Proudly the largest Caribbean weekly newspaper in Canada for 48 years

Equality

MAINTAINING THE PERFECT BALANCE $1.00

SERVING, CARIBBEAN, EAST ASIANS, GUYANESE, JAMAICANS, TRINIS AND MORE. 416 759 6397

IMMIGRATION, LEGAL & ACCOUNTING SERVICES

JAVED Legal and Immigration Services



- Express Entry; PNPs
- Family Sponsorships
- Super Visa; Visitor's Visa
- H&C; PRRA
- RAD, IAD Appeals
- Asylum Claims
- Entrepreneur and Investor Streams
- Procedural Fairness Responses

Notary Public; Oath Commissioner

- Small Claims Court
- Landlord & Tenant Board
- Traffic Tickets Defence
- Human Rights Commission

19, 695 Markham Road, Scarborough, ON, M1H2A5

Ph: 6478712444 info@javedlegal.ca

For Accounting please contact: Behroz: 437- 410-7999

VettyvelLaw Professional Corporation

2225 Markham Road -Suite 203
Scarborough on. M1B 0E6

- Real Estate Law (Residential & Commercial)
- Wills & Estates
- Corporate & Commercial Law

Rishani Vettyvel, BBA, LLB, LLM
Barrister & Solicitor
Direct 416 261 1544 Fax. 416 291 1544
rishani@vettyellaw.com



Thursday October 29 2026. Volume 44, Issue #44 www.equalitynews.ca. For advertising, call 647-216-2359





T&T PM rejects recession claims

Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar has rejected Opposition claims that the country is in recession, citing projected economic growth while defending her administration's plans to divest loss-making state enterprises.

Speaking during the 2027 Budget debate in the House of Representatives, Persad-Bissessar dismissed Opposition Leader Pennelope Beckles' assessment of the economy and argued that the country was making economic progress.

"Trinidad and Tobago is not standing still. Trinidad and Tobago is in progression," she said.

To counter the opposition's claims about the economy, Persad-Bissessar cited International Monetary Fund projections indicating that Trinidad and Tobago's economy was expected to grow by 0.8% in 2026, 3% in 2027 and an average of approximately 3.5% in 2028 and 2029.

She argued that the projections contradicted the opposition's assessment of the country's economic performance.

The prime minister also blamed the former PNM administration for leaving substantial debt obligations, saying adjusted government debt increased from $75.38 billion in fiscal 2015 to $140.58 billion in fiscal 2024, an increase of 86.5%.

Persad-Bissessar said her administration had borrowed more than $21 billion to refinance inherited debt, with another $70 billion in debt falling due over the next five years. She also rejected opposition claims that the government was conducting a fire sale of state assets, defending plans to divest enterprises that have incurred sustained financial losses.

Ali: Death penalty for heinous crimes

Guyana President Irfaan Ali has thrown his support behind the death penalty for particularly heinous crimes following the killing of six-year-old Orlando Jaikaran, whose body was found in a canal in Berbice.

Ali said he had asked the attorney general to examine the use of capital punishment and other measures for serious crimes, arguing that stronger penalties may be necessary to deter acts of extreme violence.

"The death penalty is something that we have to look at if we want to really send a strong signal," Ali told News Room when asked about the case.

Asked whether he considered the death penalty the strongest signal, the president replied: "100%."

Ali described the killing as "atrocious" and said he had asked the attorney general to carefully examine the issue, including cases involving individuals who had committed crimes of an "unthinkable nature."

The president acknowledged human rights concerns surrounding capital punishment but argued that certain crimes demanded a strong response from the justice system.

"We are, of course, very cognizant of the human rights issues and challenges," he said.

Ali added that the judicial process must be allowed to run its course but indicated that he supported penalties beyond imprisonment for crimes of this nature.

The case has prompted public calls for a strong response, with Ali saying he had received numerous messages and read comments from people demanding action.

L.R. IMMIGRATION CONSULTING INC.
Specializing in all areas of Canadian Immigration

- Express entry
- Work permits, LMIA
- Humanitarian and Refugee
- Appeals & Admissibility
- Deportation & Detention
- Loss of Residence Status
- Misrepresentations
- Sponsorships, Spousal & family class, supervise, TRPs



Lisa Ramkissoon, RCIC Member of ICCRC
1058A Albion Rd., Etobicoke ON
416-749-5559

ASTROLOGER & SPIRITUAL HEALER
PANDIT: KRISHNAM RAJU
Expert in Reading Palm Face and Horoscope
HE WILL REMOVE BLACK MAGIC, JADOO & PROTECT YOU FROM ALL EVILS
MASTER BRINGS BACK LOVED ONES
HE CAN HANDLE ANY PROBLEM
ALL RELIGIONS WELCOME
PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL
437-213-3305
2643 Eglinton Ave E, Scarborough M1K 2S2
(Inside Convenience Store) Brimley & Eglinton

Manulife Wealth

Isa M. Rahamat
Financial Advisor
905-605-7400 x 110
416-346-8883
Get in touch for a free portfolio review if you have $100K or more in investable assets



isa.rahamat@manulifewealth.ca
See our ad on Page 2

Ontario creates 2,700 new STEM spaces at Toronto Metropolitan University

By MIlan Maharaj
LJI REPORTER

Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) has been allocated a budget of $73 million by the Ontario government to create 2,776 new post-secondary seats for STEM, health, and education.

According to the announcement made on Oct. 23, the investment by the Ontario government is in line with its plan to provide funding worth $1.7 billion aimed at creating more than 70,000 new seats at publicly funded colleges and universities. This initiative is geared towards solving labour shortages and preparing the students to join the workforce in fields that require skilled professionals.

The concentration on STEM is due to the importance of technology and technical skills within Ontario's economy. Computing and engineering skills have become more valuable for sectors such as advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, construction, and alternative energy. More training at universities can ensure that students have these skills, although job prospects will depend on the type of job in question.

Of the 2,776 new seats at TMU, 2,115 will go to STEM, 627 to health and 34 to education seats. The province notes that enrolment in some of the seats can start as soon as fall 2026.

This investment is made after college and university proposals based on regional needs in the workforce, students' demands, and the possibility of expanding learning.

In the case of Ontario, the decision was based on the above-mentioned criteria in addition to the programs' contribution to workforce development and economic growth. Moreover, the government received over 1,000 letters from employers who supported the proposed expansion of high-demand programs.



TMU will now have 2776 new seats for STEM, Health and Education

For Toronto Metropolitan University, this investment will mean the capacity increase in programs relevant to industries that need specialized training. According to the university's president and vice-chancellor, Mohamed Lachemi, this investment will help achieve the university's goal of fostering applied knowledge and research for the purpose of training professionals that are needed by society.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has been emphasizing the importance of postsecondary education in solving the problem of shortage of skills. According to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's president and CEO, Daniel Tisch, the expansion of talent pools in Ontario may be helpful to businesses.

In addition, the province has provided funding of $57 million for Indigenous Institutes, with $33 million of this going to increasing capacity through an increase of up to 780 seats in areas associated with labour market needs.

It is also necessary for universities to provide sufficient staff, space, equipment, and support services to handle more students. In some areas like health care and engineering, practical training and special facilities may be important as well. This funding will create the additional capacity, but universities will have to make sure that there is no reduction in quality of education due to expansion.

As much as the expansion could help increase the numbers of students accessing the postsecondary education, it does not mean that all the applicants will be admitted or get jobs following the completion of their studies. The success of the program will depend on its availability, qualifications of the students and job availability for graduates in specific industries.

Enlarging enrolment necessitates that the universities should have adequate instructors, classrooms, and facilities in order to cater to more learners. In the cases of disciplines like medicine and engineering, hands-on practice and special facilities may become very important. The funds ensure capacity enhancement, however, it should be ensured that growth should not take place at the cost of quality teaching and resources for the students.

The investment also creates the question of how fast institutions will be able to expand their offerings without compromising on quality and giving their students equal opportunity of having access to tutors, facilities and other necessary requirements. This means that the provincial expansion will depend on the capacity of the institutions to offer such an education to the learners.

For those who wish to join the university, the new seats would mean more options in the areas related to technology, health care and other industries. The goal of Ontario's expansion is to meet the staffing needs of companies through the increase of the number of skilled graduates.

TMU is now one of the institutions benefiting from Ontario's latest investment within the province-wide expansion.

Ethnic Vision Immigration Services
· Specialist in Refugee Matters
· Appeals
· Family Sponsorship
· Student Visas
· Study Permits
Ritu V Sharma
RCIC#R510878
Consultant
416-799-2106



Life is full of surprises, but with the right preparation, you can approach each moment with confidence. Our mission is to craft personalized strategies that are designed to evolve with you, aiming to help your plans stay aligned with your goals.

Get in touch to explore personalized plans tailored to your individual needs.



Isa M. Rahamat
Financial Advisor
905-605-7400 ext.110
416-346-8883
isa.rahamat@manulifewealth.ca
5451 Highway 7, Suite 206
Woodbridge, On L4L 0B2

Get in touch for a free portfolio review if you have $100K or more in investable assets. With over 25 years of experience advising clients, we're here to help.

Manulife Wealth

Manulife, Manulife & Stylized M Design, Stylized M Design, and Manulife Wealth are trademarks of The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company and are used by it, and by its affiliates under license.

SORA LAW OFFICE
Sam Ramessar
B.Sc., M.Sc., LLB., LLM., CPA (USA & Cda), CA
Barrister, Solicitor & Notary Public
Tel: 416.953.3370
Fax: 905.457.1356, Email: srlaw@rogers.com
Tax Law I Audit I Objections I Appeals
Court Proceedings Under Income Tax,
GST- HST Minning Tax I Land Transfer Tax
Family Law I Real Estate Law I Estates &
Trusts Wills & Power Of Attorney
Can Arrange To Conduct Audit At My Office



Sam Ramessar
Offices
5484 Tomken Road, Unit #16
Mississauga ON L4W 2Z6
70 Woodland Drive
Wasaga Beach ON L9Z 2V4

Guyanese
DIASPORA DIGEST
KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 130

PRESIDENT ALI ADVANCES GUYANA'S SECURITY AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN WASHINGTON

PAGE 2



U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth hosts President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Images: IMAGO.



PRESIDENT ALI ORDERS SWEEPING RESTRICTIONS ON THE IMPORTATION OF RECREATIONAL VAPES AND VAPING PRODUCTS AMID CONCERNS OVER YOUTH USE

PAGE 3



PRESIDENT ALI PRESSES FOR DEVELOPMENT-FOCUSED REPARATIONS AHEAD OF KING CHARLES' VISIT

PAGE 8



DISTRESS ALERTS, RESCUE OPERATIONS AND RECOVERY - WHAT THE BARIMA INQUIRY HAS HEARD

PAGE 11-14

PRESIDENT ALI ADVANCES GUYANA'S SECURITY AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN WASHINGTON

Guyana is pursuing deeper cooperation with the United States across national security, energy, infrastructure and emerging technologies, following President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's engagements with senior US officials in Washington, DC.

A key outcome was the signing of a Joint Declaration for an Enhanced Defense Partnership between President Ali, who is also Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth at the Pentagon.

The declaration establishes a framework for expanded military training, joint exercises and defence expertise to support the modernisation of the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) and strengthen the country's ability to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

A major priority is improving Guyana's air-domain awareness, enhancing its capacity to monitor activity, identify emerging threats and respond to security risks. The two countries also committed to strengthening cooperation against narcotrafficking and organisations involved in narcoterrorism, building on their participation in the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition and the Shield of the Americas.



President Ali held substantive discussions with US Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick in Washington, DC

The agreement reinforces longstanding bilateral defence cooperation while broadening collaboration to address evolving security challenges affecting Guyana and the wider region.

Beyond defence, President Ali's meeting with US Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick focused on attracting further American investment and expanding commercial ties.

The discussions covered potential opportunities in oil and gas exploration, infrastructure development and connectivity, with Guyana's position serving as a gateway to the wider South American market also examined.

Agriculture and housing featured among the investment priorities, particularly the potential to draw on US expertise to create jobs, strengthen food security and expand opportunities for Guyanese families.

The talks also explored US support for developing Guyana into a regional data centre hub, advancing artificial intelligence and technology, and creating opportunities for local professionals and businesses in the digital economy.

Secretary Lutnick reaffirmed Washington's interest in continued investment in Guyana and recognised the country as a partner for growth and prosperity in the Americas.

Together, the engagements reflect efforts to deepen the Guyana-US relationship across traditional security cooperation and emerging economic sectors, with the focus on strengthening national defence while widening avenues for investment, employment and technological development.

SOVEREIGNTY, MUTUAL RESPECT MUST ANCHOR GUYANA-US RELATIONS - PRESIDENT ALI



President Ali during the interview with CNN anchor and chief national security analyst Jim Sciutto

President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has insisted that Guyana's partnership with the United States (US) must be built on mutual respect, shared priorities and reciprocal benefits, emphasising that closer cooperation must not come at the expense of the country's sovereignty.

"We are a sovereign state, and we are working with the US as a partner," the President said during an interview with CNN anchor and chief national security analyst Jim Sciutto, rejecting suggestions that Washington was seeking to dominate Guyana.

President Ali described the US as an important partner in Guyana's development and security, while making clear that the relationship must recognise Guyana as an independent state with the authority to determine its own national interests.

The position comes as Guyana's expanding petroleum industry increases its economic and strategic importance, creating opportunities for deeper international cooperation while placing greater emphasis on how the country manages its natural resources and partnerships.

On the oil sector, Ali said the Government is focused on maximising benefits from the existing Production Sharing Agreement with ExxonMobil while respecting its contractual obligations.

"What we are doing now is maximising the benefit out of that contract," he said, disclosing that investment opportunities are also being developed to allow ordinary Guyanese families to invest in major energy projects and earn returns.

The President also reaffirmed Guyana's commitment to resolving the border controversy with Venezuela through the International Court of Justice, stressing the importance of international law and respect for the court's eventual ruling.

The interview further addressed biodiversity conservation and reparative justice, with President Ali advocating mechanisms to reward countries for protecting natural ecosystems and practical development measures to address enduring inequalities.

His remarks reinforced the Government's position that international partnerships should advance Guyana's development and security through cooperation between sovereign states, with mutual respect remaining central to those relationships.

140+ GLOBAL DELEGATES TO MEET IN GUYANA TO TACKLE NATURE CONSERVATION FINANCING GAP

More than 140 representatives from governments, financial institutions, Indigenous communities and international organisations will gather in Guyana this month to confront a critical challenge: turning global commitments to protect nature into funded, practical action.

The Second Global Biodiversity Alliance (GBA) Conference and Financing Forum will be held on October 30 and 31 at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, Georgetown, under the theme "Investing in Nature: From Global Commitments to Practical Action".



President Ali along with other officials at the inaugural Global Biodiversity Alliance in 2025

A central focus will be closing the financing gap for biodiversity conservation, with discussions on how public funding, private investment and innovative financial mechanisms can support environmental protection while creating economic opportunities for communities.

Delegates will examine options including green and blended finance, carbon and biodiversity markets, and funding through multilateral institutions.

For biodiversity-rich countries such as Guyana, the discussions carry particular significance, as governments seek ways to protect natural resources while ensuring conservation delivers tangible benefits for Indigenous Peoples and other communities.

The programme will also address Indigenous stewardship, youth-led innovation, scientific monitoring and the expansion of conservation areas.

The meeting builds on Guyana's hosting of the inaugural GBA Summit in July 2025, with this year's gathering expected to strengthen international partnerships and identify practical financing pathways.

The two-day event forms part of Guyana Nature and Biodiversity Finance Week, bringing the global discussion closer to the investments and actions needed to protect nature.

GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

PRESIDENT ALI ORDERS SWEEPING RESTRICTIONS ON THE IMPORTATION OF RECREATIONAL VAPES AND VAPING PRODUCTS AMID CONCERNS OVER YOUTH USE



President Ali announcing the measures

The Government is moving to restrict the importation of vaping products into Guyana, citing growing concerns about their accessibility to children and young people and the potential threat to public health.

President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced the measure, which will prohibit the importation of vapes of all kinds unless approved by the Minister of Health or the relevant tobacco control authorities.

The order will be signed by Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh, under the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01.

The move follows concerns raised by parents, teachers, religious leaders and community members about the increasing use of vaping products, particularly within the school system.

President Ali stressed that vaping products should not be considered harmless simply because they are often promoted as alternatives to conventional cigarettes.

He pointed to warnings from the World Health Organisation about exposure to toxic substances, respiratory problems and nicotine addiction, which can interfere with brain development among children and adolescents. Potential risks during pregnancy and the uncertain long-term effects of vaping have also heightened public health concerns.

"I believe we are taking a decisive step in protecting our children, protecting our schools, and safeguarding our families, communities, and society," the President said.

The restrictions are intended primarily to curb the importation of vaping products for recreational use, while allowing for exceptions where legitimate medicinal, therapeutic or alternative applications are approved by the relevant authorities.

Any such use must comply with applicable laws, regulations and established medical standards, with qualifying products subject to the required oversight.

The measure signals a stronger government response to concerns that vaping products are becoming increasingly accessible to young people, bringing their potential health consequences into sharper focus.

By placing imports under tighter control, the Government intends to limit the availability of these products while preserving the possibility of approved uses under appropriate health safeguards.

SCHOOLS, PARENTS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS BACK VAPE RESTRICTION



Shandrina Welcome-Lee, principal, Bishop's High School



Roy Mascoe, parent Roy Mascoe, parent

Teachers who have spent years confronting vaping among students are welcoming the Government's move to restrict imports of the products, while parents and religious leaders insist that enforcement must reach beyond school gates to keep them out of children's hands.

Principal of Bishops' High School, Shandrina Welcome-Lee described President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's announcement as "**a breath of fresh air",** reflecting the challenges school administrators have faced in discouraging students from using vaping products. She stressed that schools must continue educating students and parents about the risks.

Meanwhile teacher, Miss Damon, called for clear rules and consequences for students who breach school policies.

St John's High School teacher, Nicole Nero urged authorities to scrutinise vendors selling vaping products to underage children, stressing that action must extend beyond the school environment.

Parents, Christopher Persaud and Roy Mascoe also backed the restrictions, with Persaud emphasising that enforcement would be critical**.**

"It's a good initiative by the President, but we have to ensure we enforce the system and put things in place to ensure that it's eliminated," he said.

Hindu devotee, Ramchand Ragbeer also declared his support, calling for stronger measures to prevent minors from accessing cigarettes and alcohol, while urging parents and religious institutions to help steer young people away from harmful habits.

Pandit Hari Shankar, founder and chairman of the Sanskaar Bhaarati International Ashram Guyana, welcomed the announcement, saying: "**When I read this message on Facebook, when I listen, I was so, so happy and proud."**

He also pledged the organisation's support through volunteer efforts and other assistance.

The responses highlight a shared expectation: restrictions must be backed by sustained enforcement, parental involvement and community action to protect young people.

PM PHILLIPS PUSHES US INVESTMENT IN CARIBBEAN ENERGY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SECURITY



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips attending the US-Caribbean Dialogue in Washinton, DC

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips has called for stronger United States-Caribbean partnerships in energy, infrastructure and security, highlighting investment, technology transfer and regional coordination as essential to economic growth and resilience.

Speaking at the US-Caribbean Dialogue in Washington, DC, the Prime Minister said stronger institutional capacity, technical expertise and public-private partnerships were necessary to meet the region's growing energy demands.

"Energy security is a cornerstone of the region's prosperity and sustainable growth. As energy demand increases across the region, a diversified energy matrix is required, utilising all energy resources available," he said.

PM Phillips welcomed greater participation by US companies in Caribbean energy development, pointing to American investments in Guyana's oil and gas and wider energy sectors as examples of the opportunities available. He noted that the US remains the Caribbean's largest trading partner and a major source of foreign direct investment.

"This partnership offers tremendous opportunities for sustained economic growth in the region," he said.

Beyond energy, Phillips identified logistics, digital infrastructure and other critical assets as areas for increased US investment. He referenced the US-Guyana Investment Forum, held in Washington in July 2026, as evidence of the two countries' commitment to strengthening commercial ties.

The Prime Minister also emphasised the need to protect critical infrastructure from natural disasters and criminal threats, welcoming partnerships that expand access to trusted digital technology suppliers through competitive financing and capacity building.

He further highlighted disaster preparedness, stronger healthcare systems and regional health security as priorities, given the Caribbean's vulnerability to emergencies and public health threats.

On regional security, PM Phillips pointed to transnational organised crime, narcotics trafficking and the illicit movement of firearms as persistent threats requiring coordinated action across borders.

He reaffirmed Guyana's commitment to regional and international cooperation, including through its participation as a founding member of the Shield of the Americas and the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition.

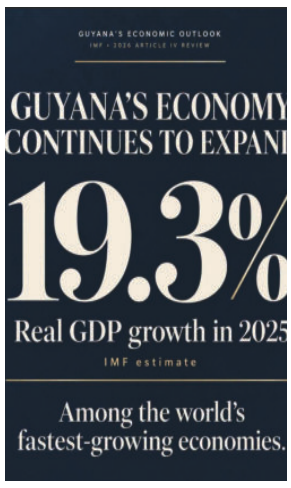
The dialogue brought together Caribbean leaders and senior officials to address shared priorities in energy, investment, infrastructure, disaster response, healthcare and security, with cooperation central to strengthening the region's resilience and economic competitiveness.

IMF BACKS KEY PILLARS OF PRESIDENT ALI'S FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reinforced key pillars of President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's five-year development agenda, highlighting infrastructure investment, energy development, economic diversification and human capital as important to sustaining Guyana's rapid growth and improving social outcomes.

In its 2026 Article IV Consultation, concluded on October 8, the Fund recognised the contribution of public investment to economic growth and social progress, highlighted the potential of the Gas-to-Energy project to improve electricity competitiveness, and stressed the importance of investment in people, employment and climate resilience.

These findings align with the Government's



focus on using oil revenues to strengthen national infrastructure, expand productive sectors and create opportunities beyond the petroleum industry.

Guyana's real gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 19.3 per cent in 2025, following average growth of approximately 40 per cent in 2023 and 2024, largely driven by expanding oil production. The non-oil economy also grew by 14 per cent in 2025, led by construction and supported by agriculture, mining and manufacturing.

The IMF projects average non-oil growth of approximately seven per cent over the medium - term, underscoring the importance of diversifying economic activity and strengthening sectors capable of generating employment and attracting private investment.

On infrastructure, the Fund noted that sustained public investment has strengthened economic activity and improved social outcomes. It also identified the Gas-to-Energy project as an important initiative expected to facilitate a shift towards more efficient and cost-competitive electricity generation.

That assessment supports the wider development rationale behind investments in energy infrastructure: reducing electricity costs could improve business



competitiveness, encourage industrial expansion and help create conditions for greater private-sector investment.

The IMF also stressed the importance of human capital and employment as Guyana's economy expands. With labour shortages presenting a challenge, investment in education and skills development will be essential to preparing citizens to access emerging opportunities.

Climate resilience is another priority identified by the Fund, which advised continued investment in sea defences and drainage systems to protect vulnerable communities and economic activity.

The IMF also recognised the role of strong oil revenues in narrowing Guyana's general fiscal deficit to 5.5 per cent of GDP in 2025, despite significant public investment. It noted that the Natural Resource Fund provides a financial cushion and that Guyana maintains one of the lowest debt-to-GDP ratios in the Western Hemisphere, while emphasising the need for prudent fiscal



management.

Taken together, the assessment reinforces several central priorities of President Ali's development agenda: building essential infrastructure, improving energy competitiveness, expanding the non-oil economy and investing in people. The Fund's findings also underscore the importance of fiscal discipline and resilience in ensuring that rapid economic growth translates into lasting benefits for Guyanese.

VP JAGDEO, PRESIDENT ALI RENEW CALL FOR NATIONAL UNITY AS GUYANA REMEMBERS CORBIN



President Ali at Corbin's funeral at St Andrew's Kirk Anglican Church

Guyana's two dominant political parties risk losing their relevance if they remain trapped in racial polarisation and entrenched partisan loyalties, Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo has warned, as the death of former People's National Congress (PNC) leader Robert Corbin brings renewed attention to the unfinished pursuit of national unity.

Speaking at Corbin's wake, Dr Jagdeo said meaningful cooperation between the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and the PNC would be necessary to Guyana's future, arguing that the political divisions inherited from earlier decades could no longer define the country's direction.

"Unless our parties, these two parties, change today – the era of binary thinking of old things is long gone – we will face extinction," he declared.

The Vice President disclosed that he and Corbin had explored political cooperation during his presidency, with senior representatives from both parties participating in discussions. Those efforts ultimately collapsed after Corbin faced accusations within his party of selling out to the PPP.

Dr Jagdeo rejected that characterisation, describing Corbin as a committed defender of the PNC who understood that Guyana's interests demanded a vision extending beyond party boundaries.

"He had a bigger vision for the country, and he understood government," he said, expressing regret that their discussions had failed to produce an agreement.



Vice President Jagdeo speaking at the wake of the late former Leader of the Opposition and PNC, Robert Corbin

Dr Jagdeo traced the country's persistent political mistrust to the racial tensions of the 1960s, noting that constitutional reforms introduced in 2001 had not eliminated the divisions. He argued that both parties must adapt to a changing society, particularly as younger generations become less accepting of rigid political loyalties.

He also said the PPP must remain open to new ideas, approaches and people who had previously opposed the party.

"The future of Guyana would involve, at some level and in some fashion, whatever that framework may be, these parties working together," he said.

At Corbin's funeral at St Andrew's Kirk Anglican Church, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali similarly described national unity as unfinished business, paying tribute to the veteran politician's nearly 35 years in the National Assembly and his advocacy for shared governance and reconciliation.

"The aspirations he championed remain unfinished business," President Ali said, urging Guyanese to look beyond political differences and embrace a shared national purpose.

He recalled Corbin as a formidable parliamentarian who challenged the Government vigorously but maintained personal respect across political lines, demonstrating that disagreement need not prevent constructive engagement.

"We have arrived at a defining moment in our history, a moment when our collective effort can give shape to a national vision that finally fulfils the dream of 1950," the President said.

As Guyana enters a period of unprecedented economic transformation, the calls by President Ali and Vice President Jagdeo underscore the importance of moving beyond historical divisions to ensure that all citizens can contribute to and benefit from the country's development.

The government's emphasis on national inclusion and a shared vision for the future reflects the need for political cooperation that places Guyana's long-term interests above partisan differences. Corbin's legacy, the two leaders suggest, must be measured not only by the principles he championed, but by the willingness of political leaders to advance national unity and work together in the interest of all Guyanese.



President Ali at Corbin's funeral at St Andrew's Kirk Anglican Church

LOWER DEBT, STRONGER RESERVES EARN GUYANA SECOND OECD RISK UPGRADE

Guyana's falling debt burden, rising financial reserves and sustained economic growth have secured a second upgrade in its international country risk classification, strengthening its prospects for accessing more affordable financing for eligible development projects.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) moved Guyana from Category 5 to Category 4, effective October 16, 2026, making it one of only two countries upgraded in the latest review.

The improved rating carries practical implications for the cost of financing eligible capital goods imported for public investment through officially supported export credits. While it does not guarantee cheaper borrowing across the board, the upgrade strengthens Guyana's position when accessing these financing arrangements.

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh, welcomed the decision, describing it as recognition of the country's economic fundamentals, fiscal management and capacity to meet its financial obligations.



The latest improvement reinforces Guyana's efforts to strengthen its credit standing

The figures behind the upgrade point to a significant shift in Guyana's debt position. Public debt declined from 47.4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020 to 28.6 per cent in 2025, while external debt fell from 24.1 per cent to 10.8 per cent of GDP.

The cost of servicing that debt has also eased relative to government revenue, dropping from eight per cent to five per cent over the same period.

At the same time, the Natural Resource Fund (NRF) expanded from US$3.3 billion at the end of 2025 to approximately US$5.5 billion by the end of September 2026, strengthening the country's financial reserves.

These gains have coincided with rapid economic expansion. Guyana recorded average annual real GDP growth of 37.3 per cent between 2020 and 2025, driven largely by oil production, while the non-oil economy grew by an average of 8.2 per cent annually.

The OECD classification ranges from Category 0, the lowest-risk category, to Category 7, the highest. Guyana's previous upgrade, from Category 6 to Category 5, came in 2022.

The latest improvement reinforces Guyana's efforts to strengthen its credit standing while pursuing major public investments. Its significance lies not simply in a better international rating, but in the potential to reduce financing costs on eligible projects and preserve more public resources for development.

NATURAL RESOURCES MINISTER URGES INVESTORS TO BUILD PARTNERSHIPS THAT PUT GUYANESE BUSINESSES FIRST

Guyana wants investment partnerships that do more than generate profits — they must strengthen local businesses, create jobs and ensure the country's economic expansion delivers tangible benefits to its people.

Minister of Natural Resources, Vickram Bharrat made the call at the opening of the International Trade and Investment Conference at the World Trade Centre in Georgetown, urging regional and international investors to pursue opportunities across established and emerging industries.

He pointed to the oil and gas sector as evidence of how collaboration among government, international operators and local enterprises can expand economic participation.

Since the Local Content Act was passed in December 2021, more than 1,200 local businesses have become directly or indirectly involved in supplying goods and services to the sector, while nearly 7,000 Guyanese have been trained and employed in the industry.

The benefits extend beyond offshore operations to farmers, transport operators, maintenance providers and other businesses meeting the sector's growing demand.



Minister of Natural Resources, Vickram Bharrat addressing the opening of the International Trade and Investment Conference

"I would like to highlight the opportunities that exist in our country today...it is about location, it is about strong leadership, it is about good governance and, importantly, it is about strong partnership," Minister Bharrat said.

However, he stressed that local participation must go hand in hand with competitiveness, urging businesses to deliver quality goods and services at competitive prices.

He also encouraged investors to pursue joint ventures with Guyanese enterprises in mining, forestry, agriculture, construction, manufacturing and information and communications technology.

Bharrat said artificial intelligence could help Guyana and the wider Caribbean overcome workforce constraints and improve productivity, but warned that workers must receive the training needed to adapt to changing demands.

He also highlighted Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy and forest conservation efforts as part of the country's approach to balancing investment with environmental protection.

The October 19–23 conference brought together business leaders and investors to explore commercial partnerships and opportunities across multiple sectors.

GUYANA'S HOTEL CAPACITY NEARS 6,000 ROOMS - 15 MORE HOTELS IN PIPELINE



The Tourism and Hospitality Institute under construction

Guyana is expanding its capacity to accommodate more visitors, with hotel room stock projected to approach 6,000 by the end of 2026 and 15 more hotels expected to enter the market after that year.

The expansion signals a growing hospitality industry preparing to serve rising demand for business travel, international conferences, leisure tourism and visits by Guyanese living overseas.

Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority, Kamrul Baksh, while outlining the sector's growth, pointed to increased investment and the arrival of international brands, including Hyatt, AC by Marriott and Four Points by Sheraton.

The growing accommodation base is already supporting Guyana's meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) market. More than 20 conferences and exhibitions have thus far been hosted in 2026, Baksh noted, bringing visitors who also spend at restaurants, bars and other tourism-related businesses.

For the wider economy, that activity creates opportunities beyond hotels, extending potential benefits to tour operators, transport providers, food businesses and communities offering local experiences.

Guyana has also added approximately 80 tours and experiences over the past six years through collaboration with the private sector, broadening the activities available to visitors exploring the country's natural and cultural attractions.

However, expanding room capacity alone will not guarantee a quality visitor experience. Baksh stressed the need to strengthen the workforce to meet the industry's growing demands.

"At the heart of this, Guyana is at a place where we need to upscale our human capacity," he stated.

The Hospitality and Tourism Institute is expected to be completed by the end of 2026, providing a foundation for developing the skilled workforce needed to support the sector's continued expansion.



AC Hotel by Mariott

GUYANA RETAINS TOP US TRAFFICKING RANKING



Guyana identified 390 victims of human trafficking in 2025, prosecuted four suspects and secured one sex-trafficking conviction, according to the United States Department of State's 2026 Trafficking in Persons Report, which recognises the country for meeting international minimum standards in combating the crime.

The figures place the scale of exploitation alongside the enforcement record as Guyana retains its Tier 1 ranking, the highest classification in the US assessment. The designation recognises government compliance with minimum standards; it does not mean trafficking has been eliminated.

Of the 390 victims identified, 375 were foreign nationals and 15 were Guyanese. They included people from Venezuela, Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, India and Colombia, underscoring the international dimension of trafficking cases in the country.

Authorities initiated 16 trafficking investigations during 2025 and prosecuted four suspects. One sex-trafficking conviction resulted in a prison sentence of at least 48 months. The report also noted that authorities detained a trafficker convicted in absentia during the previous reporting period.

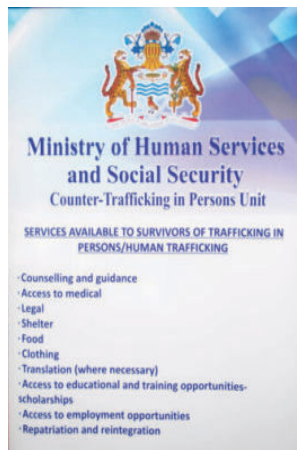
While recognising Guyana's legislative and victim-support measures, the report called for stronger investigations, improved victim identification and referrals, greater resources for protection and prevention, and tighter oversight of recruitment agencies and labour practices.

Guyana's Combating Trafficking of Persons Act of 2023 provides penalties ranging from five years to life imprisonment, extends criminal liability to corporations and broadens the definition of trafficking.

On victim protection, the government completed a 30-person transition home in July 2025, offering accommodation during a voluntary 10-day reflection period. Authorities also provided shelter, healthcare, counselling, legal assistance and repatriation support, while four foreign victims received work permits as an alternative to removal where they could face hardship or retribution.

Prevention measures included training for police, judges and immigration officers, public awareness campaigns targeting vulnerable communities, and three anti-trafficking hotlines. The hotlines recorded 15 reports of alleged trafficking during the reporting period, while a QR-code reporting system was introduced in July 2025.

The report also examined labour concerns involving Cuban workers. After



Cuba ended its bilateral health cooperation agreement in early 2026, Guyana offered remaining workers direct employment and protection. Approximately 110 stayed in Guyana, while others returned to Cuba.

Guyana's Tier 1 status reflects recognised progress in meeting international standards.

SBB-BACKED BUSINESSES RECORD 75% SURVIVAL RATE, WITH WOMEN LEADING BENEFICIARIES



Business entrepreneurs who recently completed training

Women own more than half of the small businesses accessing commercial financing through the Small Business Bureau's (SBB) loan guarantee programme, with 75 per cent of monitored businesses remaining in operation, highlighting the reach and reported sustainability of support for local entrepreneurs.

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Susan Rodrigues disclosed the figures during an appearance on the *Starting Point* podcast, outlining how financing, training, mentorship and market access are being used to strengthen small businesses.

Over the past six years, 177 small businesses accessed approximately G$1.6 billion in commercial loans through the programme. Entrepreneurs can obtain loans of up to G$30 million, with the SBB guaranteeing a portion of the collateral required by commercial banks and other private financial institutions.

"More than 50 per cent of these businesses are women-owned," Minister Rodrigues said.

The programme addresses a key barrier for entrepreneurs who may have viable business ideas but struggle to meet lenders' collateral requirements, helping them access financing to establish or expand their operations.

Beyond loans, the bureau registered 6,511 new small businesses between 2020 and 2026 and helped entrepreneurs promote their products and reach potential customers.

During that period, 493 businesses received support to participate in EXPO events across Guyana. Other entrepreneurs gained exposure through regional and international exhibitions, including Agrofest and trade shows in Brazil, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and other Caribbean destinations.

These opportunities allow businesses to test their products in new markets, build customer networks and prepare for expansion beyond their immediate communities.

However, Minister Rodrigues stressed that the number of businesses launched is not, by itself, a reliable measure of success.

"It's about how many remain in business, how many are sustainable, and how many continue to support families and community development," she said.

The SBB's monitoring and evaluation department conducts visits to businesses twice annually. More than 7,000 visits were carried out over the six-year period, with approximately 75 per cent of the businesses monitored remaining operational.

AI-GENERATED SEXUAL IMAGES, ONLINE ABUSE THREATEN WOMEN'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION — MINISTER PERSAUD WARNS



Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud

Guyana is pressing for stronger international action against digital violence targeting women, warning that AI-generated sexual images, coordinated harassment and online attacks are threatening women's participation in politics and public life.

Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud made the call at the Forum of Women Parliamentarians during the 153rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Arusha, Tanzania, urging countries to establish clear accountability measures and strengthen protections against technology-facilitated abuse.

The issue raises fundamental questions about whether women can speak publicly, pursue leadership and contribute to national development without becoming targets of online attacks.

Dr Persaud warned that manipulated images and coordinated harassment can destroy reputations, undermine confidence and pressure women to withdraw from public life. She highlighted how online anonymity can shield perpetrators while digital platforms amplify harmful content across borders.

Drawing on her own experience with digital violence, she challenged the expectation that women should limit their visibility to protect themselves from abuse.

"Digital violence threatens that promise," she stated, referring to every girl's right to aspire to public service without fear.

The minister pointed to Guyana's cybercrime legislation and the Family Violence Act 2024 as components of the country's response. Provisions include police intervention, protection allowing victims and their children to remain in their homes, and defined timelines for reporting and initiating charges.

The ministry also provides training, psychosocial support and shelter services for persons affected by violence.

Guyana is preparing a national conversation on digital violence during the annual 16 Days of Activism campaign, reinforcing calls for prevention, public awareness and accountability as emerging forms of online abuse demand stronger responses locally and internationally.

GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

GUYANA'S UN CHIEF CANDIDATE URGES DECISIVE LEADERSHIP, INSTITUTIONAL REFORM



H.E. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett responded to questions from a recent dialogue at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, D.C.

Guyana's candidate for United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, has called for stronger diplomacy and decisive leadership to confront escalating conflicts, worsening humanitarian crises and a deepening financial squeeze threatening the global body's ability to deliver.

Speaking during a dialogue at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, D.C., Rodrigues-Birkett argued that the UN must reclaim its historic peacemaking role as warfare evolves and armed conflicts become increasingly complex.

She pointed to the growing use of drones and the involvement of non-state armed groups, developments that demand renewed international cooperation and more effective diplomatic engagement.

"**Reasserting the United Nations' historical role as a peacemaker is extremely important,**" she said.

The ambassador also highlighted mounting humanitarian needs, constraints on development financing and the effects of climate change, particularly on vulnerable Caribbean countries.

These pressures are compounded by the UN's liquidity crisis, which has forced the organisation to confront how it can deliver meaningful results with increasingly limited resources.

Against this backdrop, Rodrigues-Birkett cautioned against countries turning inward when global challenges require collective action.

"**We cannot retreat inwardly when we face global challenges**," she stated.

She also called for stronger engagement with businesses and civil society organisations, recognising the growing influence of non-state actors in addressing international problems.

As the UN considers its next Secretary-General, Rodrigues-Birkett said the incoming leader must work with member states to pursue meaningful reforms and establish a sustainable path forward.

"We need more diplomacy, not less, even in these circumstances," she said, underscoring dialogue as essential to resolving international disputes and restoring the organisation's effectiveness.

PASSPORT RECORDS PROVIDE SIGNATURE EVIDENCE IN 2020 ELECTION FRAUD TRIAL

The prosecution in the 2020 election fraud trial is using passport records and handwriting analysis to establish who signed disputed election documents, including the March 5, 2020 declaration bearing Volda Lawrence's name.

At the recent hearing before the Georgetown Magistrates' Court, immigration officers testified about passport applications and signatures linked to Lawrence and former Chief Election Officer, Keith Lowenfield, providing evidence on the specimens used in the prosecution's signature comparisons.

Detective Inspector, Ameer Mohamed previously testified that his examination of Lawrence's signature on passport applications from 2010, 2015 and 2020 indicated that they appeared to have been written by the same person who signed the disputed Form 24 declaration.

The declaration was issued by then Region Four Returning Officer, Clairmont Mingo on March 5, 2020, during the contentious General and Regional Elections process. The prosecution is seeking to establish whether Lawrence signed the document, which required the signatures of the



returning officer and a party representative.

Immigration officer, Anneka Armstrong testified about processing two passport applications submitted for Lawrence through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: one for a regular passport and another for a diplomatic passport, obtained while she was serving as Minister of Health.

Armstrong said she scanned the relevant documents and forwarded them to her supervisor in keeping with established procedures.

The court also heard evidence concerning Lowenfield's lost passport application. Immigration officer, Odessa Isaacs McCaulay identified his signature in the documentation, telling the court that he signed on an electronic keypad in her presence and that the signature corresponded with the one on his application.

McCaulay also addressed the requirement for applicants to sign their own passport documents, rather than have another person sign on their behalf.

The prosecution's comparison involving Lowenfield includes his passport application and an affidavit concerning his lost passport, alongside election-related documents dated July 10, July 11 and July 31, 2020. Those documents concern requests for, and the preparation and submission of, election reports.

The testimony forms part of the prosecution's effort to establish the authorship of signatures on key election records. However, the handwriting expert's opinion is evidence for the court to assess; it does not, by itself, establish who signed the disputed documents.

Cross-examination was deferred until the next hearing as the prosecution continues presenting its case.

PRESIDENT ALI CALLS FOR EXAMINATION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOLLOWING BATH CHILD'S DEATH



The candlelight vigil and wake to mourn the traffic loss of six-year-old Orlando Jaikarran

President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has asked the Attorney General to examine the death penalty as a possible punishment for the most heinous crimes, following the killing of six-year-old Orlando Jaikarran in Bath Settlement, West Coast Berbice.

Condemning the circumstances surrounding the child's death as "**atrocious**" and "**heinous**", the President said the case has reinforced the need to consider whether Guyana's existing penalties adequately reflect the gravity of such crimes.

Speaking in an interview with Newsroom's Neil Marks, President Ali said he wanted the issue examined carefully, acknowledging the human rights considerations surrounding capital punishment while insisting that the country must confront the question of how to respond to extreme acts of violence.

"I believe that, you know, we really need to look at this," the President said, confirming that he had asked the Attorney General to examine the matter.

Asked whether he believed the death penalty was the stronger measure required, Ali responded emphatically: "**One hundred percent.**"

According to police sources, the child's father, 45-year-old Bharrat Jaikarran, reportedly confessed to throwing the boy overboard after allegedly being told by a local pujari that the child was not his biological son.

The President stressed that the judicial process must take its course, but argued that crimes of this nature demand serious consideration of the penalties available to the justice system.



The candlelight vigil and wake to mourn the traffic loss of six-year-old Orlando Jaikarran

PRESIDENT ALI PRESSES FOR DEVELOPMENT-FOCUSED REPARATIONS AHEAD OF KING CHARLES' VISIT



President Ali alongside Robert Moore of ITV New

President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali is calling for a reparations framework that tackles the development inequalities left by slavery through concessional financing, debt relief and targeted investment, as Guyana prepares to welcome King Charles III for a historic visit.

In an interview with Robert Moore of ITV News ahead of the October 29–30 visit, the President argued that reparative justice must move beyond acknowledging slavery's atrocities to addressing the economic and social disadvantages inherited by countries whose development was disrupted by the transatlantic slave trade.

"**You can never create a monetary mechanism to address that, but what you can do is to identify the development gaps, the development inequality, the underdevelopment that took place as a result of slavery,**" President Ali said.

He proposed that discussions examine preferential development financing, debt relief and targeted support for education, healthcare, mental health services and climate adaptation and mitigation.

The approach, he explained, would recognise historical harm while helping affected countries close persistent development gaps and compete more equitably in the global economy, rather than focusing on direct monetary compensation.

Guyana is pursuing the issue alongside the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the African Union and other international partners, with President Ali stressing that the consequences of slavery require a collective response.

He also addressed calls for an apology from the British monarchy, noting that King Charles has described slavery as one of the darkest periods of British history and expressed regret over that legacy.

"**Now, moving to the apology is the next step**," the President said, expressing hope that Commonwealth leaders could advance discussions towards an agreed course of action.

The reparations debate will form part of the wider historical context surrounding the King's visit, which marks 60 years of diplomatic relations between Guyana and the United Kingdom.

King Charles is expected to meet President Ali at State House on October 29, followed by a state reception involving representatives from communities across Guyana.

The programme on October 30 will include engagements with British businesses operating in Guyana, Indigenous leaders, young scientists and environmental advocates. The King is also expected to lay a wreath at the Georgetown (Rabbit Walk) Memorial in recognition of the sacrifices of British, Guyanese and other Commonwealth forces.

Environmental conservation will feature prominently, reflecting the King's longstanding interest in climate action and his association with Guyana's Iwokrama rainforest conservation initiative. Other engagements will highlight biodiversity protection, restoration and sustainable development.

The visit will be King Charles' first to Guyana as reigning monarch. His mother, Queen Elizabeth II, visited in 1994.

Beyond commemorating six decades of bilateral relations, the visit comes as Guyana seeks to advance discussions on historical accountability, development financing and the future of relations with Britain and the wider Commonwealth.

PM PHILLIPS CHALLENGES BRAZIL'S CHAMBER TO TURN WEAK TRADE TIES INTO ECONOMIC GAINS



PM Phillips at the launch of the newly established Brazil Chamber of Commerce (Guyana) Inc

Brazil accounted for just 3.2 per cent of Guyana's exports and 2.9 per cent of its imports in 2025, prompting Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips to challenge the newly established Brazil Chamber of Commerce (Guyana) Inc., to turn the two neighbours' largely untapped commercial potential into tangible economic gains.

Despite sharing a border and having opportunities for cooperation across agriculture, energy, manufacturing and infrastructure, trade between Guyana and South America's largest economy remains limited.

Prime Minister Phillips said the Chamber must help bridge that gap by connecting businesses, attracting investment and removing barriers that prevent commercial opportunities from becoming viable ventures.

"**We must judge our success by the businesses established, the investments realised, the jobs created and the goods exchanged,**" he declared at the Chamber's official launch at the National Library Conference Room in Georgetown.

He called for a results-driven approach, including sector-specific trade missions, business-to-business engagements and investment matchmaking, with measurable targets for expanding bilateral trade and increasing the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Agriculture presents significant opportunities, particularly in mechanisation, livestock development, agricultural research, technology transfer and agro-processing. Phillips also pointed to the proposed development of the Linden–Lethem corridor, alongside better roads and port facilities, could strengthen trade among northern Brazil, Guyana and Caribbean markets.

The Takutu River Bridge and announced international bus routes linking Georgetown and Lethem with Brazilian destinations could further facilitate business travel, tourism and the movement of people.

The Prime Minister urged the Chamber to build on the countries' diplomatic ties by establishing practical commercial partnerships that generate investment, create employment and expand opportunities for businesses in both countries.

GUYANA ON TRACK TO SURPASS LAST YEAR'S VISITOR ARRIVALS

Guyana is targeting a new tourism record in 2026 after visitor arrivals surged 22 per cent to 453,489 last year, with the Government now seeking to convert that momentum into greater business opportunities, jobs and community income.

Tourism, Industry and Commerce Minister, Susan Rodrigues said arrivals during the corresponding months of 2026 are already exceeding 2025 figures, putting the country on track to surpass last year's record.

"**This year also we are looking to increase that and break our record from last year and let this year, 2026, be the highest number of visitor arrivals on record,**" she said on the *Starting Point* podcast.

The strategy extends beyond attracting more visitors. Minister Rodrigues said the Government is pursuing major conferences, expanding festivals and raising Guyana's international profile, while new hotels, restaurants and tourism experiences create opportunities for workers and entrepreneurs.



Visitors at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport

She highlighted the Guyana Tourism Authority's work in launching more than 40 tourism products over the past six years, including sustainable and community-based experiences in Indigenous communities.

"**I have seen that foundational work being done. What I want to do now is to bring a lot of visibility to the country,**" she said.

A more predictable calendar of festivals, she added, would help visitors plan trips around Guyana's cultural events and experiences.

Minister Rodrigues stressed that tourism's success must also be measured by the opportunities it creates for small businesses and the protection of the country's heritage and natural environment.

"**It's not just about increasing visitor arrivals, but it's about championing small businesses**," she said.

She also pointed to the role of agencies such as the Guyana National Bureau of Standards and Small Business Bureau in improving standards and supporting entrepreneurs.

PREFERENTIAL LOANS TO HELP FARMERS EXPAND



President Ali delivering the keynote address

Farmers seeking to expand their operations could soon benefit from lower-cost financing, with Republic Bank committing resources to a proposed preferential-rate agricultural loan programme being developed by the Government of Guyana.

President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced the initiative at the inaugural Farmers' Conference at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC) in Liliendaal, Greater Georgetown, explaining that the proposed arrangement would offer incentives like those available under low-income housing loans.

"Already, we have the commitment from Republic Bank that they are going to set aside resources for agricultural loans at a preferential rate," the President said, adding that he hoped the interest rate could be announced before the conference ended.

The government is also working to bring poultry loans already offered by Demerara Bank at five per cent under the new arrangement.

The initiative comes amid strong demand for agricultural financing. Nearly 30 per cent of applications received by the Guyana Development Bank (GDB) since its launch are from the agricultural sector.

President Ali said this reflected a turnaround from 2020, when large producers were scaling back investment and many medium-sized rice and poultry operators were leaving the sector. Since then, production has recovered, with young entrepreneurs forming consortiums to invest in poultry and other agricultural ventures.

According to the International Monetary Fund's latest assessment, agriculture has grown by an average of 10 per cent annually since 2022. The sector accounts for six per cent of Guyana's gross domestic product and one-fifth of non-oil GDP.

The President attributed the growth to government investment, subsidies and supportive policies, while stressing that continued investment would be essential to expand production and meet rising demand.

THREE-MONTH FOOD RESERVES PLANNED TO CUSHION GUYANA AGAINST GLOBAL PRICE SHOCKS-*NEW STORAGE INVESTMENTS AIM TO PROTECT SUPPLIES AND STABILISE PRICES*

Guyana is expanding its food-storage capacity to build a reserve of up to three months' supply, a strategy President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali says could help protect consumers from global supply disruptions and sudden price increases.

Speaking at the inaugural Farmers' Conference at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC) in Liliendaal, Greater Georgetown, the President explained that storing food when prices are stable would allow supplies to be released when international markets become volatile.

"When chicken price is stable, we load up our storage. So, when prices go up because of something that is happening globally... we have a three-month buffer of food supply to stabilise the market," he said.

The planned investments include rice-storage facilities in Regions Two and Three, a national honey-storage facility and additional storage by private poultry producers. Chill-room capacity is also being expanded, while a regional food hub is being developed to handle fresh crops and vegetables.



President Ali at the inaugural Farmers' Conference held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre

The strategy responds to sharp swings in international commodity markets. President Ali cited the rice market, which moved from a glut in January to a shortage nine months later, underscoring the need for greater storage capacity and more resilient supply chains.

The initiative is particularly relevant to household budgets, with food accounting for approximately one-third of Guyana's consumer price basket, according to the International Monetary Fund's latest assessment.

The President noted that domestic production has increased significantly since 2020, but growing demand, including from an expanding workforce, makes further improvements in production, productivity and yields necessary.

Beyond the domestic market, Guyana is exploring opportunities to support food security across the Caribbean, with Northern Brazil and regional markets identified as potential partners.

"Just imagine if we can have the capacity in the country to hold three months of food supply for the Caribbean," the President said.

He also stressed that maintaining affordable food prices would require cooperation among farmers, government and retailers.

FARMERS' RECOMMENDATIONS TO SHAPE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN- *PRODUCERS GIVEN A DIRECT VOICE IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY*



Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha addressing the conference

Recommendations from Guyana's inaugural Farmers' Conference will inform a national action plan for agriculture, providing producers with a formal opportunity to influence policies affecting their livelihoods and the wider industry.

Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha said the conference, held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC) in Liliendaal, Greater Georgetown, was established to give farmers a direct role in shaping the implementation and refinement of agricultural policies.

"This is not a forum where government comes to tell you what we intend to do. It's a forum to ensure that you have a direct voice in the implementation, refinement, and execution of those policies," he said.

The event followed requests from farmers who told the minister during an outreach exercise that they lacked a national platform to exchange ideas and address common challenges.

Participants were grouped according to their areas of farming, with technical officers from the Ministry of Agriculture supporting discussions aimed at developing practical solutions.

Minister Mustapha urged participants to prioritise recommendations that could benefit the wider sector rather than focusing solely on individual needs.

"The most effective policies are those shaped by the people who live the realities of farming every day," he said.

The recommendations are expected to complement the government's agricultural priorities under its 2025 Manifesto, the National Development Strategy and the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030.

Minister Mustapha also announced that the conference would become an annual event, establishing a continuing platform for dialogue between farmers and policymakers.

He said the discussions would support efforts to increase agricultural production and advance Guyana's contribution to CARICOM's food-security agenda, including the 25 by 2025 + 5 initiative to reduce the region's food import bill.

The conference formed part of Agriculture Month 2026, observed under the theme "Innovate, Nourish, Grow: Building a Strong and Sustainable Guyana."



Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha addressing the conference

GUYANA PRESSES FOR BALANCE BETWEEN NATURE PROTECTION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



President Ali speaking with Journalist Kiana Wilburg

Developing countries should not have to sacrifice their economic ambitions to protect the environment, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has argued, as Guyana pushes for a global approach that recognises both the value of biodiversity and the need for development.

The president's position is central to the Guyana-led Global Biodiversity Alliance (GBA), which is working towards a common framework for valuing biodiversity and guiding investment in its protection and restoration.

Speaking on the *Starting Point Podcast*, President Ali said countries facing economic pressures have had limited alternatives, while the international system lacks a recognised mechanism to place an economic value on biodiversity comparable to other natural resources.

"The planet is something that we all have to take care of, but not at the expense of the development aspirations of our people," he said.

The issue is particularly relevant to countries with significant natural assets, which must balance environmental protection with the need to create jobs, expand infrastructure and improve living standards.

President Ali said biodiversity remains an essential asset for the planet, yet its value is not adequately recognised within existing economic systems.

"**This is such an important asset for the survival of the planet, for the balance of the planet, but there is no value on this asset,"** he said.

Through the GBA, Guyana is seeking to help develop a framework that could better account for biodiversity, establish international standards and encourage investment in restoring ecosystems.

The initiative also aims to bring governments, investors, mining and forestry interests, scientists and Indigenous peoples into a common discussion, recognising that effective environmental policy must account for the interests of those who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods and development.

For Guyana, the challenge is to advance a global conservation agenda that protects nature while ensuring countries can continue pursuing economic progress and better opportunities for their people.

PRIVATE INVESTMENT, WORKER PRODUCTIVITY FUEL GUYANA'S ECONOMIC EXPANSION — DR SINGH

Private sector investment and the productivity of Guyanese workers remain central to the country's economic expansion, with 156,000 jobs created over the past five years and unemployment reduced by 50 per cent, Senior Finance Minister Dr Ashni Singh has said.

The figures underscore the role of business confidence and employment in translating Guyana's economic growth into opportunities for citizens, as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recognises strong activity across both the oil and non-oil sectors.

In a statement published on his official Facebook page on Friday, Dr Singh credited businesses for continuing to invest and expand production, alongside workers whose contributions sustain economic activity.

"**I want to acknowledge the role that was played by the private sector by continuing to invest so confidently and boldly in Guyana and by continuing to expand their production of goods and services, which is really what underlies this economic growth,**" he said.

The IMF has attributed Guyana's strong performance to prudent macroeconomic policies, rising oil revenues and robust public and private investment. It also stressed the importance of economic diversification and inclusive development to sustain progress.

"**Guyana's economy continues to grow rapidly, driven by strong oil and non-oil activity, with the outlook remaining highly favorable,**" the institution stated.

Dr Singh also reaffirmed the Government's focus on developing the country's human capital during the 2026 IMF and World Bank Group Annual Meetings in Bangkok, Thailand.

At the Human Capital Ministerial Conclave, discussions centred on investing in people and expanding economic opportunities, reinforcing the importance of ensuring that economic growth is accompanied by skills development and access to employment.

CANAL CITY DEVELOPMENT BEGINS AS GUYANA ADVANCES NEW VISION FOR URBAN LIVING

Work has started on Canal City at La Bonne Intention (LBI), East Coast Demerara, with plans to transform an existing drainage and irrigation canal into a waterfront destination integrating housing, commerce and recreation.

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali confirmed the start of the development during an interview on the *Starting Point Podcast*, outlining a broader vision to make Guyana's urban spaces more liveable by integrating nature, wellness and heritage into modern development.

"**We have already started work in Canal City**," the president said.

The project forms part of a wider collaboration with The King's Foundation, an educational charity founded by King Charles III in 1990, which will provide expertise in sustainable communities, urban renewal and the restoration of streets and avenues.

In Georgetown, walking circuits are being developed along the city's avenues to encourage physical activity while improving safety, security and parking. Plans also include a greener wellness avenue along Thomas Street and the modernisation of Kingston's waterfront, with its historical character preserved.

The initiatives are intended to connect the capital's commercial districts, cultural attractions and architectural landmarks, allowing residents and visitors to experience more of the city on foot.

"**You'll be walking through history, commerce, the culture, the architectural beauty, nature…everything will be so interlinked and integrated in a safe way that you will be enjoying walking through the city,**" President Ali said.

Beyond recreation, the greening programme is expected to create habitats for birds, butterflies and other wildlife, supporting biodiversity while improving the urban environment.

The approach aligns with the work of the Global Biodiversity Alliance, which promotes ways for people to live in greater harmony with nature.

PRESIDENT ALI WELCOMES INDIA'S GBA COMMITMENT, SIGNALS NEW AREAS FOR COOPERATION



New Indian High Commissioner accredited

Guyana is seeking to expand its longstanding partnership with India into technology, security, defence and agro-processing, as President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali welcomed the country's new High Commissioner, Shri Chinmoy Naik.

President Ali accepted Naik's Letters of Credence, formally accrediting him as India's High Commissioner to Guyana, and said he looked forward to developing the two countries' "**extraordinary relationship**" through new areas of cooperation.

The Head of State also extended his regards to Indian President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Indian Administration.

Beyond traditional diplomatic ties, President Ali welcomed India's commitment to join the Guyana-led Global Biodiversity Alliance, an initiative seeking international cooperation to strengthen biodiversity protection and restoration.

He encouraged the newly appointed High Commissioner and his wife to experience Guyana's culture, tourism and heritage.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hugh Todd, Permanent Secretary Sharon Roopchand-Edwards and Ambassador Ivan Evelyn attended the accreditation ceremony.

DISTRESS ALERTS, RESCUE OPERATIONS AND RECOVERY - WHAT THE BARIMA INQUIRY HAS HEARD - *CONT'D ON PG 14*

The first distress alert came at 10:43 p.m. on July 18. Within hours, Coast Guard crews were pulling survivors from the darkness, as aircraft and vessels searched rough seas for others aboard the MV Barima.

The first week of testimony before the Commission of Inquiry (COI) has traced that response, detailing the efforts of Guyanese emergency personnel, civilian operators and regional partners while bringing communications, operational limitations and record-keeping under scrutiny.

Hearings, which began on October 14, have heard from the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCCA), the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) Coast Guard and Air Corps, the Maritime Administration Department (MARAD) and civilian aviation operators. Their testimony is helping establish how the search unfolded, what rescuers encountered and which issues require further examination.

From distress alert to rescue

Director of Air Navigation Services at the GCAA, Rickford Samaroo testified that the first satellite distress message arrived at 10:43 p.m. on July 18 through the United States Mission Control Centre.



Director of Air Navigation Services at the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), Rickford Samaroo

Aeronautical Information Services Officer, Tia Valenzuela, who was on duty at the Timehri Control Tower, said she relayed the beacon's coordinates to the GDF Coast Guard's operations mobile at 10:51 p.m. The Coast Guard acknowledged the message within one minute.

Valenzuela notified the lighthouse at 11:01 p.m. and Coast Guard Commander David Shamsudeen at 11:07 p.m. At 11:13 p.m., the Coast Guard advised that a vessel was heading out.

Describing the alert system, Valenzuela said: "**In the distress message mailbox, there's a continuous beep that usually goes off loud enough for anyone to hear in the office. So once it's continuous, we already know it's a distress alert.**"

She explained that her role was to relay the information and document responses, while the Coast Guard was responsible for the maritime search-and-rescue operation.

Testimony also revealed that the beacon's unique identification code and coordinates were transmitted, but its registration details did not specifically link it to the MV Barima or identify the vessel's owner and emergency contacts.

The Commission requested the relevant standard operating procedures, an after-action report and the complete communications record covering the initial alert and response.

Crews mobilised under difficult conditions

Roraima Airways responded during the early hours of July 19. Director of Operations Captain Learie Barclay testified that he received a call at 12:16 a.m. requesting aerial search assistance. He arrived at Ogle at about 12:45 a.m., and the aircraft departed at 1:36 a.m.

The crew detected an emergency signal and observed three flares, marking and relaying the coordinates to air traffic control at 2:09 a.m. However, they could not identify the vessel or anyone on the water.

"We expressed concern in the cockpit. Grave concern, because the flares were very bright, but we saw nothing of consequence on the sea," Barclay told the Commission.

On the return flight, he received word that survivors had been rescued, including an initial two people followed by another eight.

The GDF Air Corps also deployed aircraft. Lieutenant Colonel, Anson Weekes testified that he prepared a Bell 407 helicopter after receiving an emergency call and departed at approximately 1:45 a.m. The helicopter transported a drone team to Hampton Court before conducting coastal reconnaissance.

The helicopter's single-engine configuration and applicable aviation safety requirements prevented the crew from flying directly offshore at night. The team searched along the coastline but reported no confirmed sightings of survivors during that initial reconnaissance.

GDF pilot, Major Lloyden Layne separately described an Islander aircraft mission during which the crew observed a steady red light offshore. After circling for approximately 20 to 25 minutes, they could not determine its source. The aircraft was not equipped with a searchlight.

The testimony outlined how aircrews contributed to the search while operating within their aircraft's capabilities and the safety requirements governing their missions.



Coast Guard Commander David Shamsudeen testifying before the COI

Coast Guard personnel describe life-saving rescue

Coast Guard personnel described locating survivors in darkness and bringing them aboard their vessels.

Midshipman, Rahul Ramsarup, commander of the Pomeroon floating base at the time, said he received a WhatsApp mobilisation message at 10:59 p.m. on July 18, followed by the coordinates at 11:07 p.m.

His team took approximately 15 to 20 minutes to prepare and depart. However, the vessel's Starlink battery died after departure, cutting off internet connectivity. The base had no backup communications system.

Ramsarup said a journey that would ordinarily take about two hours in daylight could take approximately four hours at night because of limited visibility and the need to travel at a safe speed. His testimony established the loss of connectivity but did not establish that it delayed the rescue or affected its outcome.

Petty Officer, Jeromey Agard, whose six-member crew operated GDFS 1034, said the team used a searchlight and reduced engine speed to hear people calling for help.



GDF pilot Major Lloyden Layne

The crew rescued 26 people by approximately 5:00 a.m. Survivors were clinging to objects including wooden pallets and containers. None of the 26 was wearing a life jacket.



Roraima Airways' Director of Operations and a commercial pilot, Captain Learie Barclay

The testimony illustrated the conditions facing those awaiting rescue and the challenges crews encountered in locating them.

The wider operation involved Coast Guard vessels, civilian craft, aircraft and regional partners. Commander Shamsudeen described the deployment of seven GDF Coast Guard vessels and six civilian craft under the search operation known as Hawkeye. Regional assistance included partners from Trinidad and Tobago and Brazil.

He said the search area covered approximately 26,000 square nautical miles and was divided into six subsectors.

Explaining how teams determined where to deploy resources, Shamsudeen said: "This **is one of the research mechanisms that we use. There is an electronic chart. There is Google Earth. There are all of the other monitoring systems. So we put all of these together, trying to make sense of what we're seeing and how we will deploy.**"

He added that tidal patterns, local knowledge and experience from previous operations helped guide search strategies.

The wider response accounted for 69 survivors rescued and 73 deceased recovered, according to figures presented during the inquiry.

Communications and record-keeping under examination

Alongside accounts of the rescue effort, commissioners examined how information was transmitted and recorded across

ETHNIC VISION IMMIGRATION SERVICES

OUR SERVICES

- SPECIALIST IN REFUGEE MATTERS
- APPEALS
- FAMILY SPONSORSHIP
- STUDENT VISAS
- STUDY PERMITS

Ritu Vashni Sharma
RCIC #R510878
FOUNDER/OPERATOR
Canadian Immigration Consultant

CALL FOR CONSULTATION
(416) 799-2106

RVS LEGAL SERVICES PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

We offer expert legal consulting services designed to provide clarity, guidance, and strategic solutions tailored to your unique needs and objectives

OUR SERVICES

- Specialized in Landlord and Tenant Matters
- Immigration Appeals
- Small Claims Court,
- Human Rights Tribunal
- Highway Traffic Offenses
- Notary Public
- Commissioner of Oaths for taking affidavits.
- & more.



CALL FOR CONSULTATION
(416) 799-2106



LOTUS
Funeral and Cremation Centre Inc.

121 City View Drive
North of Belfield Road, East side of Highway 27
647-547-8188 www.lotusfuneralandcremation.com



Crematorium inside our building!



Seating for more than 500+ guests!

SUPERKING SUPERMARKET 鴻發超市

HALLOWEEN

Special Offers Effective: Friday Oct. 30 To Thursday Nov. 05, 2026.

VEGETABLE & FRUIT

Pumpkin 大南瓜 Reg:$ 1.29 — 69¢/lb
Napa 紹菜 Reg:$ 1.29 — 69¢/lb
Crown Broccoli 西蘭花 Reg:$ 1.99 — 1.29/lb
Zucchini 青日本瓜 Reg:$ 1.99 — 1.29/lb
Eddoes 小芋仔 Reg:$ 1.99 — 1.39/lb
Baby Mustard 芥菜仔 Reg:$ 1.99 — 1.39/lb
OPO Squash 水瓜 Reg:$ 1.99 — 1.39/lb
Nai Yu Miu 奶油苗 Reg:$ 2.19 — 1.59/lb

Green Peppers 青椒 Reg:$ 1.99 — 1.59/lb
Cluster Tomato 有枝番茄 Reg:$ 2.99 — 1.99/lb
Chinese Celery 唐芹 Reg:$ 2.48 — 1.88/lb
Mini Cucumber 迷你青瓜 Reg:$ 2.99 — 1.99/pk
Green Leaf Lettuce 唐生菜 Reg:$ 3.99 — 2.99/ea
Yellow Honeydew 金黃蜜瓜 Reg:$ 1.29 — 79¢/lb
Asian Pear 水晶梨 Reg:$ 1.59 — 99¢/lb
Yellow Plantains 黃大蕉 Reg:$ 1.99 — 1.39/lb

Pomegranate 紅石榴 Reg:$ 2.99 — 1.99/ea
Yellow Peach 黃毛桃 Reg:$ 2.99 — 1.99/lb
Green Grape 青提 Reg:$ 3.99 — 2.99/lb
Avocado 36S 牛油果 Reg: 2 for $5.00 — 2/$3.00
Black Seedless Grapes 2LB 黑提 Reg:$ 5.99 — 3.99/pk
Vietnam Red Fleshed Sweet Pomelo 越南紅肉蜜柚 Reg:$ 5.99 — 3.99/ea
Golden Kiwi Basket 黃金奇异果 1Lb Reg:$ 5.99 — 4.99/pk
Apple Mango 蘋果芒 Reg:$ 12.99 — 9.99/case

RESTAURANT SPECIAL

Napa 紹菜 — 20.00/case
Cluster Tomato 有枝番茄 — 21.00/case
Crown Broccoli 西蘭花 — 23.00/case
Celery 西芹 — 28.00/case
Lemon 18kg 黃檸檬 — 30.00/case
Grey Zucchini 白日本瓜 — 30.00/case
Green Pepper 青椒 — 35.00/case

Green Onion 葱 — 50.00/case
Green Leaf Lettuce 唐生菜 — 70.00/case
Avocados 36S 牛油果 — 48.00/case
Yellow Plantains 黃大蕉 — 60.00/case
Head On Shrimp 30/40 有頭白蝦 24Lb — 120.00/case
Headless White Shrimp 無頭白蝦 21–25 10X4Lb — 210.00/case
Frozen Pacific White Shrimp 91/110 10x4Lb 精選白蝦 — 155.00/case

Triple Crown Vegetable Spring Roll 春卷 10x1000g — 40.00/case
Extra Large Egg 箱裝大鷄蛋 — 56.99/case
Fresh Chicken Leg Quarter 18kg 新鮮鷄大腿 — 77.99/case
Pork Stomach 10kg 猪肚 — 30.00/case
Chicken Breast 鷄胸肉 25kg — 260.00/case
Pork Intestine 猪大腸 10kg — 50.00/case
Chicken Leg Boneless 鷄腿肉 25kg — 260.00/case

Saporito Vegetable / Canola Oil 16L 菜油/菜籽油 — 43.99/case
Mr. Goudas Long Grain Rice 20kg 黃米 — 32.99/bag
Dunya Long Grain White Rice 20kg 優質白米 — 29.99/bag
P.R.B Monosodium Glutamate 50Lb 珠江橋牌味精 — 49.99/bag
Redpath Sugar 20kg 白糖 — 26.99/bag
ADM All Purpose Flour 20kg 面粉 — 20.99/bag
LKK Chun Oyster Flavoured Sauce 李錦記錦珍鮮味蠔油 6x2.2Kg — 37.99/case
TS-018 MFPP Clamshell Container 餐盒 200pcs — 17.99/case

PP-881 MFPP Clamshell Container 餐盒 150pcs — 24.99/case
PP-993 MFPP Clamshell Container 餐盒 150pcs — 29.99/case
YS-64 Microwavable Plastic Soup & Deli Container 120sets 帶蓋湯盒 — 39.99/case
S-32 Microwavable Plastic Soup & Deli Container 240sets 帶蓋湯盒 — 39.99/case
S-24 Microwavable Plastic Soup & Deli Container 240sets 帶蓋湯盒 — 32.99/case
CN-38W Microwavable Container 150sets 帶蓋餐盒 — 29.99/case
868 Microwavable Container 150sets 帶蓋餐盒 — 25.99/case
PC-10 Portion Containers 2500pcs 餐盒 — 16.99/case

FROZEN

Full Moon Frozen Head On Shrimp 20/30 380g 有頭蝦 Reg:$7.99 — 5.99/ea
Coconut Tree Tapioca Noodle 濑粉 400g Reg:$1.99/ea — 3/$5.50
AA-1 Smelts Eperlans 雪魚仔 300g Reg:$4.59/ea — 2/$7.00
Frozen Skipjack Tuna Steak 吞拿魚扒 500g Reg:$4.99 — 3.99/ea
AA-1 Milkfish Belly 400g 牛奶魚腩 Reg:$8.99 — 6.99/ea
Baguio/Bulacan Pork Tocino 腌肉 375g Reg:$5.99 — 3.99/ea

Pampanga Dugo Blood 猪血 375g Reg:$4.59 — 3.59/ea
Sorbetero Coco Glace Frozen Coconut Jelly 220g 椰子甜品 Reg:$3.99 — 2.99/ea
Len Xiang Glutinous Corn Series 500g 糯玉米 Reg:$2.99 — 1.99/ea
Siren's World Assorted Fish Ball 500g 魚丸 Reg:$4.99 — 3.99/ea
Kababayan Goldband Fusilier 火鯧魚 500g Reg:$4.99 — 3.99/ea
Free Run Omega-3 Large Brown 12s 鷄蛋 Reg:$7.99 — 5.99/ea

GROCERY

Vinacafe Chat Instant Coffee Mix 290g 速溶咖啡 Reg:$4.99 — 2.99/ea
Senorita Brand Cooked Dry Peas 155g 熟豌豆 Reg:$1.99 — 99¢/ea
Temple Salted Black Beans 豆豉 180g Reg:$0.99/ea — 2/$1.00

BOY Bawang Cornick 零食 500g Reg:$5.99 — 3.88/ea
Jack'n Jill Chippy Barbeque Flavored Corn Chips 110g 玉米零食 Reg:$1.59 — 99¢/ea
Oishi Bread Pan Series 42g 面包片 Reg:$0.99/ea — 2/$1.00

Regent Cheese Ring 60g 芝士條 Reg:$1.59 — 88¢/ea
Golden Panda Yellow Split/ Green Mung Beans 300g 金熊猫绿豆瓣/绿豆 Reg:$1.59 — 89¢/ea
Golden Panda Tapioca Starch 金熊猫木薯澱粉 400g Reg:$1.59 — 89¢/ea

Jack'n Jill Choco Pretzels Box 巧克力零食 40g Reg:$1.29/ea — 2/$1.00
AA-1 Mackerel Series 425g 馬鮫魚罐頭 Reg:$2.59/ea — 2/$3.00
Angel Evaporada Evaporated Liquid Creamer 405ml 煉乳 Reg:$1.99 — 1.29/ea

Chaokoh 100% Pure Coconut Water 520ml Reg:$1.99 — 99¢/ea
Valentino Sparking Drink Series 750ml 汽泡飲料 Reg:$4.99 — 2.99/ea
Nutrament Vanilla Energy Drink 355ml 能量飲料 Reg:$2.99 — 2.18/ea

Huy Fong Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce 714ml 是拉差甜辣椒醬 Reg:$6.99 — 4.59/ea
Acecook Hao Hao Instant Noodles Series 30x74g 方便面 Reg:$16.99 — 13.99/pk
Nestle Coffee Mate 1.4kg 咖啡伴侣 Reg:$14.99 — 9.99/ea

MEAT

Boneless Pork Butt Shoulder 無骨梅頭 Reg:$ 3.99 — 2.99/lb
Beef Back Ribs 牛排骨 Reg:$ 4.99 — 3.99/lb
Frozen Oxtail 冰鮮牛尾 Reg:$ 9.99 — 8.99/lb

Frozen Duck 冰鴨 Reg:$ 5.99 — 4.99/lb
Chicken Drumstick 鷄小腿 Reg:$ 2.99 — 1.99/lb

SEAFOOD

Fresh Pickeral 新鮮碧古魚 Reg:$ 6.99 — 5.99/lb
Fresh Chinese Yellow Croaker 新鮮大陸黃花魚 Reg:$ 6.99 — 4.99/lb
Frozen Fresh Pompano 冰鮮黃立鯧 Reg:$ 6.99 — 5.99/lb

Live Blue Crab 生猛蓝蟹 Reg:$ 5.99 — 3.99/lb
Frozen Fresh Head-On White Shrimp 冰鮮有頭南美蝦 Reg:$ 6.99 — 5.99/lb
Frozen Fresh Squid 冰鮮魷魚 Reg:$ 7.99 — 6.99/lb

1635 Lawrence Ave West, North York ON, M6L 3C9 | Tel : 416-241-8988 | MON - SUN 8:30AM - 9PM, OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK | www.superking.ca

Although We Strive For Accuracy In Both Copy & Illustration,unintentional Error May Occur, We Reserve The Right To Correct Any Error. Specials Available While Quantities Last. We Reserve The Right To Limit Quantities.Design and advertisement by Promobiz Solutions.Tel:416-773-1668

18TH RECREATIONAL PARK

Number 63 Beach in Region Six has welcomed its new recreational park, the 18th and largest developed under the National Recreational Protocol. The upgraded facility features a children's play area, gazebos, washrooms, walking paths, seating, lighting and vending kiosks, giving families more ways to enjoy one of Guyana's best-known seaside destinations. Commissioned by First Lady Arya Ali, the park is designed to improve community well-being while creating opportunities for local vendors, small businesses and entrepreneurs to benefit from increased activity at the beach.

















GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

ENS AT NUMBER 63 BEACH





















Lula's victory in Brazil proves sovereignty matters

By Donald Ramotar
Former Guyana President



Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

Political commentators are all in awe at the victory of President Lula in the Runoff Presidential elections in Brazil on October 25th. This is the first time that a candidate who came second at the first round of voting came back to win the runoff. Another first for Lula.

Why did Lula win despite being behind in the polls. In my humble view its because Sovereignty matters.

Bolsonario declared himself an ally of Donald Trump of the US. Trump himself came out in open support of Bolsonario. The US government interfered heavily in the elections in Brazil. The open embrace of Bolsonario sent shock waves in the society. Bolsonario is being seen as a puppet of Trump, and it is envisaged that he would have made Brazil a de-facto colony of the US as so many countries are today.

That hit the people very hard. They don't want to be subjected to any foreign power. They don't want their country to be used as a dumping ground for persons/ criminals that the US wants to get rid of.

They don't want their country's natural resources to be exploited by others with very little going to the development of their country.

They don't want to be a military base of the US where people called "narco-traffickers" are killed willy nilly without any evidence.

Lula's victory is the first push back against the re-colonialisation of our region and beyond. Sovereignty matters!

Advertising in Equality News works!
647-216-2359

CHARLEY'S CARIBBEAN CUISINE

For all your catering needs

1158 Morningside Ave, Scarborough
(at Morningside)
(416) 282-8608

Fabulous authentic Guyanese food. We can't make this for these prices. (Grandma is from Berbice Guyana and knows country Guyanese food - even she will eat it!) Try the dhal puri and okra / shrimp.

Actual Review from Yellow Pages

Come savor a savory meal at Charley's Caribbean Cuisine







Not sure how much food you need? We'll help you suggest the right amount of food to minimize your cost.

Pork free halal foods. Catering for Hindu releigious events, as well as all Caribbean events.





PARTY TRAYS AVAILABLE!

Guyana, US sign enhanced defence partnership to strengthen sovereignty

Guyana and the United States have signed an enhanced defence partnership aimed at strengthening military cooperation, improving regional security and protecting Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Guyana's President Irfaan Ali signed a Joint Declaration for an Enhanced Defence Partnership with US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday.

In a statement following the signing, Ali described the declaration as a significant step in safeguarding Guyana's sovereignty, building on decades of defence cooperation between the two countries.

Under the partnership, the US Department of War will provide sustained defence expertise, multidomain training and joint military exercises with the Guyana Defence Force (GDF).

The agreement is also expected to improve Guyana's air-domain awareness and strengthen its capacity to monitor, deter and respond to threats within and around its territory.

Ali said the partnership reflects the importance both countries place on Guyana's security and stability, as well as the wider security of the Western Hemisphere.



US Secretary of Defence Pete Hesgeth signs the agreement with President Dr Irfaan Ali

The declaration also reinforces cooperation against narcoterrorist organisations and drug trafficking networks, building on the countries' participation in the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition and the Shield of the Americas.

"Together, we are sending a clear message that Guyana and its partners stand ready to deter malign state and non-state actors that threaten our peace, sovereignty and regional security," Ali said.

The president described the agreement as another milestone in Guyana's expanding strategic relationship with the United States, which also encompasses energy, trade and investment.

He reaffirmed Guyana's commitment to international partnerships grounded in mutual respect, shared prosperity, security and the protection of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The agreement comes as Guyana continues to strengthen its defence capabilities and place greater emphasis on regional security amid concerns about protecting its territory and national interests.

Dominica PM raises visa restrictions in Washington talks

Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit has raised the United States' visa restrictions on the Caribbean island during bilateral talks with US State Department officials, saying Washington has committed to discussing the matter with senior officials.

Skerrit made the disclosure following his visit to the United States last week for the United States-Caribbean Dialogue, where he met with US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau.

He said the visa restrictions were a priority during his bilateral meeting with the State Department and that he had raised the issue "very respectfully but firmly."

"I made a suggestion to the State Department on the visa restrictions and, of course, they have given me a commitment that will be discussed with the principals," Skerrit said.

He added that the next step rests with Washington to determine how it will respond to the restrictions.

Skerrit maintained that his government believes there is no justification for the measures imposed on Dominica.



Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit

The US introduced partial visa restrictions on Dominica effective Jan. 1, citing security and vetting concerns related to the island's Citizenship by Investment (CBI) program.

Under the program, Dominica grants citizenship to foreign nationals in exchange for substantial investments in the country's socioeconomic development.

The restrictions suspend most immigrant and nonimmigrant visas, including B-1/B-2 visitor visas and F, M and J visas for students and exchange visitors. They also reduce visa validity periods.

Dominican nationals may also face mandatory, refundable visa bonds ranging from US$10,000 to US$20,000 under broader US policies targeting jurisdictions identified as having high visa-overstay rates or links to citizenship-by-investment programs.

Skerrit said he was awaiting Washington's response but described the recent engagement as important for relations between the two countries.

"The United States continues to be an important ally, a developing partner here in the Caribbean and, of course, we have a longstanding relationship at all levels, whether cultural, family, students going to universities, etc. with the United States," he said.

He added that Dominica would welcome opportunities to strengthen ties between the Caribbean and the United States.

DISTRESS ALERTS, RESCUE OPERATIONS AND RECOVERY - WHAT THE BARIMA INQUIRY HAS HEARD - *CONT'D FROM PG 11*



Guyana Defence Force (GDF) Coast Guard Petty Officer Deon Smith

agencies.

The loss of the Starlink connection at the Pomeroon base raised questions about communications redundancy. MARAD personnel also described difficulties coordinating activity across multiple vessels, including informal communications and messages from the search area that sometimes reached personnel only after vessels returned closer to shore.

The Commission heard that some Coast Guard crews did not maintain onboard logs recording survivors' names, the number recovered and the precise locations where they were found. Although personnel were focused on locating and rescuing people, the testimony highlighted the importance of maintaining complete operational records.

MARAD Marine Superintendent, Christopher Bailey said an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) was recovered from the water between



Petty Officer Jeromey Agard, commander of GDFS 1034

approximately 3:30 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. on July 19. The device deactivated after he brought it aboard and was found floating independently, about three to four nautical miles from the initial coordinates.

The wreck was formally located at 1:51 p.m. on July 20. Search-and-rescue and recovery operations continued until August 3, when the Coast Guard received a directive to discontinue the search.

The hearings also brought attention to the personal toll on rescuers. Coast Guard Petty Officer, Deon Smith described hearing cries for help and using spotlights to guide his crew towards survivors. He told the Commission he was receiving therapy.

Asked how it was going, he replied: "**It's not good enough.**"

Smith said revisiting the tragedy triggered anxiety and trauma, highlighting the lasting impact of the operation on personnel involved in saving lives and recovering the deceased.

Commission seeks a complete account

The first week of hearings has detailed the mobilisation of emergency personnel, the coordination of a complex search-and-rescue operation and the challenges confronting crews at sea and in the air.



Aeronautical Information Services Officer Tia Valenzuela

It has also identified areas for further examination, including beacon registration information, communications between agencies, the capabilities and limitations of deployed assets, and the completeness of operational records.

The Commission has requested additional documents, including operating procedures, communications records, search maps, weather information and after-action reports.

As hearings continue, the Commission's task is to establish what happened, examine how the response unfolded and determine what lessons could strengthen preparedness, coordination and accountability in future maritime emergencies.

HOW THE RESPONSE UNFOLDED

10:43 p.m. | July 18 — First distress alert
A satellite distress message arrives through the United States Mission Control Centre.

10:51 p.m. | July 18 — Coordinates relayed
The Timehri Control Tower sends the beacon's coordinates to the Coast Guard, which acknowledges within one minute.

11:13 p.m. | July 18 — Coast Guard vessel mobilised
The Coast Guard advises that a vessel is heading out.

12:16 a.m. | July 19 — Aerial search requested
Roraima Airways pilot Captain, Learie Barclay receives a call requesting assistance.

1:36 a.m. | July 19 — Aircraft departs
The Roraima Airways crew begins its aerial search from Ogle.

2:09a.m.|July19—Signalandflaressighted
The crew detects an emergency signal, observes three flares and relays the coordinates.

By 5:30 a.m. | July 19 — 26 people reported rescued
The Coast Guard reports that GDFS 1034 rescued 26 people as the search continues.

July 19 onward — Wider search and recovery
Coast Guard, MARAD, civilian operators, aircraft and regional partners join the operation. The wreck is formally located on July 20.

BARIMA COI TURNS TO SURVIVORS AS HEARINGS PAUSE FOR TWO WEEKS

The Presidential Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the July 18 MV Barima tragedy will use a two-week break in public hearings to gather further evidence and statements from survivors, taking its investigation into the communities where those affected may feel more comfortable speaking.

Oral hearings will resume on Tuesday, November 10, following the conclusion of the Commission's seventh day of public proceedings at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC).

Chairman Justice Godfrey Phillip Smith of Belize said the Secretariat would visit survivors in their communities to obtain their accounts, while commissioners review the substantial volume of evidence already submitted.

The pause, he stressed, does not signal a halt to the investigation.

"The fact that we pause oral hearings does not mean that the work of the commission comes to a standstill. The hearing of oral evidence is only one part of our work," Justice Smith said.



Members of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the MV Barima during the seventh day of public hearings at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC)

The Commission has so far heard testimony from 33 witnesses, including first responders from the Guyana Defence Force Coast Guard and Air Corps, as well as officials from the Maritime Administration Department (MARAD) and the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA).

Their testimonies were accompanied by extensive documentary evidence, which Justice Smith described as "**at least one foot in height, if not more**".

Commissioners will use the break to read and process these records while the Secretariat pursues additional witness statements, particularly from survivors.

"We wish to assure those present and members of the public that notwithstanding the pause in oral testimony, the work of the commission will continue apace," the chairman said.

The COI is examining the circumstances surrounding the capsizing of the state-owned ferry, which was travelling from Georgetown to Port Kaituma, including the cause of the incident, compliance with maritime laws and the execution of search-and-rescue operations.

Any changes or developments will be communicated through the Secretariat.

US ambassador rejects claims of dominance in relationship with Guyana

United States Ambassador to Guyana Nicole Theriot has rejected suggestions that Washington dominates its relationship with Georgetown, describing the partnership as one built on mutual respect and shared benefits.

"It is a partnership – 50/50 absolutely. There is no dominance. It is very, very much a partnership," Theriot told reporters.

"We feel like we benefit from our relationship with Guyana, hopefully, as much as they benefit from us. It's a true partnership in every sense of the word," she added.

Her comments follow the signing this week of a Joint Declaration for an Enhanced Defence Partnership between the two countries, aimed at strengthening military cooperation and enhancing Guyana's defence capabilities.

Theriot, who said she helped draft the agreement, described security cooperation as a critical component of bilateral relations.

The declaration provides for sustained US defence expertise, multi-domain training and joint military exercises with the Guyana Defence Force as part of efforts to modernise the country's defence infrastructure.



United States Ambassador to Guyana Nicole Theriot

The ambassador's remarks also come after a recent CNN interview in which Guyanese President Irfaan Ali faced questions about the balance of his country's relationship with Washington.

Ali defended the partnership, saying it was rooted in shared values and priorities. He also pointed to the involvement of international energy companies, including ExxonMobil, Chevron and China's CNOOC, in Guyana's oil and gas sector as evidence that the country's energy investments were diversified and not limited to American interests.

In a separate statement, Ali described the defence declaration as another milestone in Guyana's longstanding relationship with the United States.

He said the agreement was important to safeguarding Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity and reflected the priority both countries placed on security in Guyana and the wider Western Hemisphere.

Our Family
Caring for Your Family

Sending best wishes to the community as you celebrate the

60th Anniversary of Guyanese Independence.

OGDEN
FUNERAL HOMES

4164 Sheppard Avenue East
Scarborough, Ontario M1S 1T3
Tel. 416-293-5211
www.ogdenfuneralhome.com







Finance Minister Dr Ashni Singh

Industries absorbing skilled workers as fast as they are trained: Singh

MINISTER within the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance Dr Ashni Singh has said that Guyana's rapid expansion is not only creating opportunities, but it is also intensifying demand for skilled workers.

Speaking during a recent podcast, Dr Singh stressed that strong growth does not mean the country is without challenges. Rapid expansion is increasing demand for labour, goods and services, and he warned that the domestic economy could face overheating pressures as investment and consumption rise.

Guyana is forecasting overall economic growth of almost 21 per cent in 2026, with the non-oil economy expected to expand by about 10.2 to 10.3 per cent.

A particular concern is the shortage of skilled workers. Demand for trained and certified staff is growing faster than the country can supply them, Singh said, pointing to construction and heavy-equipment operation as examples.

"The demand for skilled labour [is] vastly outstripping the speed at which we can produce people with the skills that are needed," he said, adding that workers are being absorbed by industry as quickly as they are trained.

Guyana is also operating in a difficult global environment, Singh said, with geopolitical tensions and supply-chain disruptions contributing to volatility in commodity prices.



THOUSANDS APPLY FOR BUSINESS SUPPORT THROUGH NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK

The newly launched Guyana Development Bank, has already seen thousands of Guyanese applying, signalling strong early demand for financing to start or expand businesses, President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has disclosed.

Speaking in an interview, the President said the initiative, launched on October 5, had attracted thousands of applicants without the long queues traditionally associated with accessing services.



"Imagine launching such a huge national programme. You have maybe 15,000, 20,000 persons who have applied already, without a line, without a single line, without any long line anywhere," President Ali said, noting that applications could be submitted from homes, offices and other locations.

The applications are now being evaluated, with teams assessing submissions and grouping applicants according to their intended business sectors.

President Ali also pointed to promising proposals from young people, highlighting the initiative's potential to widen access to entrepreneurial opportunities.

The bank is being developed around a digital-first application process, supported by a physical presence across the country, with the aim of making assistance more accessible without creating excessive bureaucracy.

The President urged citizens to obtain digital identification cards and establish bank accounts, describing both as essential to accessing the country's expanding digital services.

Meanwhile, the bank's board is considering candidates for chief executive officer, with President Ali indicating that an appointment is expected soon.

MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE ACTIVATED TO AVERT POTENTIAL OIL SPILL ON EAST BANK



CDC and partner agencies coordinated a response to a potantial oil spill incident in Demerara River

A barge carrying approximately 8,000 barrels of waste oil was stabilised at a private wharf on the East Bank of Demerara after listing significantly, prompting a multi-agency response to prevent potential environmental contamination.

The Civil Defence Commission (CDC), working with the Maritime Administration Department (MARAD), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Guyana Energy Agency (GEA), Guyana Fire Service (GFS), Ministry of Agriculture's Fisheries Department and Guyana Defence Force Coast Guard, coordinated containment and mitigation measures following the incident.

Containment booms were deployed around the vessel as a precaution to restrict the movement of oil should a spill occur, while corrective measures were undertaken to stabilise the barge.

The vessel was brought upright and stable, with its cargo intact, according to the CDC.

Although no oil spill was confirmed, the quantity of waste oil aboard the vessel prompted authorities to mobilise response personnel and resources to minimise the risk to the surrounding environment and public safety.

The relevant agencies continue to monitor conditions at the wharf and assess the situation, with contingency measures in place to support containment and recovery operations should they become necessary.

The CDC said the situation remains stable and under control, with coordinated operations continuing alongside its partner agencies.

The response brings together maritime, environmental, energy, firefighting, fisheries and defence personnel to manage the potential hazard and reduce the likelihood of an oil release.

The Commission reaffirmed its commitment to protecting lives, public safety and the environment while ensuring that appropriate measures remain in place as monitoring continues.

CANAL NO. 1 POLDER GETS $650M FLOOD-CONTROL BOOST

A $650 million pump station commissioned at Canal No. 1 Polder, West Bank Demerara, is expected to improve drainage across approximately 5,000 acres, strengthening flood protection for farmers, residents and agricultural lands in Region Three.

Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha commissioned the facility, which is equipped with four pumps capable of discharging a combined 580 cubic feet of water per second, providing greater capacity to move excess water out of vulnerable areas.

The investment comes as the Government ramps up spending on drainage and irrigation, with Minister Mustapha disclosing that $81.9 billion, or 72.3 per cent of the Agriculture Ministry's $113.2 billion 2026 budget, has been allocated to the sector. This compares with $9 billion in 2020.

He said the investment forms part of President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's wider push to modernise drainage and irrigation infrastructure, protect livelihoods and sustain agricultural production amid increasingly unpredictable weather patterns.

National Drainage and Irrigation Authority's Chairman, Lionel Wordsworth said the Canal No. 1 facility is among six pump stations constructed in Region Three over the past six years.



Canal No. 1 Pump Station commissioned

The project also included two additional pumps and a new community centre valued at approximately $60 million.



Minister Bishop Juan Edghill engages residents of East La Penitence

260 GEORGETOWN ROAD SHOULDERS TARGETED FOR IMPROVEMENT

More than 50 contractors are working across Georgetown to improve road shoulders, strengthen roadside drainage and enhance communities, as the Government advances a programme targeting approximately 260 such projects in the capital.

Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill said contractors operating from Houston to Cummings Lodge must inform residents about planned works before commencing, ensuring communities understand the improvements being undertaken.

"**Contractors must notify residents of what they're doing,**" Minister Edghill said during a public address.

He explained that flyers outlining the works and providing contact information can help residents obtain clarification. However, notification does not mean contractors must secure individual permission to undertake government works on public road reserves. The Ministry remains open to consultation and adjustments where necessary.

Kevin Tucker, head of the Ministry's Miscellaneous Roads Programme, said more than 2,000 road shoulder improvement projects have been identified nationwide.

"**The road shoulder is part of the road. It forms part of the road embankment, and it's one of the key features of the road**," Tucker said.

The works involve clearing and excavating selected shoulders before filling them with compacted granular material to create firmer surfaces, improve roadside runoff and reduce water accumulation.

Tucker noted that derelict vehicles, stockpiled sand and other materials occupying road reserves are obstructing contractors' work. Residents and businesses are being urged to remove these obstructions to facilitate efficient execution.

Minister Edghill also highlighted efforts to establish more suitable locations for certain commercial activities, helping to reduce noise, traffic obstructions and other nuisances in residential neighbourhoods.

Similar improvements are underway or planned across Regions Two, Three, Four, Five and Six.

FREE DIALYSIS NOW BEING OFFERED AT SIX PUBLIC HOSPITALS



Dialysis treatment

For Seeta Seepersaud, managing kidney disease while raising her children alone meant confronting two difficult realities: the physical demands of dialysis and the mounting cost of staying alive.

The 36-year-old resident of Herstelling, East Bank Demerara, previously paid $14,000 for each dialysis session at Doobay Medical Centre, a fee that later rose to $16,000. With treatment required twice weekly, the cost could reach $128,000 over four weeks, placing considerable pressure on her ability to provide for her family.

Access to free dialysis through the Government's public healthcare services is now easing that burden, allowing her to redirect money towards other essential expenses, including medication and household needs.

"It has eased a lot," Seepersaud told the Department of Public Information (DPI), describing the difference the service has made to her circumstances.

Her experience reflects the financial pressure faced by patients who require regular dialysis, a life-sustaining treatment that can become increasingly difficult to afford when household resources must also cover food, childcare and other daily necessities.

Public dialysis services are now available at six hospitals: Diamond Regional Hospital, Lima Regional Hospital, Bath Regional Hospital, Number 75 Regional Hospital and De Kinderen Regional Hospital, alongside the service at Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC).

At Diamond Regional Hospital, Head of Internal Medicine, Dr Keisha Defreitas said more than 50 patients had received treatment at the facility. Working with GPHC's nephrology department, the hospital identifies patients in need and prioritises support.

The service operates seven days a week, with capacity to treat six patients at a time, including inpatients and outpatients.

At Bath Regional Hospital, approximately 16 patients had benefitted since the service began on September 22, Medical Superintendent, Dr Daniel Robertson disclosed. The facility has two dialysis machines in operation, while Number 75 Regional Hospital also has two machines, according to Region Six Regional Health Officer, Dr Vinashri Khirodhar.

The expansion is intended to reduce long journeys for treatment while easing the financial and practical strain on patients and their families. For Seepersaud, removing the cost of each session means one less major expense to manage while living with a serious illness and caring for her children.

$3M OVERSEAS HEART TREATMENT BILL AVERTED FOR OREALLA INFANT



Construction of 100 low-income homes progressing at Le Reconnaissance

A family from Orealla faced an estimated $3 million bill to have their infant son treated overseas for a congenital heart condition. Instead, three-month-old Jervis Herman received a specialised procedure at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), with an international medical team and local specialists completing the intervention in less than 30 minutes.

For parents, Glenroy Herman and Nita Penu, the procedure meant their son could receive critical care in Guyana without the financial pressure of seeking treatment abroad.

Jervis, born at New Amsterdam Hospital on June 2, developed breathing difficulties within his first 24 hours. Further examinations revealed a hole in his heart, which was associated with recurrent respiratory infections and required intervention to prevent further complications.

Glenroy, who works at New Amsterdam Hospital, said exploring overseas treatment revealed costs of approximately $3 million.

At GPHC, specialists closed the opening using a minimally invasive device procedure, avoiding the need for open-heart surgery.

President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali shared Jervis' story on Facebook, highlighting the medical team's work and the expanding availability of specialised healthcare in Guyana.

The procedure follows a September initiative in which President Ali met parents of children requiring advanced cardiac care, alongside Health Minister Dr Frank Anthony and other senior officials. Seventeen children were identified for heart surgeries at GPHC through the programme bringing international specialists to Guyana.

CT, MRI AND CARDIAC CARE COMING CLOSER TO HOME FOR WEST DEMERARA RESIDENTS

Residents of Region Three are expected to gain access to advanced diagnostic imaging and specialised cardiac services closer to home when the new West Demerara Hospital opens in late 2027, reducing the need to travel to Georgetown for certain medical investigations and specialist care.

Health Minister, Dr Frank Anthony provided the update following a visit to the construction site, reporting steady progress on the modern healthcare facility.

The hospital will feature computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners, alongside cardiac catheterisation capabilities, expanding the range of complex conditions that can be investigated and managed within the region.



The new hospital opens in late 2027

For patients, access to these services locally could mean fewer journeys to Georgetown for specialised investigations, greater convenience and improved opportunities for timely diagnosis and treatment.

CT and MRI scans provide detailed images that help doctors identify and assess a range of medical conditions, while cardiac catheterisation can assist in diagnosing and treating certain heart conditions.

The facility is also expected to provide a modern working environment for healthcare professionals, supporting the delivery of specialised patient care.

The project forms part of the government's wider investment in healthcare infrastructure and medical technology, aimed at expanding access to advanced services beyond the capital.

With the anticipated late 2027 opening, the new hospital is expected to strengthen Region Three's healthcare capacity and offer residents greater access to services that have often required travel to larger facilities in Georgetown.

Construction remains ongoing, with the hospital's advanced diagnostic and cardiac capabilities expected to be central to its role in the region's healthcare network.

INDUSTRY TO GET NATIONAL NEUROLOGICAL REHABILITATION CENTRE



The sod turning for the construction of the centre at Industry, East Coast Demerara

People living with neurological conditions are set to benefit from expanded access to specialised rehabilitation services with the construction of a National Neurological Rehabilitation Centre at Industry, East Coast Demerara.

Health Minister, Dr Frank Anthony officially turned the sod for the facility, accompanied by Director of Rehabilitation and Disability Services, Dr Ariane Mangar and other officials.

Once completed, the centre is expected to support patients in regaining mobility, rebuilding functional abilities and achieving greater independence following neurological conditions.

The facility will strengthen specialised healthcare services while advancing efforts to improve patients' recovery, quality of life and access to more inclusive care.

FELICITY HOUSE LOT BRINGS 21-YEAR DREAM WITHIN REACH

For 21 years, Roy Persaud waited for the opportunity to own a piece of land he could call his own. Now, the very fields where he once cut grass are becoming the place where he plans to build his home.

Persaud is among 35 high-income allottees at Felicity F1 Phase One, East Coast Demerara, who have identified their respective house lots, bringing them closer to construction and homeownership.

Surveyors from the Ministry of Housing guided the beneficiaries to their allocated properties, allowing them to locate their lots and begin planning their next steps.



Mr and Mrs Persaud at their newly allotted land

For Persaud, the exercise carried a deeply personal significance.

"I grew up cutting grass in all these lands here, all these fields," he recalled, reflecting on how dramatically the area has changed.

With his lot now identified, he is preparing to price building materials, organise his finances and develop a construction plan.

"I have to start now to go around and find out the price of materials and get things sorted out, get a plan, you know," he said.

Beyond the personal milestone, Persaud said access to land represents a major opportunity for families who have spent years renting or living with relatives while working towards securing a home of their own.

"People are tired of living in rented houses, you know, and it's a big plus for men and women in this nation to achieve their own house," he said.

He also commended President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali and the Government for efforts to expand access to house lots and improve families' prospects of achieving greater residential security.

For Persaud, the journey has come full circle: land he once knew as open fields is now the site of his future home.

The identification exercise marks an important step for all 35 beneficiaries, allowing them to move beyond allocation and begin preparing to develop their properties.



35 Felicity allottees move one step closer to homeownership

Their next challenge is turning those lots into completed homes, transforming the promise of land ownership into a place to live, build security and establish their futures.

GUYANA BACKS 146 HUMAN RIGHTS RECOMMENDATIONS, REAFFIRMS DEMOCRATIC COMMITMENTS



Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with Responsibility for Public Affairs and Information, Kwame McCoy, with other delegates of the IPU's Standing Committee on Human Rights and Democracy

Guyana has reaffirmed its commitment to human rights, democratic governance and the rule of law, with Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister, Kwame McCoy highlighting the country's support for 146 human rights recommendations during an international parliamentary forum in Tanzania.

Addressing the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Democracy at the 153rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), held in Arusha from October 5 to 9, Minister McCoy outlined the country's commitments to strengthening constitutional institutions, improving accountability and expanding access to justice.

The minister noted that Guyana supported 146 of the 206 recommendations received during its Fourth Universal Periodic Review in 2025, covering areas including gender equality, child protection, social inclusion, democratic governance and legal protection.

"**For us, human rights and democracy are not abstract principles confined to international declarations. They are essential to the dignity of our people, the legitimacy of our institutions, and the sustainable development of our country,**" Minister McCoy said.

He underscored the role of Parliament and independent institutions, including the judiciary, Elections Commission, Audit Office, Ombudsman and Human Rights Commissions, in protecting citizens' rights, ensuring transparency and holding public institutions accountable.

Addressing electoral integrity, Minister McCoy said Guyana's 2025 General and Regional Elections were conducted within the constitutional framework, while stressing the importance of continually strengthening safeguards for credible democratic processes.

He also emphasised that protecting human rights must extend beyond legal guarantees to the conditions that shape people's everyday lives, including access to education, healthcare, housing, employment and economic opportunity.

Minister McCoy, who serves on the 18-member Bureau guiding the committee's work as part of the Latin America and Caribbean Group, said sustained reform, institution-building and meaningful citizen engagement remain essential to advancing democratic values.

He reaffirmed Guyana's commitment to inclusive participation, transparent governance and parliamentary accountability.

345 COMPLETE HOMEGROWN PROGRAMME AIMED AT STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS

More than 2,000 people applied for Guyana's International Human Rights Law Certificate Course in 2026, underscoring demand for greater awareness of fundamental rights and the responsibilities that accompany them.

Of those applicants, 345 participants successfully completed the programme's third cohort, including police officers, journalists and residents from Guyana's 10 administrative regions, alongside participants from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize and Grenada.

The eight-week course, delivered by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, covered international human rights law, major conventions, Guyana's Constitution and legislation, state obligations, and the mechanisms used to protect and monitor human rights.

For graduate Suhana Khan, the lessons extend beyond the classroom.

"We must carry it with us wherever we go," she told the Department of Public Information (DPI), describing the course as a valuable opportunity



345 persons graduate from int'l human rights law course

to deepen her understanding of human rights.

Journalist Khamisi Slowe said the knowledge gained would strengthen his work and career, while police officer Collin Clarke highlighted how the programme helped him understand how everyday actions can affect the rights of others.

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira said broader awareness remains essential, even as progress is made in advancing human rights.

"We have to recognise that everybody has a place, everybody has rights, and it's not just for certain people," she said, stressing that rights apply regardless of whether someone is temporarily or permanently in Guyana, or was born here.

She also underscored that rights come with responsibilities, making public understanding critical to building a society that respects and protects everyone.

Course coordinator, Anil Persaud said the programme was developed and continues to be managed in-house by the ministry to address gaps in human rights education and awareness.

He noted that the 2026 intake attracted the programme's largest cohort, with approximately 400 participants enrolled.

The initiative aims to take human rights knowledge beyond legal professionals and into workplaces, public institutions and communities, equipping more people to recognise rights violations and understand the protections available under national and international law

MOM GIVES PENSIONER AND WIFE A PLACE TO CALL HOME



75-year-old pensioner receives new home

At 75, while battling end-stage kidney disease, Abdool Nazir has finally secured what he feared might remain beyond his reach, a home of his own.

Nazir and his wife, Zanita Persaud, received the keys to a newly constructed house at Providence, East Bank Demerara, after the Men on Mission (MoM) initiative stepped in to help complete a journey that had become increasingly difficult amid his health challenges.

Although the government had allocated land to the couple, Nazir struggled to build a house on the property as his illness compounded the challenges.

"If it wasn't for the Men on Mission, I would never own a home," he said, expressing gratitude to the initiative and the contractors, workers and other contributors who made the intervention possible.

At the handover ceremony, Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning, Keoma Griffith said national development must extend beyond physical infrastructure to the well-being of the people who will inherit it.

"We can continue to build bridges and schools and hospitals and infrastructure. But if we don't work now on the people who will inherit the Guyana that we are building, we are preparing for an unfortunate future," the minister said.

National Coordinator, Lieutenant Colonel Bhageshwar Murli described the house as more than a physical structure, emphasising the security and protection it would provide for the couple.

"This is more than a structure, Mr. Nazir. This is now your sanctuary. This is your place of refuge. This is your place of protection," he said.

Launched by President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali in October 2022, MoM provides housing assistance, repairs and building materials to vulnerable households, alongside programmes focused on mentorship and youth development.



75-year-old pensioner receives new home

COMMUNITY ACTION TARGETS CRITICAL ACCESS TO CHILDREN'S HOME



President Ali leading the overnight effort to restore access to the children's home

An overnight mobilisation by Men on Mission (MoM), private sector representatives and President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali is helping address a critical infrastructure need at the Save R Kids Children's Home at Cornelia Ida, West Coast Demerara.

The team worked a Saturday night into Sunday morning to rebuild the access bridge serving the facility, undertaking work that would ordinarily take about two weeks.

The intervention reflects a model of community action the President wants replicated across Guyana, particularly at institutions providing essential care and protection for vulnerable children.

"What we want to do is to demonstrate this as a model. In every community where there is a children's home, or where there are facilities, we want the community to come together...to work on fixing these infrastructures that lead to important facilities like these," President Ali said.

He noted that while government continues to invest in roads and major infrastructure, partnerships with businesses and community organisations can help address specific needs affecting institutions and the people who depend on them.



President Ali leading the overnight effort to restore access to the children's home

At Save R Kids, the bridge is an important access link to a facility caring for children. The home also receives assistance through the First Lady's A Home for Every Child initiative, including support for utilities and other operational needs.

The exercise underscores the potential of coordinated action to tackle practical problems affecting vulnerable communities, with the President calling for similar partnerships to support institutions across the country.

PRESIDENT ALI CALLS ON MEN TO BREAK CYCLES OF VIOLENCE AND NEGLECT

Men must take greater responsibility for their families and communities if Guyana is to build safer homes, protect women and raise a generation of responsible young people, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has said.

The President made the call as more than 100 cyclists gathered on Main Street for an honorary bicycle ride marking the fourth anniversary of Men on Mission (MoM), an initiative established to promote positive male role models and strengthen families.

After completing two honorary laps with other officials and participants, President Ali commended public and private sector partners, particularly members of the joint services, for supporting the initiative.

"We believe that men have an important responsibility in creating the environment for safer and stronger families, but we need to devote more time towards that," he said.

The President stressed that men have a particularly important role to play in preventing violence against women and guiding boys and teenagers towards responsible adulthood.

He also encouraged men over 40 to consult their doctors and use available health services to support early detection of illness.

Beyond its public engagements, MoM has delivered practical assistance through housing construction, home repairs, feeding programmes, extra lessons, mentorship and youth development activities.

Guyana Defence Force Lieutenant Colonel Eon Murray outlined the initiative's achievements over the past four years,



The ride in support of the fourth anniversary celebrations of Men on Mission (MoM)

reporting that more than 160 families had benefited from homes constructed through the programme, while over 400 households had received materials to repair their homes.

Approximately 150 children have also benefited from weekday activities that include meals, homework assistance and mentorship.

The initiative has extended its outreach to incarcerated men and their children, seeking to reduce the risk of negative cycles continuing across generations.

The anniversary programme continues with community clean-up exercises, mentorship engagements, youth outreach and other activities aimed at strengthening families and supporting vulnerable groups.

The broader challenge, the President's message suggests, is not simply to provide assistance when families are in need, but to encourage men to take an active role in preventing problems and creating safer environments for the next generation.

102 GSA GRADUATES PREPARE TO ENTER AGRICULTURE SECTOR BACKED BY $113.2B INVESTMENT

With Government investment in agriculture climbing to $113.2 billion in 2026, 102 graduates of the Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA) are entering a sector offering expanding opportunities in production, technology, research and agribusiness.

The graduating Class of 2026, comprising 65 women and 37 men, completed six programmes across the institution's Mon Repos and Essequibo campuses, with 66 students earning Credit or Distinction.

Addressing the GSA's 61st graduation ceremony, Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha challenged the graduates to use their training to help modernise the sector and strengthen Guyana's food security.

Agriculture recorded 11.5 per cent growth in 2025, while Government allocations increased from $18.4 billion in 2020 to $113.2 billion in 2026, supporting investments in infrastructure, technology and expanded crop and livestock production.

Minister Mustapha said these developments are creating opportunities that extend well beyond traditional farming, including careers in veterinary services, research, environmental management, logistics, marketing and agro-processing, noting that **"... access to education must be matched by access to opportunity."** He pointed to financing available through the Guyana Development Bank to help eligible young entrepreneurs establish farms, agro-processing businesses and agricultural services.



Guyana School of Agriculture graduates

The Minister also highlighted the importance of preparing graduates for a sector increasingly shaped by technological advances, climate change and changing market demands.

Since its establishment in 1963, the GSA has produced 4,497 graduates, supplying trained professionals to agriculture and related industries. Its programmes now span agriculture, forestry, fisheries, agro-processing, animal health and veterinary public health, and livestock production and management.

The institution's successful re-registration with the National Accreditation Council through 2029 further strengthens its standing as a provider of recognised agricultural training.

Among this year's top performers, Analesia D'Aguiar earned the Chairman's Prize after graduating in forestry with a 3.97 GPA, the highest in the class. Marlon O'Donoghue received the Chief Executive Officer's Prize as the top student in the two-year programmes at Mon Repos, completing the Diploma in Agriculture with a 3.71 GPA.

The class also included 12 students from CARICOM countries, reflecting the school's regional reach.

NEW GSA TRAINING CENTRE TARGETS LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY'S SKILLS GAP



Guyana School of Agriculture graduates

A new $21.8 million training centre at the Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA) is expected to strengthen the practical skills needed to expand livestock production and improve animal health, forming part of a wider $44 million investment in the school's livestock farm this year.

Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha said the facility will give students hands-on training aligned with the demands of a modern agricultural sector, where skilled personnel are essential to improving productivity and strengthening domestic food production.

"It provides an importantfoundation for ensuring that students receive the hands-on training required by a modern agricultural sector," he said.

Speaking at the school's 61st graduation ceremony, Minister Mustapha also recognised the first graduates of its Certificate in Livestock Production and Management programme, describing their achievement as an important milestone for the institution and the livestock industry.

He urged the school to extend its reach beyond its students by introducing short, practical courses for farmers to improve yields, production methods and the quality of their produce.

"Bring farmers together, train them in best practices," he urged.

The school is also using digital farm records to support data-driven management, while collaborating with the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute to train farmers and extension officers.

Further expansion is planned, with tenders for a Centre of Excellence expected before the end of 2026.

FIRST ASSOCIATE DEGREE GRADUATES SIGNAL NEW CHAPTER FOR GUYANA'S CREATIVE SECTOR



The graduation of the 10th cohort of students from the Institute of Creative Arts

Graduates of Guyana's Institute of Creative Arts (ICA) are being encouraged to turn their qualifications into professional careers as the government seeks to expand opportunities and strengthen the creative economy.

The call came from Minister within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport Steven Jacobs at the National Cultural Centre, where the institute celebrated its 10th cohort of associate degree graduates.

The graduates represent the National School of Dance, E.R. Burrowes School of Art, National School of Music and National School of Theatre and Drama, marking further progress in formal training for Guyanese creatives.

Minister Jacobs said investment in education must be matched by opportunities for artists to showcase their work and earn from their skills.

"It's not just only the government facilitating courses, facilitating the growth of a diploma or certificate. It's making sure after that the opportunity is there for you to showcase your talents," he said.

He pointed to initiatives such as Live Art on Main Street and the upcoming CARIFESTA 2027, which is expected to bring regional creatives to Guyana and provide opportunities for locals to participate in cultural productions.

The minister also said consultations were underway to shape the country's orange economy, with stakeholders contributing recommendations on how best to develop the sector.

Valedictorian Latifa Agard, who graduated with distinction in Theatre Arts and Drama, described the programme as a historic achievement, having previously earned certificates in dance and theatre in 2023 and 2025.

She said the associate degree had deepened her understanding of theatre and strengthened her ability to contribute to different aspects of production.

"What began as a diploma pathway developed into an opportunity to achieve something historic, becoming the first to earn an associate degree in theatre arts and drama with distinction right here in Guyana," Agard said.

Joanna Edwards, representing the first graduating group from the Burrowes School of Art, highlighted the challenge of balancing studies with motherhood and full-time employment as a secondary school teacher.

She credited her family and instructors for helping her complete the programme and urged fellow graduates to continue producing bold, meaningful work.

96 TEACHERS EARN VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATION TO STRENGTHEN SKILLS-BASED EDUCATION



96 teachers certified under CPCE's CVQ programme

Ninety-six teachers have earned Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) certification through the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE), strengthening the capacity of Guyana's education system to deliver practical, skills-based learning.

The qualification equips teachers to improve technical instruction and prepare students with competencies relevant to further training and employment.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, Education Minister. Sonia Parag challenged the perception that technical and vocational education is inferior to traditional academic pathways, stressing its importance to developing a skilled workforce.

"Technical and vocational education is not a lesser pathway. It is essential to preparing our people for the opportunities ahead and building a skilled workforce that can contribute to Guyana's continued development," she said.

CVQ certification became mandatory at CPCE in 2023 for students specialising in Agricultural Science, Industrial Technology, Home Economics and Visual Arts.

The college began the process of becoming a registered CVQ institution in November 2024 and secured registration in June 2025, enabling it to register students directly for certification.

Deputy Chief Education Officer (Technical), Dr Ritesh Tularam, said the achievement reflected a commitment to nationally and regionally recognised occupational standards.

He urged the teachers to apply their training in the classroom, strengthen competency-based assessments and mentor colleagues, ensuring the qualification translates into stronger technical instruction and better learning outcomes for students.

EDPAL PLUS PUTS SEVEN EDUCATION CHANNELS AT STUDENTS' FINGERTIPS

Students across Guyana and the wider Caribbean now have improved digital access to educational resources through the launch of EDPal Plus, while a new mentorship programme is equipping secondary school students with practical media production skills.

Launched by the Ministry of Education's Distance Education Unit (DEU), the upgraded app allows users to access seven education channels directly from their devices, expanding opportunities to engage with learning resources beyond the traditional classroom.

EDYOU FM Head, Phillip Williams said the platform reflects the unit's commitment to ensuring that geographical location does not determine access to education.

The upgraded app builds on the original EDPal platform launched in September 2023, incorporating smoother operation and greater access to Ministry of Education information.

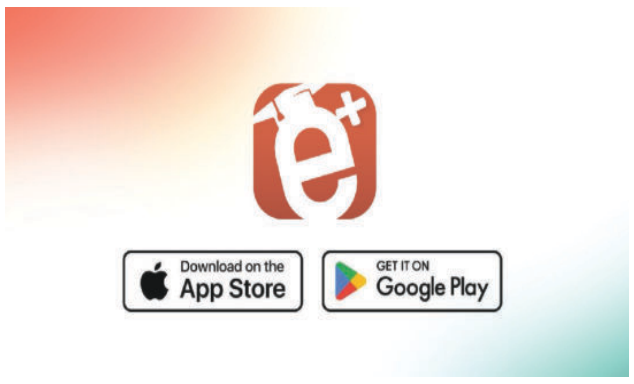
Williams described EDPal as a cornerstone of Guyana's digital education transformation, noting that feedback from users helped shape the latest improvements.

The launch also featured the Media Mentorship Programme, bringing together secondary school students from across Guyana for two weeks of training in photography, videography, video editing, audio production and pre-production.

DEU Production Manager, Jonathan Jacobus said the initiative creates opportunities for young people to learn directly from experienced media professionals through practical sessions and theoretical instruction.

Students participating in the programme represent schools including New Campbellville, Charity, St Ignatius, Brickdam, Bladen Hall, JC Chandisingh, Fort Wellington and West Demerara Secondary.

Together, the initiatives expand digital learning access while creating pathways for young people to develop creative and technical skills.



EDPal Plus Learning App launched

GOVT COMPLETES 2026 SCHOOL GRANT ROLLOUT

A total of $81.09 million has been distributed to 954 Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) students, completing the 2026 rollout of the Government's expanded Because We Care Cash Grant programme.

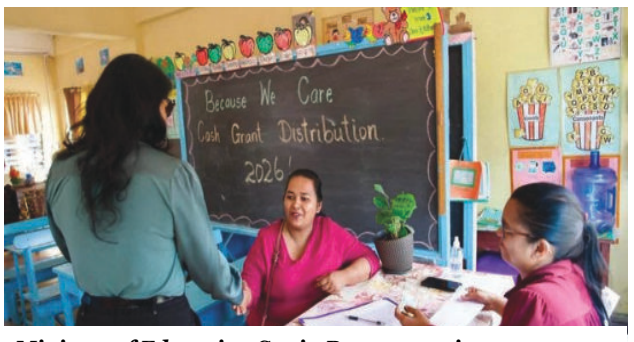
The Ministry of Education confirmed in a Facebook post that the Grades 12 and 13 students received their payments on October 2, with each child benefitting from $85,000 in combined assistance.

The package comprises a $60,000 student grant, $20,000 in transportation support and a $5,000 uniform voucher.

The expanded package delivers on commitments made by the People's Progressive Party/Civic Government in 2025, including raising the core grant from $50,000 to $60,000 and introducing dedicated transportation assistance to help families meet school-related expenses.

The CAPE distribution followed payments to students in other grades across public and private schools nationwide.

Budget 2026 allocated $17.5 billion to the programme, reinforcing the Government's direct financial support for families with school-aged children.



Minister of Education Sonia Parag greeting a parent during the distribution of cash grants

TWO NEW BUSES TO EASE SCHOOL TRAVEL FOR HIGHWAY, EAST BANK STUDENTS

Students attending five schools along the Soesdyke-Linden Highway and Upper East Bank Demerara will benefit from improved transportation following the addition of two buses to the Region Four Education Department's fleet, with more vehicles promised.

Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with Responsibility for Public Affairs and Information, Kwame McCoy, handed over the buses during a ceremony at Yarrowkabra Secondary School.

The vehicles will transport students attending Friendship Secondary, Soesdyke Secondary, Yarrowkabra Secondary, Dora Secondary and Kuru Kuru Primary, responding to the growing school population in the area.

Minister McCoy said the investment would help students travel to and from school more reliably, supporting regular attendance and access to educational opportunities.

The minister also announced plans for procurement of additional buses and urged those responsible for managing the vehicles to ensure they are used exclusively for students' benefit.

He stressed that public investments must be protected and properly managed to support children's education and well-being.

The initiative forms part of the government's broader investment in education and efforts to improve access to learning opportunities for students across the country.



New buses boost school transportation for Upper East Bank and Soedyke highway communities

CJIA REMAINS NO. 1 IN LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) has retained its position as the number-one airport in Latin America and the Caribbean, with passenger satisfaction sustaining its top ranking in the third-quarter 2026 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) survey.

Administered by Airports Council International (ACI), the global benchmarking programme measures travellers' experiences across areas including check-in, security processing, cleanliness, comfort, signage and staff courtesy.

CJIA's Chief Executive Officer, Ramesh Ghir credited the achievement to the dedication of frontline employees, security personnel, immigration officers and airline partners, noting that the corporation remains focused on maintaining service standards as passenger traffic increases.

Public Utilities and Aviation Minister, Deodat Indar said the recognition reflects the Government's investments in aviation infrastructure and its efforts to strengthen Guyana's position as a regional aviation hub.

Those improvements include runway and taxiway rehabilitation, expanded terminal capacity, modernised boarding bridges, automated baggage systems and upgraded airfield security infrastructure.

Further enhancements to commercial spaces and executive lounges are also supporting the airport's modernisation.

The continued regional ranking reinforces CJIA's role as Guyana's international gateway, as the country accommodates growing passenger volumes and seeks to deliver a more efficient and comfortable travel experience.



GUYANA ON TRACK TO SURPASS LAST YEAR'S VISITOR ARRIVALS

Guyana is targeting a new tourism record in 2026 after visitor arrivals surged 22 per cent to 453,489 last year, with the Government now seeking to convert that momentum into greater business opportunities, jobs and community income.

Tourism, Industry and Commerce Minister, Susan Rodrigues said arrivals during the corresponding months of 2026 are already exceeding 2025 figures, putting the country on track to surpass last year's record.

"This year also we are looking to increase that and break our record from last year and let this year, 2026, be the highest number of visitor arrivals on record," she said on the *Starting Point* podcast.

The strategy extends beyond attracting more visitors. Minister Rodrigues said the Government is pursuing major conferences, expanding festivals and raising Guyana's international profile, while new hotels, restaurants and tourism experiences create opportunities for workers and entrepreneurs.

She highlighted the Guyana Tourism Authority's work in launching more than 40 tourism products over the past six years, including sustainable and community-based experiences in Indigenous communities.

"I have seen that foundational work being done. What I want to do now is to bring a lot of visibility to the country," she said.

A more predictable calendar of festivals, she added, would help visitors plan trips around Guyana's cultural events and experiences.

Minister Rodrigues stressed that tourism's success must also be measured by the opportunities it creates for small businesses and the protection of the country's heritage and natural environment.

"It's not just about increasing visitor arrivals, but it's about championing small businesses," she said.

She also pointed to the role of agencies such as the Guyana National Bureau of Standards and Small Business Bureau in improving standards and supporting entrepreneurs.



Visitors at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport

NEW STEEL-FRAME FACTORY OPENS, TARGETING FASTER, AFFORDABLE HOUSING



New steel frame technology to support Guyana's 40,000-home target

Modern steel-frame construction could accelerate housing delivery in Guyana, with plans to produce components for 10,000 homes as the government works towards its target of building 40,000 homes by 2030.

Housing Minister, Collin Croal highlighted the potential of the technology during the opening of the US Frame Factory at Cove and John, East Coast Demerara.

He said steel framing, modular and prefabricated construction could reduce building timelines, improve quality control and deliver more durable, climate-resilient homes.

The investment could also create jobs and expand opportunities for local contractors, suppliers and service providers in Guyana's growing construction industry.

The commissioning featured a steel-frame home designed for the low-income category of the national housing programme and a tour of a three-storey building constructed using the technology.

Golden Shield Homes plans to partner with the Ministry of Housing and the factory to produce components for 10,000 houses, potentially supporting the government's wider housing delivery programme.

SEALED RIVER DEFENCE, COMPLETED DIVERSION ROUTE STRENGTHEN PARIKA PORT WORKS



Construction works progressing on new Parika Stelling

The transformation of the Parika Ferry Stelling into a modern port is progressing, with construction reaching about 15 per cent completion and the river defence area now fully sealed to guard against flooding.

Minister within the Ministry of Public Works, Madanlall Ramraj and Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture, Vickash Ramkissoon recently inspected the project alongside technical officials.

Senior District Engineer, Seenarine Nandram said crews are constructing pile caps to support the precast beams and decking, which are expected to be transported to the site within the next two weeks.

A key milestone is the completion of the diversion route, which has restored access for cargo weighing more than 20 tonnes travelling to destinations served by the Transport and Harbour Department.

The upgrade is expected to strengthen the movement of passengers and goods through Parika, a critical transport link connecting communities and supporting regional commerce.



Construction works progressing on new Parika Stelling

$1.6B PADDY FACILITY TO BENEFIT OVER 1500 RICE FARMERS



Sod turning for the new rice storage hub in Region Two

More than 1,500 rice farmers are expected to benefit from improved drying and storage capacity under a $1.6 billion facility being constructed at Onderneeming, Region Two, to reduce post-harvest losses and protect the value of their harvests.

Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha turned the sod for the fully automated facility, which will feature three silos with a combined storage capacity of 10,000 metric tonnes and two tower dryers capable of processing approximately 1,000 tonnes of paddy daily.

The facility, sourced from Turkey and designed to European standards, will also include four wet storage bins and modern intake and cleaning systems.

Minister Mustapha said the investment would address infrastructure gaps that can leave farmers vulnerable to losses after harvesting, while improving the handling and preservation of paddy.

The contract was awarded to 4N Hardware Stores Inc., with construction expected to be completed within one year.

National Drainage and Irrigation Authority Chairman, Lionel Wordsworth said about 10 acres of land are being developed for the project, with additional space reserved for future expansion.

PARIKA FARMERS SUSTAINING PRODUCTION WITH BETTER ROADS, EASIER WATER ACCESS

Accessing water, transporting produce and maintaining crops are becoming easier for farmers in South Ken, Parika as improved agricultural infrastructure and support initiatives help address longstanding challenges to production.

During interviews with the Department of Public Information (DPI), farmers Rajendra Persaud, Abdul Rashied and Ganesh Tiwari highlighted improvements to farm roads, water access and agricultural assistance that are supporting their daily operations.

Tiwari, who cultivates pepper, boulanger, cucumber and cassava, said the improved road has made accessing water for his crops considerably easier.

"**We are happy to get the road... cause some time back, we used to have to walk out for water**," he said.

The upgrade also addresses a critical part of farming: moving produce from fields to markets and customers without unnecessary difficulty.



Rajendra Persaud

Farmers also pointed to fertiliser assistance provided through their Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) as helpful in maintaining crops and sustaining production.

"**I do receive fertiliser from time to time, like every three months from the NDC**," Abdul Rashied said.

Another improvement is the recently constructed landing outfall at the first koker in Parika, which provides better facilities for loading and offloading goods, helping farmers move produce more efficiently.

While welcoming the interventions, the farmers called for continued visits by officials of the Ministry of Agriculture to identify outstanding concerns and determine where further assistance is needed.

Through infrastructure upgrades and agricultural support, the Government continues to target practical barriers affecting farmers, with improved access to water, roads and markets helping to strengthen production and livelihoods.

REGION ONE WOMEN ENCOURAGED TO MOVE INTO AGRO-PROCESSING

Women farmers in Region One are set to receive another shadehouse, as the Government moves to strengthen agricultural production and create greater economic opportunities for hinterland communities.

Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha made the commitment while delivering the feature address at the commissioning of the Morawhanna and Smith Creek shadehouses at Smith Creek.

Commending Towatuma – Women Working Together for the initiative, the minister highlighted women's contribution to Guyana's agricultural development and encouraged the beneficiaries to build on their production capacity by venturing into agro-processing and value addition.

"We want you to take what you produce here and explore opportunities to package, process, and market those products so that more of the value remains within your communities," he said.

The project was established through collaboration among the Greater Guyana Initiative, supported by ExxonMobil Guyana, Hess and CNOOC; the Guyana Marine Conservation Society (GMCS); and the Ministry of Agriculture, through the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI).

The initiative also reflects GMCS's continued work under Ms. Annette Arjoon-Martin to empower women through sustainable agriculture and community development, helping to strengthen livelihoods and create opportunities for economic growth in Region One.



The commissioning of the Morawhanna and Smith Creek shadehouses

LAKE CAPOEY'S NEW BRIDGE EASES ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION AND BUSINESS

A newly constructed bridge at Lake Capoey, Region Two, is easing daily challenges for residents, improving access to essential services and creating better opportunities for businesses in the Indigenous community.

Resident, Melrose Henry said the bridge makes it easier for children to travel to secondary school, transport supplies and get sick residents to hospital.

"It's not just a bridge for us ... it means development for our people," she said.

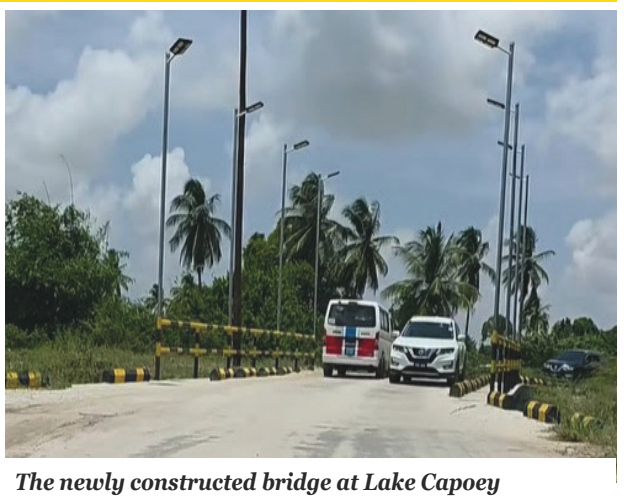
The improved connection is also strengthening Lake Capoey's tourism-based economy, making it easier for visitors to reach the community and businesses to transport groceries, building materials and other supplies.

Henry said the development is already making a difference to livelihoods and everyday life.

"**Businesses are thriving. People's personal lives are being made better, and this is what we are grateful for as a people, as an Indigenous community**," she said.

Beyond improved transportation, the bridge represents greater access to opportunities and a source of pride for residents.

"We are forever thankful and grateful for this bridge," Henry added.



The newly constructed bridge at Lake Capoey

Rice-Duck Integrated Farming strengths livelihoods – Mustapha

MINISTER of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, on Monday delivered the feature address at the Rice-Duck Integrated Farming initiative programme at the Guyana Rice Development Board's (GRDB) Rice Research Station.

The initiative, supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Canada, forms part of ongoing efforts to promote innovative and sustainable agricultural practices aimed at reducing production costs, improving productivity, and creating additional income-generating opportunities for rice farmers.

During his address, Minister Mustapha explained that the initiative represents another important step in the Government's efforts to modernise Guyana's rice industry and strengthen farmers' livelihoods.

He noted that under the leadership of President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, the Government remains committed to introducing innovative, cost-effective farming practices and providing the necessary support to help rice farmers sustain their operations and remain competitive, particularly at a time when unfavourable global rice prices continue to present challenges for producers.

The minister explained that rice-duck integrated farming offers farmers an opportunity to diversify their income while maximising the productive use of their existing farmlands. He noted that, for many years, rice farmers have depended primarily on paddy production for their livelihoods. However, through this initiative, farmers can explore new opportunities to generate additional revenue from duck production alongside their traditional rice cultivation, effectively creating two potential sources of income from the same acreage.

Minister Mustapha further explained that, under properly managed conditions, ducks can play an important role in controlling certain insects and weeds in rice fields, while their manure contributes nutrients to the growing environment. This integrated approach, he said, has the potential to reduce dependence on certain agricultural inputs, lower production costs, and improve the overall profitability of farming operations, while promoting more environmentally sustainable rice cultivation.

He emphasised that the programme demonstrates how innovation, agricultural research, and sound government policies can work together to address existing challenges within the agriculture sector while creating new economic opportunities for farmers.

Minister Mustapha also welcomed the support of the FAO and the Government of Canada, noting the importance of partnerships in advancing agricultural development and introducing modern farming techniques that can benefit local producers.



Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha



GUYANA TARGETS OVER-40S T20 WORLD CUP AS MASTERS TOURNAMENT OPENS

Guyana is using the second International Masters Cricket Over-40s World Cup to strengthen its international sporting profile, with President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali pledging the Government's full support for the country's bid to host next year's Over-40s T20 World Cup.

Opening the tournament at the Guyana National Stadium, Providence, President Ali welcomed 15 participating teams and encouraged players to use the competition to build international relationships while experiencing Guyana's culture and hospitality.

"**Sports is not only about a game; sports is about relationships. It is about bringing people together. It's about fusing cultures. It's about bridging inequalities,**" the President said.



The opening of the second edition of the International Masters Cricket Over-40s World Cup

The tournament brings together former international and national cricketers who continue competing at a high level, demonstrating the enduring value of sport beyond professional playing careers.

President Ali praised the participants for their commitment to cricket, noting that many continue to invest their own time and resources to remain involved in the game and inspire their families, communities and countries.

He also urged visiting players and their families to explore Guyana and build connections beyond the cricket field, highlighting the wider opportunities international tournaments create for cultural exchange and engagement.

The President assured organisers of the Government's support as they pursue next year's Over-40s T20 World Cup.

"**If there is anything anyone on the team needs, just let us know,**" he told the visiting teams.

Minister within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, Steven Jacobs said investments in sports infrastructure and development under President Ali's leadership were helping establish Guyana as a destination for international sporting events.



The opening of the second edition of the International Masters Cricket Over-40s World Cup

"**Guyana is definitely a sporting destination in 2026,**" Minister Jacobs said, pointing to the country's expanding sporting calendar, which includes the Global Super League.

The tournament features defending champions South Africa, alongside Australia, New Zealand, England, the United Arab Emirates and the West Indies, among other teams.

Matches begin on Saturday, October 24 at venues across Guyana. With Government backing and international participation, the tournament offers another opportunity for Guyana to build its reputation as a host for major sporting events and strengthen the links between cricket, tourism and economic activity.

NEW FACILITIES PUT ACCESSIBLE RECREATION WITHIN REACH OF MORE COMMUNITIES



President Ali reviewing the progress on the first 'Healthy Streets' project

Residents of Covent Garden, Herstelling, Sophia and Onderneeming now have access to four modern recreational facilities designed to bring sport, physical activity and community engagement closer to home, as Government and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) extend investment in neighbourhood infrastructure.

The facilities include playing fields, basketball courts, pavilions and amenities for persons with disabilities, creating spaces where young people can develop their sporting talents, families can remain active and residents can gather for community activities.

The Onderneeming facility in Region Three alone represents a $180 million investment.

The four facilities were developed under the Adequate Housing and Urban Accessibility Programme, which targets improved living conditions and community infrastructure in Regions Three and Four.

At the handover of the Covent Garden and Herstelling facilities on the East Bank of Demerara, Minister within the Ministry of Housing Vanessa Benn said the investment forms part of a broader effort that also includes road construction and core homes.

"**It not only speaks of these four community facilities, but it also speaks of the roads that have been built, the core homes that were constructed**," she said.

More than 250 core homes have been constructed through the partnership, with beneficiaries contributing towards their homes, extending the programme's reach beyond recreational infrastructure to housing support.

The facilities also incorporate fencing, energy-efficient LED lighting, washrooms, footpaths and walking areas. Accessibility was considered in their design, with pathways, entrances and washrooms intended to accommodate persons with disabilities.

Minister of Housing Collin Croal urged residents to protect and actively use the facilities, emphasising that their long-term value would depend on the opportunities they create and the community participation they attract.

At Onderneeming, the Neighbourhood Democratic Council will oversee operations and management, supported by a community-based management committee.

The facilities are intended to provide more than physical infrastructure: their impact will ultimately depend on whether residents use, maintain and make them lasting parts of community life.

GOVT PUSHES FOR STRONGER PRIVATE SECTOR BACKING OF MASHRAMANI



The launch exercise

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport Charles Ramson Jr has called for greater private sector investment in Mashramani, stating that Government may take a firmer stance on future engagements if businesses fail to provide adequate support for the national celebrations.

Speaking at the launch of the Mashramani 2027 calendar of activities, held under the theme "Guyanese Uniting, Guyana Rising", Ramson highlighted the festival's growing role in creating opportunities for local artistes and creatives to showcase their talents.

He expressed satisfaction with Mashramani's development over the past three years but stressed the need for businesses to play a more meaningful role in sustaining and expanding the celebrations.

The 2027 programme introduces several new and returning attractions, including Mash Night, the Masquerade Jamboree and Mashramani Pop-Up Concerts.

Popular events such as the Soca, Chutney, Calypso and Dancehall Monarch competitions, Banks on the Avenue and the Mashramani celebrations will also return.

Minister within the ministry, Steven Jacobs, outlined changes intended to improve the festival experience, emphasising that the celebrations must remain accessible and enjoyable.

"**Mashramani is here to stay. We want to make sure it's good, clean fun,**" Minister Jacobs said.

Winners of the 2026 music competitions also welcomed the opportunities to perform on a national platform and voiced enthusiasm for the upcoming festivities.

The official Mashramani 2027 launch is scheduled for January 15.



GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST
KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 130

WORK ADVANCES ON FOUR-TOWER GOVT COMPLEX

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, inspects ongoing construction at the new Government Complex at Haags Bosch, Eccles, along the Heroes Highway, as four 12-storey office towers take shape. Designed to accommodate more than 6,000 employees, the complex will centralise government operations while helping to ease parking constraints and congestion in Georgetown. During the visit, the minister engaged contractors and consulting engineers on construction progress, outstanding works and deadlines for completion.







ComfortSleep Inc.
Sleep on ... Dream on...

A Better You Starts with Better Sleep

GUYANA'S
CHOICE FOR BETTER SLEEP

REST TODAY A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

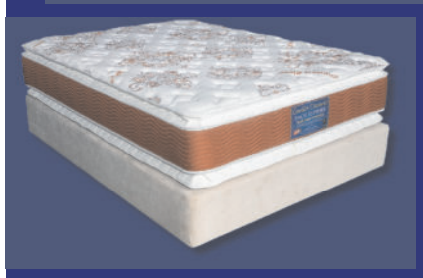
Our Mattress Collections



Comfort Dreamer
Back Support
Durable support with pocket coil comfort.



Comfort Custom
Luxury Euro Top
Comfy, restful, durable.



Comfort Custom
Luxury
Exclusive two-sided pillow-top comfort.



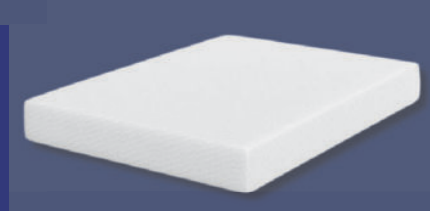
Comfort
Night Magic
Firm, durable, comfortable.



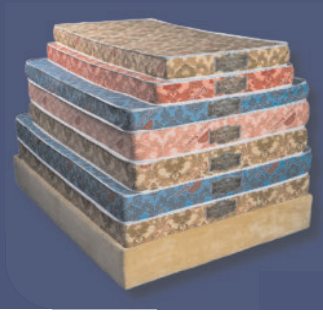
Comfort-Pedic
Memory Foam
Exclusive memory foam comfort.



Comfort Classic Deluxe
Supportive foam comfort.



Comfort Cool
Gel Foam
Cool, pressure-relieving comfort.



Comfort
Foam Mattress
Affordable comfort everyday support



Pillows

The perfect support for a better you.

Since 2003
International Standards
Zero Refunds to Date
Classic to Contemporary

QUALITY PRODUCTS
EXPERT ADVICE
RELIABLE SERVICE
A HEALTHIER, HAPPIER YOU

49 Industrial Estate, Eccles, E.B.D., Guyana, S.A.
592-233-3013 | 592-233-2677
www.comfortsleep.gy

Proudly Giyana's Choice

Caribbean nations must work together to improve port infrastructure: Ali

MORE than 400 delegates have gathered in Guyana for the Caribbean Shipping Association's (CSA) 56th Annual General Meeting, Conference and Exhibition, where regional leaders are calling for stronger co-operation, greater investment and modernised maritime infrastructure to address high shipping costs and strengthen trade across the Caribbean.

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, addressing the opening ceremony on Monday, identified high shipping costs, uneven port infrastructure, weak trade among Caribbean countries, climate-related disasters and geopolitical instability as five major challenges facing the region's shipping sector.

He said these issues have direct consequences for businesses, consumers and the wider economies of Caribbean countries, making coordinated action and investment critical to the industry's future.

"Ultimately, high shipping costs become a cost-of-living problem for people and a competitiveness problem for businesses," the President said, stressing that the region must examine whether enough is being done to improve shipping efficiency, consolidate costs and encourage commercially sustainable services.

President Ali called for a coordinated, investment-driven approach to modernising ports and improving regional connectivity, arguing that the Caribbean cannot remain competitive without addressing longstanding infrastructure constraints.

He noted that many countries depend on transshipment through larger regional and international ports before cargo reaches its final destination, resulting in additional handling, longer transit times, uncertainty and higher costs.

The President said containers have remained at transshipment ports for extended periods, delaying projects and increasing expenses. He also referenced an International Monetary Fund working paper published in May 2026, which found that all Caribbean countries except Jamaica incur shipping costs above the global average.

These challenges, he noted, are particularly difficult of smaller nations, adding, "For small markets, economic sub-shipping can be particularly unforgiving. Limited cargo volume can make it difficult to attract frequent direct services. Imbalances between imports and exports can mean that vessels carry substantial cargo in one direction but considerably less on the return journey. These have consequences for costs which do not disappear."

He later cited limited direct shipping connections, small markets and



President Dr Irfaan Ali

the region's geographic dispersion as factors contributing to the problem.

The President urged the conference to develop a policy document supported by regional development institutions, investors and other financing partners to help mobilise the capital required to improve port infrastructure.

He was keen to note that said investment must address port security, technology, safety, capacity, storage facilities and navigational access, while public-private partnerships could play an important role in modernisation.

Guyana's President highlighted the country's expanding maritime and industrial activity as an example of the investment required, noting that port facilities and related services have grown on both sides of the Demerara River.

He also highlighted private investments in the Demerara River area, including shore bases and port facilities, which he said could total close to US$1 billion over the past four to five years. "If you look at a private investment in the Demerara River, easily, when you look at the shore base investment, the radar investment and all the port investment in the last four to five years in the Demerara River, we are talking about maybe close to a billion US dollars' worth of investment," he said.

Beyond infrastructure, President Ali called for stronger trade among Caribbean countries, noting that regional integration efforts would remain challenging unless businesses could move goods between markets affordably, reliably and efficiently.

Differences in customs procedures, regulatory requirements and documentation continue to create delays and additional expenses, even where vessels and port facilities are available. Greater co-operation among shipping operators, customs administrations, port authorities and governments, President Ali said, would help simplify procedures and harmonise documentation.



HYATT®

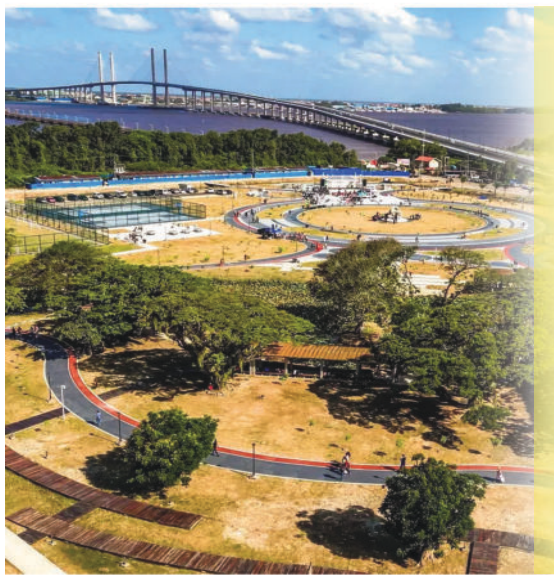
Atlantic Suites Hotel

Tracts A and B, Seawall Road, 413741 Georgetown, Guyana

Atlantic Suites Hotel in Georgetown offers family rooms with air-conditioning, private bathrooms, and sea or city views. Rated 10 stars by recent guests

592 227 9000 www.hyatt.com/stay/en-US/gyaaa-atlantic-suites-hotel





Guyana is poised to become one of the world's most compelling tourism destinations, where our extraordinary biodiversity, pristine rainforests, majestic rivers, vibrant culture and rich heritage create unparalleled experiences for visitors. Our vision is to build a world-class, sustainable and internationally competitive tourism sector that attracts strategic investment, strengthens infrastructure, empowers local communities and creates meaningful opportunities for our people. We must transform our natural assets into economic prosperity, position Brand Guyana on the global stage and ensure that tourism becomes a powerful engine of employment, entrepreneurship and national development. We are not simply promoting a destination; we are building a tourism legacy that showcases Guyana to the world while preserving its natural treasures for generations to come.





www.guyanatourism.com