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ComfortSleep empowers families

Three years ago, the owners of ComfortSleep in Guyana, Mr & Mrs Dennis Charran (pictured above with one of the recipient families) launched an initiative aimed at supporting families by distributing baby chicks and feed to help them expand or start small poultry ventures.

On Wednesday, 24 families across the country each received 100 baby chicks and four bags of feed.

To date, approximately 200 families have benefitted from this venture, receiving valuable support to help create opportunities for income generation and greater self-reliance.

See more on Page 3



President Ali in Qatar, eyes investments

INVESTMENT co-operation topped the agenda as President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, touched down in Doha on Sunday (September 6) for the start of a three-day State Visit to Qatar. Over the coming days, the president is slated to hold a series of high-level engagements to expand Guyana's economic partnerships in the Gulf region. President Ali is accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hugh Todd.

On arrival at Hamad International Airport, the delegation was received by Qatar's Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh Al Khulaifi, and was greeted by a Guard of Honour (above).

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Jamaica formally files reparations petition to King Charles over slavery

Jamaica has formally filed a reparations petition to King Charles III, asking the monarch to refer key legal questions surrounding chattel slavery and Britain's obligations to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport Olivia Grange confirmed that the petition was filed in London on Monday, Sept. 7, describing the move as historic in Jamaica's pursuit of reparatory justice.

"We have filed a reparations petition to His Majesty. We anticipate that the petition will be referred to the Privy Council and we will await the decision," Grange told a media briefing fol-

The petition asks King Charles, in his capacity as Jamaica's head of state, to refer three questions concerning the legality of the enslavement of Africans to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, Jamaica's highest court.

Grange stressed that the petition does not seek monetary compensation, pushing back against reports suggesting that the Jamaican government had submitted a financial claim.

"I wish to make it clear, and will do so at every single opportunity, that this petition is a legal petition," Grange said. "It contains three specific questions... [and] does not include a monetary claim."



A Jamaican representative holds a copy of the petition

the seizure, transportation and enslavement as chattel of Africans was ever lawful under English law; whether the seizure, transportation and enslavement of Africans in Jamaica breached international law; and whether the United Kingdom has a legal obligation to provide a reparatory remedy to the people of Jamaica.

England-based barrister Edward Fitzgerald, who helped formulate the petition as part of a team of Jamaican and British lawyers, said it asks the King to refer issues of significant legal and constitutional importance to the Privy Council.

"There's a special jurisdiction under section four of the Judicial Committee Act for the King to refer an issue of legal or constitutional importance to the Privy Council, for their determination," Fitzgerald said.

He argued that there is a strong legal case that the enslavement of Africans was never lawful under English common law.

"If you think of it, it'd be a pretty strange thing if a citizen could just go to Africa, see someone, against their will push them into a boat, and take them on a tortuous journey, and that that was lawful under English common law," Fitzgerald said.

He added that there was no statute authorizing the practice and pointed to a statute from the reign of George II that the National Council for Reparations has cited as evidence that the seizure of people from Africa was unlawful.

"So to those who say, oh, well, it was lawful at the time, we asked the Privy Council to find that it was never lawful at the time," Fitzgerald said.

The petition also argues that chattel enslavement constituted a crime against humanity.

On the question of reparatory remedies, Fitzgerald said the petition sets out legal principles supporting Jamaica's argument that a remedy is required, while leaving the precise form of any remedy to be determined

through subsequent legal proceedings.

"The question of what the exact form the remedy would take would be a matter to be worked out in the litigation," he said. "But there must be some remedy for wrongs of this magnitude, which continue to have damaging effects on the descendants of those who were enslaved."

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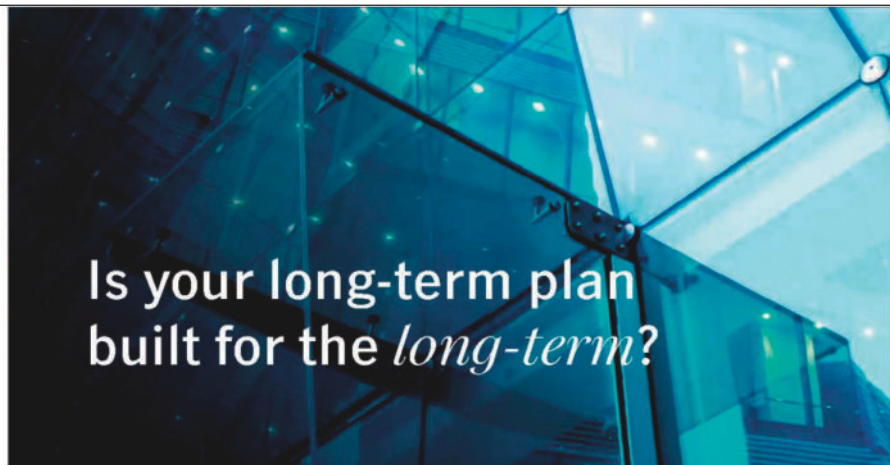
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A STRONGER GUYANA STARTS WITH STRONGER FAMILIES

PRESS RELEASE

COMMUNITY | OPPORTUNITY | SUSTAINABLE LIVING

ComfortSleep Continues to Support Families

Empowering households. Building futures. A stronger Guyana.

Georgetown, Guyana – Three years ago, the owners of ComfortSleep, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Charran, launched an initiative aimed at supporting families by distributing baby chicks and feed to help them establish or expand small poultry ventures.

This morning, the initiative continued to bring smiles to families, as 24 families from across Guyana each received 100 baby chicks and four bags of feed.

To date, approximately 300 families have benefited from this initiative, receiving valuable support to help create opportunities for income generation and greater self-reliance.

For some families who benefited in previous years, the initiative provided a foundation to continue growing their poultry operations. Others have gone on to pursue different entrepreneurial ventures, including opening shops and establishing other small businesses.

The continued efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Charran demonstrate the meaningful impact that private-sector support and community investment can have in helping families build sustainable livelihoods.



Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Charran with a recipient family at the distribution event.



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Guyana gov't to resolve longstanding agricultural land issues in Reg. Five

The Government of Guyana, through the Ministry of Agriculture, is taking decisive steps to resolve longstanding agricultural land issues in Region Five, while simultaneously expanding the productive land base, strengthening agricultural infrastructure and creating greater opportunities for farmers to increase production.

The interventions were highlighted today by Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha, during an engagement with farmers and residents of Shieldstown and surrounding communities, where a number of longstanding concerns relating to agricultural land, drainage and irrigation, access roads, livestock production, financing and farmers' livelihoods were raised.

A central issue was the longstanding situation at SeaField, where 50 farmers were issued leases in 2013 but have subsequently faced uncertainty surrounding their access to the lands.

Minister Mustapha said the Government is moving to bring resolution to the matter, noting that legal proceedings have affected some of the leases.

Following an examination of the situation, the Minister has instructed the Manager of the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary Agricultural Development Authority (MMA-ADA) to proceed with providing occupancy to the 49 farmers whose leases are not presently before the court, while re-



Minister Mustapha engages with farmers

specting the ongoing legal process in relation to the matter before the court.

"This matter has been outstanding for far too long. Farmers cannot be expected to invest, produce and contribute to the national economy while being left in uncertainty over access to agricultural land. We have a responsibility to resolve these issues, and that is precisely what we are doing," Minister Mustapha said.

He stressed that the Government's approach is one of problem-solving, fairness and respect for the law, rather

than allowing longstanding agricultural matters to remain unresolved.

The Minister also announced that the issue surrounding approximately 1,000 acres of agricultural land has been resolved, creating additional opportunities for cash-crop and cattle farmers.

He encouraged farmers who have not yet organised themselves into recognised groups or corps to do so, noting that an organised approach will facilitate a more orderly, transparent and equitable process for accessing and

developing agricultural lands.

Government is also advancing the development of approximately 5,000 acres for cattle production. Minister Mustapha explained that the objective is not simply to divide the area into individual parcels, but to develop the land in a structured manner that supports the wider farming community and reduces the potential for disputes over access and use.

Approximately \$100 million is being invested in development works in the area to establish the infrastructure necessary to support agricultural activity. The Minister also emphasised the need to protect lands designated for crop production from competing uses and to address situations where cattle enter agricultural lands, potentially damaging farmers' crops.

Minister Mustapha said expanding agricultural production must go hand-in-hand with investment in the infrastructure that allows farmers to utilise their lands efficiently.

Farmers raised concerns about access roads, irrigation and drainage, including water seeping through embankments and the need for regular weeding and maintenance in Shieldstown.

The Minister said the relevant agencies will be required to examine these concerns and undertake the necessary interventions.

Ex-Guyanese journalist launches bid for TO City Council

By Frederick Halley
GUYANA CHRONICLE

FORMER Guyanese international-award winning journalist and corporate communications specialist, Robert Bazil, on Thursday last, launched a bid for a seat on the Toronto City Council in the upcoming October 26, 2026 Municipal Elections.

The father of four, who emigrated to Canada in 2008, is also a Licensed Paralegal, Notary Public and Commissioner of Oaths in the Province of Ontario.

Bazil is running for Councillor for Ward 24 (Scarborough-Guildwood) and is confident he'll topple the incumbent who has been in office for about a decade.

Under the campaign theme, 'A Wind of Change is Coming to Scarborough-Guildwood', Bazil, who has a passion for youth development issues, said he has watched the decline in opportunities available to young people in Scarborough-Guildwood, and hopes to draw on his wealth of experience from his work as a communications officer with the Commonwealth Youth Pro-

gramme Caribbean Centre, from 2002 to 2008.

As a Licensed Paralegal whose scope of practice includes summary criminal offences, Bazil noted the rising level of gun violence in Toronto, and, when elected, hopes to 'Make Scarborough-Guildwood Safe Again' through the introduction of programmes for young people at their most vulnerable ages, before they fall through the cracks.

Improved transit and enhanced customer service training for operators, access to affordable housing, the environment, improved winter maintenance, traffic congestion, infrastructure management, homelessness, rising poverty levels, social services and mental health and addiction, are among the top issues that Bazil aims to address when elected Councillor for Ward 24 (Scarborough Guildwood) on October 26, 2026.

Married to Drupati Bazil with four children – Renee, Raphael, Regina and Raeanne, the Guyanese native maintains that strong families produce strong communities, and plans to pilot City-funded initiatives that support the



Robert Bazil

critical needs of single mothers. He pointed out that single mothers are particularly targeted because better access to subsidised childcare will allow them

to remain in the workplace or create a pathway to pursue their academic dreams.

Bazil is also passionate about issues affecting seniors in his community, especially those experiencing declining mobility and extreme hardship. Additionally, addressing the not-so-talked-about violence against women and girls in the community and access to counselling, will also be a huge part of his campaign manifesto.

Bazil, who is a member of the Miracle Arena for All Nations church in Woodbridge, Ontario, believes that it is his ordained duty to play an active part in the decision-making fabric of his community, rather than sit back passively and let others impose their own conflicting values and norms on the masses.

Come October 26, 2026, the former Guyanese journalist, who was also Chief Reporter at the Guyana Chronicle and corporate communications specialist, now, Licensed Paralegal, Notary Public and Commissioner of Oaths, is confident that he will be given the mandate to 'Make Scarborough-Guildwood Safe Again.'

Chief Magistrate rejects attempt to stall extradition proceedings

US-INDICTED businessmen Azruddin and Nazar Mohamed again attempted to stall the extradition proceedings on Thursday after their lawyers asked Chief Magistrate Judy Latchman to stay her hand until they obtain clarification from the Court of Appeal.

This follows a pattern of delay tactics, which ranged from the submission of medical reports to appeals all the way to the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), which only Tuesday rejected the most recent attempt to stay the proceedings.

The Thursday request came as the prosecution was prepared to resume the proceedings, which commenced on January 6 but have been stalled since March 25.

Magistrate Latchman rejected the request, making it clear that she could not disregard an order issued by the higher court. The Chief Magistrate ruled that the proceedings must continue, stressing that she is bound by the Court of Appeal’s directive and therefore has no discretion to suspend the matter on the basis being advanced by the defence.

The application was made by Senior Counsel Roysdale Forde, who appeared for the Mohameds alongside attorneys Damien Da Silva and Siand Dhurjon.

Forde described the defence’s position as a “crisis of clarity” and argued that the Court of Appeal’s recent order has created uncertainty over how the committal proceedings should proceed.

The defence said it intended to approach the appellate court for directions on the scope and implications of its

order before the extradition hearing progresses further.

The Court of Appeal has rejected the Mohameds’ request for a stay and permitted the extradition proceedings to continue. However, it has barred Latchman from making a final ruling while it determines the men’s constitutional challenge to certain provisions of the Fugitive Offenders (Amendment) Act.

The prosecution, led by Jamaican King’s Counsel Terrence Williams, with fellow Jamaican attorneys Herbert McKenzie and Celine Deidrick also appearing, opposed the defence’s request and urged Latchman to proceed in accordance with the existing court order.

The prosecution submitted that the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) had upheld the decision of the Court of Appeal and that the extradition proceedings should therefore move forward.

The proceedings, which began on January 6, have been delayed by several legal challenges mounted by the defence and were placed on hold on March 25 following an order of the CCJ. That order was discharged on July 29 after the regional court dismissed the Mohameds’ challenge to the Authority to Proceed (ATP) issued by Home Affairs Minister Oneidge Walrond.

The ATP had been challenged, among other grounds, on allegations of political bias.

The discharge of that order cleared the way for the extradition proceedings to resume, although the constitutional challenge before the Court of Appeal remains pending.



Azruddin Mohamed

Thursday’s ruling means the committal proceedings will continue, although Latchman remains prohibited from delivering a final decision in the extradition case until the appellate court determines the constitutional challenge.

With the court declining to pause the case, the prosecution proceeded with evidence from its second witness, Senior Superintendent of Police Prem Narine, head of the Special Branch Unit.

Narine took the witness stand on

Thursday and is now being cross-examined by the defence.

His testimony provided the court with an account of the events of October 31, 2025, when the two businessmen were arrested following the United States’ extradition request.

He also told the court that he received a Section 6 Certificate under the Fugitive Offenders Act, to which was attached the extradition treaty between the United States and the United Kingdom.

Mohamed questioned after drone found near President’s home

OPPOSITION Leader Azruddin Mohamed was among three men taken in for questioning after police intercepted a vehicle carrying a drone and four cellphones near President Dr. Irfaan Ali’s private residence in Leonora, West Coast Demerara, on Thursday evening.

Police said the investigation began after reports that occupants of a black Toyota Land Cruiser were operating a

drone in the area. Ranks stopped the vehicle along the Windsor Forest Public Road and found a DJI drone in the trunk along with the phones.

The US-indicted Mohamed, 39, leader of the We Invest in Nationhood (WIN) party, was taken to the Leonora Police Station along with driver Eugene Thorne, 35, and technician Dwayne

Ross, 25. He denied owning the drone and was released on self-bail.

Ross told police the device was his, though he acknowledged his operator’s licence had expired in 2023.

In a separate incident nearby, another patrol intercepted a second vehicle and questioned its driver, 20-year-old Mario Mohamed.

Follow-up searches of the men’s

homes turned up a second drone at Ross’s residence. Police say the investigation is ongoing.



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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Standing up

Life is about to get more expensive. And we're going to feel a lot of pressure from our neighbours down south as they ramp up their campaign against us -- specifically, the MAGA followers who don't understand why they hate us, but are hating us anyway because Dear Leader told them to.

But facing this type of hardship is nothing new to us, is it?

Many of us from the immigrant communities have lived through oppression before, whether it was surviving slavery or indentureship, to rise above it all in the end because we are resilient.

Our bloodline is strength. We went from being imported cheap labour (or free labour) and the most horrible conditions imposed on us by our colonial masters to become leaders, doctors, lawyers, engineers and ordinary citizens who work hard daily to ensure we can be responsible for our own destiny.

The examples of this resilience are glaring -- Jamaica became the most popular tourism destination on earth, going from a people who served their masters to being the owners of the places where the descendants of those masters now pay to play. It is home of reggae, loved worldwide, and many of its athletes have gone from the plantations to dominating the tracks and fields of the world.

Guyana was where our forefathers were brought to work the sugar plantations to enrich the British owners. Now the very same British, along with every major world economy, is lining up to get a piece of the pie that is owned by the very descendants of those plantation workers.

Similarly in Trinidad and Tobago, where the economy is back on the verge of an oil and gas boom that has not been seen in decades. Once again, those who enslaved us or bound us to their estates to work for pittance are now knocking on our doors to try to get a piece of what we own.

The point is, we are always rising from the worst possible conditions to becoming masters of our own destiny.

So we're ready for whatever Donald Trump throws at us and other Canadians who are just as resilient.

Trump has imperialistic designs on Canada. He wants to destroy us economically so he can just walk in and take us over.

But he has underestimated us.

We didn't become one of the best countries in the world by accident. We worked hard to get here. We built a society of people who actually care for each other, that doesn't see illness as a cash cow, and a social security system that helps the most vulnerable among us.

Canada is more than just a country. It is a community of like-minded people, and if there's one thing about Canadians, it is we don't like being advantaged.

What Trump and his administration is doing to us is waging economic warfare with the stated intention to destroy us.

When you look at the numbers, it sounds like the USA has a distinct advantage over us. Their economy is much larger (because its population is ten times

ours), it is a military superpower and it has shown that it can treat other countries like their own.

The USA, however, has been the cause of a lot of problems in the world. It wields its superpower status like a sword, creating puppet governments all over the world to get their resources.

Look at Venezuela, where it kidnapped its President and now claims to have signed "the largest oil deal in history" with his replacement, who they installed as their puppet.

We've seen a similar story played out all over the world. Iran, with which it is now in an unwinnable war, was run for decades by a puppet regime of the USA who gave them favourable access to their oil. When that ended, Iran became an enemy.

So we know what Trump is capable of, but he has miscalculated if he thinks we're an easy walkover. For starters, we have Mark Carney as Prime Minister, a highly educated and skilled economist who saw all this coming and started shifting away from our economic dependence on the USA. We now have trade deals with the whole world, with many more in the works.

Look, we are not naive. As we said at the start of this, life is going to get expensive, and tough, for most of us in the coming months and years. But what's at stake is much more important.

Our country is being held hostage. And we the people are the anti-kidnapping team.

We trust that Carney and his administration will ensure we survive this. And we have their backs.

Cost of Living: we must do our part

Dear Editor,

THERE is understandable public concern about the cost of living. This is not a new topic but has been a hot one in every country since 2020. In developed and developing countries, governments are battling with this issue. In Guyana, our government has been very proactive in tackling this problem through demand-side and supply-side policies.

Indeed, almost every conceivable policy option available has been deployed by the government to address the cost-of-living issue. By now, we should all be aware that the government removed taxes on essential items, supplies, and equipment used by farmers, as well as fuel, a key input in every sector, including agriculture. You will also recall that independent agencies such as the IDB and IMF commended the government for implementing these tax-reduction measures, which were deployed alongside a raft of other measures to boost disposable income.

However, not everyone is totally pleased with

the outcome of the policies. This is evident from the continuous public outcry. As a responsible leader, President Ali and his government have not only expanded the policy toolkit but have also signalled their intention to implement other innovative measures to address this issue. His actions suggest that the President is continuously working and not pretending that the 'cost of living problem' has been resolved to the satisfaction of every citizen.

His proposal to establish farmers' markets across Guyana is especially important. When implemented, we should see a dramatic reduction in food prices, especially for foods grown at home. This is because the middlemen in the value chain add a significant markup to the farm-gate prices they pay farmers for their produce. While allowing farmers to receive better prices, this solution will also provide significant ease for consumers.

From his public pronouncements, it is also evident that President Ali intends to go beyond retail markets. President Ali has consistently encouraged

farmers to scale up their activities so they can improve efficiency and lower prices for locally grown food. His government is also helping farmers increase output by providing equipment, technical support, and other interventions (e.g., fertiliser, shade houses, etc.). In the near future, the SME Development Bank will also provide farmers with affordable financing so they can form clusters that allow them to benefit from economies of scale and lower production costs. These initiatives will certainly translate into lower food prices in the medium and long term.

While these solutions will not provide immediate benefits, they will deliver a food production system that makes food more affordable and accessible. In the medium to long term, they will also address the underlying causes of high food prices.

In the meantime, it is reasonable for citizens to consider how their own spending choices affect their household budgets.

Kevin Persaud



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Federal fuel excise tax suspension to continue until January 2027

By Milan Maharaj
LJI REPORTER

The federal government is continuing the temporary suspension of the federal fuel excise tax, providing further assistance at the pumps while households and firms continue to be uncertain about their economic future.

According to the announcement made on September 8, the temporary suspension of the federal excise tax on gasoline, diesel and aviation fuels will continue until January 31, 2027, when it will resume at 50% of its normal level for two months. From April 1, 2027, it will resume at 100% of its level.

This measure is expected to give an additional relief of \$2.9 billion, bringing the total relief for 2026-27 from this measure to \$5.3 billion, according to the estimates of the federal government.

The temporary reduction in the excise tax was introduced on April 20, 2026, with the reduction of the federal excise tax of 10 cents per litre on gasoline and unleaded aviation gasoline, 11 cents per litre on leaded aviation gasoline, and four cents on diesel and aviation fuels. On the first day of this reduction, the price of gasoline was reduced by 11 cents per litre.

For the latest extension period, Canadians will still receive the complete benefit of the tax suspension until January. During Feb. 1 and Mar. 31, 2027, the federal tax will remain at five cents per litre for gasoline and unleaded aviation gasoline, five and a half cents for leaded aviation gasoline, and two cents for diesel and aviation fuel.

Starting April 1, the normal federal tax rates will apply again. The taxes per litre for gasoline and unleaded aviation gasoline will be 10 cents, for leaded aviation gasoline 11 cents, and four cents for diesel and aviation fuel.

According to the government, the policy aims to assist families in handling their regular expenses as well as support industries which make use of the fuel. Some of the industries which will get a boost from the policy include trucking, agriculture, food manufacturing, construction, and housing.

In relation to businesses, fuel expenses can extend beyond simply the cost of transportation, since companies that transport their goods throughout the country may incur increased opera-



The federal tax on gas will be suspended until January 2027

tional expenses because of rising fuel costs, which can ultimately impact consumer prices of goods and services.

The initiative comes amidst the continued economic uncertainty that the country faces, which is as a result of international developments. The federal government has cited the introduction of tariffs by the United States on Canadian goods, as well as turmoil in Europe and the Middle East, as reasons for uncertainty and increased costs.

This is one of many measures within Ottawa's affordability strategy. The government has cited numerous other policies aimed at cutting costs for Canadians, among them tax cuts, the Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit and relief for first-time homebuyers.

The consumer carbon price has been removed from the federal level since the government decided to remove it as of April 1, 2025. The government of Ottawa claims that this policy adjustment has led to lower prices for gasoline in most provinces and territories than last year.

This latest move regarding fuel taxes takes place amid the context where transportation plays a significant role in the expenditures of Canadian families. Individuals who use their cars as means of transportation to complete

various tasks are significantly affected by any change in fuel prices.

Canadians who live in remote areas, where they have to travel greater distances, will also be influenced by fuel prices due to lack of alternative means of transport in such locations.

Companies that need diesel fuel or aviation fuel will also benefit from tax breaks. Lower fuel taxes will lead to lower costs for businesses involved in transportation of goods and services, but it is still uncertain to what extent consumers will be affected.

The federal government maintains that this is a temporary tax measure to provide relief until measures are being taken in order to ensure that Canada's economy is strengthened. The reduction of costs at this point in time is believed to assist households and businesses through economic challenges while the country experiences

changes in its economic and trade relationships.

However, the suspension of the tax measure is only temporary as the entire federal excise tax will be back as of April 1, 2027, after which there might be another increase in taxes on the price of fuel for Canadians.

In the meantime, motorists and business people are still going to have all the tax relief for the next few months. The decision was made in order to provide some certainty for Canadians during their period of economic uncertainty.

Ottawa maintains that with this decision, Canadians will have enough space to deal with rising costs. With the total amount of tax relief measured in billions of dollars by the federal government, there will be substantial investment in the short-term affordability of the situation.



3 dead, 8 injured as building collapses

by Pankaj Yadav
EQUALITY CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, Sept. 6: Three students died and eight other persons were injured when the multi-storey building they were living in collapsed in South Delhi's Satya Niketan today, confirmed the Delhi Police.

The building had collapsed at around 01:30 p.m. (Indian Standard Time) when some repair works were being carried out inside the ill-fated building's basement area.

So far 11 persons had been rescued from under the rubble, out of which three died and 8 were undergoing treatment at a local hospital.

Several teams of India's National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) had been engaged in carrying out the rescue and relief work, even as it was feared that some more students were still trapped under the debris.

The building that collapsed had been illegally constructed, and was against the local bye-laws, said media reports.



Rescuers dig through the rubble of the building looking for survivors

Satya Niketan area was surrounded by Delhi University's colleges and other coaching institutes. It was known for such multi-storey

buildings having several rooms at every floor, with every room having two beds meant for students who stayed here on rent. Such buildings

were popularly called as Paying-Guests (PGs) among the Delhi University students.

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Guyana debt burden declines as economy and job market strengthen

Guyana remains one of the world’s fastest-growing economies while its government debt burden has declined and unemployment has fallen sharply, according to a new report from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The latest Caribbean Economics Quarterly shows that despite increased borrowing to finance roads, schools and other infrastructure projects, the share of government revenue used to service debt has fallen significantly since the start of oil production.

Before oil production began, Guyana spent about seven cents of every dollar collected by the government on debt payments. That figure has since declined to approximately five cents.

“Guyana remains a low-debt case, driven by continued strong resource revenues, making it an outlier within the sample,” the IDB said.

The situation contrasts with several other Caribbean economies, where debt burdens remain elevated.

“By contrast, The Bahamas, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago entered



The economy in Guyana is booming

2025 with debt burdens materially higher than in 2019,” the report said.

Guyana’s labour market has also improved considerably in recent years.

The country's unemployment rate fell from 14.5% in the third quarter of

2021 to 6.8% during the same period in 2024, according to the IDB.

The decline means that while roughly one in seven working-age Guyanese was unemployed in 2021, that figure had fallen to fewer than one in 14

by 2024.

The improvements come amid rapid economic and population growth fueled largely by the expansion of Guyana's oil and gas industry.

Guyana's population has increased from approximately 700,000 a decade ago to about 900,000, while the economy expanded by 19.3% in 2025 after recording growth of 43.8% in 2024.

Although oil remains the primary driver of the economic boom, growth has also accelerated outside the petroleum industry.

Non-oil economic growth reached 15% in 2025, up from 13% the previous year, indicating that the expansion is increasingly extending into other sectors of the economy.

Strong growth is expected to continue over the next several years.

International Monetary Fund projections cited in the report forecast economic growth of 16.2% in 2026, accelerating to 19.7% in 2027 and 22.1% in 2028.

Growth is subsequently projected to moderate to 12.8% in 2029 and 11.5% in 2030 before slowing sharply to 1.1% in 2031 as oil production stabilizes.

Guyana’s transformation has accelerated since commercial oil production began in late 2019, generating substantial government revenues and providing increased resources for public investment.

The latest figures suggest that despite the government's increased infrastructure spending and borrowing, rapidly rising revenues have allowed the country to maintain a relatively low debt burden while continuing its economic expansion.

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Attorney General Anil Nandlall (left) turns the sod for the start of the law school

Guyana breaks ground for regional law school after decades of talks

Guyana has officially broken ground for a new regional law school at the University of Guyana, moving forward with a project that has been discussed for nearly three decades.

The sod was turned Thursday for the Caribbean's fourth Council of Legal Education (CLE) law school, which will be constructed on an eight-acre site at the university's Turkeyen Campus.

The new institution will join the Norman Manley Law School in Jamaica, Hugh Wooding Law School in Trinidad and Tobago and Eugene Dupuch Law School in The Bahamas.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall described the groundbreaking as a significant moment following decades of efforts to establish the institution.

"It is a simple and symbolic ceremony, but a ceremony of great historical and futuristic significance," Nandlall said.

The proposal for a law school in Guyana dates back to 1996 under the administration of then-President Cheddi Jagan and emerged partly because University of Guyana law graduates faced difficulties securing places at regional

institutions to complete their professional legal training.

An arrangement was later established allowing 25 Guyanese nationals graduating from the University of Guyana to enter Hugh Wooding Law School without sitting the entrance examination. However, access remained limited.

Efforts to establish a law school in Guyana gained momentum again in 2002, when the CLE established a task force to examine the proposal. By 2005, the University of Guyana's Turkeyen campus had been proposed as a location, but the project did not advance to construction.

The initiative resurfaced over the years but faced questions surrounding demand, financing, infrastructure and regional approval.

The latest push gained momentum in 2024 when the Guyana government and the CLE established a collaborative committee to conduct a feasibility study.

CLE Chairman Liesel Weekes said representatives met several times between September 2024 and September 2025 to determine whether a fourth regional law school would be viable and

sustainable.

The completed feasibility report was presented to the Council in September 2025, with Weekes saying Guyana had "ticked all the boxes."

The CLE formally approved the establishment of the law school at its September 2025 meeting in The Bahamas and authorised negotiations for a framework agreement with the Guyana government.

Nandlall announced during the 2026 Budget debate in February that construction was expected to begin this year, while the design procurement process advanced to the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board by July.

The final construction cost has not

yet been determined and will depend on the completion and approval of the design. Officials stressed that the institution will operate as a regional law school rather than one exclusively for Guyanese students.

Nandlall said Guyanese graduates would no longer face the existing numerical restriction associated with access to Hugh Wooding Law School, while students from other Caribbean countries would also be encouraged to study in Guyana.

The government has said the new institution will help meet growing demand for professional legal education across the Caribbean and expand the capacity of the region's existing law school system.

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Guyana projected to surpass 500,000 visitors in 2026

GUYANA is projected to welcome more than 500,000 visitors by the end of 2026, as the country continues to record growth in visitor arrivals, according to the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce.

The Ministry announced on Friday that Guyana welcomed 48,582 visitors in August 2026, representing a 5.6 per cent increase when compared with August 2025.

According to the Ministry, visitor arrivals from January to August 2026 were also 11 per cent higher than during the corresponding period in 2025, continuing the country’s strong tourism growth trajectory.

Leisure travel remained the largest contributor to arrivals, accounting for 62 per cent of visitors, followed by business travel at 14 per cent and other forms of travel at 24 per cent.

The United States remained Guyana’s largest source market, accounting for 39 per cent of visitors, followed by the Caribbean at 33 per cent.

Latin America accounted for nine per cent of arrivals, Canada seven per cent, Europe five per cent and other markets six per cent.

The Ministry said the increase in arrivals was supported by several major activities, including the Global Super League (GSL) cricket tournament, which extended into early August and attracted international teams and fans.

The tournament further reinforced Guyana’s growing reputation as a sporting destination.

The return of diaspora visitors during the August vacation period also contributed significantly to arrivals, re-



The Arrivals Hall at Cheddi Jagan International Airport

flecting the strength of family and cultural ties.

According to the Ministry, these activities have helped strengthen Guyana’s image as a destination that combines cultural experiences, sporting attractions and community connections, while maintaining momentum to-

wards the projected year-end visitor figure.

Several major activities are still scheduled for the remainder of 2026, including the State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC), along with annual observances and events surrounding Diwali, Tourism Awareness

Month and the Christmas season. The Ministry also pointed to the recently announced State Visit by Their Majesties, The King and Queen, among the major upcoming events expected to attract attention to Guyana’s tourism product.

The World Guyanese Congress (WGC) is a federally incorporated non-partisan global organisation that represents the interests of citizens of Guyanese heritage around the world. The organisation focuses on the successful development of our communities globally with an emphasis on leadership development and collaborative activities in diaspora communities to strengthen the community worldwide.

The organisation is headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and led by a Chairman and Executive Committee supported by an Advisory Council and various Committees as well as a Board of Governors that acts as ambassadors for the organisation. It has nine national and regional chapters:

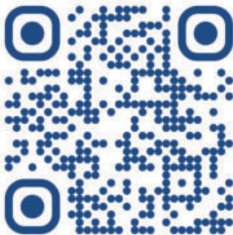
- Key priorities of the WGC include:
- Build a globally cohesive community with a focus on youth and women in business and civic leadership worldwide.
 - Support social entrepreneurship and civic engagement in communities around the world.
 - Engage diaspora communities in the social and economic development of Guyana.

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To find out more about World Guyanese Congress and our goals and priorities. Scan the QR code, or visit www.wgc-org.com

If you have any questions feel free to get in touch:
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Cops reject political interference claims in Mohamed extradition case

Senior Superintendent Prem Narine on Monday firmly rejected repeated defence suggestions of political interference in the extradition proceedings against Azruddin and Nazar Mohamed, denying that President Irfaan Ali instructed him to become involved in the matter.

Narine, Head of the Guyana Police Force’s Special Branch and a prosecution witness, faced extensive cross-examination from defence attorney Siand Dhurjon over his role in collecting the extradition documents and executing the arrest warrants.

The defence sought to establish how documents originating from different ministries came to be at the Attorney General’s Chambers.

Narine maintained that his role was to collect the documents and warrants and acknowledged that he could not say who transmitted them to the Chambers or how long they had been there.

He also rejected the defence’s suggestion that Special Branch had no role in extradition matters.

Dhurjon subsequently questioned Narine about the Police Standing Orders governing Special Branch, including provisions dealing



Senior Superintendent Prem Narine

with criminal investigations and certain political offences.

When the questioning ventured into the interpretation of the Standing Orders, the prosecution objected, arguing that Narine was not a lawyer and that their legal effect was ultimately a matter for the court.

The defence later focused on who instructed Narine to become involved in the Mohamed matter.

Narine recalled receiving a general instruction that morning but could not remember who gave it.

He maintained, however, that the warrants issued to him provided the authority to execute the arrests.

The defence accused Narine of having a “selective” memory and suggested he was being dishonest with the court. Narine firmly rejected both assertions.

The defence then directly suggested that President Ali instructed Narine to become involved.

“Definitely not,” Narine responded, adding that an instruction from the President would have been significant enough for him to remember.

Narine also made clear that police officers are not bound to carry out an unlawful instruction, regardless of its

source.

Another defence suggestion, that the Mohameds were specifically targeted for arrest on October 31, 2025, because Parliament was scheduled to convene on November 3, was also categorically rejected by Narine.

“I did not receive any instructions of that nature,” he told the court.

The defence later attempted to explore alleged public statements by senior government officials about the Mohameds. Prosecutors challenged the relevance of that line of questioning, resulting in further legal arguments before the court.

Narine said he was unaware of a reported statement by President Ali describing Azruddin Mohamed as a threat to national security. However, based on information available to him in his capacity as Special Branch Head, Narine said he considers Mohamed a threat to national security.

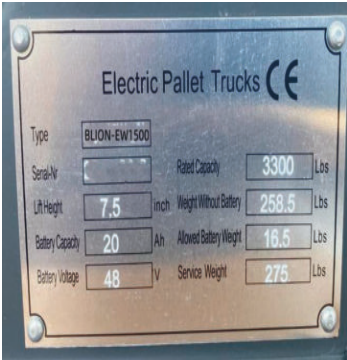


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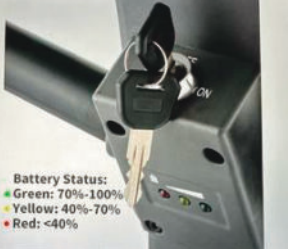
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Berbice positioned as major agricultural, trade and investment hub – Mustapha

BERBICE is being positioned to become a major agriculture, trade, logistics and investment hub as the government continues to roll out billions of dollars in infrastructure, agricultural development and business-support initiatives across the region.

Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, outlined this vision while delivering the feature address at the launch of the 20th Berbice Expo and Trade Fair which will run from October 2 – 5 at the Rose Hall Estate Community Ground in East Canje Berbice.

The Minister said the transformation taking place across Berbice is being supported by major investments in agriculture, transportation, tourism, technology, agro-processing and other productive sectors, creating new opportunities for farmers, businesses and young people. This year’s Expo is being held under the theme, “Harnessing AI to transform the future: while enhancing our People.” As such, Mustapha said the theme is particularly relevant as Guyana embraces technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve productivity and service delivery.

“Artificial Intelligence is no longer a distant concept; it is a practical tool that can help our farmers increase yields, our agro-processors improve efficiency, our businesses reach wider markets, and our young people access new skills and opportunities,” he said.

However, he stressed that people must remain at the centre of the transformation, with technology being used to enhance human potential rather than replace it. Mustapha then pointed to the Farmers Connect App as one of the ways technology is already transforming Guyana’s agriculture sector.

The platform provides farmers with access to agricultural information and services and includes an AI-driven assistant developed specifically for Guyana’s agricultural environment.

According to the Minister, the app has attracted 4,389 subscribers, including 2,212 active farmers.

The Agriculture Information System (AIS) is also being used to improve the Ministry’s ability to collect and utilise information on farmers, farms and agricultural activities.

Through partnerships with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Government is also pursuing AI-driven

production systems and large-scale agricultural innovations, including hydroponics and climate-resilient crop and livestock management.

Meanwhile, the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board’s Licensing and Registration System, launched on July 1, 2026, has registered 325 users and issued 752 licences.

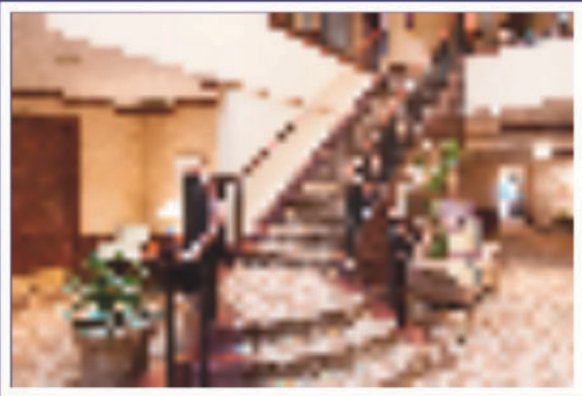
Mustapha further stated that under the leadership of President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Guyana’s development is advancing at an unprecedented pace, while emphasis continues to be placed on building a diversified economy beyond oil and gas.



Launch of the Berbice Expo and Trade Fair

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President Ali marks first year of second term with major infrastructure, health, economic gains

ONE year after being sworn in for a second term on September 7, 2025, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali points to a bridge and an operating table as proof his government’s oil wealth is reaching ordinary Guyanese.

In October 2025, weeks into the new term, President Ali commissioned the Bharrat Jagdeo Demerara River Bridge, replacing the ageing Demerara Harbour Bridge and giving commuters uninterrupted 24-hour crossing for the first time.

“Oil revenues, wisely managed, are being converted into structures like this, projects that deliver benefits to every single Guyanese,” the president said at the commissioning.

In May, a Georgetown-based surgeon operated on a patient in India, roughly 20,000 kilometres away, using robotic telesurgery, a distance the government describes as a world first.

“From today, our surgeon is called Freedom 60,” President Ali said, explaining, “Whether you do your cardiac surgery or surgery in urology or gynaecology, surgeon Freedom 60 will be at your side. Don’t be afraid.”

CONNECTIVITY

Beyond the Demerara bridge, the administration has expanded hinterland and coastal links:

- The Wismar-Mackenzie Bridge is on track to open in October.
- The expanded Aubrey Barker Road opened in April 2026, linking South Ruimveldt to the East Bank and East Coast corridors.

“What is happening here on the Aubrey Barker Road is not an isolated project. It is a strategic project. It is



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali secured a second term in 2025 and was sworn in on September 7

not a local upgrade. It is part of a national upgrade of the road transport system,” the president said.

Four hinterland airstrips were commissioned, including a new 3,000-foot concrete runway at Karasabai in Region Nine, constructed at a cost of \$1.53 billion to replace an earthen strip that frequently closed during bad weather. Other commissioned airstrips include Paramakatoi in Region Eight, Aishalton in Region Nine, which was commissioned in January 2026 and built at a cost of \$920 million, and

Anna Regina/Mainstay in Region Two, which was commissioned in July 2026 at a cost of \$220 million to support tourism and agriculture on the Essequibo Coast. New municipal airports are also planned for Regions Six and Nine.

ECONOMY

The government has set up the Guyana Development Bank to offer zero-interest, no-collateral financing to small and medium-sized businesses.

The bank’s operationalisation is backed by US\$100 million from the

\$1.558 trillion budget presented in January, which prioritised infrastructure, housing, healthcare, education, social protection, and economic development.

Georgetown has been earmarked for a \$2.8 billion Enhancement Programme covering markets, historic buildings, and public spaces, alongside plans to redevelop the Georgetown Zoo and Botanical Gardens.

COMMUNITY AND OUT-REACH

The Model Village Initiative, a priority for President Ali, was launched to transform rural and densely populated communities into modern, sustainable, and economically vibrant settlements.

A total of 23 villages across five administrative regions were officially engaged and consulted by President Ali and his cabinet members.

President Ali also led five regional outreaches, in Regions Three, Four, Six, Seven and Ten, ensuring citizens are consulted on development initiatives tailored to their specific needs.

SPORTS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Two new international-standard stadiums were commissioned: the Anna Regina Stadium in Region Two and the Bayroc International Stadium in Linden, Region Ten. The Guyana-China Friendship Park also opened during the year.

Looking ahead, the government has signalled that the administration’s focus will remain on advancing ongoing projects, strengthening public services, and delivering the remaining commitments under the five-year development programme.



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, accompanied by ministers of cabinet and members of the public participating in the symbolic walk across the new bridge



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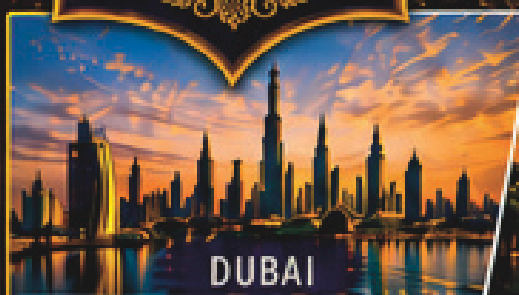
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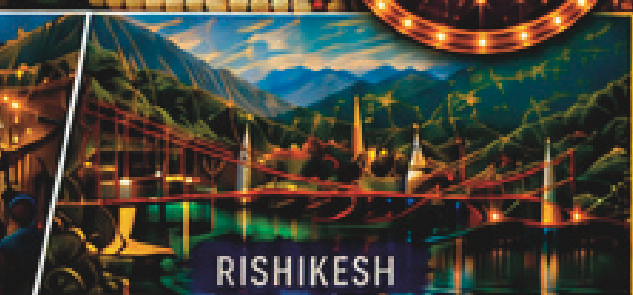
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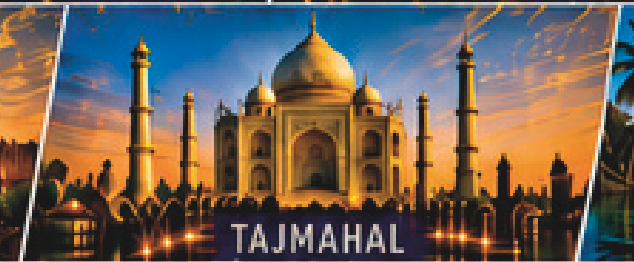
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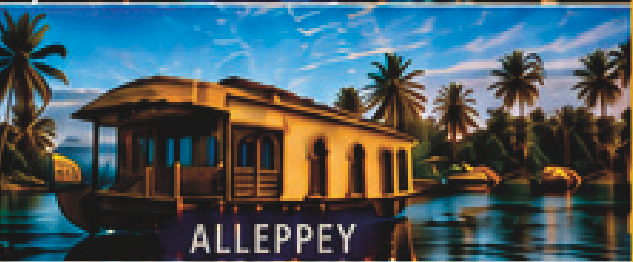
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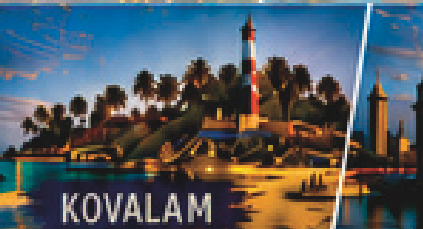
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Some of the 73 victims of the MV Barima tragedy

MV Barima murder case set for paper committal on November 16

THE murder case against three Transport and Harbours Department (T&HD) employees who were charged over the sinking of the MV Barima is moving towards its next major procedural stage, with paper committal proceedings set for November 16.

The date was fixed on Monday when the matter came up before Magistrate Ravindra Mohabir at the Charity Magistrate’s Court, following confirmation from the prosecution that disclosure of the evidence to the defence has been completed.

Senior Police Legal Advisor and attorney-at-law Mandel Moore told the court that the prosecution had disclosed all evidence and material information intended to be relied upon in the case.

The defence was subsequently given seven days to indicate whether statements will be filed on behalf of the accused. That deadline is September 14, when the matter is expected to return to court.

If statements are filed, the defence will have 45 days within which to do so.

The case will then proceed to the paper committal stage on November 16.

The accused are Kevin Price, called “KP”, 40; Rondell Dwayne Roberts, 42; and Delon Granderson, 33. Price is a captain from Melanie Damishana, East Coast Demerara (ECD); Roberts is a chief mate from Grove Public Road, East Bank Demerara (EBD); and Granderson is a goods superintendent from Fellowship, West Coast Demerara (WCD).

The three men were members of the MV Barima’s crew when the vessel sank on July 18, resulting in the deaths of dozens of passengers.

They were jointly charged with murder following legal advice from Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Shalimar Ali-Hack, SC.

The accused first appeared before Chief Magistrate Judy Latchman at the Georgetown Magistrates’ Courts on July 28.

They were not required to plead to the indictable murder charge and were remanded to prison.

The proceedings were subsequently transferred to the Charity Magistrates’ Court.

According to the charge, police alleged that the three men murdered 68 named persons and other persons unknown on July 18, at a location approximately 9.3 nautical miles off the Essequibo Coast near Devonshire Castle.

The allegations arise from the sinking of the MV Barima, an 87-year-old passenger and cargo vessel that was travelling from Georgetown to Port Kaituma in Region One (Barima-Waini).

The vessel departed the Kingston Goods Wharf in Georgetown at approximately 15:15 hrs on July 18.

Later that night, the vessel encountered difficulties while travelling off the Essequibo Coast, near the mouth of the Pomeroon River, before eventually capsizing. Approximately 179 passengers and crew were believed to have been

aboard.

The disaster resulted in 73 deaths, while 76 people survived. Authorities have said approximately 30 people remain unaccounted for.

The incident triggered a large-scale search, rescue and recovery operation involving several state agencies and other responders.

The Guyana Defence Force Coast Guard, Guyana Police Force, Maritime Administration Department (MARAD), Guyana Fire and Rescue Service, and the Civil Defence Commission were among those involved. Local fishermen, private vessels and international partners also assisted with the response and recovery effort.

Divers were deployed as part of underwater searches around the wreck, while search teams covered extensive areas in an effort to locate missing persons and recover victims.

The disaster also led to the establishment of a five-member Commission of Inquiry (CoI) by the Government.

The inquiry is tasked with examining, among other things, the circumstances surrounding the sinking, the seaworthiness of the vessel, regulatory oversight and the emergency response.

It is also expected to make recommendations aimed at strengthening maritime safety and preventing similar tragedies.

The criminal proceedings against the three T&HD employees are continuing independently of the CoI. The DPP has previously indicated that the estab-

lishment of the inquiry does not prevent the criminal case from proceeding and that both processes can continue simultaneously.

A further issue arising from the aftermath of the disaster was the condition of members of the vessel’s crew.

A day after the sinking, Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark Phillips disclosed that two crew members, including the captain, had tested positive for marijuana.

The Prime Minister subsequently said the accused continue to receive psychosocial support while the criminal proceedings remain ongoing.

Price and Granderson are represented by a team led by Dr Dexter Todd, with attorney Dexter Smartt also among the lawyers involved. Roberts is represented by attorney-at-law Everton Lammy-Singh.

The November 16 proceedings will be significant because a paper committal is a preliminary step before a serious criminal matter can proceed to the High Court.

Unlike a trial, the process does not involve witnesses giving live evidence before the magistrate. Instead, the court considers the written evidence placed before it by the prosecution to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to commit the accused for trial in the High Court. The matter will return on September 14, when the defence is expected to indicate whether statements will be filed. The three accused remain remanded.





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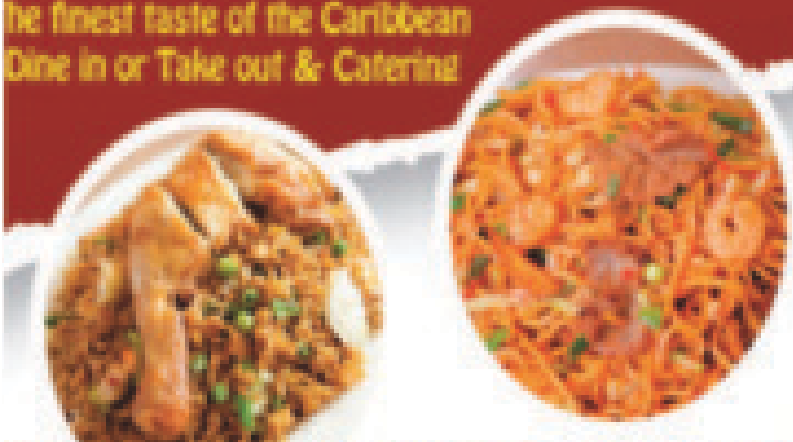
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Guyana President Irfaan Ali to keynote Caribbean tourism conference in October

Guyana President Irfaan Ali will deliver the keynote address at the Caribbean Tourism Organization's State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC) when the regional gathering is held in Georgetown next month.

The conference, scheduled for October 5 to 9, will be held under the theme "Tourism Futures: Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive."

Ali is expected to address the future of Caribbean tourism, including the use of technology and innovation, economic and environmental resilience and efforts to ensure tourism growth benefits communities across the region.

The conference comes as Caribbean destinations grapple with changing traveler expectations, emerging technologies, climate-related pressures and growing competition in the global tourism industry.

"President Ali's participation brings an important dimension to SOTIC at a time when we are asking fundamental questions about what the future of Caribbean tourism should look like," said Dona Regis-Prosper, secretary-general and CEO of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO).

"He brings the perspective not only of a regional head of government but also of a leader who understands sustainable tourism and its connection to national development."

Guyana will host SOTIC for the first time, with the country's approach to sustainable tourism, biodiversity conservation and community participation expected to feature in discussions.

Guyana's Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce Susan Rodrigues said hosting the conference provides an



President Irfaan Ali

opportunity to advance regional discussions on tourism while showcasing the country's growing visitor economy.

"The conference theme speaks directly to the kind of tourism future we are working to build — one that embraces innovation, protects what makes our destinations distinctive and ensures that the benefits of tourism reach our people and communities," Rodrigues said.

Ali, who first took office as Guyana's ninth executive president in August 2020, began his second term in

September 2025.

Before becoming president, he served in the National Assembly and held ministerial portfolios including housing and water and tourism, industry and commerce. He holds a doctorate in urban and regional planning from the University of the West Indies.

SOTIC is the CTO's main regional forum bringing together tourism ministers, commissioners and directors of tourism, private-sector executives, academics, international partners, media and other industry stakeholders.

This year's program will focus on areas including tourism data and intelligence, emerging technology, climate resilience, regenerative tourism, destination competitiveness and inclusive growth.

CTO business meetings will be held October 5 and 6, followed by the main conference on October 7 and 8. The Regional Tourism Youth Congress will take place October 8, while Destination Media Briefings will close the conference on October 9.

Public hearings into MV Barima could begin this month

The Commission of Inquiry investigating the MV Barima tragedy in Guyana says public hearings could begin later this month as commissioners gather evidence, identify potential witnesses and finalize procedures for the inquiry.

In an update on its work, the commission said it began preparations immediately after its appointment, including establishing a framework for handling its broad mandate.

The commission has conducted a preliminary in-person survey of the accident site and secured the Arthur Chung Conference Centre as the venue for the hearings, which will be open to the public.

A secretariat has also been established to provide administrative, research and logistical support.

Investigators are now obtaining data and other information from several

public institutions that could have material related to the capsizing of the MV Barima. These include the Maritime Administration Department, the Transport and Harbours Department, the Guyana Coast Guard and the Air Guard.

The commission said the information is being gathered in accordance with international maritime conventions, related regulations and the Guyana Shipping Act.

Commissioners have also begun analyzing documents concerning the vessel's seaworthiness, the conditions under which it sailed and the crew's operation of the vessel during the voyage.

A list of potential witnesses is being compiled, while officials are preparing a preliminary schedule for witness interviews.

The commission said its Rules of Procedure are in the final stages of com-

pletion and will be published shortly. The rules are intended to ensure that the inquiry is transparent, orderly, fair and accessible.

Work is also underway on a dedicated website that will serve as the commission's authoritative public record and provide greater access to information surrounding the inquiry.

The five-member Commission of Inquiry was sworn in on July 30, with President Irfaan Ali pledging the government's support for its work.

The commission acknowledged the "immense public interest" surrounding the tragedy and pledged to conduct its investigation "impartially, thoroughly and expeditiously, without fear or favour."

It said relevant technical, documentary and witness evidence must be properly identified and assessed before

hearings begin to ensure the proceedings can be conducted efficiently.

"It is also very important that all persons with relevant information have a fair opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry," the commission said, adding that it is working to begin proceedings later this month.

Further details on the start date, schedule and conduct of the public hearings will be announced once arrangements are finalized.

The commission has meanwhile invited members of the public, government and nongovernmental organizations, private and public entities, and members of the international community with relevant information or recommendations to contact its secretariat at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre in Liliendaal.

Guyana boosts food production by nearly 28% as Jamaica faces food insecurity

Guyana has increased production of key agricultural commodities by nearly 28% over five years as the country works to help the Caribbean Community reduce its dependence on imported food, Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha said Tuesday.

Production across 15 CARICOM priority commodities increased from 1.41 million tonnes in 2020 to 1.81 million tonnes in 2025, representing an increase of 394,698 tonnes, or 27.9%.

Mustapha said the expansion has helped Guyana remain on course to support CARICOM's goal of reducing the region's food import bill by 25% by 2030.

"Guyana has emerged as the leading CARICOM country in advancing the agri-food system and, at the same time, a leading voice in prioritising food security," Mustapha said in an interview with the Department of Public Information.

The regional initiative grew out of discussions among CARICOM leaders as member states sought to increase agricultural production and reduce the Caribbean's heavy reliance on imported food.

Mustapha said Guyana recorded what he described as a 77% success rate when progress toward the target was assessed in 2025.

He attributed the gains to increased agricultural production, greater investment and cooperation among CARICOM member states.

"Many countries in the Caribbean, CARICOM, now are requiring our strategy, our help, our expertise," Mustapha said, noting that Guyana has also been providing technical assistance to other countries seeking to expand agricultural production.

Guyana has recorded growth in several areas, including corn, coconut and soybean production. Soybean cultivation has also been expanded to support the country's animal feed industry.

Livestock production increased by 12.5% between 2020 and 2025, while poultry production rose 11.5%, beef 11.7%, pork 6% and egg production 12.4%.

The government is now seeking to expand onion production, with approximately 300 acres expected to be cultivated in Region Nine during the current crop.



Guyana has increased food production while Jamaica is facing food insecurity

Mustapha said the goal is to satisfy more of Guyana's domestic demand while eventually increasing agricultural exports to other Caribbean countries.

"We are not only doing agro-processing to sell locally," he said. "Our agro-processing products are being sold in different parts of the Caribbean."

The minister acknowledged that hurricanes and other natural disasters have disrupted agricultural production in several Caribbean countries and slowed regional progress.

However, he said he remains optimistic that CARICOM can achieve the 25% reduction in its food import bill by 2030 as member states continue expanding their agricultural sectors.

Meanwhile in Jamaica, more than half of the people are facing food insecurity, with 28% experiencing severe conditions in which they go hungry or spend entire days without eating, according to figures cited by a Jamaican food security expert.

Speaking Tuesday at the launch of the 10th International Food Security and Sovereignty Conference, Dr. Cecil Cornwall, head of the Western Hospitality Institute, said 55% of Jamaicans face

uncertainty about having enough food, including running out of food or skipping meals.

He said the situation is even more severe for many Jamaicans.

"Twenty-eight per cent experience severe conditions where they go hungry or go entire days without eating," Cornwall said.

Food insecurity generally refers to a lack of regular access to enough safe and nutritious food needed for normal growth, development and an active and healthy life, according to the United Nations World Food Programme.

The figures come as Jamaica continues to grapple with pressure on its food system from high food costs, extreme weather and the lingering effects of Hurricane Melissa, which devastated agricultural communities and livelihoods after striking the island in October 2025. St. Elizabeth, widely regarded as Jamaica's breadbasket, was among the areas particularly hard hit by the Category 5 hurricane, with homes, farms and livelihoods destroyed.

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, the World Food Programme partnered with the Jamaican government to provide emergency food assistance to vulnerable communities. The agency

said its initial emergency food distributions reached approximately 123,000 people in St. Elizabeth, St. James, Trelawny and Westmoreland.

WFP subsequently launched a cash assistance program with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security targeting another 50,000 people severely affected by the hurricane, including households in Hanover.

The hurricane compounded challenges already facing Jamaica's agricultural sector. Hurricane Beryl, which passed near the island in July 2024, had also caused significant damage to homes and livelihoods. WFP's subsequent cash assistance program reached more than 14,000 people affected by that storm.

Efforts are now underway to strengthen the country's agricultural resilience. The Jamaican government is rolling out a US\$50 million agriculture and resilience program aimed at strengthening food security and helping the sector better withstand climate-related shocks. The issue comes against a wider backdrop of persistent global hunger. The UN's 2026 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report estimated that about 645 million people, or 7.8% of the global population, experienced hunger in 2025.



Mundhe has overseen thousands of inspections of cafes and restaurants

A food safety officer has become a so- cial media star in India - why?

The images are hard to ignore. Cockroaches scurry across kitchen floors. Spider webs cling to walls. Spoiled vegetables rot in corners, while food counters show signs of pest infestation.

One might assume these scenes belong to a struggling restaurant. But the photos are from a members-only club in Mumbai - India's financial capital and the capital of its richest state Maharashtra.

They are among dozens of photos and videos that have gone viral since May, after Maharashtra's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) began a series of inspections at restaurants, cafes and other food businesses across the state.

At the centre of the crackdown is 51-year-old civil servant Tukaram Mundhe, the state's new food commissioner.

Since taking charge in May, Mundhe has overseen thousands of inspections and says food safety laws must be enforced regardless of a business's size, influence or reputation.

His department has suspended the licences of several quick-commerce warehouses and sent notices to Bollywood celebrities for doing advertisements suspected of indirectly promoting restricted products.

"These actions are taken in public health interest. We will continue to take them against violations," Mundhe told the BBC.

The campaign has made Mundhe a recognisable face across India, rare for a civil servant.

Videos of his inspections and press briefings circulate widely on social media, where reels and podcasts have turned him into an unlikely celebrity.

But the spotlight - and the controversy that often comes with it - is nothing new to him.

Food and Drug Administration, Maharashtra

A picture of a kitchen where dirty utensils are kept in the sink and the floor also has dirty water Food and Drug Administration, Maharashtra

An officer in the Indian Administrative Serv-

ice, Mundhe has more than two decades of experience and has been transferred so often that reports say the number exceeds his years in service, though he declines to confirm it.

"I have stopped counting my transfers," he told the BBC.

Admirers see the transfers as evidence of his uncompromising style. Critics argue that this confrontational approach has put him at odds with colleagues and elected representatives.

In the past decade, Mundhe has won praise for his handling of the Covid pandemic outbreak during his time as Nagpur city's municipal commissioner and earlier for his work on water conservation in Maharashtra's drought-prone regions.

"When he was transferred out of Nagpur during the pandemic, thousands showed up outside his home to bid him farewell. It took him an hour just to reach his car," says Shafi Pathan, a journalist who's written Mundhe's biography in the local Marathi language.

But his food-safety crackdown has brought him the most attention yet.

The scale of India's food-safety problem is serious and numbers presented to the parliament in July offer a glimpse of just how widespread the issue is.

Of 223,808 food samples tested across India in 2025 and 2026, nearly one in five were found to be "non-conforming" - which means the samples were either unsafe, substandard or mislabelled.

And Mundhe has responded with an unusually aggressive enforcement drive.

By the end of July, his department had carried out more than 3,100 inspections across the state - a number he expects has since crossed 4,000.

Around 300 licences had been suspended and more than 1,000 improvement notices issued. A new complaints portal had also received more than 16,000 complaints in its first three months, Mundhe said. "Hygiene has always been a problem here," Pawan Agarwal, former chief of India's food regulator, said.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): If you allow small things to upset you today you could miss out on something big that would have made you smile, and maybe even put some extra cash in your pocket. Be positive. See the glass in front of you as half full rather than half empty.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): The planets are about to revive your interest in something you thought was over and done with. It has actually been percolating in the back of your mind for some time and now you are ready to return to it — and this time it will work.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): If you stay calm and think things through carefully over the next 24 hours, you will realize that current events do not have the power to harm you and could even do you some good. The universe knows what you need, so listen to it.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): Your powers of persuasion will be high today and higher still tomorrow, so think about what you want other people to do for you, decide what words you are going to use, and then let them know about it. They will go out of their way to assist you.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): If you let people know you are desperate it's like asking them to take advantage of you. No matter how low you might be feeling you must put on an act and pretend that life has never been better — and, miraculously, it will start improving immediately.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): The approaching new moon in your sign will be the highlight of the year so far, so get ready to do something out of the ordinary, something you have wanted to do for ages but never quite had the courage to attempt. Make it happen!

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): What you have been going through lately is no doubt tough, but in the greater scheme of things, it will do you more good than harm. Keep telling yourself that the good times are just around the next corner. What you believe today will be your reality tomorrow.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): Stand up for what you believe today, because no one else will. Having said that, try not to take life quite so seriously. Get the balance right between doing what you know to be right and doing what feels good for you personally. Life is supposed to be fun.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 2): Cosmic activity in the area of your chart that governs your career is coming to a head and it's likely that the next few days will see changes that affect you in a big way. Remind yourself often that change is an opportunity as well as a challenge.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): You need to understand that methods and routines that worked well for you in the past won't work as well in the future. The upcoming new moon will make it easy for you to visualize new ways of doing things on a creative level. Time for a change.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): Do you focus on making money today so it becomes easier to improve a personal relationship tomorrow? Or do you focus on the relationship and worry about what money you might need later on? Make it the latter. Love must always come first.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): It may seem as if the world is against you but deep down you know it's not true. As one of the zodiac's most emotional signs you have the power to lift up your spirits or send them crashing to the floor. It's better to fly than to fall.

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Moody's upgrades Trinidad and Tobago's rating outlook to stable

Moody's Ratings has upgraded Trinidad and Tobago's sovereign rating outlook from negative to stable while affirming the country's Ba2 rating, a move the government says reflects growing international confidence in its economic strategy.

The Ministry of Finance announced the change Tuesday, saying Moody's cited an improvement in the country's external prospects and steps taken to manage its debt obligations.

According to the ministry, Moody's highlighted the government's proactive debt management strategy, including an international bond issuance in January that facilitated the partial redemption of a US\$1 billion bond due in August 2026. The transaction improved the country's debt maturity profile and helped reduce external vulnerabilities, the ministry said.

Moody's also pointed to Trinidad and Tobago's financial buffers, including the Heritage and Stabilisation Fund. The ministry said the country's combined cash and equivalent reserves amount to approximately 32% of gross domestic product, while its interest-to-revenue ratio remains below 14%, broadly in line with similarly rated countries.

The rating agency is also projecting a significant increase in Trinidad and Tobago's hydrocarbon production beginning in late 2027.



T&T Finance Minister Dave Tancoo

The outlook upgrade comes shortly after the International Monetary Fund completed its 2026 Article IV consultation with Trinidad and Tobago.

According to the Finance Ministry, the IMF concluded that the country's debt remains sustainable over the medium term and that Trinidad and Tobago continues to have full access to international capital markets.

The ministry said the IMF also praised reforms to the National Insurance System, which the government

says have extended the system's sustainability by 12 years.

Moody's also cited Trinidad and Tobago's removal from the European Union's list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions as a positive development.

The government welcomed the revised outlook, saying it follows efforts over the past year to strengthen fiscal discipline, improve revenue administration and pursue fiscal consolidation.

"This is a defining moment for our country," Minister of Finance Daven-

dranath Tancoo said. "When two of the world's most respected institutions independently affirm the direction we have set, it sends a powerful signal to our citizens, investors, and partners that Trinidad and Tobago is firmly back on a path of stability and renewed confidence."

The minister said the government would continue efforts to deepen fiscal consolidation, modernize state institutions and diversify the economy.

Trinidad's Persad-Bissessar urges unity, resilience

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar has paid tribute to the generations of Trinidad and Tobago citizens who endured poverty and hardship to build better lives for their descendants, as the country marks its 64th anniversary of independence.

In an Independence Day message addressed specifically to supporters of the United National Congress (UNC), Persad-Bissessar reflected on the sacrifices made by previous generations while urging supporters to continue pursuing education, entrepreneurship and economic advancement.

"Today we acknowledge our mothers and fathers, grandparents and great-grandparents, and the suffering they endured in the lagoons, cane fields, and oilfields to give us a fighting chance pre- and post-independence," Persad-Bissessar said.

Trinidad and Tobago gained independence from Britain on Aug. 31, 1962.

Persad-Bissessar recalled the difficult circumstances faced by many families in the decades surrounding

independence, including limited access to health care, transportation, electricity and other government services.

She said some families survived on as little as one meal a day while making sacrifices to ensure their children received an education.

"They fetched water in box carts and bull carts, used flambeaus for light, had no healthcare, possessed one outfit of clothes for going out, and usually had to walk or ride a bicycle for miles in the sun or rain to reach any government service," she said.

The prime minister said those sacrifices helped successive generations secure a stronger place in Trinidad and Tobago society and urged UNC supporters to continue that progress for their children.

"We must keep working for our sons and daughters to qualify themselves to have better lives than ours. We must never stop learning, working and improving," she said.

Persad-Bissessar also encouraged citizens to pursue business ownership

and entrepreneurship rather than rely solely on employment or government assistance.

"You must strive to be owners and entrepreneurs, not simply satisfied with being workers or living on state welfare," she said.

The UNC leader also called for greater love and solidarity within communities, saying people should resist becoming bitter despite the challenges they face.

"Greet the day with love, for it is the most valuable key to success. Never allow your heart to become small and bitter; rather, share it, and it will grow and warm everyone and everything around you," she said.

However, Persad-Bissessar also struck a combative political tone, telling supporters that while they should embrace love, they should not allow themselves to be mistreated.

"While I encourage you to live with love in your heart, I also say do not crawl on your belly for anyone. It's either peace or total war, nothing in between,"

she said.

Persad-Bissessar described the UNC as more than a political party, calling it "a belief system rooted in the spirit of resistance, freedom, equality, justice, unity, hope, and faith."

She argued that the party's leadership must remain strong and willing to defend its membership, saying "finesse and diplomacy must be backed up with steeliness and savagery when required."

Persad-Bissessar also used the message to criticize the opposition People's National Movement (PNM), accusing it of having been "hijacked by the local drug mafia and the fake eat-a-food elite."

She closed by reaffirming her commitment to the UNC and the country.

"I am honoured to be your leader, and I am committed to working tirelessly to ensure your voices are heard and our nation moves in the right direction," Persad-Bissessar said.

Trinidad and Tobago celebrated its 64th anniversary of independence on August 31.

St Kitts PM ‘stable’ as doctors continue medical evaluations in Florida

St Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Dr Terrance Drew says he is recovering well and remains in stable condition as doctors in South Florida continue medical evaluations following a recent health scare.

Drew, 49, provided an update on his condition Thursday in a five-minute video broadcast, days after experiencing nausea, vomiting, dizziness and difficulty walking and maintaining his balance.

The prime minister, who is also a medical doctor, did not disclose the cause of his illness. He said he was initially evaluated in St Kitts before receiving medical care in Martinique and later travelling to the United States for further tests.

“My wife and I travelled here on the advice of medical specialists in St Kitts and Nevis as well as specialists in Martinique so that further investigations could be conducted,” Drew said.

“At this stage there is nothing alarming to report, but the doctors are continuing their investigations and I believe it is important that they are allowed to be thorough.”

Drew said his symptoms began last Sunday with persistent nausea that progressively developed into episodes of vomiting.

He also experienced pain on the left side of his neck, a mild headache and dizziness before becoming unsteady on his feet.

“As the day progressed, I began feeling unsteady on my feet and had difficulty with my balance and walking. I understood that these were symptoms



Dr Terrence Drew — gave update on his medical condition

that should not be ignored,” he said.

Drew contacted three doctors, including a neurologist, and was advised to go to the JNF General Hospital, where he underwent scans and other tests.

He was subsequently treated in Martinique before travelling to South

Florida on the advice of his doctors.

Drew said he has been following medical advice to rest and has temporarily stepped away from his usual exercise routine. He said he was able to take a gentle walk Thursday morning.

“Though I certainly miss my regu-

lar gym regimen, I am content for now taking it easy,” he said.

The prime minister described the health scare as a “wake-up call” and urged residents to pay attention to changes in their health, attend regular checkups and get adequate rest.

Antigua PM slam gas stations closures amid fuel price hike

Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne has criticized gas station operators over their decision to close their facilities Tuesday as part of a push for higher profit margins, calling the timing of the action inappropriate as consumers face rising fuel prices.

“I just got a call that gas station dealers are demanding an increase in their profit margin and threatening closure, at a time when the Government has eliminated its margin to keep prices down. Bad timing!” Browne said in a statement posted on Facebook on Monday.

The prime minister said the government had eliminated the consumption tax on fuel in an effort to limit the impact of higher global oil prices on consumers.

“Our government eliminated the consumption tax to keep prices down; how can anyone justify an increase in profit margin at this time, to further burden their customers, during an esca-

lation in oil prices,” Browne said.

“All gas stations are profitable. If you want to make more money; you increase prices at an opportune time, instead of burdening your customers with an increase, during a time of escalated oil prices,” he added. “That’s not good business.”

Browne said he had been assured that several gas stations would remain open Tuesday despite the planned shutdown.

The dispute over dealers’ margins predates the latest increase in global oil prices. In March, 21 gas station operators wrote to the government seeking an increase in the 8% margin they receive on fuel sales.

Operators have argued that the rate has remained largely unchanged since the early 1990s, even as expenses including wages, electricity, insurance and maintenance have increased.

The dispute comes as Antigua and Barbuda prepares to raise fuel prices



Gaston Browne

amid rising international energy costs linked to the ongoing war between the United States and Iran.

Browne said on his weekly radio program that the government could no longer continue subsidizing fuel prices at the level it had maintained in recent months.

“We have not only been subsidiz-

ing the cost of fuel at the pump, but we have also been paying West Indies Oil Company rather than collecting tax revenues from the company,” Browne said.

“I want the public to understand that we normally collect between three and four million dollars monthly from WIOC on an average. So instead of collecting that three to four million dollars per month for the past six months, roughly EC\$24 million, we now owe WIOC EC\$15 million,” he said.

Browne said Ministry of Finance officials had advised that the required increase in fuel prices could be around EC\$3.50 per gallon. However, the government determined that such a sharp increase would place too much pressure on consumers and instead settled on a smaller EC\$2 increase.

“That was too large an increase to be implemented in one fell swoop, so we settled on a smaller increase,” Browne said.

Soaring airfares threaten Christmas trips home for Jamaican diaspora

Soaring airfares and reduced airline capacity are raising concerns about whether Jamaicans overseas will be able to afford trips home for the Christmas and winter season, as the island grapples with a sharp decline in visitor arrivals.

Christmas is traditionally one of the busiest periods for Jamaicans in the diaspora to return home for family gatherings, weddings, funerals and other events. But travellers have increasingly complained about ticket prices that have doubled in some instances, particularly on routes between Jamaica and Florida.

The issue has now sparked a political clash, with Opposition Spokesperson on Tourism and Linkages Andrea Purkiss calling on the Government to outline what it is doing to bring down travel costs and reverse the decline in arrivals.

“Somewhere in Fort Lauderdale this morning there is a Jamaican woman wondering if she can afford to bury her mother,” Purkiss said in a statement. “Ninety minutes of flying, but she’s being asked to pay US\$3,700. That is not a fare. That is a wall.”

The Opposition said checks in mid-August showed American Airlines quoting US\$3,744 for a return trip between Montego Bay and Miami, while JetBlue flights serving Fort Lauderdale were repeatedly sold out.

The spike in fares comes amid reduced airline capacity following the collapse of budget carrier Spirit Airlines, high travel demand and wider cost pressures affecting the aviation industry.

Purkiss argued that Spirit’s exit was particularly significant because the carrier provided competition on routes between Jamaica and major US markets.

She criticised Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett for previously characterising Spirit as accounting for only about 3 per cent of Jamaica’s airlift capacity.

“The minister counted seats when he should have been counting competitors. The other airlines took Spirit’s passengers, then raised prices,” Purkiss said.

The Government has rejected the Opposition’s characterisation of the situation, arguing that Jamaica’s tourism and



aviation sectors have been navigating a series of significant external shocks.

Transport Minister Daryl Vaz accused Purkiss of misleadingly comparing 2026 figures with 2024 without adequately accounting for the effects of hurricanes, reduced hotel inventory, cuts in airline capacity and Spirit’s collapse.

“I won’t attempt to teach Ms Purkiss how supply and demand works. We are still operating at about 70 per cent room capacity. With less seats and less flights,” Vaz said in a post on X.

He said the Government had already outlined strategies during the sectoral debates to address the challenges, including securing new direct airline routes, diversifying Jamaica’s tourism markets and accelerating the restoration of hotel rooms.

“The dominant drivers are not a sudden collapse or a secret absence of a plan,” Vaz said, listing Hurricane Melissa, reduced hotel inventory in western Jamaica, airline capacity cuts on key US routes, the loss of a low-cost carrier and global cost pressures among the factors affecting the industry.

Bartlett has also cautioned against using individual airfare quotations as a measure of overall ticket prices, saying airline pricing is complex and the highest advertised fare does not necessarily represent what the average passenger pays.

“The fact is that airfares are struc-

tured in a very peculiar way, and sometimes the figure that is quoted as the last figure is not the average price that is paid for the seat,” he said.

The debate comes as Jamaica continues to record a significant year-on-year decline in tourism.

The island welcomed 2.34 million visitors and generated US\$2.5 billion in tourism earnings through Aug. 31, according to Bartlett.

“This is 17 per cent less than last year, to date, in terms of arrivals and 18 per cent down in terms of revenue,” the tourism minister said.

He nevertheless described the performance as “satisfying” given the circumstances facing the industry.

Approximately 70 per cent of Jamaica’s hotel room stock is currently available, with the remaining 30 per cent still out of service following Hurricane Melissa, which struck the island in October 2025.

Bartlett said the unavailable inventory includes some of Jamaica’s most in-demand rooms, with much of that capacity expected to return between the end of this year and the first quarter of 2027.

Earlier figures cited by the Opposition showed stopover arrivals falling 23.5 per cent to 1.13 million, while arrivals from the United States — Jamaica’s largest tourism source market —

were down 27.9 per cent. Passenger traffic through Sangster International Airport was also down 26.7 per cent during the first half of the year.

Purkiss said that while arrivals by non-resident Jamaicans increased 7.6 per cent in June, they remained 16.5 per cent below 2024 levels.

She warned against interpreting the June increase as evidence that Jamaicans overseas can comfortably afford current fares.

“Do not mistake our people’s love of country for evidence they can afford these prices. A Jamaican will borrow, beg, or empty savings to get home,” she said.

Purkiss is calling for Bartlett to report to Parliament on airlift negotiations for Florida routes ahead of the winter season, publish the Government’s assessment of Spirit’s exit and its contingency plans, identify any relief available to Jamaicans facing emergency travel costs, and provide a timeline for restoring competitive service between Kingston and Fort Lauderdale.

With the peak Christmas travel period approaching, the dispute is likely to intensify as the Government seeks to restore airline and hotel capacity while travellers weigh whether the cost of coming home is simply becoming too high.

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Jamaica Opposition raises security concerns over US military agreement

Guyana has received its first group of deportees from the United States under the Trump administration's third-country deportation program, following months of negotiations between the two governments.

Foreign Secretary Robert Persaud said Saturday that six nationals of Cuba and Afghanistan arrived in the South American country on Friday after being vetted by Guyanese authorities and found to have no criminal backgrounds.

Persaud said the six were removed from the United States primarily for immigration-related reasons.

The arrangement between Guyana and the United States will remain in effect for one year and does not constitute permanent resettlement, he told The Associated Press. Persaud said the US has made no further requests for Guyana to receive additional deportees.

The arrivals follow the government's recent announcement that it had reached a migration cooperation framework with the United States to receive a limited number of vetted, non-criminal individuals.

Under the arrangement, those transferred to Guyana through the Assisted Voluntary Return Program will remain in the country while awaiting a determination on their immigration status.

They could eventually return to their countries of origin or relocate elsewhere.

The United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM) is responsible for implementing the program, including providing housing and other support. Guyanese authorities have said



Citizens of Cuba and Afghanistan were among those deported to Guyana

the government will not bear the financial costs associated with the arrangement.

Guyana is the latest member of the 15-nation Caribbean Community

(CARICOM) to receive people deported from the United States under third-country arrangements.

St. Kitts and Nevis and Belize have also received small groups, while St.

Lucia was expected to accept its first group this week, according to officials (see story, opposite page)

Trinidadian man pleads guilty to sex trafficking in NY

A 33-year-old Trinidadian national and lawful permanent resident of the United States has pleaded guilty to sex trafficking and admitted to kidnapping six other women in New York, according to the US Department of Justice.

Chad Barclay entered the guilty plea on Wednesday and faces a minimum of 15 years in federal prison.

During his plea hearing, Barclay admitted that on September 13, 2022, he enticed a woman to his residence to engage in commercial sex before robbing and sexually assaulting her.

As part of his plea agreement, he also stipulated to kidnapping six additional women between 2022 and 2023.

Barclay was initially charged in a 20-count superseding indictment in August 2023 involving five victims. The charges included interstate prostitution, Hobbs Act robbery, kidnapping, access device fraud, aggravated identity theft, witness tampering and obstruction of an official proceeding.

A second superseding indictment filed in May 2026 added a sex trafficking charge involving one of the original five victims, as well as interstate prostitution, Hobbs Act robbery, kidnapping and other charges involving two additional victims.

“Chad Barclay has now admitted that he kidnapped, violently raped, and robbed multiple female victims,” said Assistant Attorney General A. Tysen Duva of the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

“This prosecution demonstrates that we will always seek justice for survivors of trafficking and abuse to prevent more of these heinous crimes. This type of exploitation and violence has no place in our civilized society.”

US Attorney Joseph Nocella Jr. for the Eastern District of New York described Barclay as a “dangerous predator” and said his guilty plea holds him accountable for the harm

inflicted on his victims.

A federal district court judge will determine Barclay's sentence after considering the US Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The case was investigated by the FBI's New York Field Office and the New York Police Department as part of the Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force.



Chad Barclay



Saint Lucia accepts first 6 US migrant transfers, rejects 4 others

Saint Lucia has received six foreign nationals transferred from the United States under its third-country nationals agreement with Washington, while rejecting four others initially proposed for relocation, the government said Monday.

Foreign Affairs Minister Alva Baptiste confirmed the arrivals during the government’s weekly Cabinet press briefing, saying the United States had initially submitted 10 people for consideration but Saint Lucia did not approve all of them.

“I wish to emphasize that under the agreement with the US, St. Lucia retains full discretion to review and reject any individual proposed for relocation, and in this first case, St. Lucia did not accept all 10 individuals that the US had submitted,” Baptiste said.

The minister did not disclose the nationalities of the six people accepted by Saint Lucia or provide details about the four who were rejected.

Baptiste said the transfer and reception of the six migrants went smoothly and insisted that government assessments had found no indication that they posed a threat to public safety or national security.

“They are certainly not criminals, as has been portrayed in some circles,” Baptiste said. “These are people who have experienced an out-of-the-ordinary difficulty and in very, very trying circumstances in relation to the status in the United States and who are now seeking an opportunity to rebuild their lives.”

Under the agreement, Saint Lucia is expected to receive up to 10 third-country nationals per quarter over the next two years.



Fpreign Affairs Minister Alva Baptiste

Baptiste said the US government has committed to covering the cost of relocating the transferees, while international partners will provide additional support for those who choose to voluntarily return to their countries of origin.

Two of the six people who arrived have already expressed a desire to return home, according to Baptiste.

He said the Ministry of External Affairs is working with the relevant embassies and international partners to

facilitate their voluntary repatriation.

The remaining four have indicated that they want to stay in Saint Lucia for the time being and will continue to be accommodated under arrangements established by the government and supported by international partners.

Baptiste stressed that the arrangement is temporary and does not amount to permanent resettlement in Saint Lucia.

“Their presence in St. Lucia is governed by a set of predefined terms rather than open-ended residency, and this arrangement is temporary in nature and does not constitute permanent resettlement at this juncture in time,” he said.

The minister added that voluntary repatriation would remain available to those who initially choose to stay but later decide to return to their home countries.

He said the migrants would be treated with dignity and would have regular and private access to legal representatives and family members.

Baptiste also acknowledged public debate surrounding the agreement, saying questions raised on social media and in sections of the news media were legitimate and that some concerns were “not without merit.”

However, he said the government would continue to prioritize national security while meeting its humanitarian obligations.

“We can protect our national interests, safeguard our systems, and remain vigilant about our national security while still treating vulnerable people with dignity,” Baptiste said. “That is not weakness, that is responsible leadership.”



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India to stage landmark inaugural Women's Champions Trophy

India will take center stage in a landmark moment for women's cricket after being selected to host the inaugural ICC Women's Champions Trophy in February 2027.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) confirmed that India will replace Sri Lanka as host of the six-team tournament, which will be played from February 14-28 in Mumbai and Vadodara.

The decision, ratified by the ICC Board on September 2, sets the stage for a new addition to the women's international calendar and brings together six of the world's leading teams for a compact, high-stakes competition.

Australia, England, India, New Zealand, South Africa and Sri Lanka will contest the historic first edition.

The Cricket Club of India in Mumbai and Vadodara International Cricket Stadium will provide the settings for the tournament.

The competition is expected to add another significant layer to the expanding women's international game, with the six participating nations representing some of the strongest teams in the world.

For India, hosting the inaugural edition also represents an opportunity to showcase its growing influence in women's cricket on home soil.

The tournament had originally been earmarked for Sri Lanka, but the change follows the country's continuing efforts to implement reforms outlined at the ICC Annual Conference in July.

India emerged from a formal evaluation process that also included Bangladesh and South Africa.

The ICC assessed all three candidates against its established host-selection criteria before recommending India for the assignment.

The ICC Board subsequently approved the recommendation on September 2, clearing the way for India to stage the historic tournament.

The decision gives the competition a high-profile home while allowing Sri Lanka additional time to complete the reforms requested by the governing body.

ICC Chairman Jay Shah described the tournament as an important development in the continued growth of women's cricket.

"The ICC Women's Champions Trophy 2027 marks an exciting new chapter for women's cricket," Shah said.

He emphasized that the inaugural competition would bring the sport's leading teams together while creating another incentive for nations to improve their rankings and compete for opportunities on the international stage.

"As the inaugural edition of the tournament, it will bring together the best teams in the world in an intense,



high-quality competition, while creating even greater incentive for teams to continue rising through the rankings and competing for a place on the global stage," he added.

The introduction of the Champions Trophy is part of a broader effort to establish a stronger annual rhythm for elite women's cricket.

Shah pointed to the significance of having a major ICC women's tourna-

ment every year, arguing that greater consistency can help sustain interest among players and supporters while strengthening the sport globally.

"With a marquee ICC women's event now taking place every year, we have a significant opportunity to build greater momentum, provide more consistency, and create a stronger rhythm for the women's game, its players and its fans around the world," he said.

With the dates and venues now confirmed, attention will turn to the six teams preparing to compete for a place in history.

When the first ball is delivered in Mumbai on February 14, the winner will not simply claim a trophy.

It will become the first-ever champion of a tournament designed to establish another enduring fixture on the global women's cricket calendar.

Queen's Park Oval immortalizes T20 titans Bravo, Narine and Pollard

Three of Trinidad and Tobago's most influential figures in modern cricket now have their names permanently attached to one of the Caribbean's most historic sporting venues.

Dwayne Bravo, Sunil Narine, and Kieron Pollard were honored Monday when the stand formerly known as the Trini Posse Stand at Queen's Park Oval was officially renamed the Bravo, Pollard, Narine Stand.

The unveiling formed part of Trinidad and Tobago's 64th Independence Day celebrations, adding another significant chapter to the legacy of three players whose careers helped shape the global rise of Twenty20 cricket.

The tribute also places the trio alongside some of the country's most revered cricket figures whose names already adorn sections of the historic ground.

The newly renamed stand now sits within a venue that celebrates the country's cricket heritage at almost every turn.

The Queen's Park Oval already bears tributes to legends including the Brian Lara Pavilion, the Deryck Murray Players' Gallery, the Jeffrey Stollmeyer Stand, and the Learie Constantine Stand.

Bravo, Narine, and Pollard now join that distinguished company.

Their inclusion reflects not merely their accomplishments for Trinidad and Tobago, but their enormous influence on the explosive global growth of T20 cricket.

Few players have embodied the format's evolution more completely than Pollard and Bravo, while Narine has established himself as one of the game's most formidable and en-

during T20 bowlers.

Pollard's career stands as one of the clearest measures of the extraordinary scale of modern T20 cricket.

Across 751 T20 matches, he accumulated 14,933 runs and claimed 341 wickets, combining destructive power with valuable all-round ability over a career that stretched across leagues and continents.

Bravo was equally influential, finishing his T20 career with 6,970 runs and 631 wickets from 582 appearances.

His ability to contribute with both bat and ball, together with his leadership and personality, made him one of the format's defining figures.

Narine's statistical legacy is every bit as remarkable.

He recently became only the second bowler to reach 650 T20 wickets, an extraordinary milestone that underlines his longevity and effectiveness.

He is also the leading wicket-taker in Caribbean Premier League history and has appeared in 614 T20 matches.

Together, the three have helped turn T20 cricket from an emerging format into a global phenomenon.

The honor comes while two members of the trio continue to make their presence felt on the field.

Narine and Pollard are currently representing the Trinidad Knight Riders in the CPL, extending their association with the franchise and with Trinidadian cricket.

Bravo, meanwhile, remains involved with the Knight Riders in a different capacity, serving as a member of the franchise's coaching staff.



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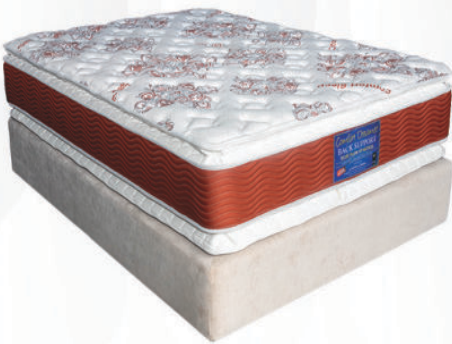
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August 31	Amerindian Religious Service	17:00hrs	Umana Yana
September 1	Amerindian Heritage Cultural Extravaganza (Opening Ceremony)	18:00hrs	Whirl Wind Village, Sophia
September 2 – 5	Amerindian Arts, Craft and Cuisine	10:00hrs Daily	Whirl Wind Village, Sophia
September 2 – 5	Amerindian Heritage Month Cultural Nights	19:00hrs	Whirl Wind Village, Sophia
September 6	Amerindian Fitness Walk	06:00hrs	Umana Yana to National Park
September 7	Amerindian Art Exhibition	18:00hrs	National Gallery of Art – Castellani House
September 10	Reflection on the Life of Stephen Campbell	19:00hrs	Santa Rosa, Moruca
September 12	Amerindian Heritage Village Day	10:00hrs	Bumbury, Region 1
September 14 - 18	School Tour (Kariako)	Daily	Office of the President and various National sites
September 18	Amerindian Heritage Dinner	19:00hrs	Royal Ballroom
September 19 - 20	Amerindian Heritage Safari	06:00hrs	MoAA to Fall Mouth, Reg 10
September 24 - 27	Amerindian Heritage Games	10:00hrs	Everest Ground
September 30	Amerindian Heritage Pageant	19:00hrs	National Cultural Centre