



*"On behalf of the staff of the Embassy of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana in Venezuela I would like to launch the Guyana Gazette which seeks to establish a system to share information with our stake holders, the diplomatic community, Guyanese Missions overseas and the Diaspora in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The Guyanese Gazette will be published at least once a quarter. At this time we are of the belief that access to factual information is critical as we go forward to develop our strategies for human development and friendship between Guyana and Venezuela. I wish to place on record my thanks to all the staff for their support in this effort."*

*Dr. Richard Van West-Charles  
Ambassador*



# Guyanese Gazette



from Venezuela

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## Celebrating the Strength and Impact of Guyanese Women on International Women's Day



On March 8th, the world comes together to honor the achievements and contributions of women across all spheres of life. This International Women's Day, we pay tribute to the remarkable resilience, strength, and leadership of Guyanese women, who stand as catalysts for change in our society.

Guyanese women have long been at the forefront of driving progress and transformation, both locally and globally. Their unwavering commitment to equality, justice, and empowerment has paved the way for positive change and upliftment in communities throughout Guyana.

The Embassy of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana in Caracas extends warm greetings to all Guyanese women, mothers, and women worldwide. We urge all our global citizens to reflect on the plight of women who have suffered abuse in various regions around the world, including Haiti, Gaza, Israel, Africa, and conflict areas in Asia.



## Ambassador of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana presented Letters of Credence to President Maduro.

The Letters of Credence of the Ambassador of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, H.E. Dr. Richard Van West-Charles, were received by the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro Moros.

The meeting, which took place in the Sol del Perú Hall at the Miraflores Palace, aimed to strengthen diplomatic ties and cooperation between both countries.

Richard Van West-Charles holds a Doctor of Medicine degree and has a career spanning over forty years in public health and water resources management.

## Celebration of the 54th Anniversary of Republic Day

As part of the Celebration of the 54th Anniversary of Republic Day, His Excellency Dr. Richard Van West-Charles led an extraordinary Reception on February 23, 2024, attended by the Honorable Vice Minister Raul Li Causi, Honorable members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Venezuela, public figures, and the Guyanese diaspora in Caracas. It was a ceremony featuring musical and cultural performances and speeches by the Ambassador and Vice Minister Li Causi, emphasizing the priority of relations between both countries, cooperation, and the construction of a Zone of Peace in the region according to President Irfaan Ali's proposal.





# Meeting with Guyanese diaspora in Caracas

Last Saturday, February 3rd, 2024, the Embassy of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana in Caracas, Venezuela received more than 80 Guyanese citizens residing in Caracas to share experiences and greet the new Ambassador H.E. Dr. Richard Van West-Charles.

## Sharing with the diaspora

H.E. Dr. Van West-Charles shared with the Guyanese diaspora residing in Caracas in a cordial meeting held last Saturday, February 3, 2024 in the spaces of the Embassy of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.





## **H.E. Dr. Richard Van West-Charles, Ambassador of Guyana, held a meeting with the Governor of Bolivar State, Mr. Angel Marcano.**

The meeting was characterized by cordiality and the intention to dialogue and work towards the development of both nations.

Various opportunities for cooperation in tourism, agriculture, and industry between Bolivar State and the Cooperative Republic of Guyana were explored. Reference was made to the cordial meeting held in San Vicente and the Grenadines between President Nicolas Maduro and President Mohammed Irfaan Ali, where cordiality and the desire to maintain a Zone of Peace in the region prevailed.

## **Celebrating 54 Years of Guyana's Republic Day in Bolivar State**

On the occasion of the 54th Anniversary of Republic Day, H.E. Dr. Richard Van West-Charles, Ambassador, led a celebration alongside the Guyanese diaspora in Bolivar State. The Reception was accompanied by Cultural activities, interreligious prayers and a Unity Speech by the Ambassador, highlighting the work of President Dr Irfaan Ali in CARICOM, striving for a zone of peace and leaving aside conflicts to move forward in development of Guyana and Venezuela as neighboring nations



## Meeting with the Bolivar State Chamber of Commerce

Another productive day in Bolivar State! H.E. Dr. Richard Van West-Charles led our delegation to the Bolivar State Chamber of Commerce, where we engaged with entrepreneurs and representatives from various economic sectors. A special thanks to Mr. Oscar Gomez, President of the Bolivar State Construction Chamber, for his warm reception.



## Lunch with the Bolivar State Chamber of Commerce

His Excellency Dr. Richard Van West-Charles shared a lunch with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce of Bolivar State, where they discussed possibilities for cooperation in commercial and industrial matters. Venezuelan entrepreneurs also expressed their interest in exploring the Guyanese market to invest in various projects ranging from the construction sector to technologies.





# Visit to San Felix Market

As part of His Excellency Dr. Richard Van West-Charles' Official Visit to Bolivar State, the opportunity was seized to visit San Felix Market and greet Guyanese citizens with businesses in that area, engaging with them and listening to their experiences.

## Consular visit to Guyanese detained in San Felix

As part of H.E. Dr. Richard Van West-Charles' visit, a Consular Access Visit was also conducted to a Guyanese citizen detained at the Macagua prison in San Felix, Bolivar State, ensuring his health and physical integrity. Additionally, H.E. Dr. Richard Van West-Charles is actively working on addressing with two Guyanese citizens detained in Porlamar, Nueva Esparta State, Venezuela, as well as, in conjunction with the Red Cross, the Embassy is actively seeking the whereabouts of four Guyanese fishermen missing since November 2023.





# Diplomatic Outreach

As part of H.E. Dr. Richard Van West-Charles' agenda in February, various courtesy visits were made to Ambassadors accredited to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, including Qatar, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia. Additionally, Guyana remains open to dialogue, cooperation, and the strengthening of diplomatic relations, with a commitment to seeking peace as a guiding principle.

## Visit to the facilities of "El Sistema" of Orchestras

As part of the Diplomatic Agenda, H.E. Dr. Richard Van West-Charles visited the facilities of the Youth Orchestra System known as "El Sistema". This project aims to teach music to Venezuelan children from every region starting at an early age, serving as a cultural development model. It is also a replicable project in Guyana, sparking Guyana's interest in fostering exchanges and projects with "El Sistema" in music education and training.



# Remarks by Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Council President and President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, at the Security Council meeting on climate change and food insecurity

February 13, 2024

Council President and President of Guyana, speaking in his national capacity, stressed the significant impact of conflict, food security and climate change on global security.

Highlighting the dire consequences of conflict-driven hunger, he pointed to the fact that nearly 149 million Africans are currently facing acute food insecurity, with 122 million of them residing in conflict-affected areas. Drawing attention to the significant economic toll of conflicts, he cited the \$5 billion needed to eradicate hunger caused by war in Africa and the \$4 billion worth of agricultural losses in Ukraine due to conflict-induced land degradation.

More than 6 million hectares of land in Colombia have been abandoned or seized as a result of conflict between 1980 and 2010. Disappointed over the lack of action by the international community, he said: "We do not see the interplay and we do not place priority on these issues".

Putting a spotlight on the overlooked consequences of war, he underscored the significant economic, social and environmental damages inflicted, including land degradation, deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions.



# **Remarks by Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Council President and President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, at the Security Council meeting on climate change and food insecurity**

**“The war in Iraq generated 141 million of emission in four years, which is equivalent of 20 million cars in one year,” he observed, highlighting an estimated 150 million tons of carbon dioxide expected from the conflict in Ukraine after 18 months of war. With the environmental and food impacts during the rebuilding phase not being calculated, he asked whether “we are we going to be bold to calculate these damages and assign a value to the damage”.**

**Noting that “food and climate are sometimes missing from the overall analysis of the impact of war and conflict”, he urged the Security Council to adopt “a very targeted approach” to address the nexus of conflict, food security and climate change, while emphasizing the critical role of political will and global cooperation.**





## **Statement on Haiti by CARICOM Chair, H.E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali**

**“As Chairman of CARICOM, I wish to make the following Statement on behalf of the Community in relation to the development in Haiti.**

**“CARICOM has been singularly focused on the events unfolding in Haiti over the last few days. The expanded Bureau has been meeting separately with Prime Minister Henry, the Stakeholders in Haiti, and our International Partners, to bring resolution to this highly complex matter, where persons’ lives and livelihoods are at stake. The complexity requires us in these consultations to ensure that a Haitian-led and a Haitian-owned solution may be achieved as soon as possible. We remain deeply engaged and will update on the outcome of our deliberations as soon as practicable. Thank you”**

# Guyana, Suriname, and Brazil pledge energy cooperation in trilateral declaration

In a joint declaration issued after a trilateral working meeting, Presidents Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali of Guyana, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, and Chandrikapersad Santokhi of Suriname expressed their commitment to strengthen energy cooperation among the three countries. The meeting, held on the sidelines of the 46th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), underscored a shared goal of promoting sustainable development with social justice.

According to the declaration, the Presidents affirmed their commitment to maintaining Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace and fostering cooperation for sustainable development. They recognized the historical relations of friendship and good neighborliness binding their nations and highlighted the importance of Amazonian and South American integration.

To advance their common objectives, the leaders agreed to establish trilateral working groups at the technical level, focusing on physical and digital infrastructure, energy, and cooperation in combating transnational illicit activities. The working groups will delve into initiatives of mutual interest and report progress to the respective Ministers for consideration in trilateral ministerial meetings.





## Guyana, Suriname, and Brazil pledge energy cooperation in trilateral declaration

In the energy sector, the Presidents pledged to deepen discussions on cooperation in the oil and gas industry, covering exploration, production, regulation, and emergency response plans. They expressed interest in sustainable hydroelectric projects and the integration of electrical networks to enhance regional energy security. The leaders welcomed the opportunity to explore renewable energy modalities, including bioenergy.

Regarding infrastructure, the Presidents acknowledged the potential to strengthen physical and digital connectivity. Projects such as the full paving of the Linden-Lethem road connecting Roraima in Brazil to Georgetown and the modernization of road connections passing through French Guiana were emphasized. Trade and investment facilitation measures along these routes were also deemed crucial.

In the fight against transnational crime, the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to joint police operations, intelligence exchange, capacity development activities, and cooperation projects utilizing remote sensing images. They urged security agencies in Brazil, Suriname, and Guyana to intensify cooperation and build upon initiatives in the Guiana Shield region.

The declaration concluded with an emphasis on the successful implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in their respective countries.



# ExxonMobil strikes oil offshore Guyana with Stena drillship



U.S.-headquartered energy giant ExxonMobil has made a new oil discovery at the Stabroek block, using a drillship owned by Stena Drilling. This black gold find marks the firm's first hydrocarbon discovery off the coast of Guyana in 2024.

ExxonMobil's latest oil discovery at the Bluefin well, which is located approximately 8.5 kilometers southeast of the Sailfin-1 well in the southeastern portion of the Stabroek block, joins the more than 30 already made at this block offshore Guyana since 2015.

Commenting on the new oil discovery, Alistair Routledge, President of ExxonMobil Guyana, highlighted: "Our exploration program continues to improve our understanding of the block's potential to drive viable oil-and-gas development. This latest find reinforces that we have the people, skills and technology to safely and responsibly deliver value to Guyana from the country's resources."

According to the oil major, the Bluefin well encountered around 197 feet (60 meters) of hydrocarbon-bearing sandstone and was drilled by the Stena DrillMAX drillship in 4,244 feet (1,294 meters) of water. This drillship recently became the first one to be awarded DNV's Abate (P) notation, after Stena Drilling implemented an energy management system across its fleet.



# ExxonMobil strikes oil offshore Guyana with Stena drillship

ExxonMobil intends to have six FPSOs on the Stabroek block by year-end 2027, with the potential for up to ten FPSOs to develop the estimated gross discovered recoverable resources of more than 11 billion barrels of oil equivalent. The U.S. oil major kicked off production from its third oil development at the block on November 14, 2023.

ExxonMobil Guyana Limited operates the Stabroek block and holds 45% interest while its partners, Hess Guyana Exploration and CNOOC Petroleum Guyana Limited, hold 30% and 25% interest, respectively. Currently, Yellowtail and Uaru, the company's fourth and fifth projects, are in progress and will each produce approximately 250,000 barrels of oil per day. ExxonMobil is working with the government of Guyana to secure regulatory approvals for a sixth project at Whiptail. An FPSO, destined to work on ExxonMobil's fourth oil project in the Stabroek block, left drydock and arrived along the quayside at the Seatrium yard in Singapore last month.

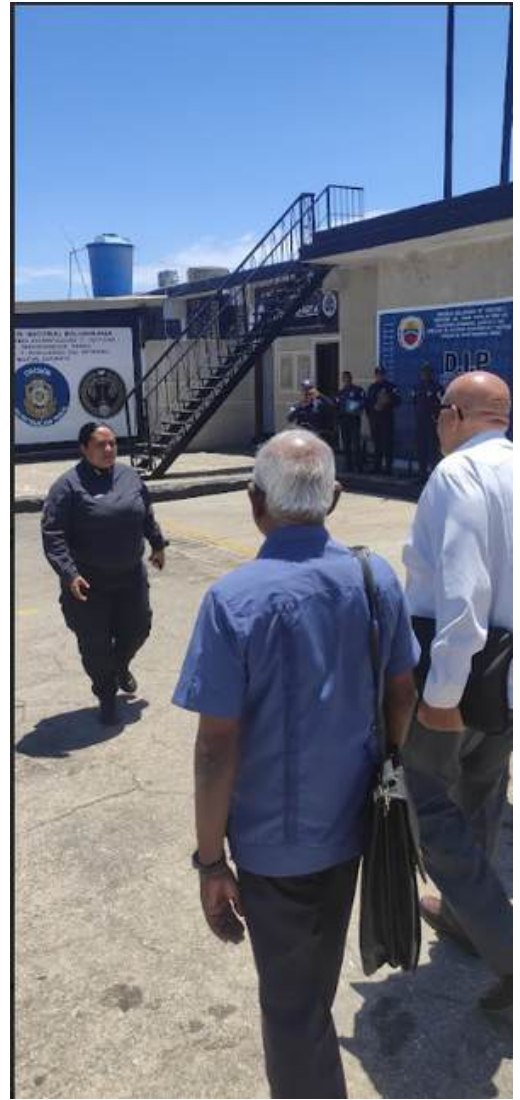


# Visit to Nueva Esparta State

H.E. Dr. Richard Van West-Charles and Delegation of the Embassy of Guyana in Caracas Visit to Nueva Esparta State

On Wednesday, March 13, 2024, Ambassador and his team conducted a Consular Visit to two Guyanese citizens detained since December 2022 at the National Bolivarian Police Guard Center in Sabana Mar, Porlamar. They engaged in conversations, verified their health status, and addressed their concerns and requests regarding Consular matters.

Later, Ambassador met with over 30 Guyanese citizens in the city of Juan Griego, where they shared pleasant moments, clarified doubts regarding Consular matters, listened to concerns and questions from the community. Ambassador expressed his support and constant closeness to the Guyanese diaspora, echoing the message of unity, cooperation, and harmony of His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of Guyana.



# National Religious Observancy in Guyana

## Phagwah (Holi)

Phagwah or Holi as it is commonly called is an annual Hindu Festival of Colours celebrating the arrival of spring. This Festival was brought to Guyana by our East Indian foreparents who first came to Guyana some 186 years ago. This festival has developed into a grand celebration involving Guyanese from all walks of life as they celebrate and enjoy together as One People, One nation and One Destiny.

It is an explosion of colour and unity across the country. Some people started the day at mandirs, where they sang chowtals before colouring each other. In keeping with tradition, Holi is celebrated by the singing of chowtals, special songs that have been handed down from generation to generation as well as spraying of coloured powder and water. Children especially enjoy spraying the coloured water on people passing by with powerful jets known as pichkaris.

Holi is the vibrant and colorful festival of India. Hindu spring festival Phagwah/Holi, also known as the festival of colours, is observed in India, Guyana and many other countries of the World. Holi is split into two events: Holika Dahan and Dhulivandan (Rangwali Holi).

Holika Dahan takes place the night before Dhulivandan, which will be on March 24, this year. Wood and dung cakes are burned in a symbolic lure to signify good defeating evil.

Dhulivandan happens the morning after Holika Dahan, on March 25, 2024 it is a noisy affair where people throw handfuls of colored powder (Gulal) at one another playfully, while getting drenched in water. The timing of Holi is synchronized with the moon, which means that the dates of each celebration vary.



# National Religious Observancy in Guyana

## Phagwah (Holi)

Holika Dahan t symbolizes the exuberance of life. It is a day of forgiveness, friendliness, oneness and equality. It is also a celebration of the triumph of good over evil.

As per Hindu scriptures, there was a prince called Prahlad who was an ardent believer of Lord Vishnu. This did not go down well with his father, the powerful and wicked King Hiranyakashyap, because he wanted to be worshipped by everyone. Hiranyakashyap's sister Holika was blessed with a boon of staying unharmed in fire so he asked her to sit on fire with Prahlad in her lap as he wanted his son dead because he was angry with the fact that his son worshipped Lord Vishnu and not him.

While Prahlad was saved from this sinister act as he was a staunch devotee of Lord Vishnu, Holika was burned to flames as a punishment for misusing her power.

This is how the tradition of Holika dahan or Holika bonfire started and it is being practised to mark the beginning of this Hindu festival.

The Guyana Embassy in Caracas, headed by His Excellency, Dr. Richard Van West Charles, extends happy Holi / Phagwah greetings to everyone of Guyanese heritage in Venezuela and everyone at home in Guyana. May this festival of colours continue to enhance peace, love and unity between and among all of us, as Guyanese.



# National Religious Observancy in Guyana

## The Holy Month of Ramadan

The 9th and holiest month of the Islamic year, Ramadan is a time when Muslims from all over the world dedicate themselves to working on their spirituality.

As part of this month of spiritual rejuvenation, Muslims worldwide fast during daylight hours (consuming no food or water) as a form of worship to bring them closer to Allah (God). Families and friends unite to break their fast together, after sunset during iftar or before dawn during suhour.

During Ramadan, most Muslims try to avoid negative acts or their personal vices, whilst instead practicing positive acts, exercising self-control and showing compassion for those less fortunate than themselves. They aim to better their relationship with God and their community in various ways: by attending the mosque for iftar, spending extra time reading the Quran, participating in volunteer work, or coming together for long nights of prayer.

In Venezuela the first day of fasting was March 11, 2024 and Eid al-Fitz is anticipated to be on April 8 while in Guyana the first day was March 12 and Eid al- Fitz is anticipated to be on April 9. This variance in days is due to the sighting of the Moon. Ramadan ends with the new moon and is celebrated with the holiday of Eid al-Fitr, the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast, where families and friends gather together to share celebratory meals and give gifts to their children. Some gives gift to the less fortunate as well. Eid al-Fitr is considered to be a time for gratitude, forgiveness, and for making amends.

The Guyana Embassy in Caracas, headed by His Excellency, Dr. Richard Van West Charles, wishes to congratulate and extend best wishes to all Muslims across the World and more especially those of Guyanese ancestry for the sacrifices they are



# National Religious Observance in Guyana

## Easter in Guyana

### A Celebration of Faith, Tradition, and Unity

Easter in Guyana is a vibrant and significant religious observance that brings together communities across the country. Rooted in Christian traditions, this annual celebration is marked by a variety of religious ceremonies, cultural events, and family gatherings.

For many Guyanese, Easter represents a time of reflection, renewal, and spiritual growth. The week leading up to Easter Sunday, known as Holy Week, is filled with religious services, including Palm Sunday processions, Maundy Thursday services, and Good Friday commemorations of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Churches throughout the country hold special services and events to honor the religious significance of the holiday.

In addition to its religious importance, Easter in Guyana is also a time for cultural festivities and community gatherings. Many families come together to share traditional meals, such as hot cross buns and pepperpot, a savory stew made with meat, vegetables, and spices. There are also Easter egg hunts, kite-flying competitions, and music festivals that celebrate Guyanese culture and heritage.

One of the most iconic traditions of Easter in Guyana is the flying of kites on Easter Monday. This custom dates back to the days of British colonial rule when slaves were given a day off from work on Easter Monday. They would gather in open fields to fly kites, which symbolized the resurrection of Jesus and the triumph of good over evil. Today, kite-flying has become a beloved national pastime, with families and friends coming together to design and fly colorful kites of all shapes and sizes.

Easter in Guyana is not only a time for religious observance and cultural celebration but also a time for unity and togetherness. It brings people of all backgrounds and beliefs together to celebrate their shared values of faith, family, and community. Whether attending church services, enjoying traditional foods, or flying kites in the open sky, Easter in Guyana is a time for joy, reflection, and fellowship.

