



**GMSA  
NEWSLETTER**  
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**Opportunities for  
Private Sector Investment –  
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“Dream Realised Housing Drive”**



**Minister of Agriculture  
Unveils Emerging Opportunities  
for Agriculture at GMSA's  
First 2021 Business Forum**

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**TIMBER WORKS INC.**  
**SHOWROOM**

## GMSA Meets with Dr. Ashni Singh on Areas of Concern for Business Growth in Guyana



**T**he Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association facilitated a Business Luncheon on 29 October, 2020 at Pegasus Hotel Guyana, which featured specially invited guest, Hon. Deodat Indar, Minister within the Ministry of Public Works. The focus for discussion was "Plans for Improving Public Infrastructure in Guyana's Oil and Gas Economy".

Speaking on the theme of infrastructural transformation, President of GMSA, Mr Rafeek Khan, opened by recognising the Government's enthusiasm and commitment to infrastructure development across the nation.

During his presentation, Mr. Khan highlighted a few key issues. He noted that the cost of transportation to and from the Hinterland and, by extension, the accessibility to natural resources have been challenges for Guyanese. These issues cause stifled supply chains and lead to entrepreneurs taking dangerous and costly risks, ultimately, inhibiting trade and growth for the entire nation.

He asserted that "competitiveness is ultimately the key factor that affects growth of industries. From farm to



market, forest to mill, the cost of transportation for goods are as much, or even more than 50% of the value." To this end, Mr. Khan remarked that in order to ensure



competitiveness moving forward, infrastructural transformation will be essential. He qualified that such infrastructural works must be built well and built to last and that this sort of approach is also complementary to sustainable development.

The GMSA President concluded by pleading with

decision makers to give urgent attention to the needs of operators, especially those placed at the source of national supply chains and reminded the audience of private sector's commitment to supporting those decision makers in their policies and programs for transformation.

#### **Minister of Public Works speaks on the Ministry and its work**

The Ministry of Public Works, according to the Minister within the Ministry, Deodat Indar, is one of the most important ministries considering that it was allocated one-third of Guyana's entire 2021 capital budget, amounting to GYD\$103bn. Under its supervision lies a massive network of bodies and agencies including the Work Services Group, MARAD, Guyana Civil Aviation Authority, Transport and Harbours, Guyana National Shipping Corporation, Demerara Harbour Bridge Corporation, CJIA and ferry services among others.

In keeping with the theme on the necessity of public infrastructure transformation for Guyana's competitiveness, Minister Indar sought to recall some of the commitments made prior to assuming office.

**Community-level Issues:** He relayed some of the more small-scale projects – “the kitchen-table issues of the individual” – on his Ministry's mandate that involve building up communities across the nation on a micro-level. These include the building and rebuilding of



community roads across the country, dealing with drainage and flooding within those communities, tackling issues of garbage collection and indirectly responding to the charge of hinterland access. Minister Indar spoke of building and maintaining up to 2000 miles of hinterland roads.

These projects help communities on multiple dimensions, from facilitating travel and trade to creating direct employment for the individuals that live around the area since labour, skills, machinery and supplies will likely be drawn from the very areas which are being upgraded.

**Travel Infrastructure:** The Minister spoke of the more transformative projects that his Ministry began plans for undertaking. These include the deep-water harbour in Berbice, the Linden-Lethem road, a 4-lane highway from Georgetown to Timehri, the Parika to Rockstone (Del Conte) road, a bridge across the Corentyne river and the high-span bridge over the Demerara River.

These projects will not only facilitate easier travel but will open up massive swathes of new lands for industrial/commercial and residential usage and, given the demanding requirements of such projects in terms of labour, raw materials, and skills, the volumes with which said projects are being done, Guyana's overall economic activity is also set to benefit.

**Maritime Sector Improvements and Upgrades:** The Minister recognised that there are severe ship and shipping limitations of the Demerara River due to its current depth and the Ministry is undertaking the dredging of the river and removal of ship-wrecks in order to facilitate larger ships for travel. There has also been the upgrading of various stellings as well as for sea and river defence.

**Energy Infrastructure:** Referencing the LCDS strategy, Minister Indar noted that Guyana's energy capacity will be expanded and its energy mix/portfolio diversified to include hydropower – through the Amaila Fall Hydropower Project (165MW of capacity) for which an RFP has already been advertised – natural gas, namely the Gas-to-Shore Project (which should deliver up to 300MW of energy), and solar power, for which grid ties are to be set up across the country to supplement energy supply. According to the Minister, these projects will cut costs by at least 50 percent and considering that Guyana has one of the highest costs of energy in the region, the country's entire economic landscape will be transformed with these undertakings.

**The Aviation Sector:** The Minister made reference to the major developments the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) has since undergone. In terms of domestic travel, the Government has met with aircraft operators to inquire why prices are still high, in spite of the removal of



VAT. He also spoke about various certifications being granted to ensure Guyana maintains international standards of airport safety.

**Homes Hospitality and Health:** Through Go-invest, a body which facilitates investment in Guyana, the Government is seeking to deliver around 2000 rooms for accommodation in the very near future and is seeking to bring international recognized brands to Guyana. There is also a push for building new hospitals across the country to secure the health of the citizens. In addition, a

massive housing drive through the Ministry of Housing to deliver homes for tens of thousands is underway. He also made mention of the new concept city, Silica City, to cater for an influx of persons and the expansion of the country. As the GMSA continues to foster enhanced relationships between its Subsectors and Government Ministries, the Association anticipates further collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works to improve the physical infrastructure necessary for social and economic development.

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# Opportunities for Private Sector Investment – Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA)



**Mr Deodat Maharaj**  
Executive Director, CEDA

**O**n the 6th October, 2021 Mr. Deodat Maharaj, Executive Director of Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA) paid a well-received courtesy visit to the Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association Ltd. (GMSA). The GMSA delegation included Mr. Ramsay Ali, Vice President, Mr. Jason Allicock- Executive Director and Ms. Nerissa Thornhill, Secretary/Accountant.

Mr. Maharaj gave an overview of the Agency's objectives and noted that, as a regional trade and investment promotion agency, CEDA is mandated to enhance the competitiveness of CARIFORUM SMEs and assist with the advancement of trade and investment regionally and internationally. Mr. Ali commended CEDA's contribution and support to private-sector entities and stated that the GMSA and its members have a long and fruitful history of collaborating on various initiatives.

Discussions centered around two (2) main sectors – Agro-processing and Services. Mr. Ali highlighted the GMSA's Agro Web Portal and explained how this initiative is assisting its membership in reaching a wider audience and enhancing export opportunities. He

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indicated that CEDA should consider partnering with the GMSA in publicizing the portal on the Agency's website, which will ensure regional and international audiences are aware of the products and services offered by Guyana. Mr. Maharaj welcomed the initiative and committed to sharing the GMSA's Agro-processing portal on CEDA's platform.

In addition to engaging the Agro-processing Sector, Mr. Maharaj showed keen interest in the Services Sector. He mentioned that the Services Sector has great opportunity and benefits to explore with the onset of the oil and gas economy. One such immediate opportunity includes training to transition to digital content for the Guyanese entertainment industry. Mr. Ali noted the need for digitalization in all industries and advised that more collaboration will be done with CEDA to develop various specialties within the Services Sectors.

Mr. Maharaj indicated that Mr. Damie Sinanan, CEDA's Manager of Competitiveness and Export Promotion is scheduled to visit Guyana in mid-October to promote the next 'call' for grant funding facility. He proposed that GMSA invites members to the sensitization session, to learn more on how they can benefit from the facility and the processes and procedures in applying. He noted that the requirement to access the same is less onerous.

Mr. Ali thanked Mr. Maharaj, and by extension, CEDA for its commitment to the Guyanese private sector. GMSA will work with CEDA in this regard through Ms. Carol Webster – Chairperson for GMSA Services Sector.



# BULKAN TIMBER WORKS INC.

**Bulkan Timber Works Inc. (BTW)**, located at Yarrowkabra, on the Linden / Soesdyke Highway, has now opened a Showroom at **8 Smyth Street, Werk-en-Rust, in Georgetown** (obliquely opposite the Licence Office).

The company had decided earlier this year to place an emphasis on the local market and in this regard, invested significantly in upgrading their plant & equipment, as well as the physical infrastructure of their facility. As a result, the company has total confidence in all of their products, with the attention to detail that takes place in the manufacturing process.



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## **GMSA Members Participate in the Central Housing and Planning Authority's “Dream Realised Housing Drive”**

**T**he Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association (GMSA) on October 15, 2021, participated in the sixth “Dream Realised Housing Drive” which was organized by the Ministry of Housing and Water (MoHW) – Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHPA), held at the Guyana National Stadium.

The Ministry's delegation was led by Hon. Minister Collin Croal - Minister of Housing and Water and included Hon. Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water Ms. Susan M. Rodrigues, Mr. Andre Ally - Permanent Secretary, Mr. Sherwyn Greaves, Chief Executive Officer and Mrs. Denise King-Tudor - Director of Operations.

Through this exercise, approximately 1,000 moderate income-earners from Region Four were allocated housing lots in Plantation Diamond and Plantation Grove, East Bank Demerara.

GMSA has a plethora of members that possess skills, competencies and experience to assist the Ministry in the development of sustainable communities through infrastructure works and supply of materials. This ability to contribute also extends to products and services available to potential homeowners by local companies such as: housing construction, landscaping, quality wood products, lesser used species of wood and waterproofing of concrete.



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Over 18 companies from various public and private sectors (Insurance, Banking, Water, Oil and Gas, Construction and Forestry and Wood Products) participated within the event, with the inclusion of: Bulkans Timber Works, SunCrest Farm, Barama Company Ltd, Durable Wood Products, Floor-it and Dover Waterproofing Technologies, Massy Gas products

and Gafsons Industries Ltd – that fall under the purview of GMSA.

The GMSA and its members extends appreciation to the Ministry for the invitation to participate in the initiative and look forward to future opportunities for collaborations in building communities.

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## Minister of Agriculture Unveils Emerging Opportunities for Agriculture at GMSA's First 2021 Business Forum



**T**he Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association (GMSA) on Friday, September 24, 2021, held the first of a series of Business Luncheons for 2021.

In anticipation of the imminent observance of Agriculture Month held annually in October, guest of honor, Minister of Agriculture (MoA) the Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha M.P. gave the keynote address. The Minister was accompanied by his esteemed MoA delegation which included Mr. Mandanlall Ramraj, Director General, MOA, Ms. Delma Nedd, Permanent Secretary, MOA, Mr. Aditya Persaud, Senior Compliance Officer, MOA, Mr. George Jervis, Chief Technical Officer, MOA and Dr. Richard Blair, Advisor, CARICOM Agri-Food System, MOA.

President of the GMSA, Mr. Rafeek Khan, in his opening remarks lauded the ambitious foresight of Guyana becoming the breadbasket of the Caribbean. However, he posed a challenge to all stakeholders to start this initiative by first becoming a self-sufficient state. Mr. Khan stated "Guyana has been an important supplier of fresh farm produce and processed farm products to the

Caribbean. While we have the potential to be the breadbasket of the Caribbean, I would like to challenge our dear country of Guyana to realize this ambitious desire locally first."

He indicated that in previous years, imports of agricultural products far exceeded that of exports, and there needs to be a strategy to reverse this continuous trend. "For this to happen we need more export-oriented domestic production and manufacturing of agro products," stated Mr. Khan.

Mr. Khan urged all and sundry to collectively pay attention to household food security and nutrition by putting measures in place mitigate adverse effects of seasonal food production and price volatilities. He encouraged everyone to get involved in home-gardening as home gardens are an integral part of local food systems and the agricultural landscape of developing countries, such as Guyana.

Hon. Minister Mustapha commenced delivery of his keynote address by assuredly stating that the



Government of Guyana and the Ministry of Agriculture recognize that “Emerging Opportunities in Agriculture for the Private Sector in Guyana's Oil and Gas Economy” is immensely important. Firstly, agriculture and manufacturing will prove to be critical in counteracting any adverse effects associated with the exploitation and capitalization of natural resources. Secondly, there is a projection of growth in national income as the new oil and gas sector will serve to unlock opportunities in traditional sectors, principally agriculture and manufacturing. Secondly, The Hon. Minister emphasized that Guyana is experiencing an influx of expatriates to serve the oil and gas and auxiliary sectors which inevitably increases the demand for high quality processed foods with greater domestic value-added. This influx also ultimately implies a large and potentially explosive future growth in the downstream components of the food value chain particularly farming, processing, wholesaling, retailing and logistics.

In this regard, the Minister stated that the Government is committed to directing substantial resources towards the alleviation of chronic under investment in public goods. The programmes initiated include adequate stable power and water supply, credible quality and safety standards with efficient testing and enforcement to enhance agriculture health and food safety and traceability services, all of which will provide an entry point for the demanding export markets as well as high-end local markets.



Alluding to the importance of the MoA partnering with the Private Sector, the Minister said that the Ministry has facilitated and created an environment which supports investment opportunities and recovery efforts in priority areas such as agro-processing, coconut, corn and soyabean, niche vegetables, beef, dairy, poultry and aquaculture development. He furthered shared with attendees, the Government's proactive role in the development of the local processing sector through a programme that aims to improve the quality of existing

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agro-processing products, develop incubation centers in strategic locations. With the injection of GY\$262.0M, the Ministry will be establishing certified processing facilities in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10, which will be utilized for commercial production and product development to assist small and medium agro-processors.

He explained the integral role of the Guyana Marketing Corporation (GMC) in supporting Local Content and added that the GMC will be focusing on subsidizing raw materials for agro-processors, to aid in reducing their production costs. The Minister stated that GMC has some 2,100 locally produced items that are also available on supermarket shelves. He called on the private sector to buy local and reduce the imports of similar products and commodities that are produced locally.

Livestock was brought to the fore of the presentation as the Hon. Minister expressed his concern over dairy imports since dairy as a percentage of total value of food imports has increased from 4.3% to 8.7% during the periods 2018 and 2019, with an average import bill of US\$27M. He was pleased to note that recent investment in the establishment of dairy processing facilities by Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL) and Amaya Milk Company will address the large dairy import bill and gives a clear indication of foreign interest in boosting

Guyana's economy. Minister Zulfikar mentioned some of the Government's incentive for investment in the livestock sector, including VAT-free concession and waivers on Import Duty for machinery, equipment tools and supplies for agro-processing; technical/extension/R&D support by Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA), concession on large scale livestock farming, zoning for livestock and crop farmers, and Tax concession on investment in agro-processing facilities.

Another investment for livestock includes the establishment of abattoirs that meet international Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) standards. This initiative will open new markets and will see the construction of a cattle abattoir in Region 5 and a swine abattoir in Region 4. The GLDA is also in the process of introducing its Livestock Information System to improve the availability, reliability and accuracy of livestock data for decision making and reporting and enhance animal traceability and surveillance capacity.

Minister Zulfikar reiterated that the agriculture sector remains integral for future development of the nation. As such, he assured that oil and gas resources will be used to develop Guyana's food systems and create an environment where the private sector can flourish. One of the main concerns is the cost of energy and has

remained the most difficult hurdle to overcome for competitiveness in agro-processing and manufacturing sectors. With the gas to shore project expected by 2024, the Minister affirmed that the project will not only benefit the agriculture sector immensely as the cost of energy can reduce by as much as 50%, but also allow the country to conserve on foreign exchange which is lost through the importation of fuel.

The Minister mentioned the opening up of arable lands in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 which are slated for development to expand cultivation of rice and other crops. On matters of drainage and irrigation, he stated the Ministry is striving to upgrade the infrastructure to improve the performance of the system in response to impacts of climate change. He explained that the construction of farm-to-market access roads is a national policy that supports the agriculture sector, thus the Government through the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority will focus on the construction of at least 65KM of roads for 2021-2022 period in Regions 3, 5, 6 and 10.

In the address, Minister Mustapha shared his role in the

Ministerial Task force as Guyana continues to assert itself as a leader in agriculture within the CARICOM region. The Ministry is implementing the CARICOM Agri-Food System Strategy which focuses on a fully commercialized regional food system with emphasis on target groups such as Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. He noted that Guyana holds lead responsibility for Agriculture, Agriculture Diversification and Food Security in the CARICOM. As the Chairman of the Special Ministerial Task Force on Food Production and Food Security, the Minister posited that the task force has been proactive in initiating dialogue with regional and strategic entities on the matter of de-risking the regional agriculture sector.

In closing, the Honorable Minister thanked the GMSA for the opportunity to engage the Membership and all stakeholders as he sought to put into perspective the absolute importance of both the agriculture and manufacturing/processing sectors and the key roles they play in an emerging oil and gas economy. He ended his address by encouraging those present, stating "Let's all work collectively to ensure that we are heading in the right direction."





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**Keynote Speaker:**  
**H.E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali**  
President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana

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