



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PARLIAMENT OF
THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC
OF GUYANA

OFFICIAL REPORT

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2020-2024) OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE DOME OF THE ARTHUR CHUNG CONFERENCE CENTRE, LILIENDAAL, GREATER GEORGETOWN

87TH Sitting

Thursday, 21ST November, 2024

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE
HANSARD DIVISION**

The Assembly convened at 10.27 a.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

*Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.,
*Speaker of the National Assembly,
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Brickdam,
Georgetown.*

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (38)

(i) MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY/CIVIC (PPP/C) (38)

Prime Minister (1)

+ Hon. Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Anthony Phillips, M.S.S., M.P.,
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Vice-President (1)

+ Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P.,
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+ Hon. Mohabir Anil Nandlall, M.P.,
*Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs,
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+ **Cabinet Member**

* **Non-Elected Speaker**

Senior Ministers (16)

+ Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P.,
(Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni),
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance,
Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance.
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+*Hon. Dr. Ashni K. Singh, M.P.,
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+ Hon. Dr. Frank C. S. Anthony, M.P.,
Minister of Health,
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+ Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P.,
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Ministry of Education,
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+ *Hon. Brindley H.R. Benn, M.P.,
Minister of Home Affairs,
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* **Non-Elected Minister**

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+ Hon. Vickram Outar Bharrat, M.P.,
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[Absent]

Hon. Mr. Shurwayne F.K. Holder, M.P.,
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Rupununi.
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(ii) A New and United Guyana, Liberty and Justice Party and The New Movement (ANUG, LJP & TNM) (1)

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Ms. Hermina Gilgeours,
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly,
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Public Buildings,
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Hansard Division Officers (16)

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Chief Editor

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Ms. Shevona Telford,
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Audio Technician

Mr. Daison Horsham,
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ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**Welcome to His Excellency, Shri Narendra Modi, the Hon. Prime Minister of India**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, please join me in giving the heartiest Guyanese welcome to His Excellency, the Hon. Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. [Applause]

Hon. Members, it is a very distinct honour for our National Assembly, for our country and especially for our people to have the leader of the world's largest democracy visiting our humble Chamber this morning. I asked one person if there is anything he would say would be the legacy of Prime Minister Modi. He said it would be hard work for the people. In this regard, His Excellency, Prime Minister Modi, has led his State and his country for over two and a half decades with hard work from the top. Before that, he did the hard legwork that makes for great servants of the people. With this, I invite His Excellency, the Hon. Shri Narendra Modi, to give us his address. [Applause]

[As translated from Hindi by Ms. Malini Gupta and Ms. Ruchi Naithani from the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India]

ADDRESS BY THE HON. SHRI NARENDRA MODI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA**Prime Minister of India [Hon. Shri Narendra Modi]:**

Hon. Speaker, Manzoor Nadir; Hon. Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Anthony Phillips; His Excellency, Vice-President, Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo; Hon. Leader of the Opposition; Hon. Ministers; Members of Parliament (MPs); Hon. Chancellor of the Judiciary; other dignitaries; ladies and gentlemen. I am truly grateful to all of you for inviting me to be here, today, with you in Guyana's historic Parliament. Only yesterday, Guyana conferred on me its highest honour. I convey my heartfelt gratitude to all of you and to every citizen of Guyana for this honour. Every citizen of Guyana is, for me, *star bai*. My grateful thanks to all of Guyana's citizens. I dedicate this award to every citizen of India.

Friends, the relations between India and Guyana run deep. This relationship is one of soil, of sweat and of hard work. It was about 180 years ago that an Indian set foot, for the first time, on Guyanese soil, and after that, in good times and bad, whatever the circumstances, the relations between and India and Guyana have been filled with deep affection. The Indian Arrival Monument is a symbol of this very close affection that we share. I will be visiting it in a short while from now. Friends, today, I am here in your midst as Prime Minister of

India. However, 24 years ago, I had the opportunity to visit this beautiful country as someone just curious to learn. Generally, people like to visit countries that are known for their glamour and glitter. However, I just wanted to learn about Guyana and understand its heritage and its history. You may find several persons in Guyana today who still remember having met me then. I have a lot of memories of my visit to Guyana at that time – the passion people have for cricket here, the music here, and something that I can never forget is the chutney. Chutney, whether from India or Guyana, is truly wonderful. Friends, it does not happen often but, at times, you visit another country and the history of that country feels just like the history of your own country.

10.37 a.m.

Over the last 200 to 250 years, both India and Guyana experienced the same kind of colonialism. We have gone through the same struggles. Both of our countries also experienced the same restlessness for freedom from subjugation. Both here in Guyana and in India, so many people dedicated their lives to the freedom struggle. Whether it was Mr. Charles Freer (C. F.) Andrews here, who shared a special bond with Gandhiji, or the President of the East Indian Association, Mr. Jang Bahadur Singh, all of them fought for freedom from subjugation together and they attained it. Today, both our countries are strengthening democracy in the world and, that is why, on behalf of 1.4 billion Indians, I convey my greetings to all of you in Guyana's Parliament today. I congratulate each member of Guyana's Parliament. Every single effort by you all to strengthen democracy in Guyana is contributing towards development in the world. Friends, as we make efforts to strengthen democracy, we must also continuously keep an eye on what is happening around the world.

When India and Guyana became independent, the world was faced with very different challenges. Today, the 21st Century world is faced with completely different kinds of challenges. The systems and institutions created after the second World War are crumbling. After the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic, when we should have moved towards a new world order, the world was caught up with other things. In these circumstances, the best motto the world can follow today to move forward is 'Democracy First, Humanity First'. The mantra 'Democracy First' teaches us that we must take everyone along and in doing so become a partner in everyone's development. The 'Humanity First' motto guides our decisions. When we make humanity first the basis of our decisions, the results we obtain are always in the interest of mankind. Friends, our democratic values are so

strong that they become our pillar of support, enabling us to face any ups and downs on our path to development.

To build an inclusive society, there is no better system than democracy. Whatever may be the belief or creed of citizens, whatever may be their background, democracy guarantees for all citizens protection of their rights, and a bright future. Both our countries have together shown that democracy is not just a law, it is not just a system, we have shown that democracy is in our deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). It is reflected in our vision and actions.

Friends, a human-centric approach teaches us that every country is equally important and that the citizens of each country are equally important. Therefore, when it was necessary to unite the world, India, during its Group of 20 (G20) Presidency, presented the 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' mantra. When the entire world faced a very difficult time of COVID-19, when the entire humanity went through a difficult time, India gave the message of 'One Earth, One Health'. When we had to mobilise the efforts of all countries to fight climate-related challenges, India presented its vision, 'One World, One Sun, One Grid'. When collective efforts were necessary to save the world from natural disasters, India launched CDRI, that is, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. When the world had to create a vast network of pro-planet people, India started a global movement Mission LiFE, that is, Lifestyle for Environment. Friends, following this very principle of 'Democracy First, Humanity First', India is fulfilling today its duty as Mr. Vishwa Bandhu, our friend to the world.

Whenever there is any kind of crisis in any part of the world, it has always been our honest endeavour to reach there as a first responder. You have all been through the COVID-19 pandemic when every country was focused only on saving and protecting itself. India shared medicines and vaccines with over 150 countries. It is a matter of great satisfaction that in that difficult time India was also able to assist Guyana.

Whenever conflicts erupt anywhere in the world, India has always come forward to help with relief and rescue efforts. Whether it is Sri Lanka or Maldives, whichever country faced a crisis, India came forward to offer selfless support. Whether it was Nepal, Turkey, or Syria, wherever there was devastation due to earthquakes, India was the first to reach. These are our values. We have never moved forward based on just our self-interest. We have never moved forward with an expansionist vision. We have never tried to get control of resources or to grab resources. I believe that whether it is

space or the seas, these should not be zones of conflict but, rather, of universal cooperation for the world as well. This is not a time for conflicts. This is a time to identify and address reasons that give rise to conflicts. Today, there are numerous challenges like terrorism, drugs and cybercrime and it is only by overcoming them that we will be able to create a better future for the generations to come. This is possible only when we let 'Democracy First, Humanity First' take centre stage.

Friends, India's views are always based on principles, trust, and transparency. Even if a single country or a single region is left behind, we will never be able to achieve our global goals. That is why India says every nation matters. That is why I repeat, every nation matters. That is why India thinks of island nations not as small island nations but as large ocean countries. It is with this very belief that we laid out the Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) vision for island nations connected to the Indian Ocean. We have also created a special forum to connect countries off the Pacific Ocean. It is with these good intentions that during its G20 Presidency, India fulfilled its duty by admitting the African Union into the G20.

Friends, today India firmly stands for global development. India stands for peace. It is in this spirit that today India has become the voice of the Global South. India believes that the Global South in the past has suffered way too much. In the past, we progressed while protecting nature, as this was an integral part of our character and our culture. However, several countries achieved development by harming the environment. Today, countries of the Global South are being forced to pay the highest price for climate change. It is absolutely imperative to correct this imbalance in the world.

Friends, whether it is India or Guyana, we also have our aspirations for development. We dream of better lives for our people and that is why it is of utmost importance that the Global South speaks in one voice. This is a moment of awakening for the countries of the Global South. This moment is presenting us with an opportunity to work together and to create a new world order, and in this, I see a big role for Guyana and for all of the peoples' representatives present here today.

10.52 a.m.

Friends, there are several women Members present here. One very big factor that impacts the future of the world and future growth is women, who make up half of the world's population. In previous centuries, women did not get enough

opportunities to contribute towards global growth and there were several reasons for this. This was not just the case in one country or in the Global South. In fact, this was the case all across the world. However, in the 21st Century, women will play a significant role in ensuring global prosperity. That is why during its G20 Presidency, India chose women-led development as an agenda priority.

Friends, in India, we have a massive campaign to assign leadership roles to women in every sector at every level. Women are stepping forward in all sectors in India today. Out of the total number of pilots all across the world, only 5% are women; whereas in India, out of the total number of pilots, 15% are women. In fact, there is a large number of women fighter pilots also in India. Even in the developed countries of the world, among Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, what is known as STEM, among the STEM graduates across the world, only 30 to 35% are women. In India, this number has crossed 40%. In India today, big space missions are being led by women scientists. You will also be happy to know that India has also passed a law for the reservation of seats for women in its Parliament. Today, in India, there is representation by women at various levels of democratic governance. In India, at local levels, we have what is called the Panchayati Raj, which are local bodies or village councils. In India's Panchayati Raj system, or the village councils, over 1.45 million elected representatives are women. Now, you can imagine that the number of women who represent the local government in India is almost twice the total population of Guyana.

Friends, for us Guyana is a gateway to the vast Latin American continent. You can become a bridge of opportunities and possibilities between India and this vast continent and, together, we can further improve the India/Caribbean Community (CARICOM) partnership. Just yesterday, the India/CARICOM Summit was held here in Guyana. We decided to further strengthen every aspect of our partnership.

Friends, India is extending all possible support for Guyana's development. India and Guyana are working together to ensure that there is investment here in infrastructure and that there is investment here in capacity building. The ferry provided by India and the aircraft provided by India are today proving to be very useful for Guyana. India is also providing extensive help to Guyana. The T20 World Cup event hosted by you was spectacular. India is happy to have assisted in the construction of the stadium.

Friends, our development-related partnership is now entering a new era. Demand for energy is growing rapidly in India, and India is also diversifying its energy sources. In this regard, we view Guyana as an important energy source. We are also making continuous efforts to ensure that our businesses invest more in Guyana.

Friends, all of you are also aware that India has a huge youth capital. India has a quality education and skill development ecosystem. India will be happy to host as many students as possible from Guyana. Today, through the Parliament of Guyana, I also invite the youth of Guyana to work together with Indian innovators and scientists; collaborate globally and act locally. This is the inspiration we can give to our youth. Through creative collaboration, we can find solutions to global challenges.

Friends, as the great son of Guyana, Shri Cheddi Jagan, once said, lessons from the past must serve as a guide for the present and help create a strong foundation for the future. The shared past of both our countries, the lessons that we have learnt – are present – will undoubtedly lead us towards a bright future.

I conclude with these words: I thank you that you gave me the opportunity to be amongst you today. I invite all of you to visit India. I would be pleased to welcome as many Members of Parliament (MPs) as possible from Guyana to India. Once again, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Guyana's Parliament and to all the peoples' representatives present here. Thank you, thank you, thank you very much. [*Applause*]

Mr. Speaker: You may be seated. Hon. Members, ladies and gentlemen, on your behalf, I extend our heartiest and grateful thanks to His Excellency, Prime Minister Modi, for that very inspirational and visionary address to our National Assembly. The things that matter to the world today, on the front burner, he touched – democracy, humanity, the environment, energy security, women and youth. These are all issues which every nation today has to address as a priority.

11.04 a.m.

For me, there are two things which stand out in his address. First, we always look at islands. In the Caribbean, you hear people say 'from the islands'. Today, I learnt a new term. These are not islands, but ocean countries. The water areas of these countries far exceed the landmass and that is what I say is visionary. Then, Prime Minister Modi said that India is Vishnu Pandu – friend to the world.

Prime Minister, thank you very much and thank you for all the commitments you have made, not only to Guyana but also to the entire Caribbean and the Global South. We in Guyana appreciate all of the work you have done, not only for Guyana but for everyone around the world. Even our Clerk spent over nine months in India in training, when he was preparing for this job. There is something very common between the two of us. On 26th May, Guyana became independent. Prime Minister Modi took his oath of office for the first time on 26th May. So, thank you very much. One bit of housekeeping. When we adjourn, we ask that you all remain seated to allow the Members of Parliament (MP) to come outside where we will have a group picture with His Excellency, Prime Minister Modi. Hon. Prime Minister, you have the floor.

ADJOURNMENT

BE IT RESOLVED:

“That the Assembly do now adjourn to Monday, 25th November, 2024, at 2.00 p.m.”

[*Prime Minister*]

Prime Minister [Brigadier Ret'd Phillips]: Mr. Speaker, I ask that we adjourn the House of Assembly to Monday, 25th November at 2.00 p.m.

Motion put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the House stands adjourned to Monday, 25th November at 2.00 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 11.06 a.m.