



Guyana Tourism News

January/February  
2010 Edition

A picture says 1000 words ... but an experience stays forever...  
**GUYANA - the Amazon Adventure...Don't Dream It..See it!**

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**South America's Largest Cat – the Jaguar**

**GUYANA**, recommended by the [Times Online](#) as one of the best adventure destinations for 2008, is yours to experience explore and enjoy. Whether you are on a Safari trip to the Pakaraima Mountains, an overland tour to the Majestic Kaieteur Falls or a tour up the Mighty Essequibo River, you will be amazed at what Guyana has to offer. So come and discover your true adventure paradise!!!

**Pakaraima Safari**

Have you heard of the Kanaima? Do you know how cassava bread is made? Have you ever seen the Parishara dance? Have you ever heard a native Patamuna speak his tongue? The answers lie in a safari through the Pakaraima Mountains. Take the ride across 529 miles to enjoy incomparable mountain views, saturate yourself in intriguing Patamuna culture, and best of all, enjoy an adventure of a lifetime.

**Kaieteur Overland**

Envision 45,000 gallons of lush black water thundering down a rock escarpment every second. Wonder in the sky dance of thousands upon thousands of scissor-tailed Swifts or soak in the culture of the prolific mountain hunters, the Patamonas. Take the overland journey through dense jungle for nights besides refreshing and scenic waterfalls, while pondering the language of the wildlife. Then take the 1,800 feet mountain hike to experience the magnificence of the 741-foot single drop waterfalls. We guarantee you'll say "Oh, my God" at both the adventure and the beauty that you behold.



**Tour of the Essequibo River**

An early start to the day will take you by bus to the departure point of the small market town of Parika. From here you will take a speed boat up the Mighty Essequibo River. You will see remains of an Old Dutch Fort – **Fort Zeelandia** where artifacts are still being found. You will pass the "River Beach" called Saxacalli and headed further up the river to the confluence of the Cuyuni and Mazaruni River, where the community of Bartica lies. Bartica is the hub of activities and recreation for miners who work the many gold and diamond claims of the

interior of Guyana. Along your journey up the Essequibo River, there will be many rapids, waterfalls and islands that you will see. The sounds of birds and howler monkeys can be heard from distance. You will also experience some community tourism and will be able to stop by at indigenous communities and maybe lucky to see the making of cassava breads and casreeps. The Essequibo River Trip is an amazing experience for nature paradise lovers and adventurers.

## Minister's Year End Review



MINISTER of Tourism, Mr. Manniram Prashad, has deemed 2009 a very successful and eventful year for tourism in Guyana.

He highlighted partnerships, with the Government and the industry commitment to stimulating and boosting tourism in an uncertain economic climate.

In an exclusive interview with the Guyana Chronicle, Prashad said: "We embarked on a strategy of realising our potential."

He pointed out that tourism creates employment, brings in foreign currency, generates revenue, encourages and attracts investments, fosters infrastructural developments and cottage industries, helps to improve livelihoods and the standard of living while providing opportunities for relaxation, exploration, leisure and enjoyment, as well as boosting and enhancing Guyana's image.

"Tourism is growing and expanding and 2009 has seen excellent returns on investment. It is the industry of the future," Prashad declared. Detailing key tourism objectives, priorities and deliverables that were achieved during last year, he said it was record breaking for arrivals, with 8.8 percent more than 2008 at the end of November.

Prashad said the year also broke records in the months, with the best ever being April, July, September, October, November and December. He alluded to the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) report which showed that, of the four countries, including Jamaica, Cuba and Saba, that recorded increases in arrivals at the end of October, Guyana showed the highest and expressed optimism that 2009 will achieve the most arrivals for any year.

Prashad said 'Destination Guyana' continues to attract more and more attention, with its immense ecological and adventure tourism potential and, compared to 2008, in January, there was a seven per cent rise; 21.8 per cent in February; 5.8 per cent decline in March; 11.5 per cent increase in April; 7.7 per cent increase in May; 18.8 per cent increase in June; 20 per cent in July; a 4.2 per cent in August; 0.2 per cent in September and 3.6 per cent in October.

He disclosed that the main markets are the United States, accounting for 54.6 percent arrivals, Caribbean 19.6 percent and Canada 16.6 per cent.

### **MORE GUYANESE**

Prashad said first time arrivals have also increased and more Guyanese are visiting their homeland.

"This record breaking visitors' arrival points to visitors' confidence in Guyana, as well as the success of the marketing initiatives and programmes of the Ministry, Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) and the Private Sector," he commented.

Prashad said Guyana was represented at the International Trade Bourse (ITB) in Berlin, Germany (the world's largest travel trade show); the World Trade Market (WTM) in London and British Birdwatching Fair, also in England; Suriname Trade Fair; Adventure in Travel Expo in New York; Guyana Independence Festival in Toronto, Canada and Caribbean Week in New York.

He said the representatives also met with travel agents and investors in Toronto and tour operators in Florida and attended events and entertainment forum.

Prashad revealed that 45 international tour companies are pro-actively selling Destination Guyana.

"This sales distribution network is critical to tourism development and growth," he acknowledged.

Prashad emphasised that some of the largest companies selling Destination Guyana include Saga Holidays, Wildlife Worldwide, Bird Holidays, Travelling Naturalists, American Birding Society, Ecoventures, Geographic Expeditions, Mass Audubon Tours, Manu Expeditions and Naturetrek and familiarisation (FAM) tours for tour operators, journalists, researchers and conservationists were conducted.

He said the FAM ventures are important for creating and increasing market demand for Destination Guyana and selected companies are invited to sample the country's tourism product and hospitality, on trips that have been very successful and yielded very high returns for investment.

Prashad said excellent travel stories on Guyana were provided to help raise the destination profile and it is through FAM tours that this country gets into the international travel sales catalogues.

### **DOMESTIC EVENTS**

He said, for the several local FAM trips that were organised, his ministry and GTA offered prizes to various tourist attractions for domestic events.

Prashad noted that China, Holland and Brazil are emerging, strategic markets and Guyana is well positioned to penetrate them.

He said Guyana was granted Approved Destination Status (ADS) by China in September 2009 and will be participating in the Shanghai Expo that will be staged from June to November 2010.

Additionally, it is collaborating with Suriname, French Guiana and Brazil to provide multi-destination tourism in those countries.

Prashad recalled that Guyana hosted the Fifth Technical Committee Meeting of the Amazon Co operation Treaty Organization (ACTO) in November to culminate Tourism Awareness Month that which was celebrated under the theme 'Promoting Quality and Sustainable Tourism in Guyana'.

He said Guyana is an Amazonian country and closer collaboration with its South American neighbours is vital for realising its continental destiny.

"The Amazon is unique and its significance has implications for climate change and global warning," Prashad said, adding that ACTO's objectives are to increase awareness as a geo-tourism destination and promote travel to and within the Amazon.

He said, at the ACTO meeting, Guyana offered to include the low carbon development strategy (LCDS) on their agenda and Guyana and Suriname are cooperating to participate at Vakantiebeurs Trade and Travel Fair in Holland, this month.

Prashad said the Amazon was nominated as one of the seven natural wonders of the world and is a finalist.

He said Destination Guyana received excellent coverage in the international travel press and that exposure is valued about US\$2.5M for 2009.

Some of the publications were in Daily Telegraph (Guyana – A Journey into the Jurassic); Americas Magazine (Climate for Conservation); Wanderlust Magazine (In God's Garden); Weedon's World (a bird watching article); Birdwatch Magazine (Guyana - the next big neotropical birding destination); Travel Mail (Falling for glorious Guyana) and Lime Magazine (Going Wild in Guyana).

Prashad also mentioned the excellent work of President Bharrat Jagdeo, as the ambassador promoting the LCDS.

### **INCREASING DEMAND**

The Minister said his ministry and GTA are looking at increasing demand at home because 'Staycation' (domestic tourism) is crucial to the success of any destination.

He said the ability of Guyanese to travel, explore and discover their own country was encouraged, facilitated and promoted throughout the year and 2009 was a record year for domestic tourism promotions, as thousands of nationals travelled to various destinations, attractions and events within Guyana.

Prashad said notable events and places included the Orealla Regatta, Cow Falls, Wanatoba, Mahdia, Moruca, Wakenaam Expo, Jonestown Memorial Service, Rockstone Fish Festival, the largest Pakaraima Mountain Safari, Bartica and Lake Mainstay Regattas, Kaieteur Specials by Rainforest Tours, Roraima, Wings, Wonderland Tours and the Duck Curry competitions.

He also identified sporting activities, such as horse racing, motor racing, cricket and football attracted people and the Rupununi Rodeo and Expo, GuyExpo and Berbice Expo, Main Big Lime and Jamzone.

Prashad listed the following:

- \* Birdwatching – Guyana is now being compared with Peru and Ecuador and is the hottest new bird watching destination with over 830 species and new finds. Guyana has gained a lot of international attention and several international companies are proactively selling bird watching tours to Guyana.

- \* Eco tourism – with the largest pristine tract of tropical forests, high species biodiversity, amazing wildlife, pristine rivers, mountain ranges, savannahs, wetlands, indigenous communities with low carbon lifestyle, Guyana has become a hotspot and a new sought after destination for the eco tourists.

- \* Adventure tourism – mountain climbing, trekking, canoeing, jungle survival, jungle trails, the safari, river trips, fishing, cattle ranches, wildlife watching, rapids, flora and fauna along with pristine rainforests make Guyana a paradise for the adventure seekers, and to this end, the Ministry re-branded the destination as 'Guyana - the Amazon Adventure'.

- \* Wildlife watching – Guyana is known for its rich and viewable wildlife and tourists' are fascinated by the amazing diversity found here. Guyana is known for the giants of South America/Amazon – Harpy Eagle, Anaconda, Black Caiman, Arapaima, Giant Ant Eater, Jaguar, Victoria Amazonia (water lily).

- \* Community-Based Tourism – more communities are turning to tourism as a sustainable means of livelihood and employment. Two communities received international awards and recognition – Surama, Fairview and Yupukari. The ministry also awarded Whyaka and Yupukari for their work in community-based tourism. Orealla, St. Ignatius, St. Cuthbert mission, Santa Mission, Tri Lake, Rewa, Surama, Yupukari, Nappi, Aranaputa, Konashen, Fair View, Rockstone, Karasabai, Kato, Monkey Mountain, are all thriving and developing Community-Based Tourism products.

### **NATURAL FIT**

- \* Agro tourism – this is a natural fit with tourism and this niche market is being developed with the help of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). Farm based experience such as fishing, picking fruits, farm stay, camping, cooking, etc, are being promoted at Rockview, Whyaka and Splashmin's Resort.

- \* Sports fishing – this has tremendous potential and filming and promotion has been done by Reel Adventures of the U.S., and Rewa has been identified as one of the top spots for sports fishing. A sport fishing plan is being developed and several investors have expressed an interest in investing in the area along with the community.

\* Sports tourism – cricket, motor racing, football, horse racing, hockey, rugby, swimming and such attracts a lot of visitors and teams, and Guyana participated in CARICOM’s regional consultation on Sports tourism development in Barbados, and more emphasis is being placed on marketing and promotion of sports.

\* Business tourism – Guyana is fast becoming an attractive meeting and conferences destination and hosted several international and regional meetings, and conferences.

\* Yachting/cruising – Guyana welcomed the cruise ship ‘Spirit of Adventure’ this year and the ministry and GTA are working with the private sector at attracting more small and medium sized cruise liners who are looking for new destinations.

\* Safe haven for yachts – yachts continue to arrive in especially the Essequibo river, whilst, several came up in the Demerara river.

\* Volunteer tourism - more focus is being placed on this by targeting volunteers such as experts, conservationists, birding specialists, hospitality specialists, researchers, students and biologists, to volunteer their time in Guyana, to benefit from their services, research and capacity building and training provided in exchange for satisfying work experiences and a holiday. Already a British couple is attached to Iwokrama Atta Lodge and volunteers at Surama, Bina Hill and Rewa and others in Rupununi.

\* Multi–destination promotion – promoting tours to Guyana in partnership with Brazil and Suriname, and several new itineraries have been created.

### **BENEFICIARY ENTITIES**

He said, to improve hospitality service and skills, 600 persons were trained in the industry and at Cheddi Jagan International Airport, assuring that the beneficiary entities are committed to training and capacity building.

Among the beneficiaries were Customs and Immigration officers, airport security, taxi drivers, waiters and waitresses, hotels staff, tour guides, events managers and bed and breakfast operators.

Prashad said the in house staffers of GTA also derived benefit and were sent to workshops overseas. They included Ms. Annarie Shiwram, Product Development Officer/Tourism Officer, who participated in the regional consultation on the development of the sports tourism sector with emphasis on Small and Medium Enterprises; Mr. Lokeraj Rupnarain, Information Technology (IT) Officer and Web Administrator/Tourism Officer, who attended a regional training workshop on tourism survey management, statistical data collection, analysis and the estimation of visitor spending and Ms. Carla James-Chandra, Statistics Research/Tourism Officer, who took part in an Organisation of American States (OAS) workshop on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the Caribbean tourism industry.

He said that community-based tourism is a new growth niche market and several communities, especially in the hinterland, taking advantage of it are well poised and positioned to offer tourists unique experiences and memorable and satisfying holidays.

Prashad said examples of communities that his ministry and GTA are working with, at a product development level, are Surama, Fairview, Annai, Aranaputa, Lethem, Rewa, Nappi, Orealla, Rockstone, Whyaka, Santa Mission, Moruca, Mahdia, Yupukari, Port Kaituma, Wakenaam and Linden.

He posited that Guyana is now a more popular and known destination, as a result of excellent and effective marketing, promotions and leveraging of international coverage.

Alluding to the boosting of investments in tourism related activities, he said, for creating demands and offering satisfying and unique experiences, 2009 has seen a number of new ones, including new guest facilities at Kaieteur National Park and Tukeit; Princess Hotel and Casino; Pegasus Hotel with new local ownership; new resorts at Mahaica Creek and Demerara River, new tours and itineraries; new community events and expanded community based tourism at Rewa, Yupukari, Nappi, Aranaputa, Orealla, Whyaka/Tri Lake.

Prashad said better infrastructure to support tourism is vital for access, safety, comfort, convenience and helps to lower costs and, in that regard, 2009 saw several important infrastructural developments and added world class visitors experience with the Berbice River Bridge, Takutu River Bridge, Ogle International Airport, improvement in water transport and coastal road networks.

In addition, there has been improvement in air access, as accessibility and airlift to a destination is directly related to visitor arrival numbers and creating tourism demand, he said.

### **AIR ACCESS**

Prashad said his ministry and GTA are committed to improving air access and are working closely with selected carriers and investors to increase airlift to the country.

Towards that objective, Sky Services has been operating during the peak season with direct flights from Canada, Delta conducting non-stop flights from New York and several new, small airplanes have been acquired by local airlines.

Prashad said, in enhancing the capacity of Government to plan and coordinate tourism sector development, Guyana has been participating in Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) organised events and trade shows; formulation and implementation of the National Competitiveness Strategy; creating and approving regulations for the accommodation sector, tour operators, resorts, lodges and tour guides; creation of standards for bed and breakfast providers; implementation of best practices for tourism; institutional strengthening of GTA and the ministry; collaboration and partnership with the Private Sector, non-governmental organisations and the diplomatic community.

He said other areas are the implementation of Management Information System for Tourism (MIST), to assist in analysing arrival data and make decisions and the implementing of the exit survey at Cheddi Jagan International Airport.

Prashad said, to strengthen Private Sector tourism operations, his ministry and GTA continue to enjoy an excellent relationship with the former, as they are the pulse of the industry and the visitor experience.

He said several key initiatives and collaborative efforts have helped to strengthen and improve their operations, such as facilitation at international and regional trade shows, organising FAM trips and including them on the itineraries; hosting and facilitating travel writers to write about their tourism attractions and events; industry training and capacity building; supporting domestic tourism; information sharing and advice; implementation of tourism regulations; facilitation of duty free concessions for tourism investment and expansion and participating in launching 'Explore Guyana' magazine and 'Guyana Where and What'.

Prashad said thousands of information packages have been distributed to potential visitors in key markets, with brochures, maps, posters, magazines and DVDs, locally, regionally and internationally.

He said website marketing has been done, providing information on Destination Guyana to assist with travel planning and destination awareness through GTA's social marketing tools, such as blogs and advertising on Caribbean Airlines in-flight videos.

[\(Excerpt taken from the Guyana Chronicle, Tuesday, 19 January 2010, Written by Priya Nauth\)](#)

## International Tourism News

### **Skyscanner reveals the world's biggest spenders: tourists who splash the cash**

With the world economy apparently on the road to recovery, tourism will play a huge part in many countries' income and competition is high to capture the biggest share of that market. International tourism is on track for a rebound with growth of 3-4% projected for 2010 – a welcome recovery after 2009's slump.



But when it comes to international travels, who spends the most and where should travel and tourism organisations be targeting their marketing budgets to attract the big spenders?

At number one, it's the Germans who spend over \$90 billion a year on their travels, a disproportionate amount compared to their population which numbers just over 80 million, less than a third of the next biggest spenders – the USA, who splash \$79.7 billion a year on holidays. Known for tipping big in restaurant and bars, Americans certainly know how to spend.

In third place it's the UK who splurges \$68.5 billion to escape the UK on cheap flights each year. No doubt the lure of sun and sand plays a huge part in the mass exodus, with Spain by far our favourite holiday escape. This

is also backed up by recent **Skyscanner** stats, with cheap flights to Malaga topping the most popular searched in January.

France, which is also the world's most popular country in terms of tourist arrivals, empty their wallets of \$42.1 per year, whilst the Chinese spend \$36.2 billion annually on their travels.

China is part of a new force of international tourists. The country's huge economic boom over the last decade has created a new middle class and with travel restrictions now a distant memory, more and more Chinese are taking advantage of their new found wealth and travelling the world - normally in tour groups.

Italy, Japan, Canada, Russia and the Netherlands made up the rest of the ten big spenders list.

**Barry Smith**, Skyscanner co-founder and business director commented: *"It will be very interesting to see how tourist spending changes since the downturn. So far, the latest figures show that only the Japanese spent less on international tourism than the previous year. China is fast rising, spending 21% more on their global travels, and are likely set to grow even more. Meanwhile, it's the Germans who remain the world's biggest spending tourists, and there would have to be significant change for anyone else to catch up with them."*

Germany	\$91.0billion (+2%)
USA	\$79.7billion (+4.4%)
UK	\$68.5billion (+4.4%)
France	\$43.1billion (+9.6%)
China	\$36.2billion (+21.4%)
Italy	\$30.8billion (+4.9%)
Japan	\$27.9billion (-7.9%)
Canada	\$26.9billion (+8.4%)
Russia	\$24.9billion (+11.8%)
Netherlands	\$21.7 billion (+9.2%).

## COMING TRENDS: NEXT 30 YEARS OF TRAVEL

World Travel Market has asked some of the worldwide travel industry's most senior executives to predict the next three decades of the travel and tourism industry. Here they predict a number of trends for the next three decades, which include underwater travel, portable hotels, home stays and sports tourism.

South African Tourism Chief Operating Officer and Acting Chief Executive Didi Moyle said: "Sports tourism will play a major role over the next 30 years. One of our objectives is to secure major sporting events post the 2010 football World Cup. This is aimed at attracting tourists all year round, increasing arrivals, spend, GDP and improving the lives of all South Africans."

Brazil's largest travel agent CVC Group founder and Chairman Guilherme Paulus added: "In the long-term tourism is one of the biggest potential growth areas for the Brazilian economy. Hosting the 2014 FIFA World Cup will help both the tourism industry and the economy as a whole."  
WTM Chairman Fiona Jeffery agreed: **"Sports tourism is now really taking off and in the next 30 years I believe we will see this sector aggressively marketed."**



Sweden's leading upmarket tour operator Select World Travel founder and Chief Executive Leila Graf said: "Authentic luxury will be a trend of the next 30 years where the destination is experienced for real. Some international luxury hotels have already adopted this philosophy, for example recruiting their chef from the simplest local restaurant rather than a renowned Michelin starred establishment."

UK's leading self-catering specialist Hoseasons Chief Executive Richard Carrick predicted: "There will be more collapses and consolidations. The nature of the competition will also change. The most telling thing is that it will become more expensive and difficult to get the customer at the right time."

Thomas Cook Chief Executive Manny Fontenla-Novoa said: "I'd like to see the

technology developed which would allow us to see the beautiful worlds beneath the sea. **There's a whole world largely unexplored under water, just think of the opportunities that would open up."**

Caribbean Tourism Organization UK and Europe Marketing Director Carol Hay revealed: "Home stay is something that we are looking to expand over the next 30 years. We want to encourage locals to open up their homes for visitors, as it will be great for the local economy and should appeal to ethically-minded travellers."

World Travel Market Chairman Fiona Jeffery said: "Hotels could be temporary, licensed, prefabricated, self-sustaining and easily transportable, erected on sites where establishing a traditional holiday resort would be environmentally unacceptable and perhaps, even politically."

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts President Onno Poortier added: "In 30 years times above all else guests will be looking for more personal attention and recognition."

Marriott International President and Managing Director Ed Fuller agreed: **"Holidaymakers will be more demanding of the services they are offered, they will want hotel experiences to be more tailored to their interests and will want the latest technology to be readily accessible."**

Cunard Managing Director Carol Marlow said: "We will continue to make sure cruising offers better value for money than land-based packages. Some prices may even come down as cruise companies look to drive volumes, which will increase the value even more."

Italy's largest tour operator Alpitour World President John Winteler suggested: "There will be an increase in market niches, which will lead to more customization and the development of many new different types of tourism."

Travel industry IT provider Amadeus Vice President Global Sales Development EMEA Julia Sattell said a common platform for all airline was the company's long-term goal. "The idea is to develop a common IT platform for our airline customers to use. An airline can suggest a new feature, and if other airlines using the feature are interested we will add it, with the development costs shared by the community. It might appear as if competitors are sharing their ideas with each other, but the airline industry is about getting passengers from A to B, and not about developing technology your rivals do not have."

(09 November 2009, [www.traveldailynews.com](http://www.traveldailynews.com))



Guyana – the Amazon Adventure

**Don't Dream It...See It!**

### Hon. Manniram Prashad calls for proactive marketing of tourism in 2010

Guyana's tourism sector has seen some successes in 2009 resulting in a 9% overall increase in tourist arrivals for the country, but despite this, much more is needed to improve the tourism products and services for Guyana to be among the mainstream tourism hotspots in the Caribbean. Hon. Manniram Prashad, Minister of Tourism in his New Year's review for 2009 underscores his Ministry's plan for 2010 to further develop and improve the local tourism sector. Prashad noted that tourism businesses must market themselves more, create new partnership, adapt to new technologies, continue to improve and invest in services and standards, adopt best practices, create more tourism packages and adapt green practices if they need to see growth in the sector. The Minister is of the view that 2010 will be a better year noting that already his Ministry is planning to sell Guyana more in the international markets, maintain market presence and seek newer markets, improve quality of tourism services through country wide training programmes for the hospitality sector, encourage more FAMS to Guyana, ensure that tourism best practices are adhered to and tourism entities are regularized and improve Guyana's niche tourism products. He also stated that Guyana expects several smaller cruise liners this year.

### Regional Health care in Guyana is further strengthened



The Regional health care system in Guyana has been given a boost with two additional hospital facilities at Linden and Lethem. The two hospitals will offer improved health services to communities nearby and visitors passing through these areas to Southern Guyana. The Guyana Government is continuing to improve regional health facilities and health care in Guyana to cater for different types of illness including eyecare, dentistry, skin care and water borne diseases.

**Guyana – A birdwatchers paradise  
Don't Dream It...See It!**

### Improved air access to hinterland and riverain communities

Air access to the Mahdia community was further improved with a \$23.6M upgrade to the Mahdia airstrip. The upgraded airstrip now has a 100 feet by 100 feet apron as safe parking areas for aircrafts.



Some new safety measures and practices are also in the overall plan.

The Mahdia community is known for its

mining activities and many visitors who travel overland to Kaieteur usually traverse through this community. Meanwhile, construction is ongoing on new 2000-foot long by 50-foot wide runway on the Wakenaam Island located in the Essequibo River. This new airstrip will be utilize for domestic flights for both passengers and cargo to the island and will help to improve accessibility to Wakenaam and surrounding islands in the Essequibo River. The Essequibo River is a popular tourist hotspot in Guyana and with the addition of an airstrip, tourism invest will improve.

### Mashramani 2010: The Big companies onboard

The big names in Guyana: GT&T, DIGICEL, Banks DIH, Ansa Mc Al and GPL have successfully participated in this year's Mashramani celebration. 'Mash', short for *Mashramani* is a Carnival like event held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February each year to mark the Republic Anniversary of Guyana. It was this time in the year 1970 that Guyana became a Republic. Mash was held under the theme "Celebrating our Diversity: Embracing our Heritage" and more than 40,000 persons crowd the avenues from Church Street and Vlissengen Road all the way to the National Park. The event was the biggest of such held in Guyana and was very colourful with spectacular floats and hundreds of revellers creating a true carnival effect. The "Mash" hype usually starts mid-January and this year Hits and Jams hosted the 'mash crank-up concert' and camp which featured some popular Jamaican artistes names like Ding

Dong with his hit 'skip to ma loo...' and Mad Dagg 'if me nah rich this year...'



### Enhancing culinary skills in Guyana

The Ministry of Tourism and Carnegie School of Home Economics are working closely together to develop a series of training courses on "developing culinary skills in local cuisines". This disclosure came when the Hon. Manniram Prashad, Minister of Tourism met with Ms. Penelope Harris, Principle of Carnegie. So far, Guyana was not successful in showcasing its culinary delights and diversity of its cuisines, but with the commitment from the Tourism Ministry to provide training and improve tourism services, it is expected that these culinary skill courses will make a big difference for the Country.

### US homeland security department auditing CJIA

The annual security audit of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) was undertaken by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) of the US Homeland Security Department. Over the years, the CJIA was successfully reviewed following audits done by the TSA and all recommendations were implemented.



## Improving Telecommunication Technology

A new shore-end sub-marine fiber optic cable was successfully installed in Guyana to further enhance the nation's information infrastructure and transformation of the local telecommunication sector. The project was a joint venture between GT&T and TELESUR of Suriname and cost about US \$30M to implement. The cable will be utilized to provide unlimited and inexpensive bandwidth to the nation, assist with modernizing the telecommunication networks and greatly enhance our ability as a destination for ICT related investments.

## Direct flights between Guyana to Suriname

Roraima Airways of Guyana and Blue Wings Airlines of Suriname jointly commenced direct flights between Guyana and Suriname. This new flight arrangement takes 50 minutes between Ogle International Airport and Zor-En-Hoop International



with flights schedule on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays departing Ogle in the mornings while those on Wednesdays and Fridays depart in the afternoon. Blue Wing Airlines is offering a rate of USD\$ 199 per passenger and will also continue their schedule flights thrice per week to Cheddi Jagan International Airport.

## More passengers travelling between Guyana and Suriname

There has been a recorded increase in arrivals through the Guyana/Suriname crossing for the year 2009 for passengers and vehicles utilizing the Canawaima Ferry operating at Molsen Creek. A number of

Dutch tourists are now entering Guyana by utilizing the ferry. Tourists are also travelling from different countries to Guyana and continue on their journey to Suriname by bus services. The Suriname/Guyana crossing is becoming popular for tourists who are touring the three Guianas since it is cheaper than air and more enjoyable.

## Guyanese receive the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence 2010

**Sydney Allicock** a conservationist by heart was selected this year as one of the recipients of the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence 2010. Mr. Allicock has contributed significantly towards implementing a sustainable community tourism development project for Surama which was adopted as a model for Community Based Tourism projects internationally. Mr. Allicock has also been integrally involved in promoting sustainable development within indigenous communities, the wise use of natural resources and a strong supporter of the Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy.

## Winners of the Tourism Month Poster Competition

**Parika Salem** Community High Student Anandeo Maraj was given the first prize of a trip to Majestic Kaieteur after winning the **Tourism Month 2009 Poster Competition Contest**. The competition was done by the Guyana Tourism Authority and it required secondary schools students to submit entries on "How can you reduce your carbon footprint?". Three prizes were up for grab and the objectives of this competition was to encourage students to showcase their artistic talents, their understanding of LCDS and raising awareness on how to lower carbon footprints. More than 100 schools were targeted and entries were judged based on its content, creativity, grammar and spelling, adherence to rules and general understanding of the LCDS. Maraj successfully displayed his talents for the first prize which was sponsored by Rainforest Tours while Devika Budraj of the Central Corentyne Secondary was awarded the second prize of a day trip to the Arrowpoint Nature Resort which was sponsored by Roraima Airways. The third prize of a mountain bicycle sponsored by National Hardware Store was given to Rachel

Boodhoo also student of the Central Corentyne Secondary.



## 'Club Pulse' opens

The Opening of Club Pulse has added new options for night life enthusiasts in Guyana and for visitors arriving in the country. The new club is located on Pere Street Kitty where the former 'Night Flight' club was located and will offer patrons a distinct kind of entertainment from other clubs. Patrons can enjoy a VIP lounge which is next to the stage area with comfortable seating, weekend surprises, lighting, and popular international DJs.

## Eccles Cabs and Car Rental Agency received training in tourism

The Guyana Tourism Authority has started its country wide training programme for the hospitality sector for Year 2010 by providing customer service training for taxi services with Eccles Cabs being the first beneficiaries. These short interactive sessions are aimed to improve taxi operators' knowledge on the local tourism products and ways in which they can help tourists to enjoy Destination Guyana. Also the training session will serve as 'refresher training' for taxi operators on customer services, duties and responsibilities of taxi drivers and dispatchers, attitude and characteristics of good drivers, the value of customer loyalty if maintained, effective communication skills, the needs of customers and elements of good services. The Authority also distributed the 'Taxi Code of Ethics' booklet to all participants and will conduct similar training session country wide. Interested participants are asked to contact the Guyana Tourism Authority Office for more information on these free training courses.

**Guyana is a nature lover's paradise...  
Don't Dream It...See It!**

### Filming expedition done at Mount Roraima

Red Bull Media House GmbH of Austria has completed a filming expedition to Mount Roraima. This Expedition featured Stefan Glowacz, a well-known German freeclimber and his team who began their climb of Mountain Roraima in late February. The expedition "RORAIMA: climbing the lost world" started on the Guyana side and ends on the Venezuelan side of Mountain Roraima.

### Welcome home for Mashramani



The Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) and the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) successfully held the first ever 'Welcome home for Mash' activity at the Arrival Lounge of the CJIA on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2010. Visitors were greeted by models displaying colourful costumes from the Banks DIH mash band. Visitors were also given small National Flags (The Golden Arrow Head), served with Brewery Fresh Banks Beer, plantain chips, tourism brochures and flyers. Many visitors were happy to be welcomed home to Guyana after so many years living abroad and first time visitors were also impressed.

### Mash 2010: Ministry of Tourism



The Ministry of Tourism fully participated in this Year Mashramani Float Parade with a small mash band consisting of a colourful float and forty revellers wearing costumes.

The band 'Mashed' under the theme "Embracing our Culture, Celebrating our Diversity". The float depicts the six ethnic groups in Guyana and was beautifully marshalled with the queen leading, a cultural melody mix performed by the six ethnic groups followed and then the revellers danced to Soca rhythms coming from the 'Krystal Vybz' boom boxes. The Ministry's Mash band was judged third in the float parade competition for the small categories and received a trophy.



### Guyana's first Las Vegas style casino is now open

Guyana's first Las Vegas style casino is now opened with 300 slot machines and 11 gaming tables (2 roulette tables, 7 card games – blackjack and poker and 2 Texas Holdem). The Casino is located at the Princess Hotel on the East Bank of Demerara. The casino is not a 24-hour facility as yet, and will only be open from midday to 4 am but not to locals. Director of operations for Princess Casinos in the Americas Oguz Tayanc said that the casino had created 130 jobs for local persons and that in the next two months; this number would increase to 160. He said once the entertainment centre of the hotel became operational the number of local jobs would increase to 200. The casino's management is promising live entertainment to its patrons and there would be persons coming from Canada and the USA specifically to play in the casino. The casino also hopes to benefit from a number of upcoming sporting events, including the ICC Twenty/20 World Cup, International Motor Racing Meet, West Indies v.s Zimbabwe series, Caribbean and Regional Rugby Tournament, Karate and Power-Lifting Tournaments which will be hosted in Guyana. Tayanc said that plans were still on board to have the local casino be a satellite casino for the World Poker tournament which is slated for June of this

year. He said that from May/June of this year it was expected to have satellite tournaments in the casino.



### Commissioning of No.63 Beach Facilities

Hon. Manniram Prashad, Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce commissioned new and refurbished facilities at No. 63 Beach on Tuesday 12th, January, 2010.

Minister Prashad at the simple ceremony stated that these facilities will add to the visitor's comfort and experience at the beach. This project was made possible through several public/private partnerships. No. 63 Beach, the main tourist attraction in Berbice, now boasts four benches, two washroom facilities, two changing rooms and three pavilions. He further mentioned that Cortours, a local tour operator in Berbice have already committed to build a pavilion to add to these facilities. Minister Prashad also encouraged other businesses to invest in other similar beach facilities. These facilities were handed over to the No. 63 Beach Committee which is now tasked with recruiting rangers and cleaners to monitor the area, especially during weekends and holidays. The Minister also urged the committee to be proactive in raising funds which will go towards maintenance of the facilities. He also urged the residents of Berbice to take good care of these facilities which has been built for their comfort and enjoyment. No.63 Beach on average per week receives 4,000 visitors and 20,000 visitors on special occasions such as Independence Day and Easter Monday. The Minister noted that the opening of the Berbice River Bridge has resulted in a high influx of people into Region Six, particularly to enjoy the beach, making its upgrade an essential one.

**Guyana – the Amazon Adventure**  
**Don't Dream It... See It!**

## Vakantiebeurs Trade Fair in Utrecht

**G**UYANA, for the first time, participated in the recent annual Vakantiebeurs Trade Fair in Utrecht, The Netherlands, as it seeks to tap into new markets for this destination. The major trade and consumer event, staged from January 12 to 17, targets three main groups, consumers, trade visitors and professionals from the travel industry, press and other media.

Director of Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA), Mr. Indranath Haralsingh, who was the Guyana delegate, said it is the largest trade fair in Holland and considered the world's biggest consumer travel and trade show. He said this year marked the 40th and it was themed 'Meet the Locals'.

Haralsingh said it was a historic inaugural participation for this country since it signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Suriname Tourism Foundation, to share booth space and participate, resulting in Guyana not having to incur much cost.

He said, in exchange, Guyana will be sharing space and cooperating with Suriname at the World Travel Market in London later this year.

Haralsingh reported that the Guyana stall was situated within the 'Caribbean Village' and the bilateral agreement is along the lines of the kind this country is looking to establish between tourism friendly countries or countries within the Amazon and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO).

Declaring that Guyana has started on a very good footing with Suriname, he said it is also looking to extend this type of collaboration with Brazil and China.

Haralsingh reminded that Brazil is a partner in ACTO and, though good connectivity with the Takutu River Bridge, Guyana wants to work with Brazil to promote multi-destination tourism and other areas of cooperation.

He disclosed that Guyana was granted the Approved Destination Status (ADS) in September last year and is preparing to attend and participate in the Shanghai Expo, in China, from May to November.

Haralsingh said this huge world exposition is expected to see the presence of people involved in tourism, forestry and agriculture and some key players in the Private Sector.

### Attendance

He said the Vakantiebeurs attracts 1,650 different tour operators and companies from 160 countries and saw attendance of about 140,000 visitors.

Haralsingh noted that Holland is also ranked the world's 12th largest market in terms of international travel expenditure as Dutch travellers take a lot of holidays annually, with a holiday in Holland not considered a luxury but routine and part of life.

Observing that Suriname receives 50 per cent of its visitors from Holland, he said, with the cooperation between it and Guyana, this country is hoping to tap into that lucrative Dutch market.

Haralsingh said Guyana shares and enjoys a very rich Dutch colonial history and there are at least three flights between the two countries weekly but, apart from the improved air accessibility from both Timehri and Ogle airports, there is the ferry crossing and easier access now with the Berbice River Bridge.

He said there are daily flights directly from Amsterdam to Suriname and that would help Guyana.

Haralsingh maintained that, if Guyana continues to work Suriname tour operators and markets the destination well in Holland, it would be able to attract a good percentage of the Dutch travellers here.

He said, out of a population of about 16.7 million, the outbound travel for last year was six million and the travellers are interested in tourism packages and more active and adventurous holidays, with activities like camping and biking.

Haralsingh said the tourists are interested in nature and green destinations, as well as wildlife and indigenous tourism, which augur well for Guyana.

He said, of recent, trips to new destinations and developing countries are increasing and that, too, is significant for Guyana.

"In addition to that, they are looking for tranquility, scenery, safety, romantic getaway and their travel intensity is very high," Haralsingh said, underlining that the other things that resonate well with the market is that they are very conscious about the environment and climate change issues.

The GTA Director said some of the objectives in participating were to create destination awareness; evaluate and assess the Dutch target market; research the demand for Guyana's tourism product and brand; meet and network with travel trade and consumers; evaluate interest and awareness of Guyana; generate leads and develop

contacts; develop competitive insights and identify trends; distribute tourism information and joint promotion of the three Guianas – Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana.

### Initiative

He said it was also part of the Common Amazonia Tourism Product (CATP) initiative within ACTO.

"This is something we are trying to do to promote multi-destination tourism. So it was a goal and objective to promote this and we did that very successfully because it was for the first time that the three Guianas were together in a foreign country at a booth together," Haralsingh reported.

He said a representative of Wilderness Explorers was also in Holland on the first day of the trade fair but Guyana's presentation, basically, comprised of audio visual showcasing the country's tourism attractions through the BBC three-part series – Lost Land of the Jaguar and Wild Guyana- among others.

Haralsingh said Guyanese tourism literature was distributed along with brochures, posters, souvenirs, packages and other informative materials.

He said 22 tour operators from Suriname were participating and seven of them were selling Guyana in conjunction with local tour operators.

He observed that there is a good level of cooperation and partnership between Guyanese and Surinamese tour operators Destination Guyana was promoted in the official Vakantiebeurs Magazine.

Haralsingh said, while there, he met with tourism officials of Suriname and French Guiana and Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) European representatives, to discuss and explore other areas of cooperation.

He held meetings with Suriname Airways and several top Dutch tour companies that are selling travel to South America, among them Djoser, Orange Travel, Swadee, Does, Cadushi and Thika Travel.

Haralsingh said he took the opportunity to meet with several Surinamese tour operators and hoteliers, as there are many other tour operators in Suriname who would like to establish linkages with Guyanese companies, because they are also trying to broaden their product base.

### Destinations

"They are looking for new destinations as well and, since it is neighbouring and there is tremendous accessibility to Suriname, they

will be able to come over to Guyana," he posited.

Haralsingh said they discussed a joint familiarisation (FAM) trip for Surinamese

tour operators to come to Guyana, to be followed by an exchange visit of Guyanese tour operators to Suriname.

He said that has never really been done and hotels and airlines, as well as Dutch based tour operators, are keen on the kind of FAM tours.

Haralsingh underscored the importance of such initiatives which have tremendous gains from the opportunity given them to sample and see the Guyanese tourism product and promote awareness and marketing of the destination.

He said the next step is to follow up and to make the linkages between Suriname and Guyanese tour operators, resorts, hotels and travel agents.

He outlined some of the inquires from the Dutch travelers included about airlift and accessibility, tour operators and tour offers; security and safety; family friendly vacations; language; the country and packages.

"We see Holland as an emerging market and a market that has a lot of potential as we try to make Guyana the destination of choice," Haralsingh asserted.

He deemed that initial participation as very successful for Guyana.

"We have achieved most of the objectives set out and we have also gathered from Holland and Suriname and we are building a database of contacts," Haralsingh said. "It was the right quality and quantity of audience for us and they are interested in the Guyana tourism product."

*(excerpt taken from the Guyana Chronicle, Tuesday, 16 February 2010, Written by Priya Nauth )*

## Statistics

### Tourist arrivals on the rise for 2010

Guyana continues to build from its successes in 2009 by recording an overall increase of 2.5% in tourist arrivals for the month January/February 2010 period. This year started off successfully with January showing a 7% increase over last year and the year-to-date (January to February 2010) an overall 2.5% increase as compared with the same period last year. This increase was due to more international PR, the LCDS, visitors choosing newer destinations and visitors' confidence in Destination Guyana.

Last year Guyana recorded the highest increase in visitor arrivals by air with an overall increase of 9% despite the Global Financial crisis and was among four (4) countries within the Caribbean that recorded increase in visitors' arrivals. Guyana is relatively a safe destination for tourist and recently it was added to the catalogue of some of the UK's established tour operators who are willing to do business here such as the British-run Explore Tours ([www.explore.co.uk](http://www.explore.co.uk)).

With major activities happening in 2010 – ICC World Twenty/20, International Motor Racing, Guyana Summer Events, Karate, Body Building Championship and with the right PR and early promotions and tour packages, Guyana will definitely record an even greater tourist arrivals.

## Upcoming Events

### January to June

Date	Event
January 1	Kashif & Shanghai Football Finals
February 21	Endurance Race
February 23	Mashramani Celebrations ( National Holiday)
February 26	Youman – Nabi ( National Holiday)
March 1	Phagwah Celebration
March 4 & 6	West Indies Vs Zimbabwe
March 26- 28	Wedding Expo
March 28	First Local Motor Race Meet
March 28	Kennard Memorial Horse Race
March 27- April 4	Pakaraima Mountains Safari
April	Horse Racing
April	Gospel Fest 2010
April 2-5	Rupununi Wildlife Festival
April 2-5	Easter Weekend Celebration
April 3-5	Bartica Regatta
April 3-5	Rupununi Rodeo
April	Horse Racing
April 30- May 10	ICC Cricket Tournament
April 25- May 2	Linden Town Week
May 1-2	Fast & Furious Regatta & International Stunt Show
May 5	Arrival Day Celebration ( National Holiday)
May 8&9	Grand MELO ( Indian Arrival)
May 25-26	Independence Day Celebration ( National Holiday)
June	Motor Racing

### Things to do when in Guyana

- ♣ Visit Kaieteur and Orinduik Falls
- ♣ Make a visit to Iwokrama and climb the 500 feet canopy walkway located in dense Jungle
- ♣ Take a trip up the Essequibo River
- ♣ Visit the Rupununi Savannahs
- ♣ Go Bird watching at our many Birding Hotspots
- ♣ Enjoy Fishing at our many sport fishing hotspots
- ♣ Enjoy Shopping for some of the finest hand craft Jewelleries
- ♣ Taste some of our traditional foods from our unique dining places
- ♣ Enjoy Nightlife
- ♣ Tour our Capital City with its many architectural heritage buildings (St. Georges Cathedral, Stabroek, City Hall)
- ♣ Enjoy festival and events.
- ♣ Cruise in your Yacht
- ♣ Enjoy Soft Adventure activities – mountain biking, canoeing, trekking
- ♣ Partake in sports – cricket, football, swimming, cycling,

Guyana is a relatively safe destination to travel to and was listed among some of the UK's most reputable tour companies as a destination they are selling to their customers. Visitors are advised to exercise the same precautions that they exercise in other countries they have visited.

For more information on how to get to Destination Guyana, please visit our website: [www.guyana-tourism.com](http://www.guyana-tourism.com) , email: [info@guyana-tourism.com](mailto:info@guyana-tourism.com) or Ph: +592 219 0094 to 6