



GUYANA TOURISM AUTHORITY

**MARCH 2013
NEWSLETTER**

11th Pakaraima Mountain Safari Launched



Minister Ali and major sponsors of the event

The 2013 Pakaraima Mountain Safari will be a trial for a bigger event planned for 2014 targeting regional participation as the ministry has been advertising it in Trinidad, New York, Toronto, Barbados, Suriname and Jamaica.

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce (acting) Irfaan Ali told the media of this development today during the launch of the

11th Pakaraima Mountain Safari, at the Tourism Ministry. He was joined by Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA), Indranauth Singh, Rainforest Tours, Managing Director Frank Singh and GUYOIL/CASTROL official Devanand Mangal. The safari is annually organised by the Ministry of Tourism and GTA in collaboration with Rainforest Tours, the Region 8 and 9 Administrations and the Ministry of Local Government. It is sponsored by GUYOIL/CASTROL, MMC and N&M Services Limited.

This year, the usual journey through Regions 8 and 9 has been extended beyond its usual 8 days to 10 and the organisers are

pushing to have 40 vehicles on the journey that will leave Georgetown on March 23, from the GUYOIL Gas station at Diamond instead of the usual Regent Street station. The vehicles will go through 14 Amerindian villages including Karasabai, Monkey Mountain and Orinduik and overnight at the largest of these 14 villages. The journey will end on April 1, in Lethem instead of the usual Orinduik as the Ministry seeks to include the convoy in experiencing another of its tourist attractions, the Lethem Rodeo, which is scheduled for that date.

Inside this issue:

Guyana & U.S Sign Open Skies Agreement	2
Ogle Airport Regional Class Facility	2
British Filming Concludes	3
Guyana Promoted as Major Hub	4
28 Vehicles for Safari 2013	5
ACTO Holds Stakeholder's Seminar	5
More Events on Tourism Calendar	6

Several tour packages available for Rupununi Rodeo

The Lethem Rodeo or Rupununi Rodeo held each year over the Easter weekend continues to generate regional and international acclaim, with thousands flocking to Region Nine annually for the most popular inland sporting festival. The fun kicks off on the Saturday, March 30 and contin-

ues until Easter Monday, April 1 with day time activities like wild bull riding, horse racing, wild cow milking, wild horse riding, a female barrel race, and steer roping, among other exhilarating events. In an effort to harness the potential of this event, the Tourism

Ministry and the Guyana Tourism Authority have collaborated with several tour operators to offer tour packages for the Rupununi Rodeo and other during Easter/Phagwah under the Re-Discover Home initiative.



Wild Bull Riding at the Rodeo

FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL

Inaugural Food and Drink Festival billed for March... Guyana Karate College 's event

FOODIES, tourists, and Guyanese at large will be given opportunity to embark on a culinary adventure of a lifetime in a veritable food and beverage paradise when the inaugural annual International Food and Drink Fest (iFest) of Guyana 2013 is hosted at the Everest Cricket Ground at

Carifesta Avenue and Camp Road in Thomas Lands, Georgetown on Easter Saturday, March 30th, 2013. This cornucopia has been endorsed by, and is being held in collaboration with, the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce of Guyana. This prestigious event has been organized

by the Guyana Karate College, and will showcase a riveting package that entails delectable food, fun and entertainment. This one-day event will be filled with fun, authentic signature dishes, yummy treats, famous cocktails from 19 countries. It will be held at the Everest Ground .

Ogle Int'l Airport Certified as Regional Class Facility



Liat's Plane on the Runway at Ogle Airport

The Ogle Airport has been certified as a regional airport and flights are expected to commence mid-year. The certification comes as the Guyana Civil Aviation celebrates 100 years of aviation here President Donald Ramotar said the aviation sector still has a

far way to go, although it has been undergoing changes. He pointed to the linkage between the agriculture and aviation sectors. To mark the airport's certification, regional carrier, LIAT made its first touchdown there, under the watchful eyes of hundreds, who gath-

ered to witness the making of history. Meanwhile, Transport Minister, Robeson Benn pledged his ministry's full support in ensuring that the ogle airport moves to a higher level in anticipation of bigger aircraft accommodation.

"It eliminates restrictions on how often carriers fly, the kind of aircraft they may use, the prices they charge; it facilitates transportation, trade and tourism between our countries..."
Ambassador Brent Hardt

Guyana U.S Sign Open Skies Agreement

The way was cleared on for fully liberalized air transportation of passengers and cargo between the United States (US) and Guyana, a move that is being seen as a fillip for overseas-based Guyanese. "The Guyanese Diaspora, which has its extensive links of families

and friendships, is likely to be one of the primary beneficiaries of this agreement given that they make up the most significant elements of expanding air travel between Guyana and the United States," said American Ambassador to Guyana, Brent Hardt.

Hardt and Guyana's Aviation Minister, Robeson Benn signed the Guyana-US Air Services Agreement that now repeals and replaces the 1946 US-United Kingdom agreement which Guyana inherited at the time of independence in 1966.

British Wildlife Documentary Filming Concludes

Three weeks of filming for a wildlife documentary in Guyana has ended with “River Monsters” Producer Jeremy Wade expressing enthusiasm about returning to the United Kingdom to compile a feature that will premiere in 2014. He met President Donald Ramotar yesterday at the Office of the President in the Company of his crew, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Dr. Frank Anthony and Attor-

ney General, Anil Nandlall. Wade, a British television presenter and author did not disclose details of the crew’s work in Guyana fearing that he might pre-empt what viewers will be seeing next year. Two years ago Wade and his team visited Guyana on an excursion to various locations, mostly riverain. Guyana’s tourism products, particularly its awe inspiring biodiversity has been a key attraction for sev-

eral *film/ documentary* crews and travel writers from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and other reputable international media entities.

The BBC shot the “Lost Land of The Jaguar”, the three-part series which gave the country tremendous exposure and was a huge success in Europe.



President Ramotar meets with Filming Team

Suriname Airways Reports Passenger Increase

Surinam Airways Station Manager Rudi Westerborg said there has been an unusually surprising increase in passenger volume during the January-March off-peak season.

Westerborg, during an interview on Thursday, told Guyana Times that the airline has been ex-

periencing larger volumes of passenger bookings than normal during January, February and March.

He disclosed that despite unfortunate reports being peddled that the airline was “going out of business”, Surinam Airways has no plans to withdraw from the market.

“I don’t know where these rumours are coming from... we have received many calls from passengers asking whether we are refunding people because we are going out of business. This is absolutely not true,” Westerborg said.

Surinam Airways will also be moving to increase the number of scheduled flights between Georgetown and Miami in response to the high demand from its Guyanese passengers.

Surinamese delegation In Guyana for Easter Rodeo

A 23 member delegation from Suriname has arrived in Guyana, to participate in the Rupununi Rodeo in Lethem, Region Nine. Tourism Minister, Irfaan Ali, said the 2013 rodeo will also include an overland excursion, which consists of over 150 persons

70 of whom are Guyanese and the others from Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica and Dubai. Minister Ali acknowledged that the trip is part of his ministry’s efforts to promote regional and local tourism.

The ministry welcomed the Surinamese delegation by presenting them with bags and hats as tokens. The Guyana Tourism Authority in collaboration with Dagon Tours and Adventure Guiana, has made this visit possible.

Tourism Minister Promotes Guyana as Major Hub in Americas

Tourism, Industry and Commerce Minister Irfaan Ali has announced that efforts are being made to promote Guyana as a major international hub between the Americas and the rest of the World. "We are building a mechanism to encourage more traffic from Latin and South America to Guyana," Minister Ali announced. The minister made this assertion as he addressed the first meeting of tourism ministers of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in Quito, Ecuador, on March 22. Tourism ministers from the 12 UNASUR member nations are presently meeting in Quito,

to discuss the establishment of a single visa for the region; other topics to be covered include the creation of the South American Tourism Network and/or the South American Tourism Institute, with the aim of adopting a common working plan and establishing a permanent coordination mechanism in order to promote the tourism potential of South America. The ministers are also meeting to discuss the adoption of a common work plan on building a permanent coordination mechanism within UNASUR. In his address, Ali expounded on the importance of the sharing of information, research and building partnership

Acting Tourism Minister Irfaan Ali with Ecuador's tourism vice minister (at Ali's right) and Venezuela's tourism vice minister at his left



in marketing and promoting the products of the region; he also suggested the twinning of markets within the region. More importantly, Guyana's tourism minister pointed to the necessity of developing a common platform that will allow ease of access and hassle-free movement for tourists between destinations in member states. In this regard, he proposed working on a regional transportation system with tourism as a core focus.

Lethem Airport Design Under Review

Prime Minister Samuel Hinds has acknowledged the success of Guyana's Aviation Sector within the fast growing development of mankind. Addressing participants at an Aviation Symposium the Guyana International Conference Centre (GICC), the Prime Minister stated that the development of Ogle International Airport shows development in Guyana through the air transport link between neighbouring countries. He emphasised that the location of Guyana's major airport soon to become an in-

ternational hub, should soon be used not only for the purpose of travelling, but also to attract persons to visit Guyana, even if it's only as a stop-over point. Minister of Public Works Robeson Benn in his address, revealed that the designs for the Lethem airport in Region Nine are under review by the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA). Region Nine is one of the most rapidly developing Regions in Guyana with the building of the Takutu Bridge, the emerging agriculture sector and

the enhancement of the tourism sector. Minister Benn emphasised the importance of the construction of the Lethem airport towards the development of these sectors. This year marks a significant milestone in Guyana's aviation history as the GCAA celebrates 100 years of aviation since March 24, 1913, when a pioneer aviator, George Schmidt landed his aircraft in Georgetown.



A View of the Lethem Airport

ACTO Holds Stakeholder's Seminar

The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO) held its first national public seminar in Guyana, aimed at getting Georgetown's involvement in sustainable development projects to tackle environmental and climate change issues. The seminar held at the Guyana International Conference Centre, was geared at informing stakeholders about the various projects it will be implementing to address climate change throughout the Amazonian region. Speaking at the seminar, the organisation's general secretary, Ambassador Robby Ramlakhan highlighted the main purpose of the organisation, explaining

that "ACTO is the only body which is able to address cross-border cooperation, through a sustainable use of biodiversity". He also noted ACTO has seen almost 90 per cent of its funding coming from European countries, such as the Netherlands and Germany; the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). However, the body is currently looking to become self-sustained. Foreign Affairs Minister Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett affirmed Guyana's support for the organisation. The minister recognised the need for capacity building, bilateral relationships, and enhancement of areas of commonality. She mentioned that

Guyana will make a proposal to the public sector for finances towards the organisation. She also said, "Guyana's membership with ACTO complements the memberships in UNASUR [the Union of South America States], Caricom and other International Organizations .



ACTO General Secretary Robby Ramlakhan and Foreign Affairs Minister Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett during the seminar

28 vehicles onboard for Safari 2013



Some of the vehicles that will be participating in the 11th Pakaraima Mountain Safari.

In preparation for the upcoming 11th Pakaraima Mountain Safari, the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) held the final inspection for the vehicles that will be participating, following which they were branded with the 2013 safari logo and that of the sponsors, Guyoil/Castrol and Neal and Massy. The vehicles were checked for durability, model, tyres, fire extinguishers, fuel containers, camping equipment, spade, shovel, spare parts and air compressor, among other pre-requisites. The inspection was necessary to ensure that the vehicles are well-prepared and fit for the rigorous journey. Driving skill is also critical on the

GTA's Director, Indranauth Haralsingh noted that the upcoming Safari is the largest one in terms of the number of vehicles participating. There are 28 vehicles that will undertake the over 600-mile journey starting on March 22 and moving off from the Guyoil gas station at Diamond, East Bank Demerara. This year there will be some new comers along with others who have been on the journey over the years. These include participants from Trinidad and Tobago. The US Embassy and two vehicles from Jamaica will be on the convoy as well. It has been confirmed that 10 vehicles from Jamaica will be in the next safari.

UPCOMING EVENTS 2013

March 31 April 1	Bartica Regatta Sun March 24, Football Fri Mar.29, Gospel Concert Sat Mar. 30, Intl Concert featuring Jah Cure Sun. Mar. 31 Miss Bartica Sun. March 31 Mon. April 1-Boat Racing	Bartica Beach Front Bartica	Bartica Regatta Committee 592 455 2251/681 7999
April 5-7	Wedding Expo	Roraima Duke Lodge, 94-95 Duke St.,Kingston, Georgetown	Roraima Group of Companies 592 225 9648
April 27- May 5	Linden Town Week *Linden Expo	Republic Ave- nue,Linden,Upper Demer- ara River	Linden Town Council 444 6373,444 2901 (Linden Chambers) Mr. Eon Hall Head of LOC
April 27	Riders Fest #3 (Floodlights)	Anna Regina Ground Essequibo	Lake Mainstay Resort 592 226 2755
April 27	Cooler Fete	Guyana National Sta- dium,Providence,E.B.D	Pulse Entertainment Robbie Singh 624 5814,600 5814
April 28	Horse Racing	Rising Sun Turf Club, Rising Sun, W.C.B	L Sukhdeo 592 232 0558,672 0810
April 28	Motor Racing- Endurance Race	South Dakota Circuit, Timehri	Guyana Motor Racing & Sports Club 231 5457,225 7492