



One Guyana: The Ali Doctrine and the Post-COVID Transformation of a Petro-State

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Abstract

This paper examines the extensive development of Guyana following the COVID-19 pandemic under the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) government, guided by the leadership of President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali and Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo. Drawing on macroeconomic data, sectoral analyses, official government communications from 2020 to 2026, extensive quotations from President Ali's recent book, *One Guyana: From Division and Bankruptcy to Unity and Prosperity* (2025), and his public statements including the "convert ambition into action" and "leapfrog" frameworks, this study argues that the Ali administration has pursued a distinctive development model characterized by planned economic diversification, infrastructure-led growth, social inclusion, and wealth democratization. The paper integrates President Ali's foundational vision statements across seven domains: education, health and social services, national unity, economic development, youth and opportunity, democracy and society, and the overarching "One Guyana" framework. While petroleum revenues provide unprecedented fiscal space, the government's strategic execution across housing, education, healthcare, agriculture, hinterland integration, and environmental services suggests a deliberate effort to manage the resource curse through broad-based investment. The paper analyses six pillars of post-COVID development, concluding by positioning what this paper terms the "Ali Doctrine" within development theory.

Keywords: Ali Doctrine, One Guyana, Petro-state transformation, Resource curse, Leapfrog development, Economic diversification

1. Introduction

When the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) government assumed office in August 2020, Guyana confronted a confluence of crises unprecedented in its post-independence history. The COVID-19 pandemic had inflicted severe economic damage: global commodity prices

collapsed, remittances dwindled, tourism evaporated, and stringent public health measures disrupted domestic commerce. The Guyanese economy contracted sharply, unemployment spiked, and public revenues fell to critical lows, leaving the new administration to inherit what



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President Ali would later describe as a nation on the brink of fiscal insolvency.

Beyond the pandemic, the political environment was deeply fractured. The March 2020 general elections had produced a prolonged and contentious stalemate, with the results disputed for five months amid allegations of electoral fraud, international mediation efforts, and widespread civil unrest. When the PPP/C finally secured office, the country remained polarized along ethnic and partisan lines, with significant portions of the populace questioning the legitimacy of the new government. This political uncertainty further undermined investor confidence and complicated the urgent task of pandemic response.

Most paradoxically, Guyana was simultaneously confronting the challenge of managing newly discovered petroleum wealth. Since the first commercial oil discovery in 2015, the country had rapidly ascended to the ranks of petro-states, with crude output reaching 900,000 barrels per day by 2025—up from just 15,000 barrels per day in 2019. While this resource windfall offered unprecedented fiscal space, it also raised the spectre of the "resource curse": the well-documented phenomenon whereby resource-rich developing economies experience slower growth, greater inequality, weaker institutions, and higher corruption than their resource-poor counterparts. The risk of Dutch Disease—currency appreciation that renders non-oil tradable sectors uncompetitive—loomed particularly large for a nation with a small, undiversified economy and a history of institutional fragility.

Five years later, Guyana has emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, with the International Monetary Fund projecting average annual GDP expansion of 14 percent through 2026. The non-oil sector has grown for five consecutive years, registering 13.8 percent growth in mid-2025. More than 70,000 jobs have been created, 39,000 scholarships awarded, and 38,000 house lots distributed. Hinterland communities that once lacked basic services now have digital connectivity, regional hospitals, and carbon credit revenues. The country has moved, in President

Ali's framing, "from division and bankruptcy to unity and prosperity."

Central to this transformation is the visionary leadership of President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, whose 2025 book, *One Guyana: From Division and Bankruptcy to Unity and Prosperity*, provides the most comprehensive articulation of his development philosophy. The book's title itself encapsulates the administration's core narrative: a nation rescued from economic collapse and political fragmentation, now unified around a shared prosperity agenda. Throughout the text, Ali advances a vision that rejects both the narrow ethnic politics of Guyana's past and the extractive-only development model that has trapped other petro-states. Instead, he proposes a "social contract of inclusion" grounded in universal access to baseline services, wealth democratization through asset ownership, and technological leapfrogging to bypass intermediate stages of development.

Complementing Ali's public-facing vision is Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo's role as the government's principal economic architect. Jagdeo, who previously served as president from 1999 to 2011, brings decades of experience in natural resource governance and climate policy. His earlier Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS)—which positioned Guyana's rainforest conservation as a source of international carbon credit revenue—has been updated and expanded under the LCDS 2030 framework to reflect the country's new oil wealth. Jagdeo has also championed innovative financing mechanisms, including state-backed investment vehicles designed to allow ordinary Guyanese citizens to acquire equity stakes in transformative national projects.

Rather than pursuing a narrow oil-centric approach, the administration has advanced what Chief Investment Officer Peter Ramsaroop describes as "a planned national economy" that integrates infrastructure, energy, production, and investment into a cohesive system. This model rejects both the neoliberal minimalism that characterized many structural adjustment

programmes and the state-centric command economies of the 20th century. Instead, it positions the state as an enabler, coordinator, and equity partner—building human capital through education, providing baseline infrastructure, and creating mechanisms for broad-based asset ownership while leaving room for private sector dynamism.

This paper examines the extensive development of Guyana since 2020 through President Ali's articulated vision. Section 2 outlines the ideational framework of the "One Guyana" social contract, drawing extensively on Ali's book and public declarations. Section 3 examines macroeconomic performance, job creation, and the distinctive "ownership revolution" that prioritizes asset accumulation over wage dependency. Section 4 analyses human capital development in education and health, including the GOAL scholarship programme, teacher training expansion, and the robotics hospital initiative. Section 5 explores infrastructural and housing transformation, from the new Demerara River Bridge to the Gas-to-Energy Project to sports tourism innovation. Section 6 addresses hinterland integration and regional equity, including carbon credit agreements with Amerindian villages and diaspora inclusion. Section 7 considers environmental stewardship as an economic strategy under the LCDS 2030. Section 8 assesses the sustainability challenges facing this transformation, including persistent poverty, Dutch Disease risks, governance transparency concerns, environmental trade-offs, and geopolitical pressures. Section 9 concludes by articulating the "Ali Doctrine"—a distinctive development model whose core elements include the social contract of inclusion, even prosperity as baseline, unity through inclusion rather than growth alone, ownership over wages, conversion over potential, leapfrog over linearity, and delivery as legitimacy. The paper integrates extensive quotations from *One Guyana* and recent presidential declarations to examine how vision translates into concrete policy execution.

2. The Ideational Framework: "One Guyana" as Social Contract

2.1 From Division and Bankruptcy to Unity and Prosperity

The title of President Ali's 2025 book—*One Guyana: From Division and Bankruptcy to Unity and Prosperity*—is not merely descriptive but programmatic. It posits a causal sequence with explicit theoretical assumptions: division produces economic failure (bankruptcy), while unity produces shared prosperity. This framing directly challenges Guyana's historical experience of ethnically polarized politics, which the author argues systematically underinvested in public goods and alienated significant portions of the citizenry.

To understand the force of this claim, it is necessary to briefly recall Guyana's post-independence political trajectory. Since independence from Britain in 1966, Guyanese politics has been predominantly organized along ethnic lines, with the Indo-Guyanese population largely supporting the PPP (and later PPP/C) and the Afro-Guyanese population mostly supporting the People's National Congress (PNC) and its successors, including the APNU+AFC coalition. This ethnic binary produced a zero-sum political dynamic in which each alternation of power brought not merely policy change but wholesale replacement of public sector personnel, de-investment in projects associated with the previous administration, and periodic outbreaks of electoral violence. The 2015-2020 APNU+AFC government, in particular, was characterized by what President Ali has called "a culture of looting and mismanagement," with the national debt ballooning, state assets sold under opaque conditions, and public investment grinding to a halt. By 2020, Guyana was technically bankrupt, dependent on emergency loans from the International Monetary Fund to meet basic payroll obligations.

It is against this backdrop that President Ali's framing acquires its polemical and programmatic force. The "One Guyana" vision explicitly rejects ethnic mobilization as a governing principle, insisting instead that national identity must supersede sectional loyalties. The book argues that

the division-bankruptcy linkage operates through multiple mechanisms: ethnic patronage diverts resources from productive investment to clientelist distribution; political uncertainty deters long-term investment; alternating governments dismantle each other's initiatives, wasting sunk costs; and citizens disengage from national projects when they perceive the state as captured by an opposing group.

President Ali articulates the core principle of his vision with direct clarity:

"One Guyana is a social contract of inclusion. It is about creating a country in which every citizen sees themselves in the development of the nation and benefits from the prosperity of the nation."

This formulation is significant for two reasons. It explicitly invokes social contract theory—the idea, traceable from Hobbes through Locke to Rawls, that legitimate governance rests on the consent and participation of the governed. By using the language of "social contract," Ali positions the "One Guyana" framework as a philosophical alternative to both ethnic majoritarianism (which privileges numerical majorities) and elite pact-making (which excludes ordinary citizens). The contract is not between political leaders but between the state and every citizen.

The formulation also links two distinct concepts that are often separated in development discourse: "seeing themselves in the development" (recognition and agency) and "benefiting from prosperity" (material distribution). Mainstream development economics has tended to focus on the latter, assuming that rising incomes will automatically produce feelings of inclusion. Post-development theorists, by contrast, have emphasized recognition and cultural identity while sometimes neglecting material distribution. The "One Guyana" framework refuses to separate symbolic inclusion from economic inclusion, insisting that neither is sufficient without the other.

2.2 The Substantive Content of "Even Prosperity"

President Ali rejects superficial or symbolic unity—the kind of rhetoric that celebrates diversity while maintaining structural inequality. In a passage that directly addresses the administration's distributional commitments, he writes:

"Even prosperity means that the country must be able to give a baseline level of service to every citizen in health, in education, in infrastructure and in opportunities."

The phrase "baseline level of service" is operationally significant. It commits the government to minimum standards rather than merely equalizing opportunity to compete for scarce resources. In conventional liberal theory, equality of opportunity is considered sufficient: all citizens should have an equal chance to succeed, but outcomes may legitimately differ based on effort and talent. President Ali's "baseline" formulation goes further, arguing that certain goods—health, education, infrastructure, and opportunities—are so fundamental that the state has an affirmative obligation to guarantee them regardless of geography, income, or social background.

This baseline approach is evident in the hinterland investments documented below: every region must have a functional hospital, every child access to secondary education, every community connection to digital infrastructure. The government has not merely expanded access to existing services but has actively built new facilities, deployed telemedicine to overcome distance, and used satellite technology to connect remote schools. The "baseline" is not a floor below which no one falls but a standard to which all are raised.

The concept of "even prosperity" also carries distributional implications beyond service provision. It implies that prosperity should not be concentrated in enclaves—the oil fields, the capital city, the coastal plain—but should reach

"every community, every family and every region." This is a direct rejection of the enclave development model that has characterized many resource-rich economies, where resource extraction generates enormous wealth for a small number of stakeholders while leaving surrounding communities impoverished and environmentally degraded.

2.3 Unity as Development Precondition

President Ali argues that prosperity alone is insufficient for national unity—a claim that challenges purely materialist theories of development, from classical Marxism (which posits that economic development resolves class contradictions) to modernization theory (which expects economic growth to produce social integration). He writes:

"Prosperity alone does not guarantee unity. Unity comes when people feel included, respected and given equal opportunity to participate in national development."

This passage recognizes that subjective feelings of inclusion and respect are not automatic by-products of rising. A society can be objectively wealthier while remaining subjectively divided, particularly if the fruits of are perceived to be distributed unfairly or if certain groups feel systematically excluded from decision-making. The Arab Spring uprisings, for example, occurred in countries with rising per capita incomes but entrenched political exclusion; the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom reflected, in part, the resentment of regions that had experienced economic growth but felt culturally marginalized.

The administration has therefore invested in symbolic recognition alongside material distribution. The "One Guyana" brand appears on public buildings, official communications, and national events. Cross-cultural programming celebrates Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Indigenous festivals as equally national rather than sectional. The President has made a point of visiting communities across all ten regions, not merely the traditional PPP/C strongholds. The book further specifies the scope of inclusion:

"One Guyana is a Guyana that gives opportunity and brings prosperity to every single Guyanese regardless of race, religion, geography or social background."

The enumerated categories—race, religion, geography, social background—directly address Guyana's historical fault lines. "Geography" acknowledges the coastal-hinterland divide, a cleavage that is both spatial and ethnic (since hinterland communities are predominantly Indigenous). "Race and religion" address the Indo-Guyanese/Afro-Guyanese political cleavage, which has structured electoral competition for six decades. "Social background" encompasses class, recognizing that even within ethnic groups, elite capture can exclude working-class and rural citizens from development benefits. By explicitly naming these categories, President Ali signals that the administration sees and intends to address each dimension of exclusion.

2.4 The "Convert Ambition into Action" Doctrine

President Ali's second inaugural address in September 2025 articulated a governing philosophy that prioritizes execution over rhetoric:

"In the next five years, we will convert ambition into action and action into transformation. We will not speak in half-measures, and we will not hesitate to deliver."

This framing responds directly to Guyana's history of unrealized potential. For decades, Guyana has been described as a country with enormous promise—vast forests, mineral resources, agricultural land, a strategic location—that never quite translated into prosperity. Each successive government produced development plans, vision documents, and grand pronouncements, yet the material conditions of most Guyanese improved only slowly, if at all. The "convert ambition into action" doctrine is a rejection of this pattern. It insists that the value of a vision lies not in its rhetorical elegance but in its actualization.

As President Ali observed in his 2026 New Year's address: "The story of Guyana is no longer one of

potential alone. It is written in the language of progress made real, of opportunity seized, of a nation stepping confidently into its moments." The shift from potential to actuality requires institutional mechanisms for accountability: clear targets, transparent reporting, and consequences for failure. The administration has therefore published quarterly progress reports on key initiatives, invited independent verification of job creation numbers, and subjected itself to regular press scrutiny. The President's emphasis on having "shown you that you can trust the People's Progressive Party Civic's leadership" is precisely this claim to performance legitimacy.

2.5 The "Leapfrog" Strategy

In October 2025 at the opening of the SOMA Hotel & Restaurant, President Ali declared:

"We are going to leapfrog this country into unbelievable places."

This declaration referred to specific initiatives: a robotics-enabled hospital integrating telemedicine and artificial intelligence for remote surgery; four new government mobile applications to digitize public services within six weeks; expansion of Terminal Two at Cheddi Jagan International Airport; and data centres positioning Guyana as "the Caribbean's digital future."

The "leapfrog" concept has a distinguished pedigree in development economics. It refers to the capacity of late-developing nations to bypass intermediate stages of technological evolution, adopting frontier technologies directly without incurring the sunk costs of legacy systems. The classic example is the mobile phone: many African countries leapfrogged landline infrastructure entirely, moving from no telecommunications to widespread mobile and internet access. Similarly, India leapfrogged traditional banking infrastructure by moving directly to digital payments and biometric identification. President Ali's application of this concept to Guyana suggests a deliberate strategy rather than accidental advantage: the country will not build 20th-century hospitals when 21st-century robotics are available; it will not build

analogue bureaucracy when digital governance is possible; it will not expand outdated airport capacity when next-generation logistics hubs can be constructed.

The robotics hospital is perhaps the most striking example. Rather than building a conventional regional hospital and then later upgrading it, the administration has designed a facility that integrates telemedicine and remote surgery from the outset. This allows Guyanese patients to access specialist care—neurosurgeons, cardiologists, orthopaedist—without leaving the country, while also positioning Guyana as a medical tourism destination for the region. The four mobile applications, similarly, aim to digitize most state services by mid-2026, reducing corruption (by eliminating face-to-face interactions with bureaucrats), increasing accessibility (by allowing citizens in remote areas to transact without travel), and improving data collection (by creating digital records of service delivery). The data centres position Guyana to capture value from the global data economy, including cloud computing, artificial intelligence training, and cryptocurrency mining.

2.6 Planned Diversification as Economic Philosophy

The government's economic framework integrates three temporal dimensions: immediate pandemic recovery (2020-2022), medium-term diversification (2023-2025), and long-term structural transformation (2026-2030). This sequencing is evident in the progression from cash transfers and job creation to infrastructure investment to digital transformation and artificial intelligence integration.

President Ali has explicitly rejected the "one-sector nation" label:

"We are not a one-sector nation. We are building a diversified economy that will generate jobs, raise incomes, and secure prosperity. As part of our commitment to economic diversification, we will strengthen the traditional pillars of our economy—mining, agriculture, fisheries and forestry..."

We will create new growth poles that drive the economy of tomorrow: world-class tourism, a thriving blue economy, competitive manufacturing, cutting-edge information and communications technology, and dynamic knowledge-based industries."

This articulation reflects awareness of Dutch Disease risks while demonstrating commitment to non-oil sectors. The traditional pillars—mining, agriculture, fisheries, forestry—are to be strengthened through modernization and value-added processing rather than abandoned. The new growth poles—tourism, blue economy, manufacturing, ICT, knowledge industries—are intended to absorb labour productively as the economy expands. Crucially, the list includes both tradable sectors (manufacturing, ICT services, tourism) that can generate foreign exchange and non-tradable sectors (construction, retail, local services) that can absorb labour without competing with oil exports.

As President Ali declared in late 2025: "We are taking Guyana into the first world with speed, accuracy, and a very clear vision." The phrase "first world" is significant: it signals that the administration's ambition is not merely to reduce poverty or achieve middle-income status but to reach the living standards of developed countries. The emphasis on "speed, accuracy, and a very clear vision" rejects both gradualism (the idea that development necessarily takes generations) and improvisation (the idea that planning is unnecessary). The government has published specific targets, timelines, and metrics for each major initiative, allowing citizens and investors to assess progress against stated goals.

This ideational framework—the "One Guyana" social contract, even prosperity as baseline, unity through inclusion, conversion of ambition into action, technological leapfrogging, and planned diversification—provides the conceptual architecture for the sectoral analyses that follow. Each policy initiative documented in subsequent sections can be understood as an instantiation of one or more elements of this framework. The

housing program operationalizes even prosperity; the GOAL scholarship program embodies the conversion of ambition into action; the robotics hospital exemplifies leapfrogging; and the hinterland integration strategy gives substance to the "One Guyana" social contract.

3. Economic Development: Building a Country Where Every Guyanese Can Prosper

3.1 The Vision of Shared Prosperity

President Ali's economic vision is explicitly distributional from its first articulation:

"We're building a country where every Guyanese can prosper, where development reaches every community, every family and every region of our country."

This statement rejects both trickle-down economics—the theory, associated with supply-side economists like Arthur Laffer and politically championed by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, that tax cuts and deregulation for corporations and the wealthy will eventually benefit everyone through growth and job creation—and enclave development—the pattern, common in resource-rich economies, where extractive industries generate enormous wealth for a small number of stakeholders while leaving surrounding communities impoverished and environmentally degraded. The administration has instead pursued what might be termed "archipelagic development": simultaneous investment across all ten of Guyana's administrative regions, with particular attention to historically marginalized areas such as the hinterland regions (1, 7, 8, 9) and the less-developed coastal communities.

This vision has intellectual antecedents in several development traditions. It echoes the "basic needs" approach of the International Labour Organization in the 1970s, which argued that development should be measured not by aggregate GDP growth but by the extent to which it meets the fundamental needs of the poor—food, shelter, health, education, and employment. It also resonates with Amartya Sen's capabilities approach, which defines development as the

expansion of human freedoms and capabilities rather than merely the accumulation of material goods. The phrase "every community, every family and every region" operationalizes this capabilities framework at a spatial level: development is not achieved if some regions flourish while others stagnate, regardless of national averages.

The administration's rejection of trickle-down economics is not merely rhetorical but policy-relevant. Instead of prioritizing tax cuts for corporations and high-income earners in the expectation that benefits will eventually reach the poor, the government has pursued direct investment in public goods (schools, hospitals, roads, digital infrastructure) and targeted transfers (cash payments, school grants, pension increases). This approach is consistent with the empirical literature on growth and poverty reduction, which finds that while growth is necessary for sustained poverty reduction, its distributional impact depends critically on initial inequality and public policy. In highly unequal societies, growth may disproportionately benefit the wealthy, with poverty reduction proceeding slowly if at all.

3.2 Macroeconomic Performance

Guyana's economic trajectory since 2020 defies conventional post-pandemic recovery patterns. While most economies experienced sharp contraction in 2020 followed by a rebound to pre-pandemic trend growth by 2022 or 2023, Guyana has sustained extraordinary expansion far beyond its historical baseline. The International Monetary Fund projects GDP growth of 23 percent in 2026—a figure more typical of a wartime mobilization or a post-conflict reconstruction than a routine economic forecast. Inflation has been contained at 4.4 percent, remarkably low given the scale of fiscal expansion and the global inflationary pressures that followed the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The non-oil sector has grown for five consecutive years, with mid-2025 data showing non-oil GDP growth of 13.8 percent. This is arguably the most important single statistic for assessing the administration's diversification strategy. If non-oil

growth were sluggish or negative, it would suggest that petroleum revenues were producing Dutch Disease—crowding out tradable sectors through currency appreciation and resource reallocation. Instead, the non-oil sector is growing at rates that would be considered exceptional even for a rapidly developing economy, indicating that the government's investments in infrastructure, housing, education, and agriculture are generating genuine economic expansion beyond the extractive industries.

The fiscal balance has shifted from surplus to a projected deficit of -4.5 percent of GDP in 2026, reflecting expansionary public spending rather than austerity. This represents a deliberate policy choice with significant implications for development theory. Conventional wisdom in petro-state governance, influenced by the resource curse literature and the experience of countries like Nigeria and Venezuela, has emphasized fiscal conservatism: save oil revenues in sovereign wealth funds, avoid budget deficits, and spend only what can be sustained when oil prices inevitably fall. The Ali administration has rejected this orthodoxy, instead pursuing counter-cyclical investment—using oil revenues to finance public spending that, they argue, will generate long-term returns exceeding the cost of borrowing.

There are both risks and potential rewards to this approach. The risk is that oil prices decline or production is disrupted, leaving the government with a structural deficit and debt service obligations that it cannot meet from non-oil revenues. The potential reward is that infrastructure investment, human capital development, and economic diversification transform the non-oil economy to the point where it can sustain higher spending even if oil revenues decline. This is essentially a bet on the elasticity of the non-oil tax base: if the investments generate enough growth, the government will be able to finance spending from conventional taxes rather than oil revenues.

President Ali has emphasized that this growth is not abstract but experienced. In his 2026 New Year's address, he pointed to "expanded schools,

upgraded hospitals, improved water access, increased incomes and a decline in serious crime," describing these as the "lived experience of a country on the move." This framing is politically significant: it invites citizens to evaluate the government's performance not by macroeconomic aggregates but by tangible changes in their daily lives. The "lived experience" metric is harder to manipulate than GDP statistics and more directly relevant to electoral accountability. A government can claim credit for high growth even if citizens do not feel richer; it cannot credibly claim that schools have expanded or crime has declined if citizens experience the opposite.

3.3 Job Creation and Labour Market Transformation

The government's flagship employment initiative targeted 50,000 new jobs; by mid-2025, this target had been surpassed, with over 70,000 sustainable jobs created across education, infrastructure, housing, health, and tourism. The use of the term "sustainable" is significant: the government distinguishes between temporary pandemic-related hiring (contact tracers, vaccination campaign staff) and jobs that are expected to persist as the economy restructures. The latter include teachers, construction workers, healthcare professionals, tourism employees, and agro-processors.

Analysis of National Insurance Scheme (NIS) data provides a more precise picture. More than 67,900 new employees between ages 16 and 59 registered with NIS between 2021 and 2025, indicating formal sector expansion rather than precarious informal employment. This is a crucial distinction: in many developing economies, job creation primarily occurs in the informal sector, where workers lack legal protections, benefits, and social insurance coverage. Formal sector registration implies that these new jobs come with NIS contributions, access to healthcare, and other labour protections—a higher quality of employment than informal alternatives.

Sectoral decomposition reveals the strategy's architecture. Construction emerged as the largest contributor, experiencing 180 percent growth and

generating over 30,000 jobs. This expansion is directly attributable to the housing and infrastructure programs documented in Chapter 5. Each house lot distributed generates demand for construction materials, skilled and unskilled labour, and ancillary services like electrical, plumbing, and landscaping. The multiplier effects are substantial: employment in construction supports employment in manufacturing (cement, steel, lumber), retail (hardware, tools), and services (transport, catering).

Agriculture has seen over 75,000 persons benefit from training and capacity-building programs, with new jobs in agro-processing rather than raw commodity production. The shift toward value-added agriculture—transforming raw produce into processed goods for export—reflects the government's industrial policy. Raw commodities capture only a small fraction of final value; processing and packaging capture significantly more. By building agro-processing capacity, the government aims to retain more value within Guyana while creating higher-skilled, better-paying jobs than primary agriculture alone.

Tourism and hospitality created 7,300 new jobs alongside 60 new tourism products, supported by expanded airlift and hotel capacity. The opening of the AC Marriott Hotel in Ogle, the SOMA Hotel, and other properties exemplifies the planned alignment of hotels, airlift, and airport infrastructure. The government has not simply encouraged hotel construction; it has simultaneously expanded airport capacity, recruited new airlines, and developed tourism products (ecotourism, cultural heritage, sports tourism) to attract visitors.

At the Guyana Energy Conference in February 2026, President Ali outlined five strategic pillars for job creation: strengthening national and regional energy security, building resilient food production systems, driving economic diversification, creating sustainable high-value jobs, and expanding infrastructure through strategic financing. Each pillar corresponds to a specific employment pathway. Energy security creates jobs in construction (the Gas-to-Energy

Project), operations (power plant management), and maintenance. Resilient food production creates jobs in agriculture, agro-processing, logistics, and research. Diversification creates jobs in new sectors like ICT, manufacturing, and knowledge services.

The unemployment rate declined to 10.2 percent in 2024, a substantial improvement from the pandemic peak but still elevated by international standards. The persistence of unemployment despite rapid job growth reflects several factors: labour market mismatches (the skills available do not match the skills demanded), geographic mismatches (jobs are concentrated in certain regions while workers are located elsewhere), and frictional unemployment (workers between jobs). The government has responded with training programs, relocation assistance, and job placement services.

The poverty rate stands at 48.0 percent (using the \$6.85 per day PPP threshold), indicating that job growth has not yet translated into comprehensive poverty reduction. This is a common lag in rapid-growth economies: employment growth reduces poverty only to the extent that the newly employed come from poor households and earn wages above the poverty line. If jobs go to households that were already above the poverty line, or if wages are too low to lift families out of poverty, then poverty reduction will proceed more slowly than employment growth. The government's emphasis on "sustainable" and "high-value" jobs reflects awareness of this issue: the quality of jobs matters as much as their quantity.

3.4 The Ownership Revolution

President Ali's most distinctive contribution to development economics is his emphasis on asset ownership rather than wage dependency. In *One Guyana*, he articulates this philosophy with specific reference to youth:

"I want to create new educational and work opportunities for young professionals in our country. I want them to become educated

and trained to be owners and managers of all sectors of our society."

This passage links education, training, ownership, and management—four distinct capacities that conventional development policy treats separately. Education policy focuses on human capital; industrial policy focuses on job creation; financial policy focuses on credit access; corporate governance focuses on management. By integrating them into a single vision, Ali signals that these are not separate domains but components of a unified strategy to create a Guyanese capitalist class.

The "owners and managers" formulation rejects both the wage-labour model (where workers sell their time to owners who capture the surplus) and the technocratic model (where professionals manage but do not own). Instead, it envisions a Guyanese capitalist class emerging from within the population rather than being imported (through foreign direct investment) or inherited (through dynastic wealth). This has both economic and political dimensions. Economically, local ownership is associated with higher reinvestment rates (since local owners are less likely to repatriate profits) and greater attention to local suppliers and workers. Politically, local ownership diffuses economic power, creating a constituency for property rights and market institutions while reducing the political influence of concentrated wealth.

At the Labour Day brunch at State House in May 2026, he further declared:

"You have to own things. We want the workers to own things... We can't only think about empowerment through wages... we have to think about empowerment as something long-term, something sustainable."

This philosophy translates into concrete mechanisms. The planned Guyana Development Bank will offer loans up to \$10 million at rates as low as 3 percent, supported by government-backed equity. This is a substantial intervention in credit markets. Commercial banks in Guyana

typically charge interest rates of 10-15 percent for small business loans, with stringent collateral requirements that exclude most first-time borrowers. By offering loans at 3 percent—below the inflation rate, implying a negative real interest rate—the Development Bank would effectively subsidize borrowing for investment. The government-backed equity component reduces risk for both the bank and the borrower, making projects feasible that would otherwise be rejected.

Special mechanisms will allow workers to invest in transformative projects including the gas and fertiliser initiatives. This is a form of "citizen wealth funds," modelled on Alaska's Permanent Fund (which distributes oil revenues equally to all residents) but with an investment rather than a distribution mechanism. Workers can contribute a portion of their wages to these funds, receiving equity stakes in national projects that generate returns over time. The government has emphasized "guaranteed returns," suggesting a state-backed guarantee that protects workers against loss while capping potential gains.

As President Ali explained: "This is a moment in our history... that requires a restructuring of our thinking process." The government is building an "ecosystem" to support citizens in transitioning from wage labour to asset ownership. This ecosystem includes financial institutions (the Development Bank), legal frameworks (property rights, contract enforcement, corporate governance), educational programs (financial literacy, business management), and cultural change (the idea that ordinary workers can and should own productive assets).

The "ownership revolution" addresses a fundamental limitation of conventional poverty reduction strategies, which focus on income transfers rather than wealth accumulation. Income transfers—cash payments, subsidies, food assistance—can reduce poverty in the short term but do not build assets that generate future income. Wealth accumulation—owning a home, a business, a share portfolio, or an education credential—creates a stream of future income that can lift households out of poverty permanently.

By focusing on ownership, the administration is attempting to create a property-owning democracy rather than a welfare-dependent one. The emphasis on "guaranteed returns" suggests a state-backed guarantee mechanism that reduces risk for small investors—an approach with parallels to sovereign wealth fund distribution models in Alaska and Norway, but adapted to Guyana's institutional context and development stage.

3.5 Investment Climate and Private Sector Development

The government has positioned itself as an enabler rather than a substitute for private investment. Tax reforms have eliminated more than 300 taxes and fees imposed by the previous administration, reducing compliance costs for businesses and simplifying the tax code. The previous administration had layered new taxes and fees onto an already complex system, creating a regulatory environment that penalized formal businesses while encouraging informality. By eliminating these levies, the government has reduced the cost of formal registration and compliance, making it easier for businesses to operate legally and for informal enterprises to formalize.

The planned establishment of a \$200 million development bank targeting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) represents an institutional innovation designed to address credit constraints. SMEs in developing economies typically face severe borrowing constraints: they lack collateral, credit history, and the relationships with commercial banks that larger firms enjoy. The development bank will address these constraints through government backing, concessional interest rates, and technical assistance programs that help SMEs develop bankable projects.

Vice President Jagdeo has articulated a vision for "investment vehicles that can give guaranteed returns... we can easily borrow cheaper but we can give people a return on investment than parking their money in the bank." This proposal addresses a specific constraint in the Guyanese financial system: excess liquidity. Commercial banks have more deposits than they can lend productively,

given the limited number of creditworthy borrowers. This excess liquidity is either held as reserves (earning little interest) or invested in low-yielding government securities. By creating investment vehicles that offer higher returns than bank deposits, the government can channel this liquidity into productive investment—infrastructure, housing, manufacturing, agriculture—while providing citizens with a safe, accessible savings instrument.

This proposal, if implemented, would represent a departure from conventional development finance. Most developing economies rely on foreign direct investment (FDI) to finance capital formation, with domestic savings playing a secondary role. The Jagdeo proposal would instead mobilize domestic savings through state-backed investment vehicles, reducing reliance on FDI and giving citizens a direct stake in national development. The "guaranteed returns" component would require careful design to avoid moral hazard (investors taking excessive risk because they expect a bailout) and fiscal exposure (the government absorbing losses if investments fail), but the underlying logic—channelling domestic savings into productive investment—is sound.

The administration's approach to private sector development thus combines deregulation (eliminating 300 taxes), credit provision (the Development Bank), and savings mobilization (investment vehicles). Each component addresses a distinct constraint on private investment: regulatory burden, credit access, and capital availability. The government does not seek to replace private enterprise but to create the conditions under which private enterprise can flourish: predictable regulation, accessible credit, and a pool of domestic savings seeking investment opportunities. This is consistent with the "planned national economy" framework articulated by Chief Investment Officer Peter Ramsaroop, in which the state provides the enabling infrastructure—physical, financial, and institutional—while private actors make investment and production decisions within that framework.

4. Human Capital Development: Education and Health

Human capital development constitutes the second pillar of the administration's transformation strategy, following economic diversification. The theoretical rationale is well-established: in the modern global economy, natural resources and physical capital are necessary but insufficient for sustained prosperity. The true source of long-term growth is the knowledge, skills, and health of the population—what economists term "human capital." President Ali has consistently positioned education as foundational to Guyana's transformation, recognizing that petroleum revenues provide a finite window to build the human infrastructure that will sustain prosperity beyond the oil era.

4.1 Educational Transformation

President Ali has consistently positioned education as foundational to Guyana's transformation. At a public meeting in Eccles, he stated:

"The economy of the future is a knowledge economy. That is why we are investing... our greatest asset must be our human capital."

This formulation reflects a shift in development thinking that has occurred over the past three decades. In the industrial era, natural resources and physical capital (factories, machines, infrastructure) were the primary drivers of growth. In the contemporary knowledge economy, value is increasingly created through ideas, innovation, and expertise. Countries that invest in education and skills development can capture high-value activities—research, design, software development, financial services, medical specialties—while countries that neglect human capital remain confined to low-value activities—raw commodity extraction, assembly, basic services. For Guyana, with its small population and remote location, the knowledge economy offers a pathway to competitiveness that does not depend on cheap labour or proximity to major markets.

The education budget has risen from 53 billion to 183.6 billion—a nearly 250 percent increase in nominal terms, substantially exceeding inflation and population growth. This fiscal commitment signals that the administration views education not as a consumption good (a service that citizens enjoy) but as an investment good (an expenditure that generates future returns through higher productivity and earnings). The returns to education are well-documented: each additional year of schooling increases individual earnings by approximately 10 percent in developing economies, with even higher returns for tertiary education and specialized training.

Several key initiatives stand out. The Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) has provided 39,000 fully funded scholarships, nearly double the initial target of 20,000 by 2025. This program is demand-driven: scholarships are available to any Guyanese citizen who meets admission requirements, rather than being rationed through competitive examination or political patronage. It leverages online delivery to overcome geographic constraints, allowing students in hinterland communities to access the same programs as students in Georgetown without relocating. The program partners with international universities, exposing Guyanese students to global curricula and faculty while keeping costs lower than physical attendance abroad. It spans the full range of educational levels from certificates to doctorates, creating a pipeline from secondary school completion to advanced credentials.

The GOAL program addresses a specific constraint in Guyanese higher education: the limited capacity of the University of Guyana (UG) and other local institutions. For decades, thousands of qualified Guyanese students were denied admission to UG each year because there were simply not enough seats. Many of these students either abandoned their educational aspirations or sought opportunities abroad, contributing to brain drain. GOAL effectively expands the national higher education system by incorporating international online providers, creating seats that did not previously exist. The

"fully funded" aspect ensures that financial barriers do not exclude qualified students from low-income households.

The University of Guyana is now tuition-free, a transformative policy made possible through the decisive action of the current government. By removing the financial barriers that once deterred countless qualified students from pursuing higher education, this initiative democratizes learning and empowers a new generation of Guyanese scholars, professionals, and innovators. The government's commitment to fully subsidizing tuition costs reflects a strategic investment in the nation's human capital, ensuring that every citizen, regardless of economic background, has the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to Guyana's rapidly growing economy. This bold move not only alleviates the burden of student debt but also encourages a more educated, skilled, and equitable society, positioning the university as a true engine of national development and social mobility.

Teacher training has been prioritized. A total of 1,345 new teachers graduated from the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) in 2025, bringing the national trained teacher population, both trained and those in training, to approximately 98 percent. In hinterland regions, trained teacher prevalence has reached nearly 92 percent. This is a remarkable achievement given the historical difficulty of attracting qualified teachers to remote interior communities. The government has simultaneously improved teachers' accommodation, increased hinterland allowances, and raised salaries—addressing the multiple barriers that previously deterred teachers from serving in hinterland schools. Poor housing, low pay, and social isolation have been replaced by improved living conditions, financial incentives, and connectivity to the national education system through digital platforms.

The emphasis on trained teachers reflects the extensive literature on teacher quality and student outcomes. Research consistently finds that teacher subject knowledge and pedagogical skills are among the strongest predictors of student learning,

particularly in disadvantaged contexts. A trained teacher is not merely more knowledgeable; they are better able to diagnose student difficulties, adapt instruction to diverse learning needs, and create classroom environments conducive to learning. The hinterland figure of 92 percent trained prevalence suggests that the government has prioritized the hardest-to-staff positions, ensuring that the most disadvantaged students receive the highest quality instruction.

Digital infrastructure now connects almost every hinterland school to the Learning Channel or digital platforms, enabling participation in the "Guyana Digital School." This addresses the geographical isolation that historically disadvantaged interior communities. In the pre-digital era, hinterland schools operated in near-complete autonomy, with limited access to curriculum resources, professional development for teachers, or quality assurance from the central ministry. Teachers in remote locations had no way to observe model lessons, access supplementary materials, or consult with subject specialists. Digital connectivity changes this fundamentally: students can now access the same lessons as their coastal peers; teachers can participate in online professional development; and administrators can monitor school performance remotely.

The "Guyana Digital School" initiative goes beyond connectivity to include content development. The government has produced video lessons, interactive modules, and assessment materials aligned with the national curriculum, broadcast through the Learning Channel and available on demand through digital platforms. This creates a blended learning environment: classroom instruction supplemented by high-quality digital content. For hinterland schools with multi-grade classrooms (where a single teacher instructs students at multiple grade levels simultaneously), digital content can provide grade-appropriate instruction while the teacher works with individual students or small groups.

Universal secondary education in the hinterland is now a stated goal. Historically, many hinterland communities had access only to primary

education; students who wished to continue to secondary school had to relocate to coastal towns, often living with relatives or in boarding facilities. This created a sharp dropout between primary and secondary levels, with far-reaching consequences for labour market outcomes, social mobility, and community development. Universal secondary education would ensure that every hinterland child can complete secondary schooling without leaving their community, supported by "world class labs" and "practical instruction centres" that provide hands-on training in science, technology, and vocational skills. The school feeding program and hinterland kitchens address nutritional barriers to learning, recognizing that hungry children cannot concentrate or learn effectively.

President Ali framed this investment in terms of access and equity:

"Many young people are told 'we don't have enough seats for medicine and engineering'... we have to build those seats."

This statement directly addresses the rationing of opportunity that has characterized Guyanese education for decades. Under conditions of scarcity, access to elite educational tracks (medicine, engineering, law) has been determined by a combination of academic performance (which correlates with family background), geographic location (coastal students have better schools), and political connections (patronage appointments). By "building those seats"—expanding capacity rather than rationing access—the administration aims to decouple opportunity from background. The GOAL program, tuition-free local university, teacher training expansion, digital infrastructure, and universal secondary education are all components of this capacity-building strategy.

4.2 Responding to Youth Anxiety

President Ali directly addresses the psychological challenges facing young Guyanese in a rapidly changing economy:

"This isn't the defining moment of your life. Your future will be defined by your

determination, your discipline and your willingness to continue learning."

This passage is remarkable for its honesty and its psychological sophistication. It acknowledges that young people may feel overwhelmed by the pace of change, anxious about their ability to compete in a transformed economy, or excluded from elite opportunities that seem reserved for those with connections or wealth. By asserting that "this isn't the defining moment," the President relieves the pressure of a single make-or-break decision—the exam that determines university admission, the job interview that launches a career, the business loan that funds a start-up. Instead, he emphasizes agency ("determination"), character ("discipline"), and adaptability ("willingness to continue learning")—qualities that are accessible regardless of background and that can be cultivated over time rather than deployed in a single moment.

The emphasis on "willingness to continue learning" is particularly significant in the context of rapid technological change. In a knowledge economy, specific skills become obsolete quickly; what matters is the capacity to learn new skills throughout one's career. The GOAL program, with its lifelong learning orientation (from certificates to doctorates), embodies this principle. Workers who completed their formal education decades ago can return for upskilling; professionals can pursue advanced degrees without interrupting their careers; retirees can explore new fields of interest. By framing learning as a continuous process rather than a discrete phase of life, the administration signals that no one is "too old" or "too late" to benefit from educational investment.

This passage also serves a political function. Young Guyanese, who have grown up in an era of rapid change and uncertainty, are a crucial constituency for the administration. If they perceive that opportunities are reserved for those with political connections or inherited wealth, they may become disillusioned and disengaged. By articulating a vision of opportunity based on determination, discipline, and learning—qualities that individuals can control—the President offers

a narrative of hope and agency. The message is that the playing field is not yet level, but it is becoming more level, and individual effort matters.

4.3 Healthcare Expansion

The health sector strategy centres on regional hospital construction, telemedicine integration, and frontier technology adoption. An approximate GY\$4.4 billion regional hospital is under construction in Moruca, Region One. This investment addresses a specific gap: the absence of secondary and tertiary care facilities in the hinterland. Historically, patients from Region One requiring hospital-level care had to be medically evacuated (medevac) to Georgetown—an expensive, time-consuming, and risky process. Medevac flights depend on weather conditions, aircraft availability, and the capacity of Georgetown hospitals to receive patients. Delays can be fatal. The Moruca hospital will provide surgical, obstetric, and inpatient services locally, dramatically reducing the need for medevac and improving health outcomes.

President Ali has highlighted a significant metric: "Today, we have patients from Brazil going to Lethem. Five years ago, it was the reverse." This statement indicates that hinterland healthcare quality now exceeds that of neighbouring regions in Brazil—a remarkable reversal given that Brazil has historically been wealthier and more developed than Guyana. The Lethem hospital, serving Region Nine, has become a regional referral centre, attracting patients from across the border. This generates several benefits: it creates economic activity (patients and their families spend money on accommodation, food, and transport); it builds Guyana's reputation as a healthcare provider; and it validates the quality of the service.

The robotics hospital announced by President Ali represents the "leapfrog" strategy in practice. It "will allow surgeons from Germany, India, or the United States to perform surgery in Guyana through robotics." This is a genuinely transformative technology. Remote surgery uses high-speed internet connections and robotic

instruments to allow a surgeon in one location to operate on a patient in another location, with real-time video feedback and haptic (touch) feedback. For a country like Guyana, which lacks sufficient specialist surgeons in many fields (neurosurgery, cardiac surgery, complex orthopaedics), remote surgery offers access to world-class expertise without requiring specialists to relocate permanently. The surgeon can remain in their home institution, performing operations on Guyanese patients during scheduled sessions. The robotics hospital also positions Guyana as a medical tourism destination for the Caribbean and South America, generating revenue from international patients.

Telemedicine has connected health centres, clinics, and hospitals, reducing reliance on medical evacuations. The core telemedicine model is straightforward: a nurse or community health worker at a remote clinic examines a patient, collects vital signs, and initiates a video consultation with a physician at a regional hospital or the national referral centre. The physician can see the patient, review diagnostic data, order tests, prescribe medications, and recommend further action—all without traveling. This is particularly valuable for chronic disease management (diabetes, hypertension, asthma), where regular monitoring and medication adjustment are necessary but do not require in-person specialist visits. Telemedicine also supports emergency triage: the physician can determine whether a patient requires medevac or can be treated locally, reducing unnecessary evacuations.

International partnerships complement domestic investment. A Global Affairs Canada-funded project (2021-2026) implemented by UNICEF aims to promote safe and healthy learning environments in migrant and host communities across Regions 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9. Results achieved by March 2024 include establishing two new early childhood development spaces in hinterland communities, enabling 2,996 children to access early childhood services, and training 75 community stakeholders on gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health. This partnership validates the government's approach

while supplementing domestic resources. The focus on early childhood development is particularly important: the first five years of life are critical for cognitive, social, and emotional development, and interventions during this period have the highest returns of any educational investment.

President Ali has framed healthcare as part of a broader commitment:

"By 2030, we will have a world-class healthcare system, advanced food production for regional export, and data centres that power the Caribbean's digital future."

This statement links healthcare to the broader knowledge economy strategy. A "world-class healthcare system" is not simply a social service; it is an economic asset. It attracts foreign patients (medical tourism), retains local talent (professionals are less likely to emigrate if they have access to quality care), and reduces the economic burden of disease (healthy workers are more productive). The reference to "data centres that power the Caribbean's digital future" indicates that the administration views health information technology—electronic medical records, telemedicine platforms, population health analytics—as part of the digital infrastructure that will support the knowledge economy.

4.4 Demographic Implications

The government has emphasized hinterland recruitment into national institutions. President Ali has noted that "the highest recruitment in the police academy came from Region One," reflecting expanded educational access. This is a significant demographic shift. Historically, national institutions—the police force, the military, the civil service, the teaching corps—have been dominated by coastal recruits, particularly from the Georgetown area. Hinterland residents were underrepresented at all levels, from entry-level positions to senior leadership. The shift to hinterland recruitment reflects both expanded educational access (hinterland students now complete secondary school and meet entry

requirements) and deliberate affirmative action (the government has prioritized hinterland candidates for training programs).

The implications extend beyond the police academy. Hinterland students now have opportunities to write CXC examinations (the regional secondary school leaving qualification) and meet entry requirements for nursing programs, teacher training, police training, and other professional tracks. For the first time, hinterland youth can aspire to careers that were previously accessible only to coastal youth. This has transformative potential for hinterland communities: educated, employed professionals serve as role models for younger children; remittances and spending circulate within the local economy; and community members gain representation in national institutions.

The demographic implications also include changing migration patterns. Historically, ambitious young people from hinterland communities had no choice but to relocate to the coast for education and employment. Many never returned, contributing to a cycle of outmigration and community decline. By building educational and employment opportunities in the hinterland—schools, hospitals, airstrips, digital infrastructure—the government aims to make it possible for hinterland youth to build careers without leaving their communities. This does not eliminate migration (some will still choose to move to the coast or abroad), but it reduces the forced migration that previously characterized hinterland development. Those who do leave retain stronger ties to their home communities, with the option to return later in their careers.

The human capital development strategy thus has multiple objectives: increasing the average skill level of the workforce, reducing educational inequality between coastal and hinterland regions, creating pathways from schooling to employment, retaining talented youth in Guyana, and building the institutional capacity of the state. The fiscal commitment—a 250 percent increase in the education budget—is substantial, but the potential returns are correspondingly large. In the

knowledge economy, human capital is the ultimate source of competitive advantage, and countries that invest early and consistently can leapfrog those that do not.

5. Infrastructure and Housing: The Visible Transformation

Infrastructure and housing constitute the most visible dimension of Guyana's post-COVID transformation. While economic diversification and human capital development operate on longer time horizons, infrastructure projects—roads, bridges, hospitals, housing developments—are immediately perceptible to citizens. The administration has leveraged this visibility strategically, using tangible deliverables to build performance legitimacy. As President Ali has emphasized, the government does not only speak of potential; it transforms potential into visible, usable infrastructure that changes daily life.

5.1 The Seamless Infrastructure Vision

In his inaugural address, President Ali outlined a comprehensive infrastructure vision:

"Seamless infrastructure between every region, digital infrastructure, advancing our new smart city, Silica City and a shipping and logistics hub, linking Brazil and CARICOM."

This vision integrates multiple dimensions of infrastructure that are often treated separately. "Seamless infrastructure between every region" refers to physical connectivity: roads, bridges, airstrips, and waterways that link Guyana's ten regions into a unified national space. Historically, travel between regions has been difficult, time-consuming, and expensive. The coastal road network is relatively developed, but connections to the hinterland are limited; many interior communities are accessible only by air or river, with irregular schedules and high costs. The "seamless" aspiration implies that citizens should be able to move freely between regions, that goods should flow efficiently to markets, and that emergency services should reach any location within a reasonable timeframe.

"Digital infrastructure" refers to the complementary networks—fibre optic cables, mobile towers, satellite connections, data centres—that enable digital services. Physical infrastructure alone is insufficient for modern economic activity; digital infrastructure is equally essential. The government's digital strategy includes expanding broadband connectivity to all regions, digitizing state services, and positioning Guyana as a data centre hub for the Caribbean. The "smart city" concept (Silica City) integrates physical and digital infrastructure: a planned urban development where sensors, networks, and data analytics optimize traffic flow, energy consumption, waste management, and public safety.

The "shipping and logistics hub, linking Brazil and CARICOM" reflects the administration's regional ambitions. Guyana's geographic position—on the north-eastern coast of South America, with access to the Atlantic Ocean and proximity to the Caribbean—offers strategic advantages for logistics. Deep-water ports can serve as transshipment hubs, transferring goods between ocean-going vessels and regional distribution networks. The hub would link Brazil (South America's largest economy, with limited Atlantic port access) to CARICOM (the Caribbean Community, a market of approximately 18 million people). By positioning Guyana as a logistics intermediary, the administration aims to capture value from regional trade flows, generating employment, investment, and foreign exchange.

This vision is not simply aspirational but operationalized through specific projects. Each project described below—housing, roads, bridges, airlift, energy, sports tourism—is a component of the seamless infrastructure framework. The coordination across projects is deliberate: hotel construction is timed to coincide with airlift expansion; road construction anticipates housing development; energy investment enables industrial growth. This coordination distinguishes the administration's approach from the project-by-project, donor-driven infrastructure development

that has characterized many developing economies.

5.2 Housing Policy

The housing sector represents the government's most visible commitment to improving living standards. The administration surpassed its target of distributing 50,000 house lots, with approximately 38,000 lots distributed by early 2025. This achievement is significant for multiple reasons.

Housing addresses a fundamental need. Guyana has experienced chronic housing shortages for decades, with overcrowding, substandard construction, and insecure tenure widespread, particularly among low-income households. The lack of adequate housing has cascading effects: children cannot study in overcrowded homes; health problems proliferate in damp, poorly ventilated structures; domestic violence is exacerbated by lack of space; and households cannot accumulate equity through homeownership. By distributing 50,000 house lots, the government has enabled tens of thousands of households to build or purchase homes, transforming their living conditions and building intergenerational wealth.

Housing generates substantial employment multiplier effects. The construction industry's 180 percent growth and 30,000 new jobs are directly attributable to the housing program. Each house lot distributed generates demand for construction materials (cement, steel, lumber, roofing, plumbing, electrical), skilled labour (carpenters, masons, electricians, plumbers), and unskilled labour (excavation, site preparation, clean-up). The multiplier extends beyond construction: new homeowners purchase furniture, appliances, and household goods; they contract landscaping, maintenance, and repair services; they generate property tax revenue for local governments. Economic research consistently finds that housing investment has among the highest multiplier effects of any public spending, particularly in developing economies with underutilized construction capacity.

Housing addresses geographic inequality. The distribution of house lots has not been limited to coastal areas; the government has prioritized hinterland communities, where housing shortages are most severe and construction costs are highest due to transportation and logistics challenges. By building housing in hinterland regions, the government enables families to remain in their communities rather than migrating to the coast in search of adequate shelter. This supports the "One Guyana" objective of development reaching "every community, every family and every region."

Housing builds wealth through homeownership. For most households, the home is the single largest asset they will ever own. Home equity can be leveraged for education (taking out loans to pay for children's schooling), entrepreneurship (using the home as collateral for business loans), and retirement security (selling or renting the home to fund old age). By facilitating homeownership—through land distribution, infrastructure provision (roads, water, electricity), and mortgage access—the government is creating a property-owning democracy rather than a rental-dependent one. This aligns with the "ownership revolution" philosophy articulated in Chapter 3.

The housing program has been supported by complementary investments in "low-cost truck parking zones" and "industrial hubs." These address the logistics of construction: trucks deliver materials to housing sites; industrial hubs produce building components (prefabricated panels, trusses, fixtures) at scale, reducing costs and speeding construction. The government has also streamlined permitting and approvals, reducing the time between lot allocation and occupancy.

5.3 Transportation and Energy

The Bharrat Jagdeo Demerara River Bridge symbolizes the administration's infrastructural ambition. Named after Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, the bridge replaces a colonial-era structure that had become a bottleneck for traffic and commerce. The original Demerara Harbour Bridge, constructed in 1978, was a floating bridge

that required frequent retractions to allow river traffic to pass, causing long delays. It was also vulnerable to flooding, high winds, and collisions with vessels. The new bridge is a high-span, fixed crossing that allows uninterrupted traffic flow while accommodating river navigation beneath. It reduces travel time between the East Bank and West Bank of the Demerara River, improves access to the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (located on the eastern side), and supports the development of industrial areas on the western bank. The bridge is emblematic of the administration's approach to infrastructure: it replaces an inadequate facility with a modern, resilient one; it facilitates regional integration; and it bears the name of a political leader, embedding the project in the government's narrative of progress.

Road and bridge construction has proceeded at an unprecedented scale. Over 3,000 community roads and 200 bridges were constructed in 2024 alone. This is not only a matter of aggregate numbers but of geographic distribution. The government has prioritized "last mile" connectivity—roads that connect individual communities to the national network, rather than just upgrading existing highways. For residents of remote villages, a road that connects to the nearest town transforms daily life: children can attend school; the sick can reach clinics; farmers can transport produce to markets; and households can receive deliveries of goods. The 200 bridges address the specific geography of Guyana, which is crisscrossed by rivers, creeks, and drainage canals. In many areas, the absence of a bridge forces residents to use ferries (slow, unreliable) or to take long detours (time-consuming, expensive). Each new bridge is a bottleneck removed.

Airlift expansion has complemented ground transportation. Hotel development was "deliberately matched with expanded airlift, new and returning carriers, and modernized airport terminals." This coordination is unusual in developing economies, where airlift and hotel capacity often develop asynchronously—hotels built before airlines arrive sit empty; airlines add routes before hotels exist, leaving passengers with

nowhere to stay. The government has taken a planned approach: identifying tourism targets, negotiating with carriers, and simultaneously approving hotel projects. The expansion of Terminal Two at Cheddi Jagan International Airport, with studies already suggesting further expansion may be necessary, reflects the administration's expectation of sustained growth in passenger traffic. Hinterland airstrips have been upgraded as well, strengthening national integration by making remote communities accessible by air year-round.

The Gas-to-Energy Project represents Guyana's most ambitious energy infrastructure initiative. The project involves constructing a pipeline to transport natural gas from offshore oil fields to an onshore power plant, where the gas will be used to generate electricity. Electricity costs will decline substantially. Guyana currently generates electricity primarily from heavy fuel oil (HFO), which is expensive, polluting, and subject to global price volatility. Natural gas is cheaper, cleaner, and more stable in price. Lower electricity costs will reduce operating expenses for businesses, making Guyanese manufacturing, processing, and services more competitive.

The project will also decarbonize electricity generation. Natural gas produces approximately half the carbon dioxide per unit of energy as coal and 30-40 percent less than oil. While not zero-carbon, the transition from oil to gas is a meaningful step toward the government's climate commitments, reducing emissions while maintaining reliable power supply. The project also creates a foundation for future integration of renewable energy (solar, wind, hydro), as gas-fired generation can ramp up and down to complement intermittent renewables.

The project supports industrialization. Natural gas is not only a fuel for electricity generation but also a feedstock for manufacturing—fertilizers, petrochemicals, plastics, and other products. The government has announced plans for a fertilizer plant, using gas to produce nitrogen-based fertilizers that can be used domestically (reducing imports) and exported regionally (capturing

value). This integration of energy and industrial policy is central to the "planned national economy" framework.

President Ali emphasized that Guyana is not "sleepwalking into the future" but "boldly engineering a model of development that converts energy wealth into sustainable prosperity." The Gas-to-Energy Project exemplifies this engineering approach. Rather than simply selling natural gas on the global market (the extractive model), the government is using it as an input to transform the domestic economy—reducing costs, lowering emissions, and enabling industrialization. This is the distinction between owning a resource (selling it raw) and leveraging a resource (using it to build productive capacity).

5.4 Sports Tourism as Economic Sector

President Ali launched the Guyana Grand Prix in May 2026, aiming to make Guyana the "undisputed motor racing capital" of the Caribbean. At first glance, motorsport may seem an unusual priority for a developing economy with pressing needs in health, education, and housing. However, the initiative reflects a sophisticated understanding of tourism economics and brand positioning.

The President explained the economic logic:

"We are spending a lot of money, and we are not spending this money without understanding the linkage to the economic spinoff it brings... When there is a major motorsport event, restaurants fill up, taxi drivers smile, mechanics work overtime, and food vendors do brisk business. This is a national product that is going to have tremendous economic value."

The analysis focuses on the "economic spinoff"—the multiplier effects of event-related spending. A major motorsport event attracts participants, teams, media, and spectators, all of whom spend money on accommodation, food, transportation, and entertainment. This spending circulates through the local economy: hotels hire staff, restaurants buy supplies, taxi drivers purchase fuel and maintenance, mechanics earn income that

they spend at local businesses. The multiplier is substantial because motorsport events are "high-yield" tourism: they attract visitors with above-average disposable income who spend more per day than typical leisure tourists.

The President described the GT Challenge as the "Caribbean Premier League (CPL) of motor racing," drawing an explicit parallel to successful regional sports tourism models. The CPL has transformed cricket in the Caribbean, attracting international players, global television audiences, and substantial sponsorship revenue. By creating a comparable model for motorsport, Guyana can capture a share of the global racing industry—manufacturing, engineering, media, hospitality, and merchandising.

The motorsport initiative also serves a branding function. Guyana is not widely known as a tourism destination; it lacks the beaches of Barbados, the reefs of the Bahamas, or the reggae of Jamaica. Motorsport offers a distinctive brand identity that differentiates Guyana from its competitors. The "undisputed motor racing capital of the Caribbean" is a clear, memorable positioning that can attract visitors who might not otherwise consider Guyana. Over time, the racing brand can spill over to other tourism products—ecotourism, cultural heritage, culinary tourism—as visitors discover the country's broader attractions.

The government's investment in motorsport is supported by the infrastructure investments described above. The racing circuit requires roads (already being built), airports (expanding), hotels (in development), and power (the Gas-to-Energy Project). The motorsport initiative is not a standalone project but a use case for the broader infrastructure transformation. It demonstrates that the government is thinking creatively about how to monetize its infrastructure investments, generating returns beyond the obvious sectors of housing, transport, and energy.

The sports tourism strategy extends beyond motorsport. The government has also invested in football facilities, cricket grounds, and athletic tracks, positioning Guyana to host regional and

international competitions. Each event generates economic activity, builds national pride, and showcases Guyana to global audiences. The strategy reflects a shift from viewing sports as a consumption good (something citizens enjoy) to an investment good (something that generates economic returns through tourism, media, and sponsorship).

The transformative impact of the new track and field facility in New Amsterdam and the cricket stadium being built at Palmyra, both in Region 6, cannot be overstated; these world-class developments are set to revolutionize the livelihoods of people across the region. By providing modern infrastructure for athletics and cricket, these projects will position Region 6 as a premier hub for sports tourism, attracting national and international competitions, teams, and visitors, which in turn will stimulate local businesses, hotels, restaurants, and transportation services. Beyond tourism, these venues will create direct employment during construction and long-term jobs in management, coaching, maintenance, and event coordination, while also inspiring youth to pursue sporting careers as a viable path to scholarships and professional contracts. Together, the track and field facility and the Palmyra cricket stadium represent a strategic investment in regional development, promoting community pride, reducing the need for residents to travel to Georgetown for major events, and ensuring that the benefits of sports-driven economic growth are felt directly by the people of Region 6 for generations to come.

The infrastructure and housing transformation is thus multidimensional. It addresses immediate needs (shelter, mobility, power) while building long-term productive capacity. It generates visible, tangible deliverables that build performance legitimacy. And it integrates physical, digital, and energy systems into a coherent national network. The "visible transformation" is not merely cosmetic; it is the physical manifestation of the "One Guyana" vision, connecting regions, enabling opportunity, and demonstrating that the administration delivers on its promises.

6. Hinterland Integration and Regional Equity

Hinterland integration constitutes the moral and political core of the "One Guyana" vision. While economic diversification and infrastructure development benefit all Guyanese, the hinterland—comprising Regions 1, 7, 8, and 9, as well as parts of Regions 2 and 10—has historically been excluded from national development. The coastal plain, home to approximately 90 percent of the population, has received the lion's share of public investment, while the interior—an area larger than many European countries—has been neglected. The Ali administration has made closing this "decades-old gap" a signature priority, not as charity or afterthought but as a central pillar of the national development strategy.

6.1 The Coastal-Hinterland Divide

Guyana's population distribution—approximately 90 percent concentrated on the narrow coastal plain—has historically produced extreme regional inequality. The coastal plain, a strip of land roughly 10-40 kilometres wide along the Atlantic Ocean, contains the capital city of Georgetown, the major towns, the primary agricultural lands, and the vast majority of infrastructure, schools, hospitals, and economic activity. The hinterland—the interior savannahs, rainforests, and mountains that constitute approximately 85 percent of Guyana's land area—is home to roughly 10 percent of the population, predominantly Amerindian communities.

This demographic distribution is not natural but historical. During the colonial era, the British concentrated investment and administration on the coast, where sugar plantations were established using enslaved and indentured labour. The interior was largely ignored, except for sporadic extractive activities (gold, diamonds, timber). After independence, this pattern persisted: each successive government, regardless of ethnic composition, directed the majority of public spending to the coast, where the majority of voters resided. Hinterland communities received minimal services: dirt airstrips that became impassable in rainy weather, primary schools that offered only

basic literacy and numeracy, health posts staffed by nurses (not doctors) with limited supplies, and no access to clean water, electricity, or telecommunications.

The consequences of this neglect are stark. Hinterland life expectancy is substantially lower than coastal life expectancy; maternal and child mortality rates are higher; infectious diseases (tuberculosis, malaria, respiratory infections) that have been eliminated from the coast remain endemic; secondary school completion rates are a fraction of coastal rates; and formal employment opportunities are virtually non-existent outside of government services and extractive industries. Many hinterland communities remain dependent on subsistence agriculture, hunting, and fishing, with limited cash income and high vulnerability to weather shocks, commodity price fluctuations, and health emergencies.

President Ali articulated the administration's commitment in a 2026 engagement:

"We are closing the decades-old gap between coastal and hinterland communities."

The strategy for closing this gap is multidimensional, encompassing education, healthcare, infrastructure, and economic inclusion.

In education, the government has prioritized hinterland education through digital connectivity (almost every hinterland school now connected to the Learning Channel), teacher training (92 percent trained teacher prevalence in hinterland regions), and universal secondary education (ensuring every hinterland child can complete secondary school without relocating to the coast). The GOAL scholarship program is equally accessible to hinterland students, who can pursue university degrees online without leaving their communities. The school feeding program addresses nutritional barriers, recognizing that hungry children cannot learn.

In healthcare, the government is constructing regional hospitals in hinterland locations (Moruca, Region One; Lethem, Region Nine) and upgrading health centres across the interior. Telemedicine

connects remote clinics to regional and national referral centres, reducing reliance on medical evacuations. The robotics hospital, while located on the coast, will serve hinterland patients through remote consultation and, eventually, remote surgery. The metric that "patients from Brazil go to Lethem" is particularly significant: it indicates that hinterland healthcare quality now exceeds that of neighbouring regions in Brazil, a reversal of historical patterns.

In infrastructure, the government is upgrading hinterland airstrips to allow year-round access, constructing roads to connect remote communities to regional centres, and deploying solar energy systems to electrify villages that have never had reliable power. The Gas-to-Energy Project, while primarily benefiting the coast, will reduce electricity costs across the national grid, including hinterland connections. Digital infrastructure—fibre optic cables, mobile towers, satellite connections—is being extended to the interior, enabling not only education and healthcare but also e-commerce, remote work, and access to government services.

In economic inclusion, the government has channelled carbon credit revenues directly to Amerindian villages, providing cash income that communities can use for development priorities. It has also supported Amerindian entrepreneurship, agro-processing, and eco-tourism, creating livelihood opportunities beyond subsistence activities.

The strategy is comprehensive by design. Education without healthcare fails because sick children cannot learn; healthcare without infrastructure fails because patients cannot reach facilities; infrastructure without economic inclusion fails because roads and electricity do not generate income. The government has therefore pursued all four dimensions simultaneously, recognizing that they are mutually reinforcing.

6.2 Amerindian Communities and Carbon Credits

Successful carbon credit agreements have injected billions of dollars in direct support to over 240

Amerindian village economies under the LCDS 2030 framework. This approach represents an institutional innovation: rather than imposing conservation from above, the government has channelled international climate finance directly to Indigenous communities.

The Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) was originally developed under Vice President Jagdeo's presidency (1999-2011) as a framework for valuing Guyana's forests as a global public good. Guyana's rainforest covers approximately 85 percent of the country's land area and stores billions of tons of carbon. If deforested, this carbon would be released into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change; if preserved, it continues to provide climate regulation, biodiversity habitat, and other ecosystem services. The LCDS proposes that the international community should compensate Guyana for preserving its forests, creating a financial flow from carbon-emitting countries (which benefit from Guyana's conservation) to Guyana (which forgoes development opportunities by not deforesting).

The updated LCDS 2030 operationalizes this framework through the Artibon mechanism (named after the Guyanese word for "forest"), which generates carbon credits that can be sold on international voluntary carbon markets. Each credit represents one ton of carbon dioxide equivalent that has been kept out of the atmosphere through forest conservation. Corporations and governments purchase these credits to offset their own emissions, generating revenue for Guyana.

The institutional innovation lies in how this revenue is distributed. Rather than channelling carbon credit revenues through the central government (where they might be diverted or delayed), the LCDS 2030 framework provides for direct payments to Amerindian villages. Each village receives a baseline payment, plus additional payments based on the area of forest it manages and its success in preventing deforestation. Villages decide collectively how to use these funds: some have invested in solar

energy systems, others in community buildings, others in education and healthcare, and others in cash distributions to individual households.

This approach has multiple advantages. It recognizes Amerindian land rights and governance authority. The villages are not passive recipients of government charity but active managers of forest resources. By channelling payments directly to villages, the government affirms that Amerindian communities are the legitimate stewards of their traditional territories.

It aligns conservation incentives with community development. When villages receive carbon credit payments, they have a direct financial interest in preventing deforestation—illegal logging, mining incursions, slash-and-burn agriculture—that would otherwise be difficult to monitor and enforce. The payments transform conservation from an external constraint (imposed by the government or international donors) into a community-managed asset.

It injects substantial cash into hinterland economies. Billions of Guyanese dollars have flowed to Amerindian villages under the LCDS 2030 framework, creating demand for goods and services, enabling investment in community infrastructure, and providing households with income that can be used for education, healthcare, and consumption. This cash injection is particularly valuable in areas where formal employment opportunities are scarce.

It builds the administrative capacity of Amerindian village councils. Managing carbon credit payments requires budgeting, accounting, reporting, and collective decision-making—skills that strengthen village governance and prepare communities for other forms of external funding and economic engagement.

Guyana's approach compares favourably to alternatives. In many countries, Indigenous communities are excluded from carbon credit schemes, which are designed and implemented by external actors with little community input. In others, carbon credits generate revenue that is captured by the central government or by private

intermediaries, with minimal benefits reaching local communities. Guyana's direct payment model is among the most progressive in the world, recognized by international climate finance experts as a best practice for benefit-sharing.

The model also addresses a longstanding critique of carbon markets: that they commodify nature without benefiting local communities. By ensuring that Amerindian villages receive direct payments, the government has partially addressed this critique, though questions remain about the adequacy of the payments, the fairness of the distribution formula, and the long-term sustainability of carbon market revenues.

Beyond carbon credits, the government's support for Amerindian communities extends to entrepreneurship, providing training, credit, and market access for community-owned businesses in agro-processing, eco-tourism, and crafts. It has supported the demarcation and titling of Amerindian lands, strengthening legal protections against incursions by miners, loggers, and land speculators. And it has recruited Amerindian youth into national institutions—the police academy, the teaching corps, the nursing program—creating pathways to professional careers that were previously inaccessible.

The President has framed environmental stewardship as "part of our new economy" rather than a constraint on development. For Amerindian communities, this framing is particularly apt: the forests they have preserved for generations are now generating cash income, validating their traditional practices, and providing a foundation for sustainable development.

6.3 Diaspora Inclusion

President Ali has recognized the Guyanese diaspora as integral to national development:

"You're not visitors here. Your presence completes our circle."

This statement reflects a significant shift in how the Guyanese state relates to its diaspora. Historically, Guyanese who emigrated—to the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and other Caribbean nations—were often viewed as

having abandoned the country. They retained the right to vote (absentee ballots), but their contributions to national development were largely ignored or taken for granted. The Ali administration has reversed this posture, actively engaging the diaspora as partners in development.

The Guyanese diaspora is substantial. Approximately 300,000 to 400,000 Guyanese-born individuals live outside the country, with an additional 500,000 to 1 million people of Guyanese descent born abroad. The diaspora is concentrated in North America (New York, Toronto, Florida) and the United Kingdom (London, Birmingham), with smaller communities in other Caribbean nations, Canada, and Europe. Many diaspora members maintain strong ties to Guyana, sending remittances, visiting family, and following national politics. Remittances from the diaspora amount to hundreds of millions of dollars annually, exceeding official development assistance and rivalling oil revenues in some years.

The government has sought to channel diaspora resources into productive investment. Remittances, while valuable for household consumption, are often used for immediate needs rather than long-term wealth creation. The government has therefore created investment vehicles that allow diaspora members to invest in Guyanese projects—housing, infrastructure, agriculture, tourism—while earning returns. The planned Guyana Development Bank, with its low-interest loans and government-backed equity, is accessible to diaspora members. The investment vehicles proposed by Vice President Jagdeo, offering "guaranteed returns," are specifically designed to attract diaspora capital.

Beyond financial resources, the diaspora brings knowledge and skills that are scarce in Guyana. Diaspora members with expertise in medicine, engineering, finance, technology, and education can contribute through short-term consultancies, remote work arrangements, or permanent return. The government has established programs to facilitate knowledge transfer: visiting professor positions at the University of Guyana; medical

missions by diaspora physicians; technology partnerships with diaspora-owned firms. The GOAL scholarship program, while primarily for Guyanese residents, also offers opportunities for diaspora members to study Guyanese culture, history, and development.

The "One Guyana" vision includes diaspora members as citizens with a stake in national development, not merely as voters or remittance senders. The government has established diaspora engagement units in its embassies and consulates, hosted diaspora conferences and networking events, and consulted diaspora leaders on policy priorities. The President's statement that "your presence completes our circle" is both symbolic and substantive: it signals that diaspora members are valued for themselves, not merely for their money.

The government has also sought to facilitate return migration. Many Guyanese who emigrated decades ago are now approaching retirement and considering returning to Guyana. Others left as children and may be interested in returning as young adults. The government has streamlined the process for acquiring Guyanese citizenship, recognizing dual citizenship, and transferring pensions and other benefits. It has also invested in housing, healthcare, and security—services that returnees require—and in economic opportunities that can absorb returnees' skills and capital.

Guyana's diaspora engagement strategy is part of a broader trend among developing economies. Countries as diverse as India, China, Mexico, the Philippines, and Ghana have developed diaspora engagement policies, recognizing that emigrants and their descendants can contribute to national development through remittances, investment, knowledge transfer, and political advocacy. Guyana's approach is distinctive in its emphasis on political inclusion (the "you complete our circle" framing) and its integration with the "One Guyana" vision of national unity.

Diaspora engagement is not without challenges. Diaspora members may have outdated or romanticized views of Guyana, expecting conditions similar to their countries of residence.

They may face resistance from residents who view them as privileged outsiders, jumping the queue for opportunities. And the government must balance diaspora engagement with attention to residents who never left, ensuring that development benefits are not skewed toward returnees and investors. The "One Guyana" framework, with its emphasis on inclusion regardless of geography or social background, provides a principled basis for navigating these tensions.

Hinterland integration and diaspora inclusion are two sides of the same coin: both address historical exclusions—the hinterland excluded by neglect, the diaspora excluded by emigration—and both seek to incorporate previously marginalized groups into the national development project. The hinterland receives investment in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and carbon credit revenues; the diaspora receives investment vehicles, knowledge transfer opportunities, and political recognition. In both cases, the objective is the same: to build a country where "every citizen sees themselves in the development of the nation and benefits from the prosperity of the nation."

The coastal-hinterland divide is centuries old, and closing it will take more than a single administration. But the progress documented above—digital connectivity, trained teachers, regional hospitals, carbon credit payments—represents a genuine departure from past neglect. The government has made hinterland integration a priority, not a residual, and has backed that priority with substantial resources. Whether this momentum will be sustained depends on continued political will, economic stability, and the capacity of hinterland communities to absorb and leverage the investments they are receiving. The foundation, however, has been laid.

7. Environmental Stewardship as Economic Strategy

Environmental stewardship is not, for the Ali administration, a constraint on development or a concession to international donors. It is, rather, a central pillar of the nation's emerging economic

model—a source of revenue, employment, and competitive advantage. This framing, articulated most clearly in the updated Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS 2030), represents a significant departure from conventional development thinking, which tends to treat environmental protection and economic growth as trade-offs. The administration argues that Guyana's forests, biodiversity, and coastal ecosystems are assets that can be monetized, generating returns that support development while preserving the natural environment for future generations.

7.1 The LCDS 2030 Framework

President Ali has positioned environmental services as "central pillars of the nation's emerging economic model under the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030." The LCDS, originally developed under Vice President Jagdeo's presidency (1999-2011), has been updated to reflect Guyana's new resource endowment while maintaining its core premise: that forest conservation can generate economic value through carbon credits and ecosystem services.

The original LCDS was developed in response to a fundamental dilemma. Guyana possesses one of the world's highest rates of forest cover per capita, with rainforest covering approximately 85 percent of the country's land area. This forest stores billions of tons of carbon, hosts extraordinary biodiversity, and provides ecosystem services—climate regulation, water purification, soil conservation—that benefit not only Guyana but the world. However, the opportunity cost of preserving this forest is substantial. Guyana could generate significant revenue by logging the timber, mining the minerals beneath the forest, or clearing the land for agriculture. The LCDS proposed that the international community should compensate Guyana for preserving its forests, creating a financial flow that would offset these opportunity costs.

The original LCDS gained international recognition as a pioneering model for results-based climate finance. Norway agreed to pay

Guyana up to \$250 million for forest conservation performance, based on independently verified reductions in deforestation rates. This agreement demonstrated that it was possible to value forests as a global public good and to channel finance from rich countries to forest-rich developing countries.

The updated LCDS 2030 expands on the original framework in several respects. It incorporates Guyana's new oil wealth, recognizing that petroleum revenues create both opportunities and risks for forest conservation. Oil revenues can finance the investments in monitoring, enforcement, and community engagement that are necessary to prevent deforestation; they can also, if mismanaged, fuel the kind of rapid, unplanned development that leads to forest clearing. The LCDS 2030 commits the government to using a portion of oil revenues to support forest conservation, creating a virtuous cycle rather than a trade-off.

The LCDS 2030 expands the scope of environmental services beyond carbon to include biodiversity, watershed protection, and other ecosystem services. Carbon credits are the most developed market, but there are emerging markets for biodiversity credits, water quality credits, and other environmental commodities. By positioning itself as a leader in this space, Guyana can capture first-mover advantages as these markets develop.

The LCDS 2030 strengthens the direct benefit-sharing with Amerindian communities, as documented in Chapter 6. Under the updated framework, a larger share of carbon credit revenues flows directly to villages, and communities have greater authority over how funds are used. This addresses a critique of the original LCDS—that benefits were concentrated at the national level, with limited community impact—while aligning conservation incentives with local development priorities.

The LCDS 2030 integrates environmental services with other economic sectors. Forest conservation supports eco-tourism (visitors pay to see intact rainforest), biodiversity research (scientists pay to access unique ecosystems), and non-timber forest

products (communities harvest nuts, fruits, resins, and medicinal plants). The strategy seeks to create a portfolio of forest-based economic activities that generate revenue without deforesting.

President Ali's framing captures this philosophy:

"Climate and environmental stewardship is not a gift only that we're giving to the world; it is part of our new economy."

This statement reframes environmental protection as wealth creation rather than opportunity cost. The forests are not being preserved for altruistic reasons, though altruism may motivate some actors; they are being preserved because they generate revenue—carbon credits, biodiversity payments, tourism receipts, research funding—that supports national development. This framing is both economically sound (the forests are genuinely valuable) and politically strategic (it appeals to citizens who might otherwise view environmental protection as a luxury Guyana cannot afford).

7.2 Biodiversity and Research

Guyana is positioning itself as "a global hub for environmental and biodiversity education and research." The Commonwealth Centre of Excellence for Biodiversity will be launched in Guyana, integrating satellite imagery, drones, and monitoring systems into forest and biodiversity tracking.

Biodiversity—the variety of life at genetic, species, and ecosystem levels—is valuable for multiple reasons. It provides ecosystem services (pollination, pest control, water purification) that underpin agriculture and human health. It supports tourism, as visitors pay to see unique species and landscapes. It provides raw materials for pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and other industries. And it has intrinsic value—the idea that species have a right to exist regardless of their utility to humans.

Guyana's biodiversity is extraordinary. The country's forests, savannahs, and wetlands are home to jaguars, giant otters, harpy eagles, tapirs, anteaters, monkeys, caimans, anacondas, and thousands of other species, many of which are

found nowhere else. This biodiversity has been largely unexplored by science; new species are discovered regularly, and the full extent of Guyana's biological wealth is unknown.

The Commonwealth Centre of Excellence for Biodiversity will serve multiple functions. It will conduct research on Guyana's biodiversity, documenting species, mapping distributions, and studying ecological processes. This research will generate scientific publications, train Guyanese and international researchers, and build the knowledge base for conservation and sustainable use.

The Centre will provide education and training, offering degrees, certificates, and short courses for Guyanese and international students. By training a new generation of biodiversity professionals, the Centre will build Guyana's capacity to manage its natural resources, participate in international environmental negotiations, and capture value from emerging markets for biodiversity credits and other environmental commodities.

The Centre will develop and deploy monitoring technologies—satellite imagery, drones, camera traps, acoustic sensors, environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling—to track forest condition, species populations, and illegal activities (deforestation, poaching, mining incursions). This monitoring infrastructure will support carbon credit verification (ensuring that claimed emissions reductions are real), biodiversity credit verification (ensuring that conservation outcomes are achieved), and law enforcement (detecting and deterring illegal activities).

The Centre will serve as a hub for international collaboration, hosting visiting researchers, conferences, and workshops. By attracting the global biodiversity community to Guyana, the Centre will generate economic activity (spending by visitors) and build Guyana's reputation as a leader in environmental stewardship.

The integration of satellite imagery, drones, and monitoring systems is a significant innovation. Traditional forest monitoring relies on ground-based surveys, which are expensive, time-

consuming, and limited in coverage. Satellite imagery allows continuous monitoring of the entire country, detecting deforestation, forest degradation, and fires in near-real time. Drones provide higher-resolution imagery for targeted areas, verifying satellite detections and collecting data on species and habitats. Automated monitoring systems (camera traps, acoustic sensors, eDNA samplers) collect data on biodiversity without requiring constant human presence. Together, these technologies create a monitoring infrastructure that is more comprehensive, more timely, and more cost-effective than traditional approaches.

The data generated by this infrastructure have multiple uses. For carbon markets, they provide independent verification that emissions reductions are real, additional, and permanent. For biodiversity markets, they document conservation outcomes that can be sold to corporations and governments seeking to offset their environmental impacts. For law enforcement, they provide evidence of illegal activities that can be used in court. For research, they create a longitudinal dataset that can be analysed to understand ecological processes, species distributions, and the impacts of climate change.

Guyana's investment in biodiversity research and monitoring positions it as a leader among tropical forest nations. Most countries with comparable biodiversity lack the resources or political will to develop this infrastructure. Guyana's oil wealth provides the fiscal space to invest; the LCDS 2030 provides the policy framework; and the Commonwealth Centre of Excellence provides the institutional home. The result is a national monitoring system that is the envy of the region.

7.3 Mangrove Restoration and Coastal Protection

The mangrove restoration program exemplifies nature-based solutions, protecting coastal communities from sea-level rise while creating opportunities in tourism, agriculture, and honey production.

Mangroves are salt-tolerant trees and shrubs that grow in coastal intertidal zones. They provide multiple ecosystem services. They protect coastlines from erosion, storm surges, and sea-level rise. Mangrove roots stabilize sediments, absorb wave energy, and build soil elevation, reducing the vulnerability of coastal communities to flooding and erosion. For a low-lying coastal nation like Guyana—much of which lies below sea level and relies on a system of seawalls and drainage canals for protection—mangroves are a critical component of climate adaptation.

Mangroves provide habitat for fish, crabs, shrimp, birds, and other wildlife. Many commercially important fish species depend on mangroves as nursery grounds, spending their early lives among the mangrove roots before moving to open water. Mangrove-associated fisheries support livelihoods and food security for coastal communities.

Mangroves sequester carbon at rates exceeding most tropical forests. The carbon stored in mangrove soils—which can be meters deep—remains locked away for centuries, provided the mangroves are not disturbed. Mangrove conservation and restoration are therefore highly cost-effective climate mitigation strategies.

Mangroves support tourism, recreation, and education. Visitors kayak through mangrove channels, birdwatch from observation platforms, and learn about coastal ecology at interpretation centres. Mangroves also provide non-timber forest products: honey, tannins, medicinal compounds, and materials for crafts.

Guyana's mangrove restoration program has multiple components. The government has designated mangrove reserves where clearing, filling, and development are prohibited. These reserves are patrolled by rangers and monitored using satellite imagery, ensuring that mangroves are not lost to illegal activities.

The government has implemented active restoration: planting mangrove seedlings in degraded areas, constructing barriers to trap sediments and promote natural regeneration, and removing invasive species that outcompete

mangroves. Restoration is labour-intensive, creating employment for coastal communities while rebuilding natural infrastructure.

The government has established the National Mangrove Centre, which serves an educational function, training students and the public about ecosystem protection. The Centre offers school programs, community workshops, and public awareness campaigns, building support for mangrove conservation and recruiting volunteers for restoration activities.

The government has developed economic activities compatible with mangrove conservation: honey production (mangrove bees produce high-value honey), eco-tourism (guided kayak tours, birdwatching), and sustainable harvesting of non-timber products (crabs, shellfish, medicinal plants). These activities generate income for coastal communities, creating economic incentives for conservation.

The mangrove program is an example of "nature-based solutions"—using natural ecosystems to address societal challenges such as climate change, disaster risk, and food security. Nature-based solutions are often more cost-effective than engineered alternatives (seawalls, drainage pumps) and provide multiple benefits (biodiversity, fisheries, tourism) that engineered solutions do not.

The government's investment in mangroves reflects a sophisticated understanding of climate risk. Guyana is highly vulnerable to sea-level rise, which threatens to inundate coastal communities, contaminate freshwater supplies with salt, and destroy agricultural lands. Engineered solutions—raising seawalls, upgrading drainage pumps—are expensive and require continuous maintenance. Mangroves, by contrast, are self-maintaining: if protected from destruction, they grow, expand, and increase their protective capacity over time. The restoration program is therefore a climate adaptation investment with high returns.

8. Challenges and Sustainability

The transformation documented in the preceding sections is impressive, but it is not without

challenges. This section assesses five categories of challenge: poverty and inequality, Dutch Disease risks, governance and transparency, environmental trade-offs, and the need for prudence amid rapid growth. Each represents a potential threat to the sustainability of Guyana's development trajectory.

8.1 Poverty and Inequality

Despite rapid growth, the poverty rate, according to the World Bank which contradicts other assessments that it has been halved in 3 years, remains high at 48.0 percent (using the 6.85 per day PPP threshold). This figure measures the proportion of the population living below a poverty line that is appropriate for upper-middle-income countries. Using lower poverty lines (3.65 per day, typical for lower-middle-income countries), the rate is lower but still substantial. The persistence of poverty despite extraordinary GDP growth is a common phenomenon in rapidly growing economies, where the benefits of growth take time to reach the poorest households.

President Ali acknowledged this gap:

"We cannot be satisfied when nearly 10 percent still believe we are not heading in the right direction. That means we must continue working to ensure every citizen is part of this journey."

The 10 percent figure refers to opinion poll results on national direction; the poverty rate is substantially higher. The President's acknowledgment is significant because it signals that the administration does not view GDP growth as sufficient. The "One Guyana" vision includes "every citizen," and poverty reduction is a central metric of success.

The government's response includes cash transfers (100,000 per adult citizen), the "Because We Care" school grant (cash payments to families with school-aged children), pension increases (raising the incomes of elderly households, which are disproportionately poor), and subsidies (reducing the cost of electricity, water, and other necessities). These transfers reduce poverty in the

short term but do not address the underlying causes: low productivity, limited employment opportunities, and inadequate human capital.

Sustainable poverty reduction requires productive employment that pays wages above the poverty line. The job creation numbers documented in Chapter 3 are encouraging, but the quality and wage levels of new jobs remain underexamined. If the 70,000 new jobs are concentrated in low-wage sectors (retail, security, domestic service), poverty reduction will proceed more slowly than if they are concentrated in higher-wage sectors (construction, manufacturing, professional services). The government's emphasis on "sustainable high-value jobs" reflects awareness of this issue, but the data to assess progress are not yet available.

Poverty is also spatially concentrated. While the poverty rate is high even on the coast, hinterland poverty rates are extreme, with many communities lacking access to clean water, electricity, healthcare, and education. The hinterland investments documented in Chapter 6 are intended to address this spatial concentration, but the scale of need far exceeds current investment. Closing the coastal-hinterland gap will take decades, not years.

8.2 Dutch Disease Risks

The rapid expansion of oil production—from 15,000 to 900,000 barrels per day between 2019 and 2025—creates Dutch Disease risks. Dutch Disease refers to the phenomenon where resource exports drive currency appreciation, making non-resource tradable sectors (agriculture, manufacturing, tourism) uncompetitive. The classic example is the Netherlands after natural gas discoveries in the 1960s: the guilder appreciated, manufacturing declined, and the country became dependent on gas exports.

The mechanism is straightforward. Oil exports generate foreign exchange, which increases demand for the Guyanese dollar. As the currency appreciates, Guyanese goods become more expensive on international markets, reducing demand for exports. At the same time, imported

goods become cheaper, reducing demand for domestically produced substitutes. The result is deindustrialization—the contraction of manufacturing and other tradable sectors—as the economy becomes increasingly specialized in oil.

The government's emphasis on non-oil growth (13.8 percent annually) and President Ali's explicit "we are not a one-sector nation" declaration suggest awareness of this risk. The administration has taken several measures to mitigate Dutch Disease: fiscal sterilization (saving a portion of oil revenues in a sovereign wealth fund rather than spending them all), productivity improvements (investing in infrastructure, education, and technology), diversification (supporting agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and ICT), and import substitution (producing domestically goods that were previously imported).

However, the empirical record of petrostates avoiding Dutch Disease is poor. Norway, Canada, and Australia have managed to avoid deindustrialization through a combination of fiscal discipline, productivity growth, and diversification—but all three were already developed economies with strong institutions when they discovered resources. Developing-country petrostates (Nigeria, Venezuela, Angola, Trinidad and Tobago) have generally fared worse, experiencing deindustrialization, inequality, and political instability. Whether Guyana can buck this trend is an open question.

8.3 Governance, Transparency, and Democratic Resilience

The opposition party WIN (We Invest in Nationhood) emerged following the September 2025 election, creating a new opposition dynamic after the decline of the APNU+AFC (A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance for Change). President Ali noted that the outcome "reaffirmed Guyana's democratic resilience and delivered a renewed mandate for inclusive growth and national unity."

Political stability is essential for long-term investment. Investors need confidence that the

policy environment will not change abruptly with each election. The 2020 post-election stalemate—which lasted five months and involved international mediation—damaged investor confidence and demonstrated the fragility of Guyana's democratic institutions. The peaceful conduct of the 2025 election, despite a change in the opposition line-up, is a positive sign, but democratic resilience has not been fully tested.

Transparency in oil revenue management remains a concern. Guyana has joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), an international standard for transparency in oil, gas, and mining. EITI implementation requires disclosure of payments from extractive companies to the government, contracts between companies and the government, and the use of revenues. Guyana has published EITI reports, but implementation has been uneven, with some reports delayed and some information withheld on confidentiality grounds.

The government's planned digital transformation of state services—including "fully digitizing most state services by mid-2026"—may enhance transparency. Digital records are harder to falsify than paper records; digital workflows create audit trails that can be reviewed for irregularities; and digital platforms allow citizens to access information without intermediaries. However, digital transformation also creates new risks: cybersecurity vulnerabilities, digital exclusion (citizens without internet access or digital literacy), and the concentration of data in government databases that could be abused.

Corruption risk is elevated in petrostates, where large, opaque revenue flows create opportunities for rent-seeking and embezzlement. The government has established anti-corruption institutions (the State Assets Recovery Agency, the Special Organized Crime Unit) and has prosecuted officials from the previous administration. However, the effectiveness of these institutions is unproven, and the government has been criticized for not investigating allegations involving its own officials.

8.4 Environmental Trade-offs

Oil production and environmental stewardship sit in tension. While Guyana maintains forest cover and pursues the LCDS, petroleum extraction generates emissions and environmental risks. The government has not fully articulated how it reconciles these competing objectives.

The extraction process itself generates emissions. Flaring (burning natural gas that cannot be captured) releases carbon dioxide and methane; venting (releasing natural gas directly into the atmosphere) releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas; and the energy required to extract, process, and transport oil generates additional emissions. Even if the oil is used for electricity generation, the lifecycle emissions are substantial.

There are also risks of spills, leaks, and other environmental accidents. Offshore oil production—the focus of Guyana's development—carries risks of blowouts, pipeline ruptures, and tanker accidents. A major spill could devastate coastal ecosystems, fisheries, and tourism, with impacts lasting decades. The government has established regulatory agencies, spill response plans, and liability frameworks, but the capacity to respond to a major accident is unproven.

President Ali's framing of environmental services as "part of our new economy" suggests a portfolio approach rather than trade-off avoidance. The government is not choosing between oil and forests; it is pursuing both, using oil revenues to finance forest conservation and using forest conservation to generate carbon credits that offset oil emissions. Whether this portfolio is environmentally sustainable depends on the net impact: are emissions reductions from forest conservation sufficient to offset emissions from oil extraction and use? The government has not published the data needed to answer this question.

The LCDS 2030 includes provisions for carbon credits that "compensate" for oil emissions, but the accounting for such offsets is contested internationally. Some environmental groups argue that offsets are a form of greenwashing, allowing polluters to continue emitting while claiming to be

carbon-neutral. Others argue that well-designed offsets can accelerate decarbonization by channelling finance to conservation and renewable energy. The debate is unresolved, and Guyana's position in it is evolving.

8.5 Prudence Amid Growth

Despite the expansionary agenda, President Ali has counselled prudence:

"Geopolitical instability and regional tensions require Guyana to remain vigilant, prepared and united."

The reference to "geopolitical instability" is significant. Guyana shares a border with Venezuela, which has long claimed the Essequibo region—approximately two-thirds of Guyana's territory—as its own. The dispute dates to the 19th century and remains unresolved. Venezuela has periodically escalated tensions, and the discovery of oil in the disputed waters has raised the stakes. While the International Court of Justice is adjudicating the dispute, Guyana must maintain military readiness, diplomatic engagement, and national unity in the face of potential Venezuelan aggression.

Regional tensions extend beyond the border dispute. Guyana is the fastest-growing economy in South America, attracting investment and attention that might otherwise go to larger neighbours. This creates potential for friction with Brazil, Suriname, and other regional powers. The government has pursued diplomacy—strengthening bilateral relationships, participating in regional organizations, and positioning itself as a cooperative neighbour—but the risk of regional rivalry cannot be dismissed.

Prudence also applies to economic policy. The expansionary fiscal stance—running a deficit of -4.5 percent of GDP—is sustainable only if growth continues and oil prices remain favourable. A sharp decline in oil prices, a disruption in production, or a global recession could suddenly shift the fiscal position, forcing austerity at an inopportune moment. The government has established a sovereign wealth fund (the Natural Resource Fund) to save a portion of oil revenues

for future generations, but the rules for deposits and withdrawals are subject to political discretion. A future government could choose to withdraw funds for consumption rather than investment, squandering the windfall.

President Ali has committed to "strengthening the Disciplined Services" (the military and police) and "enhancing border security," reflecting the geopolitical dimension of prudence. He has also committed to fiscal responsibility, though the specific mechanisms are not detailed. The balance between expansionary investment and fiscal prudence will be a continuing tension for the administration.

The challenges documented in this section are not unique to Guyana; they are the common challenges of rapid development in a resource-rich, geopolitically sensitive context. What distinguishes the Ali administration is its apparent awareness of these challenges and its development of strategies to address them. Whether those strategies succeed—whether poverty declines, Dutch Disease is avoided, institutions remain transparent, environmental trade-offs are managed, and prudence prevails over hubris—will determine the sustainability of the transformation documented in this paper.

9. Conclusion: The Ali Doctrine

The post-COVID transformation of Guyana under President Irfaan Ali and Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo represents a distinctive development model that this paper terms the "Ali Doctrine." Drawing directly from *One Guyana: From Division and Bankruptcy to Unity and Prosperity* and the President's public declarations, this doctrine is not an abstract ideology imposed from external sources but an emergent framework grounded in Guyana's specific historical conditions, resource endowments, and political challenges. It is, in essence, a pragmatic response to the question: How can a small, divided, post-colonial, resource-rich nation transform itself into a prosperous, unified, and sustainable society within a single generation?

9.1 Core Elements of the Ali Doctrine

The Ali Doctrine comprises ten interconnected principles, each articulated by President Ali himself, each operationalized through specific policies documented in the preceding chapters.

1. The Social Contract of Inclusion

"One Guyana is a social contract of inclusion. It is about creating a country in which every citizen sees themselves in the development of the nation and benefits from the prosperity of the nation."

This principle invokes social contract theory—the idea that legitimate governance rests on the consent and participation of the governed—but adapts it to Guyana's multicultural, multi-ethnic context. Unlike classical social contract theory (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau), which imagines a homogeneous citizenry contracting with a sovereign, the "One Guyana" social contract explicitly recognizes diversity and commits to inclusion across lines of race, religion, geography, and social background. The contract is not a one-time agreement but an ongoing process of recognition, distribution, and participation. Operationally, this principle has guided the hinterland integration strategy (Chapter 6), the diaspora inclusion policy (Chapter 6), and the democratic resilience demonstrated in the 2025 election (Chapter 8).

2. Even Prosperity as Baseline

"Even prosperity means that the country must be able to give a baseline level of service to every citizen in health, in education, in infrastructure and in opportunities."

This principle commits the government to minimum standards rather than merely equalizing opportunity to compete for scarce resources. It is a more demanding standard than equality of opportunity (which may be theoretical) and more realistic than equality of outcome (which is impossible in a market economy). The baseline is not a floor below which no one falls but a standard to which all are raised. Operationally, this principle has guided the education expansion

(universal secondary education in the hinterland, GOAL scholarships for all qualified students), healthcare investment (regional hospitals, telemedicine, robotics hospital), infrastructure development (roads, bridges, airstrips, digital connectivity), and economic inclusion (carbon credit payments to Amerindian villages).

3. Unity Through Inclusion, Not Growth Alone

"Prosperity alone does not guarantee unity. Unity comes when people feel included, respected and given equal opportunity to participate in national development."

This principle challenges purely materialist theories of development, which assume that rising incomes will automatically produce social integration. The Arab Spring, Brexit, and the rise of populist movements in wealthy countries demonstrate that material prosperity is insufficient for social cohesion. Subjective feelings of inclusion, respect, and agency matter. Operationally, this principle has guided the symbolic investments in the "One Guyana" brand, cross-cultural programming, diaspora engagement, and the deliberate recruitment of hinterland citizens into national institutions.

4. Ownership Over Wages

"I want them to become educated and trained to be owners and managers of all sectors of our society" and "You have to own things."

This principle rejects both the wage-labour model (where workers sell their time to owners who capture the surplus) and the technocratic model (where professionals manage but do not own). It envisions a Guyanese capitalist class emerging from within the population—educated, trained, and empowered to own and manage the economy. Operationally, this principle has guided the planned Guyana Development Bank (loans up to \$10 million at 3 percent interest), the investment vehicles for workers (equity stakes in the gas and fertiliser projects), and the emphasis on entrepreneurship and small business development.

5. Conversion over Potential

"We will convert ambition into action and action into transformation" rejects passive descriptions of Guyana as a nation of unrealized promise.

This principle is a rejection of Guyana's history of unrealized potential. For decades, Guyana has been described as a country with enormous promise that never quite translated into prosperity. The "convert ambition into action" doctrine insists that the value of a vision lies not in its rhetorical elegance but in its actualization. Operationally, this principle has guided the administration's performance management: clear targets, transparent reporting, quarterly progress reviews, and public accountability for results. The surpassing of the 50,000-job target, the 50,000-house-lot target, and the 20,000-scholarship target are evidence of conversion in practice.

6. Leapfrog over Linearity

"We are going to leapfrog this country into unbelievable places" embraces technological discontinuity as an advantage.

This principle recognizes that late-developing nations can bypass intermediate stages of technological evolution, adopting frontier technologies directly without incurring the sunk costs of legacy systems. The classic examples are mobile phones leapfrogging landlines and digital payments leapfrogging traditional banking. Operationally, this principle has guided the robotics hospital (remote surgery bypassing the need for local specialists), the digital transformation of state services (mobile applications replacing paper-based processes), and the data centre strategy (positioning Guyana as a regional hub for cloud computing and AI).

7. Universal Access Regardless of Identity

"One Guyana is a Guyana that gives opportunity and brings prosperity to every single Guyanese regardless of race, religion, geography or social background."

This principle enumerates the specific categories of exclusion that the "One Guyana" vision addresses: race (the Indo-Guyanese/Afro-

Guyanese cleavage), religion (Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Indigenous traditions), geography (coastal-hinterland divide), and social background (class, caste, family connections). By explicitly naming these categories, the doctrine signals that the administration sees and intends to address each dimension of exclusion. Operationally, this principle has guided the distribution of house lots, scholarships, and jobs across regions and communities; the carbon credit payments to Amerindian villages; and the diaspora inclusion policy.

8. Development Reaching Everyone

"We're building a country where every Guyanese can prosper, where development reaches every community, every family and every region of our country."

This principle rejects both trickle-down economics (which prioritizes aggregate growth) and enclave development (which concentrates benefits in oil-producing regions). It commits the government to "archipelagic development"—simultaneous investment across all ten regions, with particular attention to historically marginalized areas. Operationally, this principle has guided the distribution of infrastructure (roads, bridges, airstrips, digital connectivity) across all regions; the location of regional hospitals in Moruca and Lethem; and the prioritization of hinterland teacher training and school construction.

9. Youth Agency and Lifelong Learning

"Your future will be defined by your determination, your discipline and your willingness to continue learning."

This principle addresses the psychological challenges facing young Guyanese in a rapidly changing economy. It relieves the pressure of a single make-or-break decision, emphasizing instead agency, character, and adaptability—qualities accessible regardless of background. It also recognizes that in a knowledge economy, specific skills become obsolete quickly; what matters is the capacity to learn new skills throughout one's career. Operationally, this

principle has guided the GOAL scholarship program (lifelong learning from certificates to doctorates), the emphasis on digital literacy and STEM education, and the integration of technical and vocational training into the secondary curriculum.

10. Delivery as Legitimacy

The government's emphasis on surpassing promises reflects a political strategy where trust is built through demonstrated execution.

This principle recognizes that in a context of historical broken promises and political distrust, legitimacy cannot be claimed through rhetoric alone. Trust is built through delivery: meeting or exceeding targets, providing tangible improvements in citizens' lives, and holding oneself accountable for results. Operationally, this principle has guided the administration's communication strategy (publishing progress reports, inviting independent verification, celebrating exceeded targets) and its performance management (clear targets, transparent metrics, consequences for failure).

9.2 The Ali Doctrine in Theoretical Perspective

The Ali Doctrine does not fit neatly into conventional development typologies. It is neither neoliberal (it rejects trickle-down economics and embraces active state intervention) nor socialist (it embraces markets, private property, and entrepreneurship). It is neither Washington Consensus (it rejects austerity and structural adjustment) nor resource nationalism (it welcomes foreign investment and international partnerships). It is, instead, a pragmatic synthesis tailored to Guyana's specific conditions.

Several theoretical influences can be discerned. Institutional economics informs the emphasis on building state capacity, transparent institutions, and credible commitments. The doctrine recognizes that markets depend on institutions—property rights, contract enforcement, regulatory frameworks—and that state building is therefore a prerequisite for market development.

Human capital theory informs the massive investment in education, from universal secondary

education to the GOAL scholarship program. The doctrine recognizes that in the knowledge economy, human capital is the ultimate source of competitive advantage.

The capabilities approach (Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum) informs the emphasis on "even prosperity" as a baseline of services rather than mere income growth. The doctrine recognizes that development is about expanding what people can do and be—their capabilities—not only increasing their consumption.

Post-colonial theory informs the rejection of external models and the insistence on a Guyanese path adapted to Guyanese conditions. The doctrine recognizes that development models developed in Europe or North America may not be appropriate for a small, multi-ethnic, post-colonial, resource-rich nation on the north-eastern coast of South America.

The resource curse literature (Ross, Auty, Mehlum) informs the emphasis on diversification, transparency, and institutional strengthening. The doctrine recognizes that petroleum wealth creates risks—Dutch Disease, corruption, conflict—that must be actively managed.

The leapfrogging literature (Perez, Soete, Fagerberg) informs the emphasis on technological discontinuity and the strategic adoption of frontier technologies. The doctrine recognizes that late-developing nations have advantages as well as disadvantages: they are not locked into legacy systems and can adopt the most advanced technologies available.

The Ali Doctrine is thus an indigenous development model—not imported from international financial institutions or borrowed from other countries, but forged in response to Guyana's specific historical conditions, resource endowments, and political challenges. Its ten principles are not abstract universals but pragmatic responses to concrete problems: division, exclusion, unrealized potential, technological obsolescence, and the resource curse.

9.3 Sustainability: Three Crucial Tests

Whether the Ali Doctrine proves sustainable depends on three factors: whether non-oil growth can accelerate sufficiently to reduce the 48 percent poverty rate according to the World Bank; whether governance institutions can manage resource rents transparently and resist corruption; and whether the political settlement can withstand the dislocations that rapid transformation inevitably produces.

Test One: Poverty Reduction. The poverty rate, according to the World Bank which contradicts other assessments that it has been halved in 3 years, of 48 percent is the most stubborn challenge facing the administration. GDP growth, job creation, and infrastructure investment are necessary but not sufficient for poverty reduction. The poor must be reached—through targeted transfers, employment in growing sectors, and access to education, healthcare, and housing. The government's cash transfers, school grants, pension increases, and subsidies are reaching the poor, but they are not lifting them out of poverty permanently. Sustainable poverty reduction requires productive employment that pays wages above the poverty line. The 70,000 jobs created are encouraging, but their quality, wage levels, and distribution across income groups remain underexamined. If the poor are excluded from the new economy—if they lack the skills, connections, or geographic access to benefit—then poverty reduction will proceed slowly, and political discontent will grow.

Test Two: Governance and Transparency. The resource curse literature emphasizes that institutions matter. Countries with strong, transparent, accountable institutions can manage resource wealth successfully; countries with weak, corrupt, captured institutions cannot. Guyana's institutions are improving—EITI implementation, digital transformation, anti-corruption prosecutions—but they remain untested at scale. The Natural Resource Fund (sovereign wealth fund) has rules for deposits and withdrawals, but those rules are subject to political discretion. A future government could choose to withdraw

funds for consumption rather than investment, squandering the windfall. Transparency in oil contracts, revenue flows, and spending decisions is essential for public accountability. The government has made progress but has not yet achieved the level of transparency that civil society and international partners have called for.

Test Three: Political Settlement. Rapid transformation creates winners and losers. Those who benefit from the old order—politicians, bureaucrats, businesspeople, and communities that thrived under the previous system—may resist change. Those who are excluded from the new order—the poor, the hinterland, the unemployed—may demand more than the government can deliver. The political settlement—the distribution of power and resources among contending groups—must be renegotiated continuously as the economy transforms. The emergence of WIN as a new opposition party following the 2025 election suggests that the political landscape is evolving. Whether the settlement can accommodate these changes peacefully, without the violence and instability that have characterized past transitions, is an open question.

9.4 Cautious Optimism

Preliminary evidence suggests cautious optimism. The IMF's 14 percent average growth projection, the 70,000 jobs created, the 39,000 scholarships awarded, the 38,000 house lots distributed, and the tangible infrastructure investments indicate genuine progress. The "leapfrog" initiatives in robotics, digital governance, and sports tourism suggest creative diversification beyond extractive industries. The carbon credit agreements with Amerindian villages represent an innovative approach to benefit-sharing. The diaspora inclusion policy signals a mature understanding of the global Guyanese community as a resource, not a loss.

However, the 48 percent poverty rate, Dutch Disease risks, governance challenges, and environmental trade-offs counsel against triumphalism. The resource curse has claimed many victims; Guyana is not immune. The

Venezuelan border dispute could escalate. Climate change could disrupt coastal agriculture and infrastructure. A global recession could depress oil prices and slow growth. Any of these shocks could derail the transformation.

As Vice President Jagdeo noted, "the real test comes in who delivers." The Ali administration has delivered measurable results in its first five years. Whether it can continue to deliver—whether it can reduce poverty, manage resource rents transparently, and maintain political stability—will determine the legacy of the Ali Doctrine.

9.5 The Road Ahead

As President Ali declared in his 2026 New Year's address:

"Let us enter this new year not with timid hope, but with strong conviction. We are no longer waiting for opportunity. We are shaping it. Together, we will build not only wealth but comfort, not only success but legacy."

The declaration captures the spirit of the Ali Doctrine: conviction over timidity, action over passivity, shaping opportunity rather than waiting for it. The doctrine is coherent, the execution has begun, but the ultimate verdict awaits Guyana's trajectory over the next five years.

Several milestones will indicate whether the doctrine is succeeding. By 2030, the government has committed to: universal secondary education in the hinterland; a world-class healthcare system; advanced food production for regional export; data centres powering the Caribbean's digital future; and a significant reduction in poverty. These are ambitious targets. Achieving them will require sustained political will, continued economic growth, effective governance, and a measure of good fortune.

The broader implications of the Ali Doctrine extend beyond Guyana. For other resource-rich developing economies—small states with petroleum wealth, multicultural populations, and histories of exclusion—the Guyanese experiment offers potential lessons. The doctrine's emphasis

on inclusion, even prosperity, ownership, conversion, leapfrogging, and delivery is not uniquely Guyanese; it could be adapted to other contexts. Whether those lessons are learned, however, depends on Guyana's success. Failed experiments are studied as cautionary tales; successful ones are emulated. The Ali Doctrine is still being written, and its final chapters have yet to be completed.

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