

Guyana



KEY FACTS

Official name: Co-operative Republic of Guyana

Head of State: President Donald Ramotar (PPP/Civic) (from 3 Dec 2011)

Head of government: Prime Minister Samuel AA Hinds (since 1997; reappointed 5 Dec 2011)

Ruling party: People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/Civic) (from 1997; re-elected 28 Nov 2011)

Area: 214,970 square km

Population: 775,000 (2012)*

Capital: Georgetown

Official language: English

Currency: Guyana dollar (G\$) = 100 cents

Exchange rate: G\$200.45 per US\$ (Jul 2013)

GDP per capita: US\$3,596 (2012)*

GDP real growth: 3.35% (2012)*

GDP: US\$2.79 billion (2012)*

Inflation: 2.97% (2012)*

Balance of trade: -US\$414.90 million (2010)

* estimated figure

Guyana is a country at odds with itself. The population comprises around 30 per cent descended from African slaves, brought to South America when Holland controlled the area, and around 50 per cent who are descended from indentured agricultural workers from India, imported after slavery was abolished, during the British administration of colonial Guyana. Today these groups display ethnically-based tensions that fuel political instability.

It has been long accepted that the larger, Indo-Guyanese community will back the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) and as such, has guaranteed its success at the

polls since 1992. Despite the success of Donald Ramotar (PPP/C) in winning the presidential election on 28 November 2011, for the first time PPP/C failed to win a majority in parliamentary elections held at the same time, winning only 32 seats (out of 65) (a fall to 49 per cent of votes cast from 55 per cent in the previous election). A coalition of four parties – A Partnership for National Unity (APNU), led by the People's National Congress (PNC) the party supported by the Afro-Guyanese community, won 41 per cent (26 seats). The third force in the national assembly is the Alliance for Change (AFC), a multi-ethnic political party, which won seven seats.

These elections had been something of a sea change in the country's constitutional history. For the first time in Guyana's history, the opposition in parliament will have an effective input to the legislation process, as the executive will be obliged to take into account the votes in the National Assembly in the passage of laws. The separation of the executive from the legislative means that the Guyanese people will benefit from compromise and inclusion, rather than confrontation. Guyanese no longer have to stand by and watch as one political party controls the legislative process, as had been the case for several decades. The 2011 elections saw the Guyanese effectively vote for a division of labour, where one political party, the PPP/C, which came first but did not win (i.e. had less than 50 per cent of the votes), could hold the executive office of the land, while the collective opposition will hold legislative authority in parliament. Under the new system, decisions can be made by the opposition with no less than 51 per cent of the total votes; or with combinations larger than 51 per cent of the total votes if the executive joins for collective responsibility. This rather complex formula meant that as the Guyanese did not trust any single party to pass or veto legislation in parliament, after these elections no one party acting on its own had the minimum percentage (51 per cent) to do anything unilaterally.

Economy

Guyana weathered the effects of the recent global financial crisis very well when compared with other Caribbean countries or with the rest of the Latin American and

the Caribbean region. While most economies in the region contracted during the crisis years (2008-09), the Guyanese economy recorded an average growth of 4 per cent.

Increased activity in agriculture, gold mining and services resulted in robust growth in 2011 of 4.4 per cent, rising to an estimated 5.4 per cent in 2012. The growth also benefitted from favourable external conditions and rising foreign direct investment (FDI) and only the weakening current account deficit of 13.6 per cent (of GDP) in 2012, falling from 9.9 per cent in 2011, due to the surge in world oil prices and capital goods imports, was considered unfavourable by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its November 2012 report on the economy.

Policymakers in Guyana are expected to pursue a low-carbon development strategy in light of the victory of the ruling party at the polls in November, despite a much-reduced majority in parliament. Under the agreement with the government of Norway for the joint implementation of this strategy Guyana will receive some US\$30 million in financing in 2012 and up to US\$100 million annually through 2020.

In 2012 there was moderate growth in credit to the private sector in view of the uncertainty as to whether the ruling party, with a reduced parliamentary majority, will be able to maintain all aspects of its policy agenda.

On 12 September, a joint agreement was signed in Xian (China) by the finance minister, with Sithe Global private equity fund, and the engineering company, China Railway First Group, for the

construction of the Amaila Falls Hydroelectric plant, with approximately 165MW capacity. The US\$506 million project is the largest infrastructure contract ever undertaken by Guyana, with construction work scheduled to begin in mid-2013. The minister described the signing as 'historic' and welcomed the increasing role of Chinese enterprises in the development of Guyana. Another agreement was signed with the Chinese government on economic and technical co-operation in December, which will see China invest US\$4.8 million in agreed projects. This agreement came one month after China signed a concessional loan of US\$130 million for the Cheddi Jagan International Airport expansion project. Two modern ferries were delivered by China in 2012, to improve river transport between the coast and the interior of Guyana.

In October 2012 the minister of natural resources and the environment announced that gold production had increased to 314,000 ounces, an increase of around 23 per cent over the corresponding period in 2011 (January–September). The strength of the sector resulted in not only job creation but also further work on establishing a mining school to provide skilled workers. Negotiations with the Geo-Science Department of the University of Texas, to establish a school, were underway in 2012. Although it was said that the ministry had engaged local and international specialists to ensure that global standards and national requirements of the local mining industry were applied, four miners died in a collapsed pit in Aranka (near Linden) in October.

Old antagonisms were revived in October when Guyana accused the Venezuelan navy of violating its sovereignty when it entered Guyanese territorial waters and detained a ship belonging to Texas-based company Anadarko. Anadarko has been granted a contract to look for oil in the area. The government said that the Venezuelan actions in the disputed Essequibo region constituted 'a serious threat to peace in the region', while Venezuela said the ship was operating illegally in its waters.

Risk assessment

Economy	Fair
Politics	Fractious
Regional stability	Fair

COUNTRY PROFILE

Historical profile

The area before European settlement was inhabited by semi-nomadic,

KEY INDICATORS

Guyana

	Unit	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Population	m	*0.77	*0.77	*0.77	*0.78	*0.78
Gross domestic product (GDP)	US\$bn	1.92	2.02	2.21	2.48	*2.79
GDP per capita	US\$	2,497	2,629	2,868	3,202	*3,596
GDP real growth	%	2.0	3.3	4.4	4.2	*3.3
Inflation	%	8.1	2.9	3.7	5.7	*3.0
Exports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	789.0	768.2	884.5	–	*1,395.7
Imports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	1,183.4	1,096.8	1,299.3	–	*1,977.7
Balance of trade	US\$m	-394.4	-328.7	-414.9	–	*-581.9
Current account	US\$m	-191.6	-172.0	-216.0	-344.0	-368.0
Total reserves minus gold	US\$m	355.9	631.4	782.1	784.1	864.0
Foreign exchange	US\$m	355.9	627.5	780.0	778.8	862.2
Exchange rate	per US\$	203.60	204.00	203.60	203.96	204.00

* estimated figure

hunter-gatherer Amerindian tribes, notably Arawaks and Caribs.

1498 Christopher Columbus first sighted Guyana.

1616 The Dutch built the first fort.

1640 The first African slaves arrived to work on sugar plantations. Settlements grew up in Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice and were sustained by trade through the Dutch West India Company.

1763 The Berbice slave rebellion began on one plantation and spread to others along the Berbice River.

1781–1803 The Three colonies of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice passed into the hands of the English, briefly to the French, back to the Dutch, then the English, then the Dutch and lastly back to the English.

1814 After the Napoleonic Wars the colonies of were ceded to Britain.

1831 The British administration merged the three colonies into British Guiana, but retained the Dutch administrative, legislative and legal system.

1834 Britain abolished slavery in all its territories. Many Indian and smaller numbers of Chinese and Japanese indentured labourers were brought to work on the estates.

1920 Indentured labour ended.

1953 The General election was won by the People's Progressive Party (PPP), led by Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham. The British government deemed the government as pro-Communist and suspended the constitution. The PPP split and Burnham founded the People's National Congress/Reform (PNC) party.

1957 and 1961 The PPP won both general elections. Support began to grow for independence.

1964 Guyana's political system was generally viewed as fraudulent with Guyana a *de facto* one-party state and an 'administrative dictatorship'.

1965 The PPP won most seats in the general election; however a coalition of PNC and another minor, conservative, party formed a government. Burnham became prime minister and stayed in post in an increasingly authoritarian manner, until 1980

1966 Guyana gained independence.

1971 A UN tribunal convened to try and resolve the long-standing border dispute with neighbouring Venezuela concerning the oil-rich Essequibo region.

1980 A new constitution introduced the post of executive president, and Forbes Burnham became the first.

1985 President Burnham died. Desmond Hoyte became president. The one-party state and radical socialism was gradually replaced by a market economy. Austerity measures introduced in the late 1980s resulted in great civil unrest.

1992 The National Assembly and Regional Council were elected in the first free and fair general elections. Hoyte lost the presidency to former Marxist, Dr Cheddi Jagan (PPP).

1997 A PPP/Civic (PPC/C) coalition won the election, but PNC refused to accept the election results. Cheddi Jagan died in March. Samuel Hinds became president until December when Jagan's widow Janet was elected president.

1998 After boycotting parliament since the 1997 election, the PNC returned to the National Assembly, following intervention by the Caribbean Community (Caricom), which carried out an independent audit of the election results and brokered an accord with the PNC, which also catered for a new constitution and fresh elections.

1999 Janet Jagan resigned the presidency due to ill-health; she was succeeded by Bharrat Jagdeo.

2000 Guyana had an agreement with the Canadian oil company CGX Energy to drill within waters also claimed by neighbouring Suriname. Suriname gunboats raided the exploration oil-rig sparking international tension; diplomatic proposals for joint exploration and exploitation failed.

2001 The general election was won by President Jagdeo's ruling PPC/C.

2002 A high-profile television presenter, Mark Benschop, was charged with treason after he was accused of inciting demonstrators to storm the presidential offices compound. The demonstrators were complaining of discrimination against Afro-Guyanese.

2003 A UN tribunal convened and tried, without success, to resolve the maritime border dispute with Suriname.

2004 CGX Energy announced it had begun exploration of inshore waters along the Cortenye Coast, with drilling in the disputed Berbice area about to begin. A key witness in the trial of home affairs minister Ronald Gajraj was shot dead before he could testify about allegations of extra-judicial killings. The minister had stepped down after several months of procrastination and opposition inquiry. Guyana joined 12 South American countries in the launch of an economic and political bloc called the South American Community of Nations.

2005 Severe flooding affected half the country's population. The economic effect was shown to be a 2.2 per cent reduction in the year's economic growth, costing the nation about US\$65 million. Ronald Gajraj was reinstated as home affairs minister, following a ruling by a presidential commission acquitting him of any wrongdoing; however the decision to

reinstall the minister provoked international criticism. Gajraj resigned his position.

2006 The agriculture minister, Satyadeow Sawh, was murdered. President Jagdeo was re-elected with 54.6 per cent of the vote while his PPP/C party won a majority in parliament.

2007 The UN ruled that both Suriname and Guyana should share the disputed, possibly oil-rich, offshore territory.

2008 Guyana signed a trade agreement with the EU.

2009 Local elections were postponed until 2010 due to revisions necessary in the voter list, new identification cards and the demarcation and delineation of electoral boundaries. The new Takutu River Bridge, across the border with Brazil, was opened.

2010 A new, flood-resistant rice, developed for the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) in the Guyana-based Burma Rice Research Station, began testing in local conditions. It was designed to survive being completely submerged for up to 17 days. The government and the China Development Bank signed a loan agreement (for an undisclosed amount) to begin the Amaila Falls Hydro-Electric Project (AFHEP), for which the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) also approved US\$1.2 million for project preparation.

2011 In July, at the close of President Jagdeo's second and final term in office, he addressed the conference of heads of government attending the Caricom meeting urging them to focus on outcomes rather than processes, 'people judge us by results' he said, and exhorted other leaders to 'always ascertain the value added to the process before plunging into new initiatives'. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held on 28 November, in which the PPP/Civic won 49 per cent of the vote (32 seats out of 65), the coalition of four parties called A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) won 41 per cent (26) and the AFC seven seats. PPP/Civic was given a mandate to appoint its presidential candidate, Donald Ramotar as president.

2012 On 12 September, a joint agreement was signed by the finance minister, private equity fund, Sithe Global and the engineering company, China Railway First Group, for the construction of the AFHEP, with an approximately 165MW capacity. The US\$506 million project is the largest infrastructure contract ever undertaken by Guyana. On 6 October the minister of natural resources reported that gold production for the year had increased year-on-year by 23 per cent, to 314,000 ounces (up from 207,000 ounces in 2011).

2013 Guyana accused the Venezuelan navy of violating its sovereignty when it

entered Guyanese territorial waters in October and detained the *Teknik Perdana*, a vessel contracted out to Texas-based company Anadarko. Anadarko has a contract to look for oil in the area. The government said that the Venezuelan actions in the disputed Essequibo region constituted 'a serious threat to peace in the region', while Venezuela said the ship was operating illegally in its waters. The vessel was released on 15 October.

Political structure

Constitution

The constitution was enacted in 1980, a decade after Guyana became a co-operative republic and 14 years after joining the Commonwealth.

Guyana is divided into 10 regions, each headed by a chairman who presides over a regional democratic council. Local communities are administered by village or city councils.

Independence date

26 May 1966

Form of state

Co-operative republic

The executive

Executive power rests with the president, who appoints and supervises the prime minister and other ministers. The president is the presidential candidate chosen by the major party in the National Assembly. Most cabinet ministers are also members of the National Assembly; the constitution limits non-member technocrat ministers to five. Technocrat ministers serve as non-elected members, allowing them to debate, but not to vote.

National legislature

The unicameral National Assembly comprises 65 members directly elected by proportional representation, of which 25 are elected in 10 geographic constituencies and 40 from national lists of political parties. The president may dissolve the Assembly and call new elections at any time, but no later than five years from its first sitting. All laws passed by the assembly must be endorsed by the president. From 2012 the executive is obliged to discuss and agree new laws with the National Assembly.

Legal system

Guyana's legal system is based on Roman Dutch law modified by English common law. The country has a series of magistrates' courts and further appellate courts, a Court of Appeal, headed by a chancellor of the judiciary, and a High Court, presided over by a chief justice. The chancellor and the chief justice are appointed by the president.

An ombudsman investigates complaints against government departments or other authorities.

Last elections

28 November 2011 (presidential and parliamentary)

Results: Presidential: candidates win depending on party list votes for parliamentary constituencies, in order of parliamentary voting, therefore the winner was Donald Ramotar (PPP/Civic); David Granger (APNU) and Khemraj Ramjattan (AFC) were runner's up.

Parliamentary (2011): People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/Civic) won 48.62 per cent of the vote (32 seats out of 65), A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) (coalition of four parties) 40.83 per cent (26), Alliance for Change (AFC) 10.33 per cent (seven), the United Force 0.26 per cent (none). Turnout was 72.9 per cent

Next elections

2015 (presidential and parliamentary)

Political parties

Ruling party

People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/Civic) (from 1997; re-elected 28 Nov 2011)

Main opposition party

Partnership for National Unity (APNU) (coalition of four political parties led by the People's National Congress/Reform (PNCR), Guyana Action Party (GAP), National Front Alliance (NFA) and Working People's Alliance (WPA).

Population

775,000 (2012)*

Last census: September 2002: 751,223

Population density: Four inhabitants per square km. Urban population 29 per cent (2010 Unicef).

Overall population density is low although population distribution is very uneven with a high concentration of people along the coastal strip and many inland areas virtually uninhabited. More than one-quarter of the total population live in the capital, Georgetown.

Annual growth rate: 0.2 per cent, 1990–2010 (Unicef).

Ethnic make-up

East Indian (51 per cent) (resident mostly in agricultural areas) and Afro-Guyanese (30 per cent) (resident mostly in towns) make up the majority. The remainder are of Chinese and European heritage, or Amerindians, most of whom live in the west and south or on reserves.

The main groups of Amerindians are Arawak, Carib, Wapisiana and Warao. The Caribs include Akawaio, Macushi, Patamona and Waiwai.

Religions

Christian (approximately 50 per cent), Hindu (35 per cent) and Muslim (10 per cent).

Education

Education includes primary school, four to six years of secondary school and between three to four years of higher academic or practical education. Students are usually expected to remain in the school system until the age of 16. There are around 900 schools in Guyana.

Increased access to secondary education is supported by two bilateral funded education projects – the Guyana Education Access Programme (GEAP) and the Guyana Building Equity Project (GBET).

The Minister of Labour announced on 29 June 2011 that the schedule to distribute one laptop computer per family by October 2011 was on target. Computer trainers were also being recruited to go into communities and target groups that were required to undertake coaching in the new technology.

Literacy rate: 98.7 per cent, total; 98.3 per cent, female: adult rates in 2002 (World Bank).

Compulsory years: Five to 14

Enrolment rate: 97.4 per cent net primary enrolment (World Bank).

Health

The government has stepped up provisions for drugs and medical supplies in all hospitals and health centres including facilities in the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC).

In June 2011, the Inter-American Development Bank approved a US\$12 million loan to improve the water supply to Guyana's second city Linden. Overall, the plans include water pressure to be improved, quality sustained and a reduction in water loss achieved. Over five years (2011–16) the annual cost of water supply to Linden (100km inland from the coast) is estimated to fall from US\$232,000 to US\$140,000.

HIV/Aids

By 2001 46 per cent of sex workers were living with HIV/Aids and the probability of the virus passing into the wider population is considered by UNAID/WHO as high.

HIV prevalence: 3.2 per cent aged 15–49 in 2003 (World Bank)

Life expectancy: 63 years, 2004 (WHO 2006)

Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate: 2.3 births per woman, 2010 (Unicef)

Birth rate/Death rate: 9 deaths and 18 births, per 1,000 population (World Bank).

Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000): 35 deaths per 1,000 live births (WHO 2012); 12 per cent of children aged under five are malnourished (World Bank).

Welfare

The government has been developing new housing schemes, including distributing

over 20,000 housing lots for a Low Income Settlement Project. The private sector has also been encouraged to assist in the development of the housing sector.

Main cities

Georgetown (capital, estimated population 142,484 in 2012), Linden (30,875), New Amsterdam (15,283), Anna Regina (14,088), Golden Grove (11,042), Corriverton (10,313).

Languages spoken

Guyana is the only English-speaking country in South America. Urdu, Hindi, Amerindian languages and Creole are also spoken. Along the Brazilian border, many Guyanese also speak Portuguese.

Official language/s

English

Media

Press

Dailies: In English, the *Guyana Chronicle* (www.guyanachronicle.com) is state-owned, private newspapers include *Stabroek News* (www.stabroeknews.com) and *Kaieteur News* (www.kaieteurnews.com).

Weeklies: All daily newspapers publish a weekend edition. In English, other newspapers include *The Catholic Standard* and *The Mirror* (www.mirrornews.com) published twice weekly.

Broadcasting

The state-owned National Communications Network (NCN) (www.ncnguyana.com) operates radio and television services.

Radio: The (NCN) (www.ncnguyana.com) operates two radio stations, Hot FM (<http://98hoffm.co.gy>) broadcasting modern music. The Voice of Guyana (<http://voiceofguyana.com>) broadcasts internationally (<http://vog560am.co.gy>).

Television: The (NCN) (www.ncnguyana.com) operates a public TV station (<http://ncn.co.gy>). A number of TV channels are received from neighbouring countries. There are international satellite TV channels available.

National news agency: GINA (Government Information Agency)

Other news agencies: Caribbean Net News: www.caribbeanetnews.com
Guyana Journal: www.guyanajournal.com

Economy

Although the service sector is the major component of the economy, constituting 46.4 per cent of GDP in 2010, agriculture is still an important factor accounting for 20.9 per cent of GDP. The industry sector contributed 32.7 per cent, of which manufacturing was a minor 4.1 per cent. Agriculture provides employment for around 30 per cent of the workforce with traditional production of sugar and rice remaining major exports. There is

ongoing development and investment in new enterprises, including sea and fresh-water fishing and shrimp and crawfish, raw timber and finished lumber. Mining of bauxite and gold constitutes most of industrial activity, with open cast mines operating for both minerals.

GDP growth was a record high of 7.0 per cent in 2007, falling to 2.0 per cent in 2008 as the global economic crisis cut world trade, particularly in commodities. However, Guyana avoided the worst of the downturn and in 2009 GDP growth picked up to 3.3 per cent, and further still to 4.4 per cent in 2010; estimated growth in 2011 was 4.2 per cent.

Guyana has since the early 1990s been working to transform itself from a state-dominated economy to a largely free-market enterprise driven economy. In 2010, the government announced an Agricultural Export Diversification Programme (ADP), funded by US\$21.9 million from a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), with US\$1.1 million of public funds, to develop non-traditional agricultural exports, including fruit and vegetables, livestock and farm and sea-caught fish. Despite the government priority of promoting foreign investment and membership of the Caribbean Community (Caricom), inward investment has been slow. Social and political unrest between ethnic divisions of the country has proved a deterrent to foreign investors.

In 2011, the UN Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Guyana 117 (out of 187) for national development in health, education and income. Since 2000, Guyana's progress has grown but has not matched the improvement of other countries in Latin America. In 2010, 39.5 per cent of the population experienced at least one indicator of poverty, while the headcount poverty rate was 13.4 per cent of the population (2000–10).

Migrant workers provided US\$373 million in remittances in 2010 (12.5 per cent of GDP), which not only stimulates the economy in general but also directly supports family budgets. Remittances were estimated to have reached US\$339 million in 2011.

External trade

Along with 11 other members of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (Caricom), Guyana operates within the single market (Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME)), which became operational in 2006. CSME includes the free movement of goods and services, a common trade policy and external tariff.

Imports

Fuels and lubricants (typically up to 40 per cent of total), machinery and transport

equipment, consumer goods, food and chemicals.

Main sources: US (26.6 per cent of total in 2011), Trinidad and Tobago (16.4 per cent), Curacao (8.4 per cent).

Exports

Sugar, bauxite and alumina, shrimps, rice, rum, timber, diamonds and gold.

Main destinations: US (22.8 per cent total of total in 2011), Canada (20.1 per cent), UK (8.7 per cent).

Agriculture

Agriculture is a very important economic activity in Guyana. The sector employs approximately 35 per cent of the workforce and contributes a similar amount to the country's total GDP. The sugar industry is an important export earner, responsible for around 46 per cent of total exports. Rice accounts for 12 per cent of Guyana's export earnings and 19 per cent of its agricultural contribution to GDP.

About 2 per cent of the total land area is under cultivation. Cultivation of cash crops is confined to the alluvial coastal plain.

The main cash crops are sugar, rice and shrimps.

Guyana is self-sufficient in sugar, rice, vegetables, fish, meat and fruit and increased government investment in the sector has improved production of many other products. Cassava is the principal crop grown in the interior.

Emphasis is also being placed on the cultivation of oil palms, soya beans and corn, and on the development of dairy farming.

There is a national herd of livestock of between 200,000–250,000 head which are ranched on the Rupununi savannah in the south-east.

A new, flood-resistant rice, developed for the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) in the Guyana-based Burma Rice Research Station, began testing in local conditions in 2010. It was designed to survive being completely submerged for up to 17 days. In 2011, yields from this rice had risen by 10 per cent.

The fishing industry represents a valuable source of income to the economy of Guyana. Produce is sold on both domestic and international markets and the industry employs approximately 5 per cent of the country's total workforce.

Guyana is the region's largest exporter of shrimp, which make up 14 per cent of total exports. Government initiatives in the fishing sector include the improvement of fisheries management and the encouragement of investment in unexploited marine stocks. The typical annual fish catch is over 55,000mt, of which 27,000mt is shellfish.

Guyana is one of the most densely forested countries in the world. Approximately 95 per cent of the country's total land mass is covered by forest and woodland.

All the forests are state-owned. Sawwood and plywood are the principal forest products; pulp and paper, however, are imported.

Industry and manufacturing

The expansion of the industrial sector has traditionally been hampered by a lack of domestic energy supplies together with a dearth of technical and managerial personnel. At present the sector contributed roughly 10 per cent of total GDP and employs approximately 10 per cent of the total work force.

Previously, a serious shortage of foreign exchange had also caused the closure of many firms relying on imported inputs.

However, the government is trying to expand the country's industrial base with a policy of diversification and greater encouragement of foreign investors to work with the predominant state sector.

Guyana's manufacturing industry is dominated by the processing of raw materials. Activity related to the mining sector (predominantly bauxite, gold and diamonds) and the processing of agricultural products such as sugar, rice, coconuts and timber, together account for about three-quarters of manufacturing activity. The remainder is accounted for by small-scale import substitution production for the local market. A shortfall in investment is a recurring problem.

In December 2003, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago concluded an agreement to import raw sugar from Guyana in 2004, to meet the additional requirements of the sugar refinery operated by the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited (SCML).

Tourism

As South America's only English-speaking country Guyana has a natural advantage of familiarity to visitors from North America and elsewhere. Tourist facilities are almost exclusively located along the Atlantic Coast and around the capital, Georgetown, where the main dock welcomes a growing number of cruise liner visitors. In 2010, there were 150,141 arrivals to Guyana, of which over 80,000 came from the US and 25,000 from Canada. In 2011 (January–October) the total number of visitors was 126,313. The interior of the country offers sites of pristine rainforest to explore but is sparsely populated and suitable only for the experienced outdoor visitor.

In February 2012 Guyana joined the Amazon Co-operation Treaty Organisation (Acto), which develops strategies to integrate tourism in the Amazon region,

focussing on Brazil, Guyana and Suriname. The emphasis is due to change from wholly local packaged holiday destinations to one that incorporates greater use of the wider Amazon tourist opportunities.

Guyana has experienced a downturn in its tourist industry since 2006 when travel and tourism represented 13.6 per cent of GDP (a figure that had itself grown from 13.7 per cent in 2000). Since then a five-year decline reduced its contribution to 9.1 per cent by 2010. However in 2011 the industry picked up with an impressive growth rate of 5.5 per cent. Tourism has been an important long-term employer, but it too matched the decline, with an overall employment rate of 12.2 per cent (32,600 jobs) in 2006 down to 8 per cent (24,800 jobs) in 2010; this grew to 8.1 per cent (25,200 jobs) in 2011.

Mining

Both mining and quarrying are of great importance to Guyana's economy. Both activities combined, amount to 25 per cent of total GDP and account for approximately 12 per cent of the country's total work force.

Annual gold production averages 440,000 ounces, 70 per cent of which comes from Omai Gold Mines, a US\$300 million venture. Cambior and Golden Star Resources – Canadian companies – own 65 per cent and 30 per cent of Omai, respectively, and the Guyana government owns 5 per cent. In mid-2003, residents of western Guyana began legal action against Omai for allegedly allowing a dam to collapse on the Essequibo river in 1995, pouring 2.9 million cubic metres of cyanide-tainted slurry into the river. Around 23,000 residents supporting the writ want Omai to pay US\$2 billion in damages and are demanding an end to the dumping of toxic waste into the river. A similar writ was issued in 2000, but was thrown out by the courts on technical grounds.

Royalties paid to Guyana's Gold Board are linked to world gold prices. An estimated one-fifth of gold production is smuggled across the borders to Venezuela, Brazil and Suriname by local miners. There is also inefficient alluvial mining by some 10,000 miners using dredgers and suction.

Bauxite is the country's most important mineral, typically accounting for around a quarter of total export earnings. Production slumped in the early 1980s, prompting the government to seek outside help for the management of the industry.

There are known deposits of kaolin, molybdenum, uranium, copper, semi-precious stones, talc, soapstone and

high-silica sand, which the government would like to develop.

On 6 October 2012, the minister of natural resources reported that gold production for the year had increased year-on-year by 23 per cent, to 314,000 ounces (up from 207,000 ounces in 2011).

Hydrocarbons

There are no proven hydrocarbon reserves. Consumption of oil was 11,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 2008, all of which was imported. In 2005, Guyana, plus a number of other Caribbean states, signed an agreement with Venezuela to establish PetroCaribe, a multi-national oil company, owned by the participating states. PetroCaribe buys low-priced Venezuelan crude oil under long-term payment plans.

In 2007, a UN tribunal decision settled a boundary dispute, which resulted in Guyana being granted 33,152 square kilometres of disputed oil-rich territory off the Atlantic coastline. An estimate of the recoverable oil is 2 billion cubic metres (15 billion barrels) and 1.19 trillion cubic metres of gas. Exploration continued into 2009.

Any use of natural gas or coal is commercially insignificant.

Energy

Total installed generating capacity was 226MW in 2007, the majority of which was produced by thermal power plants. Consumption is typically around 800 million kilowatt hours. Only 60 per cent of the population has access to an electricity supply and self-reliance on individual power sources is widespread. The country has two centres of generation, the Berbice and Demerara Systems; the government has plans to integrate them.

Guyana continues to be heavily dependent on imported oil from both Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago in order to meet its energy needs. Guyana Electricity Corporation (GEC) is government-subsidised. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has provided loans to rehabilitate a number of GEC's existing thermal stations, as well as expanding the power grid.

The GEC's commissioning of the US\$17 million 22MW Wartsila generating plant has brought total capacity in the Demerara system up to 93MW, sufficient to meet peak demand in 2007, but which will need an additional 16MW by 2011 to meet needs. The entire generating system should be increased by 72MW by 2011. Renewable energy includes a new wind farm on the east coast supplying 4MW. The country has considerable potential for hydroelectric power generation, but significant investment remains dubious due to

the lack of existing, extensive infrastructure.

In 2010, the government and the China Development Bank signed a loan agreement (for an undisclosed amount) to begin the Amaila Falls Hydro-Electric Project (AFHEP), for which the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) also approved US\$1.2 million for project preparation. On 12 September 2012, a joint agreement was signed by the finance minister, private equity fund, Sithe Global and the engineering company, China Railway First Group, for the construction of the AFHEP, with an approximately 165MW capacity. The US\$506 million project is the largest infrastructure contract ever undertaken by Guyana.

Financial markets

Stock exchange

Gasci (Guyana Association of Securities Companies and Intermediaries Incorporated)

Banking and insurance

Guyana's banking and financial services industry is concentrated in the capital Georgetown. The Central Bank of Guyana regulates the industry.

Central bank

Bank of Guyana

Main financial centre

Georgetown

Time

GMT minus four hours.

Geography

A plain about 15km wide runs along the 320km northern (Atlantic) coast and extends west into Venezuela and east into Suriname. This strip, which lies some 1.5 metres below sea level and is protected by a system of dykes, is intensively farmed and contains 90 per cent of the population. To the south of this area the land is mountainous, heavily forested and covered with a network of fast-flowing rivers with numerous rapids and falls, including the Kaietur Falls on the Potaro River which is seven times higher than Niagara. There are substantial reserves of bauxite, gold and diamonds in this area. To the south-west along the border with Venezuela is a region of upland savannah, the Rupununi, where the rest of the population, predominantly Amerindian, engages in limited agriculture and cattle-raising.

Hemisphere

Northern.

Climate

The climate is tropical, with a mean monthly temperature of 26–28 degrees Celsius (C) throughout the year on the coast (28 degrees C in the interior). Temperatures of above 32 degrees C or below 24 degrees C at any time of day or

any season are rare. Rainfall is between 200–280mm per year on the coast, mainly in two sharply defined wet seasons, May to August and November to January. In the south there is a single rainy season from April to September, but rainfall is lower – averaging 150mm per year.

Dress codes

Among local businessmen the *shirtjac suit* – based upon a civilian version of the bush jacket – is widely worn in preference to the traditional business suit. It is perfectly acceptable to wear an open-necked shirt without a jacket on all but the most formal of occasions, but shorts are frowned upon.

Entry requirements

Passports

Required by all and valid for at least six months beyond intended stay.

Visa

Visas are required by all, except nationals of North America, Western Europe, Australasia, some Asian and all Caricom countries. For full details see: www.guyana.org/govt/visa_requirements.html.

Currency advice/regulations

The import and export of local currency is limited to G\$200. The import of foreign currency is unlimited, subject to declaration on arrival; export is limited to amount declared.

Health (for visitors)

Mandatory precautions

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required if arriving from an infected area.

Advisable precautions

Vaccination against yellow fever is encouraged for travellers to rural areas.

There is a risk of malaria in some areas of the interior, and adequate precautions should be taken. Water in urban areas is chlorinated, but typhoid is a risk in rural areas so drinking water should be boiled; bottled water is widely available. Dairy products are likely to be made from unpasteurised milk.

Various hepatitis strains are common. B and D stains are endemic in the Amazon basin and precautions are necessary. Tropical parasites, TB, and dengue fever all occur in certain areas. Professional advice concerning precautions should be sought before travelling to Guyana. Hospital conditions may not match those in developed countries; health insurance, including repatriation is recommended. Travellers should carry enough prescription and medical supplies for the duration of their stay.

Hotels

Hotels are available in Georgetown, Linden and New Amsterdam. Rooms are generally in short supply. A 10 per cent tip is usual.

Public holidays (national)

Fixed dates

1 Jan (New Year's Day), 23 Feb (Republic Day), 1 May (Labour Day), 5 May (Arrival Day), 26 May (Independence Day), 25–26 Dec (Christmas).

When a public holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday is taken as the holiday.

Variable dates

Holi (Hindu, Mar), Good Friday, Easter Monday, Caricom Day (first Mon in Jul), Liberty Day (first Mon in Aug), Diwali (Hindu, Oct/Nov), Eid al Adha, Birth of the Prophet.

Hindu and Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the moon.

Working hours

Banking

Mon–Thu: 0800–1230; Fri: 0800–1230, 1500–1700.

Business

Mon–Thu: 0800–1600; Fri: 0800–1200.

Government

Mon–Thu: 0800–1200, 1300–1630; Fri: 0800–1200, 1300–1530.

Shops

Mon–Fri: 0800–1130, 1300–1600; Sat: 0800–1130.

Electricity supply

Electricity supply is not standardised; Georgetown generally 110V AC 60Hz, but some supplies are 220V AC, 50Hz. Elsewhere supply is 110V AC at either 50 or 60 cycles.

Weights and measures

The metric system is official, but imperial measures are often preferred.

Social customs/useful tips

Business is often conducted in a relaxed atmosphere and an emphasis is placed upon personal contact. At the same time, careful observance of polite formalities such as handshaking and formal use of titles (such as Mr, etc) is appreciated. All officials should be treated with careful respect. Attention to detail in the making and keeping of appointments is also appreciated, although punctuality may not be reciprocated.

Invitations to the homes of business contacts are regularly offered since Guyanese pride themselves upon their hospitality. It is customary for visitors to return the invitation in a hotel or to a restaurant.

Hotel and restaurant staff and taxi drivers customarily receive a 10 per cent tip; airport porters are tipped by the bag.

Security

The streets of Georgetown can be unsafe after dark due to street robbery, and the use of taxis is recommended. Ostentatious display of wealth such as expensive

wristwatches or jewellery and the carrying of large amounts of cash should be avoided. As in all cities, it is unwise to leave articles unattended in parked cars or hotel rooms.

Getting there

Air

International airport/s: Cheddi Jagan International Airport (GEO), 40km from Georgetown; bank, duty free, restaurants and car hire.

Airport tax: G\$4,000 for international departures; not applicable to transit passengers.

Surface

Road: A coastal road runs from the Suriname border to Georgetown, via a ferry across the Berbice River at New Amsterdam.

Entry from Brazil is possible at Lethem where international border controls are in place. A bridge being constructed across the Takutu river will eventually connect Bonfim in Roraima State (Brazil) to Lethem. There are unsealed roads in current use. There are no road connections to Venezuela.

Water: There is a ferry service between Guyana-Surinam.

Main port/s: Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Springlands.

Getting about

National transport

Air: Air travel is the only efficient method of reaching the interior of the country. Trans Guyana Airways operates both regional and interior flights, but occasionally permits are needed from the ministry of the interior for non-nationals. Early booking is essential.

Charter facilities are available at Georgetown. Larger towns and mining companies have airports or landing strips.

Road: There are all-weather, asphalt roads along the coast and some brick roads inland. A coastal road links Georgetown, Rosignol, New Amsterdam and the Suriname border. Another coast road runs west from Georgetown, via the Demerara River, to Parika. A sealed highway to the Brazilian border via Lethem is in the initial stage of construction; only unsealed roads exist currently.

Buses: Buses are operated privately and run regularly and are generally reliable (although crowded). Services run along the coast. Private *tapir* minibuses, mine buses and bush buses (into the interior) are also available.

Rail: There is no passenger rail service, although some mining companies have private goods lines.

Water: Passenger and cargo vessels travel up the Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice rivers, and also along the coast between the rivers. Ferries link

Parika-Bartica on the Essequibo River; Rosignol-New Amsterdam on the Berbice River; Corriverton-Suriname on the Corentyne River. These services include New Amsterdam-Ituni, Georgetown-Bartica, Rosignol-New Amsterdam. River taxis (small wooden boats) service the same areas as the ferries. The taxis are faster and more expensive, they may also be chartered.

City transport

Taxis: Taxis are widely available in major towns and can be found on ranks. They have standard fares for inner city journeys; fares for longer trips should be negotiated in advance. A 10 per cent tip is usual.

For early morning flights from Timehri, make taxi arrangements the previous day.

Buses, trams & metro: Minibuses are a cheap mode of transport. They connect Timehri airport with Georgetown and are safe in the day. At night it is wiser to use a taxi.

Car hire

Car hire facilities are limited. They are available in Georgetown but must be booked well in advance. An international driving licence is required. Traffic drives on the left.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

Telephone area codes

The international dialling code (IDD) for Guyana is +592, followed by subscriber's number:

Chambers of Commerce

Berbice Chamber of Commerce, 12 Chapel Street, New Amsterdam, Berbice (tel: 227-6340; fax: 226-4535).

Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry, PO Box 10110, 156 Waterloo Street, North Cummingsburg, Georgetown (tel: 225-5864; fax: 226-3519; e-mail: info@georgetownchamberofcommerce.org).

Banking

Bank of Baroda, Avenue of the Republic & Regent Street, Georgetown (tel: 226-4005).

Bank of Nova Scotia, Regent & Hinck Streets, Georgetown (tel: 640-312; fax: 225-7985).

Citizens Bank Guyana Ltd, 201 Camp & Charlotte Sts, Georgetown (tel: 226-1705/6; fax: 226-1719).

Demerara Bank Ltd, 230 Camp St & South Rd, Georgetown (tel: 225-0610/9; fax 225-0601).

Guyana Bank for Trade & Industry, 47-48 Water Street, Georgetown (tel: 226-8430/9; fax: 227-1612).

Guyana Co-operative Agricultural & Industrial Development Bank, 126 Barrack & Parade Streets, Kingston, Georgetown (tel: 225-8806/9; fax: 226-8260).

Guyana National Co-operative Bank, Lombard & Cornhill Streets, Georgetown (tel: 225-7810/9).

National Bank of Industry & Commerce, 38-40 Water Street, Georgetown (tel: 226-4091/5; fax: 227-2921).

Central bank

Bank of Guyana, 1 Church Street & Avenue of the Republic, PO Box 1003, Georgetown (tel: 226-3250; fax: 227-2965; e-mail: comminications@bankofguyana.org.gy).

Stock exchange

Gasci (Guyana Association of Securities Companies and Intermediaries Incorporated), www.gasci.com

Travel information

Air Services Ltd, Wights Lane, Kingston, Georgetown (tel: 226-1767, 226-5759).

Guyana Overland Tours, PO Box 10173, 6 Avenue of the Republic, Robbstown, Georgetown (tel: 226-9876).

Roraima Airways, 101 Cummings Street, Georgetown (tel: 225-9647; fax: 225-9646).

Tourism Association of Guyana, 228 South Road, Lacytown, Georgetown (tel: 225-0807; fax: 225-0817).

Ministry of tourism

Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, 229 South Road, Lacytown, Georgetown (tel: 226-8629; fax: 225-9898; e-mail: ministry@mintic.gov.gy).

National tourist organisation offices

Guyana Tourism Office, Sophia Exhibition Complex, Georgetown (tel: 223-6351 fax: 231-6351).

Ministries

Ministry of Agriculture, Regent Road, Bourda, Georgetown (tel: 223-7844; fax: 225-0599; e-mail: moa@sdpn.org.gov.gy).

Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, 236 Thomas and Quamina Streets, Georgetown (tel: 227-5067; fax: 223-1616; e-mail: moaa@networksgy.com).

Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, 71 Main Street, Georgetown (tel: 227-7866; fax: 226-8549; e-mail: psmincys@guyana.net.gy).

Ministry of Education, 26 Brickdam, Stabroek, Georgetown (tel: 223-7900; fax: 225-8511; e-mail: moegyweb@yahoo.com).

Ministry of Finance, Main Street, Kingston, Georgetown (tel: 225-6088; fax: 226-1284; e-mail: guyanadmd@solutions2000.net).

Ministry of Fisheries, Crops & Livestock, Regent Road, Bourda, Georgetown (tel: 226-1565; fax: 227-2978; e-mail: minfci@sdpn.org.gy).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 254 South Road & New Garden Street, Georgetown (tel: 226-9080; fax: 223-5241; e-mail: minfor@sdpn.org.gy).

Ministry of Foreign Trade, 254 South Road & New Garden Street, Georgetown (tel: 226-1607; fax: 223-0900; e-mail: mofitic@mofitic.gov.gy).

Ministry of Health and Labour, Brickdam, Stabroek, Georgetown (tel: 226-1560; fax: 225-4505; e-mail: moh@sdpn.org.gy).

Ministry of Home Affairs, Brickdam, Stabroek, Georgetown (tel: 225-7270; fax: 227-4806).

Ministry of Housing and Water, 41 Brickdam, Stabroek, Georgetown (tel: 225-7192; fax: 227-3455; e-mail: housing@guyana.net.gy).

Ministry of Information, Area B Homestretch Avenue, Georgetown (tel: 226-8996; fax: 226-4003; e-mail: gis@sdpn.org.gy).

Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, 1 Water and Cornhill Streets, Stabroek, Georgetown (tel: 225-0655; fax: 227-1308; e-mail: nrdocgd@sdpn.org.gy).

Ministry of Legal Affairs, 95 Carmichael Street, Georgetown (tel: 223-7355; fax: 227-5419).

Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Fort Street, Kingston, Georgetown (tel: 225-8621; fax: 226-5070).

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Office of the President, New Garden Street, Georgetown (tel: 226-6453).

Ministry of Public Service Management, 164 Waterloo Street, Georgetown (tel: 227-1193; fax: 227-2700; e-mail: psm@sdpn.org.gy).

Ministry of Transport and Hydraulics, Wights Lane, Kingston, Georgetown (tel: 226-1875; fax: 225-8395; e-mail: minoth@networksgy.com).

Office of the President, New Garden Street, Bourda, Georgetown (tel: 225-1573; 227-3050; e-mail: op-iu@sdpn.org.gy).

Office of the Prime Minister, Wights Lane, Kingston, Georgetown (tel: 226-6695; fax: 226-7573; pmoffice@sdpn.org.gov.gy).

Other useful addresses

Association of Non-Traditional Exporters of Guyana (ANTEG), (tel: 226-0779; fax: 226-1063),

Bauxite Industry Development Co, 71 Main Street, Georgetown (tel: 225-7780; fax: 226-7413).

British High Commission, 44 Main Street, PO Box 10849, Georgetown (tel: 226-5881; fax: 225-0671; e-mail: bhcguyana@networksgy.com).

Caribbean Community Secretariat, PO Box 10827, Turkeyen, Georgetown (tel: 222-0001; fax: 222-0171; e-mail: info@caricom.org).

Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry, East Street, PO Box 10730, Georgetown.

Forest Products Association of Guyana (tel: 226-9848).

Forestry Commission, 1 Water Street, Georgetown (tel: 226-7271; fax: 226-8956; e-mail: forstry@sdpn.org.gy).

Geology and Mines Commission, PO Box 1028, Brickdam, Georgetown (tel: 225-3047; fax: 225-2274; e-mail: ggmc@sdpn.org.gy).

Guyana Broadcasting Corporation, PO Box 10760, Georgetown (tel: 226-9231).

Guyana Embassy (USA), 2490 Tracy Place, NW, Washington DC 20008 (tel: (+1-202) 265-6900; fax: (+1-202) 232-1297; e-mail: guyanaemb@aol.com).

Guyana Export Promotion Council, Sophia National Exhibition Park, Sophia, Georgetown (tel: 225-9443, 227-3394, 226-8526; fax: 226-3400).

Guyana Manufacturers' Association (GMA), 62 Main Street, Georgetown (tel: 227-4295; fax: 227-0670).

Guyana Mining Enterprise Ltd, Linden, Georgetown.

Guyana Office for Investment, Go-Invest, 190 Camp & Church Streets, Georgetown (tel: 225-0658, 227-0653; fax: 225-0655).

Guyana Rice Producers' Association (tel: 226-4411, 227-6957).

Guyana Rice Board, 1-2 Water Street, Georgetown (tel: 226-6822).

Guyana State Corporation, 45-47 Water Street, Georgetown (tel: 226-0530).

Guyana Sugar Corporation, 201 Camp Street, Cummingsburg, PO Box 10547, Georgetown (tel: 226-0571; fax: 225-7274).

Institute of Private Enterprise Development, (IPED), Georgetown (tel: 225-8949, 225-3067, 226-4765).

New Guyana Marketing Corporation, Robb Street, Georgetown.

Omai Gold Mines Limited, 176-D Middle Street, Cummingsburg, Georgetown (tel: 226-8129, 226-5898; fax: 226-6468).

Private Sector Commission (PSC), Georgetown (tel: 225-7170, 64-603; fax: 227-0725).

Public Corporations Secretariat, PO Box 1020, 45-7 Water Street, Georgetown (tel: 226-0536/9).

Shipping Association of Georgetown, 28 Main and Holmes Streets, Georgetown (tel: 226-2632).

United States Embassy, 31 Main Street, Georgetown (tel: 225-4900; fax: 225-8497).

National news agency: GINA (Government Information Agency)

Area B Homestretch Ave, D' Urban Backlands, Georgetown (tel: 226-6715; fax: 226-4003; internet: www.gina.gov.gy).

Other news agencies: Caribbean Net News: www.caribbeanetnews.com

Guyana Journal: www.guyanajournal.com

Internet sites

Berbice online newspaper: <http://www.berbicenews.com>

Guyana News and Information: <http://www.guyana.org/>

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean: <http://www.eclac.cl/index1.html>

Inter-American Development Bank: <http://www.iadb.org>

Organisation of American States: <http://www.oas.org>

Latin World: <http://www.latinworld.com>

Latin Trade Online: <http://www.latintrade.com>

Local web directory: <http://sdpn.org.gy/guylink.html>