

# the Humming Bird



## NEW ECLAC STUDY EXAMINES

TRAFFIC CONGESTION BURDEN ON TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

## EXPERT GROUP MEETING DISCUSSES

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

## ECLAC CONVENES EGM TO DISCUSS

STUDY ON POST COVID-19 TOURISM DIVERSIFICATION



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

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## ABOUT US

Issued on a monthly basis, The Hummingbird offers insights into the latest projects, publications, technical assistance missions and research carried out by ECLAC Caribbean. In addition to these, sneak previews are provided of the most salient upcoming events, alongside enriching follow-ups to previously covered issues. With a view to featuring a variety of facets of Caribbean life and lifestyle, The Hummingbird also zooms in on cultural activities and landmark occurrences through an eye-opening regional round-up.

### EDITORIAL TEAM

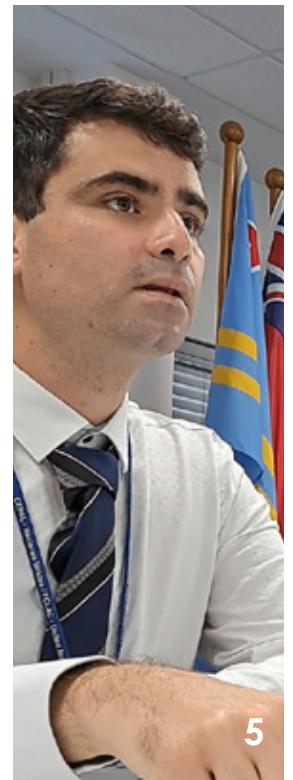
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Please see our contact details on the back cover of this magazine.



# INTERNATIONAL DAYS

## 4 February

International Day of Human Fraternity

## 6 February

International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation

## 10 February

World Pulses Day

## 11 February

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

# UPCOMING MEETINGS

## 5 FEBRUARY 2024

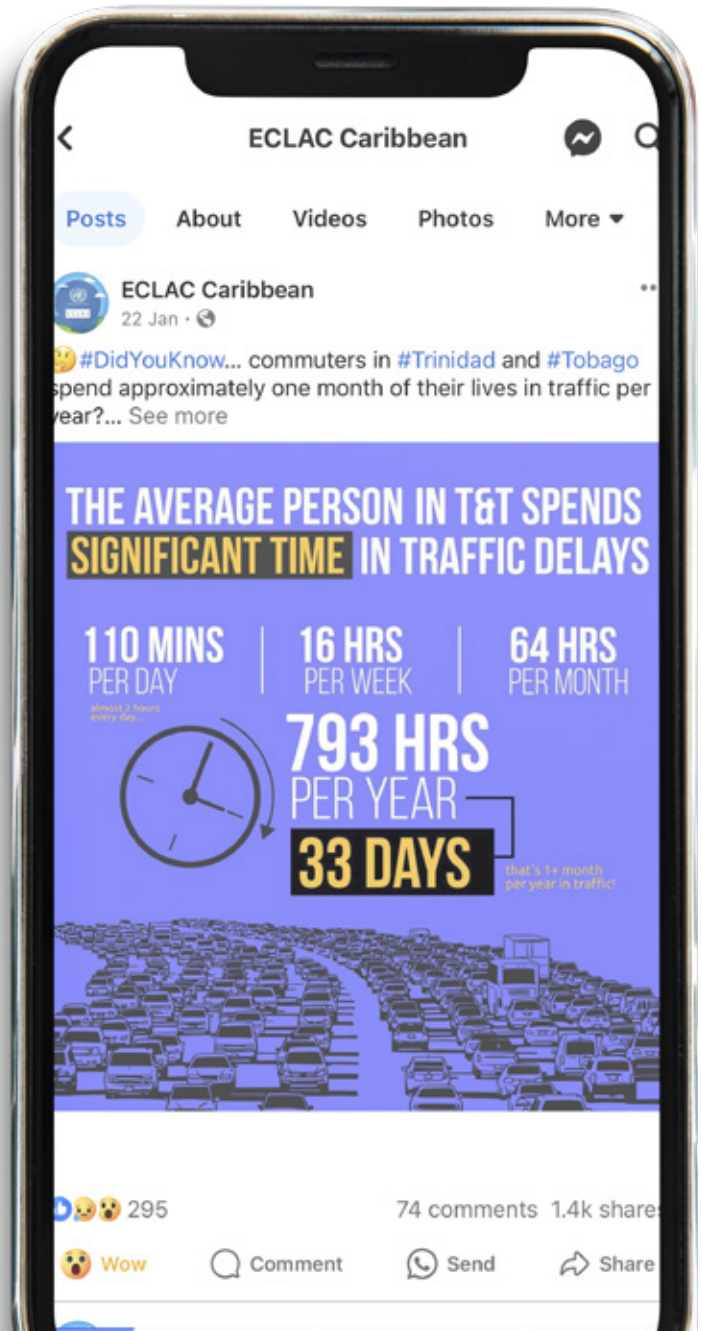
Enhancing Statistical Capacity through the Global Training on Small Area Estimation: Lessons from Asia Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean

## 13 FEBRUARY 2024

Remaking Trade For a Sustainable Future

## 19 FEBRUARY 2024

Fixing a Leaky System: Creating Resource Management Systems for Used Textiles



# EXPERT GROUP MEETING DISCUSSES

## INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

The demographic transition occurring in the Caribbean mirrors that of developed countries, where the birth rate is falling and is close to or below the death rate in some countries. As a result, population growth has slowed in the Caribbean, with fewer children relative to the population of older people.

ECLAC Caribbean Director Diane Quarless made the statement at the start of a recent expert group meeting (EGM) to discuss a study on "International migration and sustainable development in the Caribbean: An analysis of data trends from 2000 to 2020." The Director said the demographic transition has produced a dividend for some countries, as fewer children per woman results in socioeconomic benefits, such as more women joining the labour force, gaining economic empowerment, and enhancing their country's economic growth. She stated: "This demographic transition has also increased care burdens as the population ages and, eventually, will reduce the country's labour force as the birth rate keeps falling."





Director Quarless acknowledged that this would have major macroeconomic implications for the subregion, which is already confronted with limited fiscal space and declining labour productivity.

Discussions at the EGM not only included perspective on international migration, but also emigration from the Caribbean. She said this holds substantial implications for the subregion's sustainable development, encompassing factors like remittance inflows and labour force revitalization.

The Director underscored the importance of quality data in assessing international migration trends.

**“It is pertinent to collect, analyse, and disseminate international migration data in the Caribbean following international standards and best practices, as it will facilitate the optimal**

### **use of the subregion's international migration statistics.”**

Some of the conclusions included in the EGM report are:

- (1) While there has been slower population growth and a larger proportion of older persons relative to children, this transition can present socioeconomic benefits to Caribbean countries. For example, increased female labour force participation, economic empowerment, and overall economic growth.
- (2) The positive net emigration from the subregion continues to drive remittance receipts and provides a pool of skilled returning residents, with the potential to rejuvenate ageing labour forces and foster increased labour productivity.
- (3) The 2018 Global Compact for Migration emphasizes the central role of data and leveraging statistics to build the evidence base on international migration by improving and investing in accurate, reliable,

and comparable data. Therefore, an important objective of conducting this study is to encourage the collection, analysis and dissemination of such data in accordance with international standards.

- (4) Data sources like national censuses and administrative data are crucial in the collection of international migration data.

The EGM was attended by Caribbean experts in statistics and social development from member States Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and associate member countries Anguilla, Curaçao, Montserrat, Sint Maarten, and Turks and Caicos Islands. Migration experts from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) of the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona Campus, also participated.



A Hummingbird  
FEATURE

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# NEW ECLAC STUDY EXAMINES TRAFFIC CONGESTION BURDEN

ON TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



**F**or at least a week in January, the results of ECLAC Caribbean’s study on traffic congestion dominated news headlines and public discussion online. The major findings that, on average, people in Trinidad and Tobago spend 33 days per year in traffic, and that traffic congestion costs the economy TT\$2.26 billion or 1.37 per cent of GDP, were shared thousands of times across social media.

Here is a snapshot of some of the discussion the study generated in T&T and around the Caribbean.



## NEW ECLAC STUDY EXAMINES TRAFFIC CONGESTION BURDEN ON TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

# A DEEPER LOOK

### *Background* \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicular traffic congestion is a phenomenon experienced in most cities and countries around the world. This results in significant direct economic costs, together with greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants, which in turn contribute to major health risks. The study finds that the problem has become a major challenge among Caribbean small island developing states (SIDS), especially in the context of the subregion's growing urbanization and increasing levels of motorization over the past three decades.

These and other related issues are examined in the recently published study from ECLAC Caribbean . Additional impacts of traffic congestion have also been identified as stress, fatigue and depression among commuters, and is possibly linked to increased anti-social behaviour and diminished road safety.

Trinidad and Tobago had more than one million registered vehicles on the road and an increase of more than 25,000 new cars in 2019. This amounts to a vehicle to population ratio of roughly 0.76. The challenge, the study finds, is compounded by increasing

urbanization and personal vehicle ownership, alongside lagging development of public transportation infrastructure.

The road transportation system in Trinidad and Tobago, or the road network, reflects the typical experience of SIDS where their smallness, relatively small population, and limited land resources, pose challenges of economic scale and scope in the development of infrastructure. The physical geography of SIDS also impacts mobility and choice of transportation since many of these countries are hilly with limited options for expanding public infrastructure.

The study explains that consistent with the distribution of population and the evolved transportation network, the most intense traffic congestion was experienced in the more densely populated areas of the country. "Transit routes along the main north-south highway (Uriah Butler Highway), and the main roadways of the East-West corridor (Churchill Roosevelt Highway, Eastern Main Road, Audrey Jeffers Highway and Western Main Road) endure the brunt of the traffic congestion on the island of Trinidad."

In the case of Tobago, the study noted that while traffic congestion is comparatively less compared to Trinidad, most traffic congestion is experienced in the South-West of the island along Milford Road, and the connecting Claude Noel Highway. "These two roadways form the main arterial connection of the more densely populated southwest, with the island's capital at Scarborough. Additional traffic congestion is also routinely observed on main suburb connecting routes such as Scarborough to Calder Hall, and Scarborough to Mount Marie."

The most important policy implication, arising from the findings, was the level of public sector investment that would likely be necessary to mitigate the vehicle traffic congestion challenge. "An opportunity cost, measured in this instance as a direct economic burden of 1.37 per cent of annual GDP is not trivial, and represents a considerable economic benefit that the country routinely foregoes each year because of vehicle traffic congestion."

# TRAFFIC IN T&T HAS A DIRECT ECONOMIC COST OF AN ESTIMATED **TT \$2.26 BILLION** PER YEAR OR 1.37% OF GDP.




## CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

THE IMPACT OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION ON THE ECONOMY

<b>AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY &amp; FISHING</b> <b>TT \$2.43B EARNED</b> 1.5% OF GDP	<b>VERSUS</b>	<b>TRAFFIC</b> <b>TT \$2.26B FOREGONE</b> 1.37% OF GDP*
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\*GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT




### T&T COMMUTERS SPEND AN EXTRA **\$558 PER MONTH** OR **\$6,696/YEAR** ON ADDITIONAL EXPENSES RELATED TO TRAFFIC

- FOOD** 
- COMMUNICATIONS** 
- CHILDCARE** 
- ACTIVITIES** 



### TRAFFIC CONGESTION HAS ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE **ENVIRONMENT SOCIAL EMOTIONAL INTERACTION AND HEALTH** OF THE POPULATION



### WHEN YOU'RE ON THE ROAD DURING THESE **INTENSE** HIGH TRAFFIC SEASONS THE ADDITIONAL HOURS ADD UP...

	<b>CHRISTMAS</b> 8.9 HOURS/YEAR	<b>RAINY SEASON</b> 9.3 HOURS/YEAR
	<b>CARNIVAL</b> 5 HOURS/YEAR	<b>MONTH-END</b> 5.6 HOURS/YEAR
	<b>SCHOOL BREAKS REDUCE TRAFFIC BY 7.7 HOURS ANNUALLY</b>	



### THE AVERAGE PERSON IN T&T SPENDS **SIGNIFICANT TIME** IN TRAFFIC DELAYS

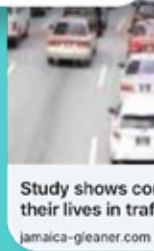
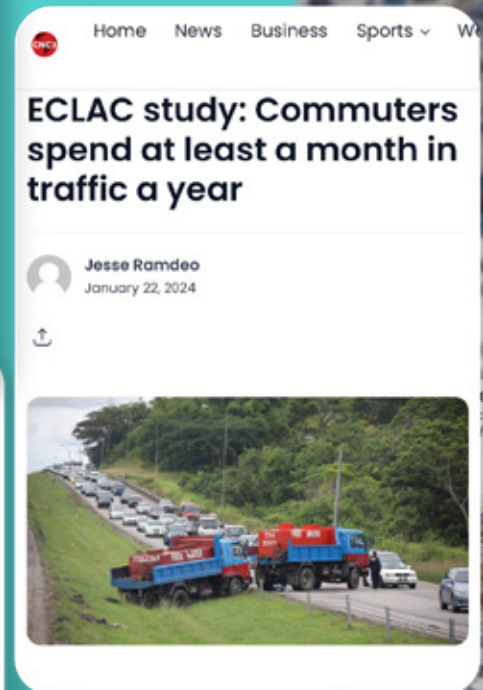
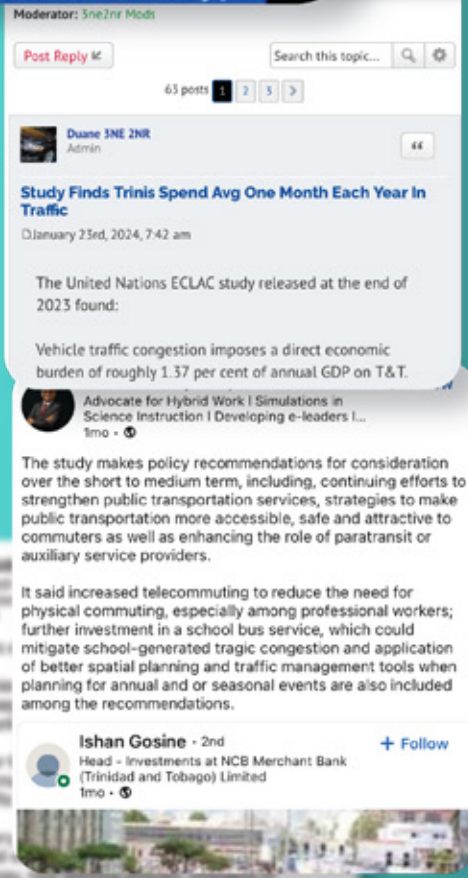
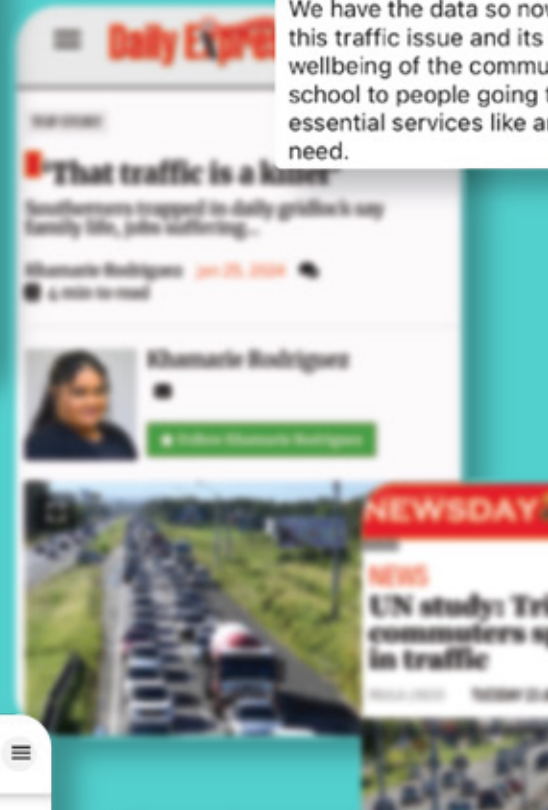
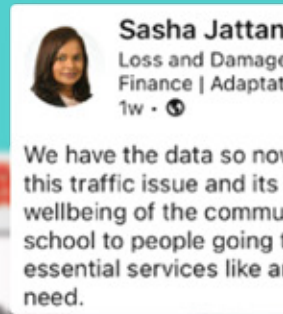
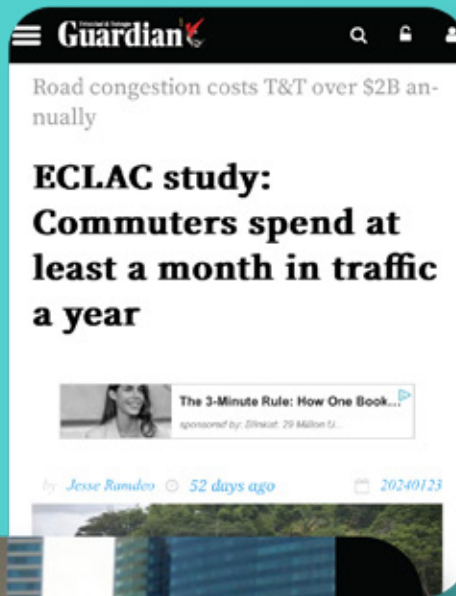
<b>110 MINS PER DAY</b> <small>(almost 2 hours every day...)</small>	<b>16 HRS PER WEEK</b>	<b>64 HRS PER MONTH</b>
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**793 HRS PER YEAR**

**33 DAYS** that's 1+ month per year in traffic




# A HOT TOPIC



...singh · 2nd  
...e Expert | Climate  
...ion | Loss and Da...

...w we need real policy shifts to alleviate  
...effects on productivity, health and

**loop** Friday Mar 15 30°C

News Videos

**Secret Savings 60% OFF**

**Study shows one month, \$2B lost to traffic congestion in T&T annually**

Loop News | January 23, 2024 11:15 AM ET

Commuters in traffic along the Beetham Highway.  
Photo: Alina Doodnoth

**NEWSDAY** News Latest Sports Sections

**EDITORIAL**  
**Spending life in traffic**

NEWSDAY THURSDAY 25 JANUARY 2024

Local Government Minister Faris Al-Rawi - File photo by Angelo Marcelle

**Mikey LIVE**

CARIBBEAN NEWS LATEST CARIBBEAN NEWS

**Study Shows Commuters In T&T Spend One Month Of Their Lives In Traffic Annually**

By Mikey Live - January 23, 2024

Post Views: 17

...TT, particularly  
...Port of Spain,  
...international  
...traffic problem

...s Commuters in Trinidad  
...Spend One Month  
...ly in Traffic Delays

**Sinanan: Revamped PTSC among 12 traffic relief measures coming**

...ort Minister Robert Sinanan  
...traffic was being experienced  
...ity is on the way with 12 traffic  
...s planned for this year.

...the Economic Commission for  
...of the Caribbean (ECLAC) found  
...with the roadway is costing T&T  
...tudy.

**UN Trinidad & Tobago**

22 Jan ·

Share if you can relate 🙄🙄🙄!

Check out this study on T&T's traffic by our team at ECLAC Caribbean.

**ECLAC Caribbean**

22 Jan ·

#DidYouKnow... commuters in #Trinidad and #Tobago spend approximately one month of their lives in traffic per year?... See more

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What you're reading matters Get Started

Published 2 months ago •  
[Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago](#) •  
Updated 2 months ago

**Study shows commuters in T&T spend one month of their lives in traffic annually**

Summary by Ground News

The average commuter in Trinidad and Tobago spends about one month annually in traffic delays. The direct economic cost of traffic in the CARICOM country is estimated at TT\$2.26 billion annually. Traffic-related loss amounts to some 1.4 per cent of GDP in the European Union.

**THE AVERAGE PERSON IN T&T SPENDS SIGNIFICANT TIME IN TRAFFIC DELAYS**

HOME LEAD STORES NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT

Published Monday | January 22, 2024 | 7:30 PM

**ECLAC study: Traffic imposes heavy burden on T&T**

**Jhordan Channer** · 2nd  
Co-Founder @ Island City Lab  
1w ·

The study positions congestion as a consequence of urbanization and population growth, but it is crucial to understand congestion as a consequence of car dependency (and, by extension, economic dependency). I am a bit disappointed that the policy recommendations in this study did not include addressing car dependency by re-distributing public space away from cars or discouraging private car use. Space is a zero-sum game, simply improving public transportation won't solve the problem if they have to wait the same traffic as private cars.

That said, the immense personal and social cost of losing a month to traffic each year is shocking to read.

**PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC – A study conducted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has found that the average commuter in Trinidad and Tobago spends about one month annually in traffic delays.**

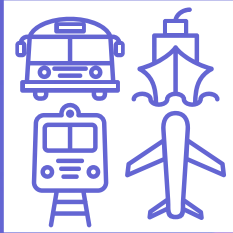
...orge · 2nd  
...ator/ Clinical Instructor/ Nurse  
... Childhood Cancer Data Manag...

**Commuters in T&T spend one month of their lives in traffic annually**

3 min read

# RECOMMENDATIONS

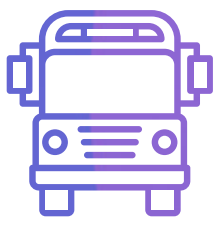
Several suggestions to the traffic congestion challenge were also put forward for consideration over the short to medium term.



## STRENGTHEN AND IMPROVE EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

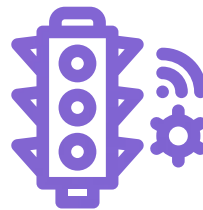
- make public transportation more attractive and reliable to commuters
- enhance and improve paratransit services - first and last mile transportation options
- improve public safety of commuters and service providers

## ADOPT TELECOMMUTING TO REDUCE NEED FOR PHYSICAL COMMUTING



## INVEST IN SAFE AND RELIABLE SCHOOL BUS SERVICE

## IMPROVE SPATIAL PLANNING AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT FOR ANNUAL + SEASONAL EVENTS



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122

ECLAC SUBREGIONAL  
HEADQUARTERS  
FOR THE CARIBBEAN

# Assessment of the economic costs of vehicle traffic congestion in the Caribbean

A case study  
of Trinidad and Tobago

Willard Phillips  
Elizabeth Thorne  
Esther Chong Ung



ECLAC



Working for  
a productive, inclusive  
and sustainable future

Read these and the entire study at:

[CLICK HERE](#)

# US \$5.3M INITIATIVE

## TO PROPEL FOOD SECURITY IN GUYANA

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has officially launched the Caribbean Agricultural Productivity Improvement Activity (CAPA), a programme that aims at increasing food security efforts, while strengthening the livelihoods of farmers locally.

The three-year US \$5.3 million project will focus on providing support to farmers to increase the production of fruit and vegetables, and building connections between consumers. It will also input suppliers, and help with improving farm-level extension systems.

During the launch held at the University of Guyana, Turkeyen Campus, Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, said the implementation of the programme is being executed at a critical time, where the effects of the Russian-Ukraine war continue to present immense challenges for global food security.

"I am particularly encouraged by the intention of this project... All of the far-reaching benefits that this project promises can be divorced from other related regional goals, such as the reduction of our food import bill by 25 per cent by 2025. In fact, all of the commodities that are being targeted in this project are identified as priority commodities in some form under the 25 by 2025 programme," he stated.

CAPA will also soon be rolled out in Guyana, Suriname, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, Barbados, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.



# CARRIACOU CELEBRATES AS PARADISE BEACH

IS RATED 'NUMBER  
ONE' IN SUBREGION

Residents of Carriacou, a sister isle of Grenada, showed their pride and joy earlier this month (January), as they officially celebrated Paradise Beach placing first in the category of Best Caribbean Beach on USA Today's 10 Best Readers' Choice Award 2024.

Minister for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs and Local Government, Tevin Andrews, described the island as 'simply the best'. He said the Ministry will continue to work together with the Grenada Tourism Authority to maintain and uplift the world-famous beach.

Sales, Marketing and Nautical Tourism Manager of the Grenada Tourism Authority, Nikoyan Roberts, said the win signals a powerful invitation and opportunity to showcase the unique charm and warm hospitality of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. She added this also provides new avenues for product development and an inspiration to welcome visitors with open arms.

This is the second time Paradise Beach has been voted the best beach in the Caribbean, the first time being in 2022.

# MEASURING THE ECONOMIC

## AND SOCIAL VALUE OF CARNIVAL

The 2024 dates for Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) are earlier than recent previous years (12 and 13 February), and while it is just two days of celebration, there is considerable economic, social and cultural benefit for the country. Official statistics indicate that tourist spending during the period is approximately \$1 billion.

Indeed, Carnival as an industry and an economic generator goes well beyond Carnival Monday and Tuesday and, in fact, provides jobs and economic benefit for a significant number of people throughout the year, and concentrated over an eight-week period - beginning on Boxing Day and ending on the weekend after the Parade of the Bands (the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday).

One major factor to consider is the economic impact of tourist spending, which often is in the region of \$1 billion. According to the Central Statistical Office (CSO), in January and February 2020 (before the pandemic), Trinidad and Tobago benefited from a total of 78,148 tourist arrivals, with the average expenditure by each visitor being \$12,101, over an average stay of 12 days.



These numbers would suggest overseas visitors alone injected around TT\$940 million into the local economy during Carnival 2020. This figure in no way begins to account for the compounded effect of that quantum as it makes its way through the economy. It also doesn't include the impact of seasonal employment for the thousands of ushers, tour guides, security personnel, vendors, artisans and others who benefit directly from the staging of Carnival each year, and who would have sadly experienced the full effect of there being no Carnival in 2021 and 2022.

There is also economic benefit on the "private" side of Carnival, such as the numerous fetes held every year, each one providing opportunities for income generation, benefitting service providers, entertainers, engineering crews, and others. For example, a single fete attended by 2,500 patrons can generate more than a million dollars in activity along the value chain, and provide direct benefit to 150 to 250 individuals.

In acknowledgement of the substantial influence this annual festival has on our economy and way of life, and its tremendous potential impact on the national economy, the state invests considerable funds, as well as physical and human resources towards its management and continued development. These resources are complemented by intense output from the artistic fraternity, civil society, business community and members of the public.

The T&T government's budget allocation for Carnival 2024 is \$141 million, as compared to 2023's \$147 million, according to the National Carnival Commission (NCC).

Aside from T&T, several countries and territories in the Caribbean, have Carnival on their upcoming schedule of festivals and holiday celebrations, which take place each year. According to ECLAC Economic Affairs Officer, Willard Phillips, many of these celebrations have their origins in the subregion's colonial past, and reflect a socio-cultural tapestry forged from that historical, religious and anthropological experience. Today, elements of such history inform the nature, scope and traditions of the festivals, even including the dates for the staging of events.

He explained that in Trinidad and Tobago for instance, the dominant influence of European Catholicism places the Carnival season strictly before the church's Lenten period of fasting. This is also the case for several other countries and territories which have many variations of the activities according to the specific needs and circumstances of each country.

In the context of the Caribbean being an area heavily dependent on tourism, Phillips said: "Over the years, one important evolution in strategic thinking with respect to the hosting of Carnivals in the Caribbean, is the linking of related cultural events to the tourism offerings of the subregion. In fact, many countries now promote national Carnivals as a main tourism product offering and have deliberately rescheduled their festivals to periods of the year deemed to be optimal in terms of attracting visitors and maximizing competitiveness and brand awareness of their destinations."



# ARTIFICIAL REEFS TO BE CONSTRUCTED

TO BOOST FISH & LOBSTER STOCK IN NEVIS' WATERS

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) of Saint Kitts and Nevis, believes the island will benefit from a planned project to install artificial reefs made from conch shells. Deputy Director of the DMR, Corey Maynard, unveiled the plan during a recent meeting at the Nevis Island Administration Ministry of Agriculture.

He explained that the project will involve scuba divers and conch divers, who when they take the conch from the shells, they bring the shells to the shore.

**“In terms of our Marine Management Unit, we plan to make some cages and place the conch shells in the cages. These will act as nurseries**



**for juvenile fish, lobsters and other reef species.”**

Maynard also listed combatting ghost fishing as a focal area for the Department in 2024. Ghost fishing is when fish traps (pots) are lost, abandoned or discarded and continue to trap fish, which eventually die inside the traps.

He said: “Ghost fishing is a big issue that we have in the Federation. What we plan on doing for that is introducing a biodegradable twine. That will be attached to the door of the trap and after a period, based on the soaking time, the twine will disintegrate and the trap door will fly open and so the fish will be able to swim in and out of the traps.”



He highlighted the financial and environmental impact of ghost fishing to the island. "For 2023 we had approximately 100 traps that were lost. If each trap netted eight pounds of fish monthly that brings up to 800 pounds of fish per month at about \$10, that's \$8000, and \$8000 multiplied by 12 gives us \$96,000 a year which will be lost to fishers, and also it decreases our fish stock. So you see why the introduction of this biodegradable twine will be so important."



# ECLAC CONVENES EXPERT GROUP MEETING

## TO DISCUSS STUDY ON POST COVID-19 TOURISM DIVERSIFICATION

ECLAC Caribbean recently convened an expert group meeting (EGM) to discuss the findings of a new study, entitled “Building economic resilience through tourism diversification post COVID-19”.

In attendance were representatives from Antigua and Barbuda’s Ministry of Finance and Corporate Governance, National Parks Authority; Saint Kitts and Nevis’ Office of the Prime Minister, Chamber of Industry and Commerce; Ministry of Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Tourism, Transport and Ports, and the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office; and the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus.

Economic Affairs Officer, Sheldon McLean, presented an outline of the study and overview of the tourism industry in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries in general, and in the countries under study – Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia and Saint Kitts and Nevis – in particular.

He noted that tourism plays a major role in these countries’ economies, as it accounts for the highest share of value added in Antigua and Barbuda and the lowest in Saint Kitts and Nevis. Given





the importance of tourism in these economies, they were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through the restrictions on travel and entertainment.

The study uses a counterfactual analysis, which compares the estimated tourism arrivals and expenditure from 2020 to 2022 without the pandemic, with actual arrivals expenditure to estimate the losses from the event. It was found that Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia and Saint Kitts and Nevis lost approximately US \$2.5 billion, US \$3.8 billion, and US \$1 billion respectively.

Part of the study focuses on opportunities for diversification of the tourism product in the three target countries. It was noted that diversifying into niche markets can help strengthen the tourism industries in these countries.

For Antigua and Barbuda, the study proposed diversification into luxury tourism. Barbuda's perceived exclusivity can be leveraged to create

more exclusive luxury products that cater to high-end travellers. Investment in general infrastructure will be required to facilitate this transition.

In Saint Lucia, an opportunity lies in developing community-based tourism. Facilitating community-based organizations to manage community assets and develop and promote unique community-based products, can foster an authentic experience which is representative of local culture.

In Saint Kitts and Nevis, sports tourism can be developed through making use of the range of available sporting facilities. The country can seek to attract more international sporting events which would in turn garner more media coverage and promote their traditional tourism products.

Beyond the effects of the pandemic, tourism development in the Caribbean also faces other challenges. The tourism sector is vulnerable to global economic shocks and natural

disasters. The industry is often characterized by heavy seasonality, with most visitors arriving in the northern hemisphere's winter months.

Some of the other challenges facing the tourism industry in the target countries include: a lack of available data for policymakers, a shortage of skilled workers in the labour force, degradation of natural resources caused by the tourism product and a lack of integration with the creative industries.

The presentation concluded with some recommendations for the development of a tourism diversification strategy. These included establishing a strategic planning framework, strengthening risk management and disaster planning, expanding data collection and analysis, improving the ease of doing business, strengthening stakeholder participation in tourism planning, investing in human resources and improving the ease of intraregional travel.

# JAMAICA BANS PLASTIC

## LUNCH BOXES

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Jamaica is banning plastic lunch boxes and personal care products, with microplastic beads, starting 1 June 2024. This was announced on 19 January by Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Matthew Samuda.

"We have taken the lesson of the first round of the plastic ban as it relates to public education and need to give sufficient lead time," the Minister said.

Additionally, he said the development of a national policy on the environmental sound management of single use plastic products is to be done this coming fiscal year.

Samuda informed that Jamaica currently collects more than 30 per cent of the plastic bottles produced monthly. "We commend the NSWMA (National

Solid Waste Management Authority) and Recycling Partners of Jamaica, who have achieved this up from 8% three years ago," he said.

"We are in a race against time to ensure that we improve our waste management target, and one of the ways... is to ensure we extract plastic waste from the waste stream. We will continue to work with stakeholders to determine the appropriate legislation necessary to achieve our goal. Our goal is not less than 70% of all plastic being produced monthly to be collected and recycled for the benefit of Jamaica," Samuda added.

Meanwhile, he informed that Jamaica is actively participating in negotiations for a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.



# THE Hummingbird KITCHEN



## TRINIDAD CHICKEN PELAU

Chicken pelau is one of the most popular lunchtime meals in Trinidad and Tobago, throughout the year and especially around Carnival time. It is typically a one-pot dish made with well-seasoned, bone-in chicken pieces, browning, pigeon peas, rice, and veggies. Coconut milk and butter are often added for more flavour.

The origins of pelau are not exactly clear. The dish is similar in name to pilau or pulao, which is an ancient Indian rice dish. But charring and browning of meat is an African cooking technique. There are East African versions of pilau that resemble pelau but use Indian spices like cumin, coriander, and masala instead of brown sugar. So, it is likely pelau is a fusion dish that epitomizes the melting pot that is T&T.

### What you will need:

#### Chicken

- 2 lbs chicken (cut up pieces)
- 2 tbsp flour
- 3 tbsp green seasoning (with chadon beni, garlic, pepper)
- 1 tsp salt

#### Peas

- 1½ cups green pigeon peas (200 grams)
- 3 cups water

#### Coconut Milk

- ½ brown coconut
- 3 cups water

#### Pelau/Rice

- 1½ tbsp oil
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- one third cup ketchup
- 2 pimento (or pepper of choice like scotch bonnet)
- 2 tbsp chadon beni (culantro)
- 1 large onion
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 large carrot
- 2 tbsp cilantro (celery)
- 1½ cups parboiled rice (or rice of choice like basmati)
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 cups water
- 1½ tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp chives

#### Equipment

- Blender

## Instructions

### Chicken prep

Remove fatty tissue from the cut-up chicken pieces. Wash the meat.

Rub flour into the chicken. Scrape off any slime.

Rinse the meat again and drain.

Mix in green seasoning and salt.

Cover and refrigerate overnight (or at least 4 hours).

### Cook pigeon peas

Place a small pot on the stove on medium heat.

Add water and green pigeon peas.

Leave to boil until the peas are cooked (about 20 minutes).

Strain and set aside.

### Make the coconut milk

Crack open a brown coconut.

Remove the white coconut flesh from half of the coconut.

Add the coconut flesh and water to a blender.

Blend until smooth.

Strain the mixture for pure coconut milk.

Set aside.

### Veggies prep

Wash, peel and chop onion and garlic. Dice the pepper.

Wash and chop carrots into chunks.

Wash the rice several times until the water runs clear.

Wash and finely chop the chadon beni, cilantro and chives.

## Make Pelau

Place a large pot on medium heat. Allow to heat up.

Add oil and leave for 1 to 2 minutes.

Sprinkle in brown sugar.

Leave sugar to caramelize and become frothy.

Stir occasionally to ensure even heating (about 3 to 5 minutes).

Once sugar darkens (it may smoke too), stir in the ketchup.

Add the seasoned chicken pieces.

Mix to coat the chicken.

Add the pimento and chadon beni.

Lower the heat. Cook for 10 minutes (uncovered).

Once the liquid has mostly boiled off, toss in the onion, garlic, carrot, 1 tbsp of celery and cooked pigeon peas.

Mix and cook for about 5 minutes.

Stir in the washed rice. Cook for about 3 minutes.

Add the coconut milk and water.

Cook on low for 30 minutes. Stir occasionally.

Add butter, chives and remaining celery. Stir.

Cook for another 10 to 15 minutes or until the liquid has boiled off and the rice is cooked.

Serve hot.

## NOTES

Substitute green pigeon peas for canned green or brown pigeon peas. No pre-boiling will be necessary, saving you time. The canned peas can be rinsed and added to the pelau when the rice and other ingredients are added.

Substitute fresh coconut milk for canned coconut milk. Or mix about 6 tbsp of coconut milk powder with 3 cups of water.

In place of caramelizing the sugar, add 2 tbsp of browning and 1/3 cup ketchup to the seasoning chicken pieces. So, once the pot and oil are hot, add the meat, pimento and chadon beni to the pot and cook until the liquid has mostly boiled off.

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