

Guyana commissions multi-million dollar bridge

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The Bharrat Jagdeo Demerara River Bridge CMC PHOTOS

Guyana on Sunday commissioned the Chinese-funded US\$262 million Bharrat Jagdeo Demerara River Bridge, with President Irfaan Ali saying it signals the dawn of a new era of transformation.

“Today, on behalf of a grateful people, I’m pleased to dedicate this bridge in the name of Bharrat Jagdeo. From this day forward, it shall be called the Bharrat Jagdeo Demerara River Bridge, because great men deserve recognition, because visionaries deserve legacies,” President Ali said, as he announced the renaming of the Demerara River Bridge after his Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo.

Ali justified his decision to name the new east-west river corridor after Jagdeo, who became president of this Caribbean Community (Caricom) country in 1999 when the then head of state, Janet Jagan, stepped down for health reasons.

Jagdeo, a former finance minister, was elected to the position on two occasions, with Ali saying, “I want to recognise a man that has dedicated his life to the equipment of this country, a man who has been an advisor, an architect and an anchor in our development today. I want to pay tribute to a giant of our local politics and economy.”

Amid much pomp and fanfare, President Ali emphasised the value of the new bridge.

He said that for many thousands of commuters who travel daily, it would now mean easy, uninterrupted travelling, eliminating the long hours of waiting to cross the floating structure.

He also said the new bridge would spur economic activity on both sides of the river and it is expected that new factories, logistics centres, and corridors of development will rise on both sides of the river because of the ease of travel now facilitated.

The new multi-million dollar structure connects Regions Three and Four, replacing the old floating structure. It has four lanes and will operate 24 hours daily, unlike its predecessor, which was

intermittently closed to allow ships to pass through.

China's Ambassador to Guyana, Yang Yang, said the bridge symbolises the commitment of Guyana and China to the Belt and Road Initiative.

"Undoubtedly, this project is not only a bridge of steel and stone, but also a bridge of friendship between China and Guyana, a milestone in the high-quality Belt and Road cooperation we are building together," she told the ceremony.

The bridge was built by China Railway Construction Corporation Limited and is projected to last 100 years.

Launched in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative is a centrepiece of China's foreign policy that envisages massive sophisticated infrastructure and other forms of connectivity.

Construction of the new Demerara River Bridge began on December 22, 2022.

(CMC STORIES)