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APNU+AFC assertions nothing more than a smokescreen

By Staff Reporter - October 7, 2022



Senior Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance, Dr. Ashni Singh

–Dr. Singh says, calls out coalition for having ‘no sensible’ response to gov’t’s comprehensive agenda

THE Leader of the Opposition, Aubrey Norton, and the APNU+AFC continue to resort to a rhetoric of ethnic discrimination, to overshadow and distract Guyanese from the coalition’s lack of any alternative policy or response to the government’s existing comprehensive policy agenda, Senior Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance, Dr. Ashni Singh has said.

Dr. Singh, in an interview with the Department of Public Information (DPI), related that the coalition’s claims of the government practising ethnic discrimination are baseless and without evidence.

He related that the Opposition’s assertions are nothing more than a “smokescreen,” which could be easily dismissed by the evidence of the systematic approach taken by the government to ensure that “all Guyanese” benefit from public resources.

“Since the PPP/C [People’s Progressive Party/Civic) formed the government, if you look at our successive budgets you would see a consistent pattern of policy positions that promote improving the lives of all Guyanese. Creating an environment for job creation, for income generation, and for improved well-being,” Dr. Singh said.

He added: “In response to which the APNU+AFC really has no answer. And so their recourse is this ethnic boogeyman, and baseless statements being made about discrimination. It is reflective of the fact that the APNU+AFC has no sensible response to the comprehensive agenda that is being implemented by President [Dr. Irfaan] Ali’s People’s Progressive Party government.”

The PPP/C Government has introduced a plethora of welfare measures that have benefitted many Guyanese regardless of their race, creed, religion and any other individual characteristic.

The latest of those measures is a one-off cash grant of \$28,000 for all pensioners, announced by President Ali on Thursday. This newest measure provided an additional \$1.8 billion in disposable income to persons receiving old-age pension.

In addition to making provisions for pensioners, the government reinstated the “Because We Care” cash grant and school uniform cash grant which stands at \$30,000 per child in both public and private schools.

Every household in the hinterland will receive a \$25,000 one-off cash grant; fisherfolk have started receiving a one-off \$150,000 grant; farmers will receive \$1 billion in fertiliser support, and there were and are many other initiatives geared at addressing the rising cost of living induced by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The government also returned the tax-free one-month bonus to members of the joint services.

Dr. Singh pointed to the indiscriminate distribution of those welfare measures, noting that each measure is testament to the government’s unbiased approach to development.

“These statements being made by the APNU+AFC and in particular Opposition Leader, what it says more than anything else is that they are unable to articulate a credible criticism of [our] policies, they are unable to put forth alternative policy position of any sort on any issue.

“If you think about it and listen to their constant commentary you don’t hear anything about the alternative option and alternative policy. The accusations of discrimination are reflective of an intellectually bankrupt APNU+AFC that has nothing to offer Guyana except inciting discontent and hostility,” Dr. Singh posited.

The PPP/C on the other hand has been indiscriminate in its distribution of house lots, and allocation of scholarships under the Guyana Online Learning Academy (GOAL) programme, which pledges to see 20,000 scholarships allocated in five years.

EVERY GUYANESE

“When you apply for a house lot you have people of every background, people of almost every region, throughout the length and breadth of the coast and even in some of the hinterland regions. This housing programme benefits Guyanese of every background. Guyanese of every

background now once again have the capacity to become the owner of a plot of land in their own country," Dr. Singh noted.

In addition to reinvigorating the housing industry through increased allocations, the government has also worked along with the lending agencies to reduce lending rates, and has increased the mortgage interest ceiling to \$30 million.

"The cost of lending for home ownership is at an all-time low and that is a benefit enjoyed by all Guyanese," Dr. Singh related.

According to the minister, several of the measures implemented by the government, particularly in the case of tax reversals, were necessary to reverse several draconian measures that had previously been instituted by the APNU+AFC during their time in government from 2015 – 2020.

According to Dr. Singh, during that five-year period, the APNU+AFC articulated no vision or policy in relation to growth of the economy, particularly in promoting diversification of the economy.

"Their strategy was simply to wait for oil to come in. We saw agriculture completely decimated, we saw the services sector completely decimated, and this was even before the no-confidence motion. And subsequently with the passage of the no-confidence motion, we saw a political behaviour and policy posture that led essentially to the economy grinding to a halt," Dr. Singh said.

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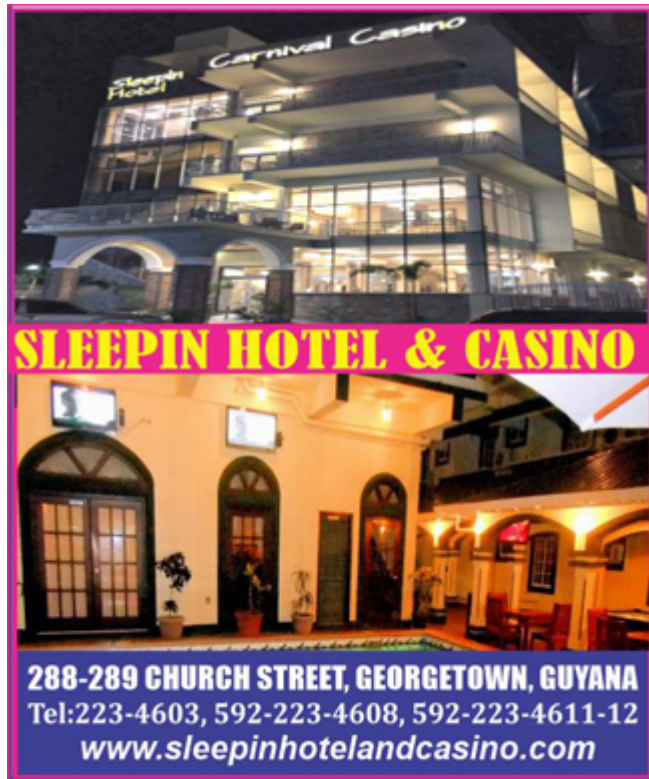
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CONTACT US



Lama Avenue, Bel Air Park, Georgetown, Guyana.



(592) 226-3243-9



gnnleditorial@gmail.com (Editorial)

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