

GLOBAL HORIZONS



A communications platform for MIA's Protocol and International Affairs Division

MAY 2026

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ABOUT US

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GUYANA “Garden City of the Caribbean”



The Co-operative Republic of Guyana

Head of State & Head of Government: Dr. Irfaan Ali

Capital: Georgetown

Population: 842,000 (2026 est.)

Independence: May 26, 1966, from the UK, and became a Republic on February 23, 1970.

Guyana's path to becoming the Co-operative Republic began with centuries of colonial rule. First settled by the Dutch in the late 16th century and later taken over by the British, the territory evolved into British Guiana in 1831. Its diverse population—shaped by African emancipation and the arrival of indentured laborers from India—formed the foundation of the country's multicultural identity.

After gaining independence from the UK on May 26, 1966,

Guyana initially retained the British monarch as head of state. Political leaders, led by Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, soon pushed for full republican status. Their goal was to strengthen national sovereignty and chart a new economic and political direction rooted in self-reliance.

Fun facts about Guyana: The country's name comes from an Indigenous word meaning “[Land of Many Waters](#),” a fitting title for a place with hundreds of rivers and waterfalls.

[Guyana is the only English-speaking country in South America](#), making it a unique cultural bridge between the Caribbean and the continent. Guyana stands out as the continent's sole nation where English is the official language.

St. George's Cathedral is an Anglican cathedral in Georgetown, Guyana. At one time, St. George's Cathedral was the tallest wooden church in the world, with its tower reaching 143 feet. It held this record until 2003.

Guyana does not yet have any official UNESCO World Heritage Sites, but it has five remarkable locations on UNESCO's Tentative List that showcase the country's cultural and natural richness. These include iconic wooden architectural treasures such as St. George's Cathedral, Georgetown City Hall, and the historic Fort Zeelandia complex, as well as the unique coastal ecosystem of Shell Beach and the broader plantation-era layout of Georgetown.

Guyana is home to Kaieteur Falls, the world's highest single-drop waterfall at 251 meters — nearly five times the height of Niagara Falls. Located on the Potaro River in the Kaieteur National Park, it sits in a section of the Amazon rainforest that is part of the Potaro-Siparuni region of Guyana.

More than [75% of Guyana is covered in lush rainforest](#), making it one of the most pristine and biodiverse rainforest regions on Earth.

Guyana is known as the “[Land of Six Peoples](#)” due to its rich blend of Afro-Guyanese, Indo-Guyanese, Indigenous, Chinese, Portuguese, and European heritage.

The country's flag, the Golden Arrowhead, symbolizes endurance, zeal, and the natural beauty of its forests and rivers.

Guyana's longest river, the Essequibo, stretches over 1,000 kilometers and is wider than the Mississippi in some areas.

Mount Roraima, Guyana's highest peak, inspired Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* with its dramatic tabletop summit.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Honorary Consul of Guyana in Miami for their valued contribution to this month's featured country profile.



U. Desmond Alufohai

Division Director II

Protocol & International Affairs Division

As we step into May, we enter a month that feels like a deep breath, one filled with renewal, momentum, and meaning. Interestingly, the significance of May stretches far beyond the modern calendar. The month takes its name from *Maia*, the Roman goddess of growth, warmth, and abundance. In ancient tradition, *Maia* symbolized the gentle but powerful shift from spring's awakening to summer's full bloom. It's fitting, then, that May still carries that same spirit of expansion and possibility.

May sits at a unique crossroads in the year: far enough from January that our resolutions have been tested, yet close enough to summer that possibility feels tangible again. It's a month that invites us to grow, to stretch, and to pay attention to the small but meaningful shifts happening around us.

It's also a time of transition and reflection. Students prepare for graduations, families look ahead to summer rhythms, and nature reaches its full spring expression. From Mother's Day to Memorial Day, May asks us to honor the people and histories that shape our lives. It's a month that blends gratitude with forward motion.

In this issue, you'll find stories, insights, and updates that reflect the spirit of May—growth, purpose, and connection. My hope is that these pieces inspire you to embrace the opportunities this month brings and to move forward with intention.

Thank you for being part of this community. Here's to a meaningful May and all the promise it holds.



DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR RELATIONS

Reinventing Protocol as a Global Strategic Tool

In a world that feels increasingly unpredictable, one discipline is quietly reclaiming its place at the center of global affairs: **protocol**. Once seen as ceremonial décor, protocol has re-emerged as a strategic tool shaping diplomacy, international business, and cross-cultural communication. Far from outdated, it has become essential infrastructure for a fragmented, fast-moving world.

Why Protocol Matters More Than Ever

Today's geopolitical landscape is marked by shifting alliances, rising tensions, and cultural complexity. In this environment, small symbolic missteps can carry enormous consequences. Protocol provides the structure that keeps diplomacy coherent—ensuring respect is communicated clearly, even when politics is complicated.

At the same time, diplomacy has gone digital. Virtual summits, hybrid negotiations, and AI-mediated communication have created new questions about precedence, etiquette, and representation. Protocol is evolving rapidly to define these norms, offering clarity in spaces where tradition has no precedent.

The modern protocol is neither rigid nor ornamental. It is intentional, strategic, and deeply human.

As strategy, it shapes the choreography of summits, the symbolism of state visits, and the narrative of international engagement.

As a form of crisis management, it provides stability and predictability when tensions rise.

As cultural intelligence, it interprets the gestures, rituals, and hierarchies that define global interaction.

Protocol professionals today are cultural translators—preventing offense, building trust, and creating environments where meaningful dialogue can happen.

Global Recognition: World Protocol Day

The goal of establishing **World Protocol Day on May 11** reflects the growing acknowledgment of protocol's importance. It celebrates the discipline's role in diplomacy, highlights the need for professional standards, and elevates cultural intelligence as a global competency.

Beyond Diplomacy: Protocol for Everyday Life

Protocol's influence now extends far beyond embassies. Its principles shape corporate leadership, international business, event design, branding, and digital etiquette. In a world where everyone interacts across borders—physically or virtually—protocol has become a life skill. It teaches us how to communicate with intention, navigate difference with grace, and create experiences that honor the people in the room.

Protocol is not old-fashioned. It is not ceremonial fluff. It is a strategic, stabilizing force in a world that needs clarity, respect, and cultural intelligence more than ever. As global interactions grow more complex, protocol is stepping into its rightful place—not as decoration, but as power.

The expanding importance of protocol also reflects a global shift toward more thoughtful, relationship-driven engagement. In a climate where misunderstandings can escalate quickly, protocol offers a framework that not only reduces friction but actively cultivates trust. It transforms interactions from mere transactions into opportunities for connection, ensuring that respect is communicated through every detail, timing, space, symbolism, and sequence. These seemingly small elements often determine whether negotiations feel collaborative or adversarial, whether leaders feel valued or overlooked.

This renewed attention has elevated the expectations placed on protocol professionals. They are increasingly viewed as strategic advisors rather than behind-the-scenes coordinators. Their role demands an understanding of intercultural psychology, geopolitical sensitivity, logistics management, and narrative construction—all combined with an ability to remain calm under pressure. The environments they design influence first impressions, shape diplomatic tone, and create the conditions for meaningful outcomes.

At the same time, digital transformation has added new layers of complexity. Virtual summits, rapid-response communication channels, and AI-mediated interactions require a modernized approach to etiquette and representation. Protocol now extends into screen layouts, speaking order cues, digital security, and even the symbolism of virtual backgrounds. These details ensure that online diplomacy mirrors the respect and precision of in-person engagements.

Ultimately, protocol provides something the modern world urgently needs: **clarity in ambiguity, dignity in diversity, and structure in uncertainty**. It is becoming not just a tool of tradition, but a catalyst for more respectful and resilient global interaction.

A Global Tapestry of May Traditions

May is one of the most culturally expressive months on the global calendar. Across continents, it carries a blend of celebration, remembrance, creativity, and national identity. From ancient traditions to modern commemorations, May reveals how communities honor their past, embrace the present, and imagine their future.

Around the world, May is marked by festivals, national holidays, and cultural rituals that reflect each nation's history.

France's Fête du Travail (May 1) blends labor rights with the symbolic gifting of the lily of the valley for luck.

Japan's Golden Week (May 3–5) brings the country to a joyful pause with festivals celebrating nature, children, and civic life.

Mexico's Cinco de Mayo (May 5) honors resilience and heritage, especially in Puebla, where parades and reenactments fill the streets. **The Netherlands' Liberation Day** (May 5) transforms cities into open-air celebrations of freedom.

South Korea's Children's Day (May 5) centers joy, play, and family connection.

The UK's May Day traditions—from maypoles to Morris dancing—keep folklore alive.

Norway's Constitution Day (May 17) is a vibrant display of national pride, traditional dress, and community parades.

Argentina's May Revolution Day (May 25) honors the birth of independence with cultural events and traditional cuisine.

The United States' Memorial Day closes the month with remembrance and the unofficial start of summer.

May Across Africa: Heritage, Reflection, and Unity

The African continent adds its own powerful voice to May's global chorus, with observances rooted in resilience, identity, and Pan-African pride.

South Africa and Ghana's May Day (May 1) blends labor rights with cultural expression and community gatherings.

Africa Day (May 25)—celebrated across the continent—marks the founding of the OAU and honors unity, heritage, and the continent's cultural brilliance.

Ethiopia's Patriots' Victory Day (May 5) honors resistance fighters who stood against occupation during WWII.

Tunisia's Martyrs' Day (May 9) commemorates those who fought for independence.

Morocco's Throne Day (May 23) celebrates national identity and the monarchy's role in shaping it.

Nigeria's Democracy Day (May 29) reflects on the nation's democratic journey.

Across borders, May is a month of renewal, remembrance, and reconnection. It's a reminder that culture is not static but celebrated and passed forward. Whether through festivals, ceremonies, or national reflections, May invites the world to honor its stories and embrace the season's creativity and possibilities.

New Airport Protocol Officer



The Protocol and International Affairs Division is pleased to welcome **Ms. Marie Béa Mbong**, who joined the Protocol team on April 27, 2026. Ms. Béa Mbong is a candidate for her third master's degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, specializing in Educational Leadership, Organizations, and Entrepreneurship. She holds a master's degree in International Affairs from Florida State University (FSU) and a master's degree in French from the University of South Florida (USF). She also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Languages, Literature, and Foreign Civilizations from the University of Paris XII. Her early academic career included serving as a Teaching Assistant in French at Florida State University and the University of South Florida, where she refined her intercultural communication and instructional skills.

She also volunteers with a nonprofit organization, teaching Spanish and French to children in Haiti and expanding access to multilingual education. For the past five years, she has acted as a judge for the Congrès de la Culture Française in Orlando, an academic competition established in 1952.

Through partnerships with educational NGOs, Ms. Béa Mbong supports learning opportunities for children in underserved communities across Africa. A 2025 Fulbright semi-finalist, she is committed to global diplomacy and cross-cultural education, contributing her expertise to the Protocol and International Affairs Division of the Miami-Dade Aviation Department. She serves as a Cultural Ambassador for Académie Sainte Cécile de Yaoundé and served as President of the African Graduate Students Association at Florida State University (2024). She also participated in the Young Black Leadership Summit at the White House in 2018 and 2019.

Ms. Béa Mbong is fluent in English, French, and Spanish, with basic proficiency in German, Portuguese, Mandarin, and several African languages.

Congratulations, Florida International University Graduate



Ms. Hellen Cristina Thompson has served as Administrative Secretary to the Division Director of the Protocol and International Affairs Division since July 2021. She recently earned her Bachelor of Science in Hospitality & Tourism Management, Cum Laude, from FIU in April 2026. Additionally, she is completing a Master of Science degree in Hospitality Management & Leadership at FIU.

Her professional credentials include:

- Certified Autism Travel Professional (CATP), IBCCES – 2026
- Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP), FIU – 2025
- Certified Wedding Planner, Miami Dade College – 2009
- Administrative & Personal Assistant Certificate, New Skills Academy – 2020

BRIEFS AND NOTES

Why Human Trafficking Surges Around Major Sporting Events

Large sporting events do not *cause* human trafficking. But they create conditions that traffickers exploit. These events bring together massive crowds, temporary workers, and global attention, creating opportunities for criminal networks to operate with greater anonymity.

Key Drivers Behind the Spike

1. **A Sudden Influx of Visitors:** Major events draw hundreds of thousands of spectators. The surge in population increases demand for hospitality, transportation, and short-term labor—sectors where exploitation can be easily hidden.
2. **Temporary Labor Vulnerabilities:** Construction, cleaning, food service, and security jobs often rely on subcontractors. This creates gaps in oversight that traffickers use to exploit migrant and low-income workers.
3. **Online Recruitment Scams:** Law enforcement agencies report spikes in fraudulent job postings and social media grooming during major events. Traffickers use promises of temporary work or travel to lure victims.
4. **Displacement of Local Communities:** Infrastructure projects can push vulnerable populations—especially migrants, homeless youth, and women in unstable housing—into riskier situations.
5. **Criminal Networks Follow the Money:** Trafficking organizations move where profits are highest. Major events create a temporary but lucrative market for exploitation.

Recent research paints a clearer picture of trafficking patterns around major events:

A [2023 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\)](#) review found increases in trafficking-related online ads and recruitment attempts during global sporting events. The U.S. Homeland Security has documented spikes in trafficking investigations around the Super Bowl. The 2022 FIFA World Cup highlighted significant labor trafficking risks, especially among migrant workers involved in stadium and infrastructure construction.

The consensus among experts: Major events amplify existing vulnerabilities—they don't create them.

- How Communities Can Respond
- Practical Steps for Prevention
- Strengthening protections for temporary and migrant workers
- Increase public awareness of trafficking indicators
- Support survivor-centered services and local NGOs
- Promote safe recruitment practices
- Encourage responsible tourism and reporting of suspicious activity

Red Flags of Human Trafficking

- A person appears fearful, controlled, or unable to speak freely
- Signs of physical neglect or restricted movement
- Confiscated passports or identification
- Someone working excessively long hours with no pay
- A “recruiter” who refuses to leave the individual alone

If something feels wrong, trust your instincts and report it to local authorities or national trafficking hotlines. As the world gathers to celebrate athletic excellence, it's crucial to remember those who remain unseen. Human trafficking thrives in the shadows, but awareness brings light. Major sporting events should unite communities—not create opportunities for exploitation. Protecting vulnerable people is not just a law enforcement task. It is a global responsibility.

International Chameleon Day



Each year on May 9, [International Chameleon Day](#) shines a spotlight on one of the world's most captivating and misunderstood groups of reptiles. With their color-shifting skin, panoramic vision, and lightning-fast tongues, chameleons have long fascinated scientists and nature lovers alike. But beyond their striking appearance, they play essential roles in ecosystems across the globe—and their habitats tell a powerful story about biodiversity and conservation.

Chameleons inhabit a surprisingly wide range of environments across Africa, Madagascar, southern Europe, the Middle East, India, and Sri Lanka, with a few introduced populations in places like Hawaii and Florida. Their habitats are as diverse as the species themselves:

- **Madagascar's Rainforests:** Nearly half of all chameleon species live exclusively in Madagascar. These lush forests host everything from the tiny *Brookesia nana* to the brilliantly colored panther chameleon. Many of these species exist nowhere else on Earth.
- **East African Highlands:** Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia support species adapted to cool, misty mountain climates. The iconic Jackson's chameleon thrives in these cloud forests and high-altitude woodlands.
- **Deserts of North Africa and Arabia:** Species such as the desert chameleon (*Chamaeleo chamaeleon*) survive in harsh, arid landscapes by conserving water and blending seamlessly into the sandy terrain.
- **Mediterranean Woodlands:** Southern Spain, Greece, and Turkey host small populations of the common chameleon, which prefers warm, dry scrublands and coastal thickets.
- **Tropical Forests of India and Sri Lanka:** These regions support species such as the Indian chameleon, which thrives in monsoon-fed forests and agricultural edges.

This global distribution highlights the chameleon's remarkable adaptability—yet many of these habitats are shrinking due to deforestation, agriculture, and climate change.

Chameleons are evolutionary marvels: They are nature's living rainbows. They don't change colors to blend in; they do it for communication, regulating their body temperature, displaying mood, and camouflaging.

- **Independent Eye Movement:** Nearly 360-degree vision for spotting prey and predators.
- **Projectile Tongue:** Can extend rapidly to capture insects with precision.
- **Specialized Feet and Tails:** Perfect for gripping branches in arboreal environments.

These traits have inspired innovations in medicine, materials science, and robotics. Researchers studying chameleon skin have developed adaptive materials and dynamic camouflage technologies. In medicine, the concept of "molecular chameleons"—drugs that change properties to move through the body more effectively—has influenced modern drug design. Their gripping feet and prehensile tails have even inspired climbing robots and flexible mechanical grips.

Chameleons play vital ecological roles:

- **Natural Pest Control:** They help regulate insect populations in forests and agricultural areas.
- **Environmental Indicators:** Their sensitivity to habitat changes makes them early warning signals for ecosystem decline.
- **Biodiversity Anchors:** In places like Madagascar, they are integral to complex food webs.
- **Protecting chameleons means protecting the ecosystems that sustain them—and us.**

International Chameleon Day reminds us that these extraordinary reptiles face increasing threats. By supporting habitat conservation, sustainable land use, and community-based education, we can help ensure that chameleons continue to thrive in the wild. They may be masters of adaptation, but they cannot adapt to extinction. Their future depends on the choices we make today.

What Does It Mean to Call Someone a "Chameleon"?

When we describe a person as a chameleon, we're using a metaphor inspired by the reptile's ability to change colors and blend into its surroundings. It usually means:

They adapt easily to new environments, cultures, or social groups. They're versatile, able to shift roles depending on what's needed.

They adjust their personality or style based on who they're with, sometimes helpfully, sometimes mysteriously. In short, a "chameleon" person is someone who blends in, fits in, and thrives wherever they go.

World Bee Day 2026: Bee Together for People and the Planet



On May 20th, 2026, the world celebrates the [9th Annual World Bee Day](#), a global initiative honoring the tiny powerhouses that keep our ecosystems alive. This year's theme, "Bee Together for People and the Planet," highlights the deep, interdependent relationship between humans and pollinators—a partnership that stretches from the traditional honey hunters of Africa to the high-tech apiaries of Europe and Asia. For thousands of years, bees have nourished humanity; today, we are called to return the favor.

The date itself carries historical weight. It marks the birthday of Anton Janša, born in 1734, a Slovenian pioneer whose innovations laid the foundation for modern beekeeping. Slovenia's leadership was instrumental in the United Nations' 2017 resolution establishing World Bee Day, ensuring global recognition of bees' ecological and economic importance.

A Planet Buzzing with Diversity

While honeybees often steal the spotlight, they represent only a tiny fraction of the world's bee diversity. Research from the University of Wollongong in 2026 suggests that scientists now estimate 24,000 to 26,000 bee species worldwide, with thousands still awaiting classification.

Türkiye stands out as a biodiversity hotspot, home to an estimated 843 yet-to-be-named species—more than all continental Europe combined. Island nations such as Fiji, Madagascar, and the Seychelles harbor unique, endemic bees that have evolved alongside local plants. These species are increasingly vulnerable to rising sea levels, habitat loss, and climate change. This expanding understanding of bee diversity underscores how much remains to be discovered—and how much we stand to lose.

The Global Honey Economy

- Honey is far more than a natural sweetener; it is a vital economic engine supporting millions of rural families.
- China remains the world's largest honey producer, generating over 460,000 tons annually.
- India and Türkiye follow closely, with India's honey sector booming thanks to government programs that support small-scale beekeepers.
- Ukraine holds a unique distinction: it produces the most honey per capita, roughly 1.7 kg per citizen, making it a key supplier to European markets.
- In the United States, North Dakota continues to reign as the "honey capital," producing approximately 19,000 tons each year.

Despite strong production, the industry faces mounting challenges—from habitat loss and pesticide exposure to climate-driven shifts in flowering seasons.

World Bee Day is not just a celebration—it's a reminder of our responsibility. Bees are essential to global food security and biodiversity:

- They pollinate one-third of the food we eat.
- They support nearly 90% of wild flowering plants.
- They maintain the health of forests, grasslands, and agricultural landscapes.
- Without bees, our diets, ecosystems, and economies would look drastically different.

How We Can Help

- Experts emphasize that protecting bees doesn't require grand gestures—small, local actions add up:
- Plant native wildflowers to provide nectar and habitat.
- Avoid harmful pesticides, especially during blooming seasons.
- Support local beekeepers who practice ethical, sustainable honey production.
- Create bee-friendly spaces such as pollinator gardens, balcony planters, or community green areas.

World Bee Day 2026 reminds us that bees give us far more than honey—they give us life. Protecting them is not just an environmental duty; it is a shared human responsibility.

INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DAYS (MAY 2026)

May 9, 1877 – Romania: Although Romania's national holiday, Unification Day, is celebrated on December 1st, the country gained independence from the Ottoman Empire on May 9th, 1877.

May 15, 1811 – Paraguay: During the night of the 14th to the 15th of May 1811, an uprising led to Paraguay achieving independence from Spain. Both days continue to be celebrated as Independence Days.

May 17, 1814 – Norway: Constitution Day, Norway's national holiday, celebrates the day the Norwegian constitution was adopted in 1814.

May 20, 2002 – Timor-Leste: Restoration of Independence Day celebrates the day Timor-Leste was internationally recognized as a sovereign state, gaining independence from Indonesia.

May 24, 1993 – Eritrea: Although Eritrea was fully liberated from Ethiopia in May 1991, the provisional government did declare formal independence on May 24th, 1993.

May 25, 1810 – Argentina: Initially intended as a show of loyalty to the Spanish Crown, the May Revolution (May 18 - 25, 1810) was the beginning of Argentina's quest for independence. May 25th is celebrated annually as the Day of the May Revolution.

May 25, 1946 – Jordan: Jordan gained independence from the League of Nations mandate, which had placed it under British administration.

May 26, 1918 – Georgia: Georgia celebrates two Independence Days. On May 26th, 1918, Georgia gained independence from the Russian Empire (via the Transcaucasian Federation), while on April 9th, 1991, it regained its independence from the Soviet Union.

May 26, 1966 – Guyana: The country gained its independence from the United Kingdom.

May 28, 1918 – Armenia: Armenia declared independence from the Russian Empire and the dissolution of the Transcaucasian Federation. Since 1992, May 28th is celebrated as the Day of the Armenian First Republic, while independence from the Soviet Union is celebrated on September 21st (1991).

May 28, 1918 – Azerbaijan: Independence Day formerly known commemorates the founding of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan in 1918.

May 30, 1967 – Anguilla: Celebrated as Anguilla's Day. It remains a British Overseas Territory.

