

BBC starts filming Raleigh's search for Eldorado

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-Minister finds epic's potential reach advantageous to Guyana

Pull Quote: *'This type of marketing strategy assists greatly to promote Guyana as the ideal destination for films and documentaries'* he said, adding: *"We are happy, since this was long in planning, and last July, I met with representatives from the BBC to discuss the filming, and we are glad that they have chosen Guyana"*- Minister Prashad



GUYANA as a destination of choice will again be propelled into the spotlight with the arrival of a team from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to begin filming a ten-part documentary titled, the 'Serious Explorers-Raleigh.' So as to accord the visitors a warm Guyanese welcome, Minister of Tourism, Manniram Prashad along with a team from the Ministry of Tourism and the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) journeyed Friday to Mabaruma in Region One (Barima Waini) where they caught up with and met the expedition members as they entered the Waini River to begin the first leg of their journey.

The BBC team, consisting of 15 adults and eight children from the United Kingdom, is here to retrace the footsteps of Sir Walter Raleigh in his quest to find the City of El Dorado. Like Raleigh, the team sailed across the Caribbean from Trinidad and Tobago to the coast of Guyana. Arriving on the vessel, 'Scaramouche', the adventurers were warmly welcomed by the Tourism Minister and his entourage as they boarded the moored ship to interact with the visitors.

Minister Prashad pointed out that because of the international exposure which will be generated by the programme, 'Guyana- the Amazon Adventure', the country will be propelled more into the spotlight.

'Serious Explorers', he said, has worldwide reach, and will give tremendous exposure to Guyana and our pristine forest, which will boost our destination branding as an eco, nature, and adventure destination.

"This type of marketing strategy assists greatly to promote Guyana as the ideal destination for films and documentaries," he said, adding: "We are happy, since this was long in planning, and last July, I met with representatives from the BBC to discuss the filming, and we are glad that they have chosen Guyana."

Noting that members of the team have expressed their delight at the warm welcome they received from everyone, including the customs and immigration officers who were also on hand to perform the requisite checks, Minister Prashad said:



"This is what Guyana is all about - A very friendly, hospitable people, and we are very happy that captain and crew aboard the 'Scaramouche' feel so welcome in the first few hours here."

With reference to the impact the series can have on Guyana, Prashad emphasized that the programme will serve to further propel the country forward on the international market, in much the same way as the previous three-part series, 'Lost Land of the Jaguars' has done.

"That was a huge success for Guyana, and this one will be even bigger, since it will be viewed in 150 countries all over the world, with an estimated audience of 60 million," he stressed.

Noting that Guyana will never be able to quantify the dollar value of the expedition, which he estimates to cost a minimum of US\$10,000, Minister Prashad expressed his gratitude to the Expedition leader and all of the members involved in the project, especially the children, whom he said are representative of the future interest in the industry.

"We are happy that we were chosen from among all of the Amazon countries, and



The GTA and the Government of Guyana would like to make sure that the visiting team's stay is a very successful and rewarding one," he said.

Ben Major, Project Coordinator/Expedition Leader of BBC said that Guyana is indeed a beautiful destination. A retired Officer of the British Army, Major has been working with BBC for the past eight years.

This is not his first visit here, as he has worked previously with TREKFORCE on projects at Iwokrama and Surama, and has also done films and documentaries such as: 'The Lost Land of the Jaguar' and 'Extreme Dream'. He has also coordinated 'Serious Explorers' documentaries such as: Serious Jungle and Desert, Artic and Amazon among others, Explore Marco Polo in China and David Livingston in Africa (Great 19th Century explorers).

First Impression



One of the Producers/ Directors of the BBC series, Ms. Ros Edwards explained that all on board the 'Scaramouche' were astounded by the unspoilt beauty that welcomed them as they approached the mouth of the Waini River.

"When we first sailed into the Waini River and entered Guyana, our first impression was that it was so pristine and absolutely gorgeous, it's just breathtaking," she related.

Ms. Edwards explained that all of the children were very excited to embark on this adventure, and were all very optimistic that they would discover what Sir Walter Raleigh did more than 400 years

ago.

Said she: "The beauty here is that everything we are seeing is practically undiscovered, and we are really excited. And I know the children just can't wait to begin exploring."

Edwards said the team is expected to be in the country until March, since filming of the documentary will be done at several ideal tourist locations, including Waini, Shell Beach, Kaieteur Falls, Surama, and Raleigh's Peak. She also noted that the TV series mainly focuses on adventure for kids, and highlights the challenges faced, and the glory of overcoming them.

"The children on the series represent a good mix, so that the kids watching on television will be able to identify and relate to the programme, which teaches about pushing the limits, and through this, the children will learn to appreciate their life when they return home and it puts everything into perspective," Edwards explained.

Meanwhile, every last one of the children said they are excited to see what else Guyana has to offer, and are even more thrilled to embark on a quest that began centuries ago.

"...we are here in this beautiful place called Guyana; this is our first time here but we love it so far, and the people are all so welcoming to us. I can't wait to see more," 14-year-old Sammie said.



All eight young explorers said they were happy to be chosen to take part in such an adventure, and that they would be happy to return home to tell everyone about the beautiful and friendly people they met in Guyana.

"We don't mind that we have to be in the wilderness or to camp out in extreme conditions; just to be here and do what we are doing means so much to us," team member, Josh, related.

While here, the explorers will be given the opportunity to interact with all nine Amerindian tribes, as they will be passing through Amerindian communities and will be exposed to their culture, customs and beliefs.