

GATEWAY TO SURINAME

Upon entry in the Republic of Suriname every Chinese citizen is obliged to respect and abide the national legislation and regulations. On aliens is applicable the Immigration law (Vreemdelingenwet 1991 (S.B. 1992 no. 3) and the Gazette on aliens (het Vreemdelingenbesluit 1995 (S.B. 1995 no.85).

Furthermore, Suriname is since 25 May 2007 party to the United Nations Convention against transnational Organized Crime (the Palermo Convention) and the Protocols thereto namely the Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children and the Protocol against smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air. To prevent human trafficking of women and children it is necessary to internationally bind against these horrible acts of humanity.

According to abovementioned Convention transnational organized crime is defined as recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices **Bonded labor**, or debt bondage, is probably the least known form of labor trafficking today, and yet it is the most widely used method of enslaving people.

To beware, victims become "bonded" when their labor is demanded as a means of repayment for a loan or service in which its terms and conditions have not been defined or in which the value of the victims' services is not applied toward the liquidation of the debt. Generally, the value of their work is greater than the original sum of money "borrowed."

Forced labor is a situation in which victims are forced to work against their own will under the threat of violence or some other form of punishment; their freedom is restricted and a degree of ownership is exerted. Men are at risk of being trafficked for unskilled work, which globally generates 31 billion USD according to the International Labor Organization. Forms of forced labor can include domestic servitude, agricultural labor, sweatshop factory labor, janitorial, food service and other service industry labor, and begging. Some of the products produced by forced labor are: clothing, cocoa, bricks, coffee, cotton, and gold, among others.

Since Suriname has implemented the Border Management System on 19 November 2012 and works closely with international intelligence organization e.g. Interpol to eradicate transnational organized crime, a watch list/blacklist is exchanged of undesirable persons with the Immigration authorities of the Ministry of Justice and Police and the Embassies of Suriname abroad.

Rules and Regulations

1. If an applicant applies for a tourist visa, with the purpose of holiday, the applicant is not allowed to work during the stay in the Republic of Suriname, because of trespassing the Immigration law and the labor legislation which means that the authorities of the Immigration have the right of deportation.
2. If an applicant applies for a business visa, the applicant is not allowed to work. A business visa is issued for the purpose to engage in commercial, industrial or professional activities and negotiation. Also in this case the risk is deportation by the authorities of Immigration.
3. When an applicant applies for a mkv (machtiging tot kort verblijf), which means the applicant will stay longer than 3 months (90 days) in Suriname. The procedure is that both the ministries of Justice & Police and Labor & Technology Development must give their approval. When the approval is received, the applicant will be issued a KV visa in its passport. When entering the country the person needs to apply for a temporary resident permit within 2 weeks.
4. Filing for a temporary residence permit is done with the Head Department of Immigration. The requirements for applying for a permit are:
 - A filled out petition with a receipt stamp of SRD 1,50,-;
 - 2 similar passport photo's;
 - Copies of all written pages of the passport;
 - Certificate of good conduct (original and copy);
 - Birth certificate (original and copy);
 - Marital status;
 - Certificate of health insurance or an employer guarantee certificate or a guarantee certificate of a third person with the sponsorship form;
 - A deposit slip of US\$ 150,- of the Central Bank (accountnumber # 324623 of the ministry of Justice & Police) or the equivalent amount in Surinamese dollar (SRD) (accountnumber # 324641 of the ministry of Justice & Police);
 - An Employer's certificate (original and at least 3 months valid, with the amount of the salary).

Admission and Residence

5. A temporary resident permit will be issued for a maximum period of 2 years with the possibility of extension.
6. The issuance of a resident permit or the validity of the extension may be carried out under certain conditions in relation with the purpose of the allowed stay.

7. The certain conditions may also serve to provide security for the costs which is the result from the permit of the holder as well as the costs to travel to a place outside Suriname where the admission is guaranteed.
8. In the interest of the public order, national safety and public health, a permit can be restricted. The restriction and/or requirements may be amended upon request of the permit holder or when circumstances are changed.
9. Granting a residence permit as well as extend the validity thereof can be denied on conditions of general interest.
10. The conditions to withdraw a residence permit are:
 - a. if incorrect information and facts were submitted - if was known in advance- would led to refusal or denial of extension of the validity of the residence permit;
 - b. if means of subsistence are not sufficient;
 - c. breach of public order and peace or a constitute threat to the national security or public health;
 - d. breach on the limitation under which the residence permit was granted or infringement of an associated rule.
11. Aliens are allowed to stay for an indefinite period in Suriname:
 - a. If they are holders of a settlement;
 - b. If they are accepted as refugee by the Minister of Justice & Police.
12. A settlement is not subject to restrictions; no conditions are associated.
13. The Minister of Justice & Police is authorized to grant and withdraw a settlement. This settlement expires by right once the holder has had his main residence for more than one year outside Suriname.
14. A settlement may be withdrawn on the following conditions:
 - a. If incorrect information was submitted that led to the granting of the permit;
 - b. If an offense is committed repeatedly under the Immigration Law;
 - c. When convicted of an intentionally committed crime by Court Order for a prison sentence of 4 years or more;
 - d. Poses threat to the national security or public health.
15. Aliens who had their main residence for at least five (5) years in Suriname, their permit can only be refused:
 - a. When reasonably it is not assured that he will have sustainable sufficient means of subsistence;

b. If serious breach was made against the public order and peace or constitutes a serious threat to national security or public health.

16. An alien who at least had a permitted principle residence for 10 years in Suriname , the permit may not be refused in accordance with the reason as is describe in point 15 under a.

Surveillance Measures

17. a. Aliens should always carry with them their identity licenses or at request demonstrate those papers.

b. Notify the change of residence within Suriname and/or departure to another country.

c. Submit information which can be relevant to the application pursuant to the Immigration law.

d. Providing cooperation to capture data for identification.

18. Aliens who are not holder of a settlement, can be obliged to register within a certain period after their entry in Suriname or give a periodic notification.

19. In case the Minister of Justice & Police deems it necessary in the interest of the public order and peace, the national security or the public health, the alien will be obliged to a periodic notification with the local police.

20. An alien may be declared undesirable:

a. If he has repeatedly committed an offense under the Immigration Law;

b. If he is convicted by Court Order of an intentional committed crime and is sentenced for a period of 4 years or more.

21. An alien who is not a holder of a residence permit or a settlement can be declared undesirable by the Minister of Justice & Police, when he is a danger to the public order and peace, the national security or the public health and pursuant to the requirements of admission and residence (article 6 of the Immigration law), is not allowed to stay in Suriname.

Deportation & Detention

22. Aliens who are not allowed to stay under the conditions of admission to and stay in Suriname (mentioned in the articles 6, 9 and 10 of the Immigration Law), shall be deported.

23. Deportation does not take place:

a. If and as long as an alien is under criminal investigation of the Public Prosecutor;

b. Pending an ongoing extradition procedure of his case;

c. During the deprivation of his liberty, or in connection with a measure taken towards him in respect of any offense committed in Suriname.

24. An alien is not allowed to stay longer in Suriname by expiry of a term such as a transit visa or the period necessary to continue their journey, a visa for the duration for which the visa is issued or renewed, or insofar as it concerns visa for multiple trip (mentioned in article 6 paragraph 4 of the Immigration law) or by not completing the requirements for the application of a residence permit or settlement (specified in article 6 paragraph 1 of the Immigration Law).
25. When their stay is no longer allowed by expiring of the validity period of the residence permit, then the deportation will take place by order of the competent authority who has refused the extension.
26. When the stay is not allowed by withdrawing a residence permit, settlement or an admission as refugee, the deportation will take place on behalf of the competent authority who has decided the withdrawal.
27. The stay is not allowed any longer, because the alien cease to belong to the category of holder of a settlement or admittance as a refugee (to which the provisions of article 10 paragraph 2 applies).
28. In all other cases which are not mentioned in the abovementioned paragraphs, each official charged with the supervision of the entry or with the oversight on aliens, are empowered to deportation, as long as the Minister has not decided otherwise.
29. Unless the interest of the public order and peace, the national security or the public health resist, the deportation will be expelled in order to give the alien a reasonable time to leave the country to another country where his admission will be guaranteed.
30. Deportation will not take place when the removal of the alien out of Suriname regarding his health conditions or one of his family member, according to a statement of a licensed physician is not considered justified.
31. If the interest of the public order and peace, national security or the public health so demands, or if there is reason that the person concerned will withdraw from the removal, the Public Prosecutor can demand their detention:
 - a. aliens whose deportation has been ordered;
 - b. aliens against whom serious reason are expected that their deportation will be ordered;
 - c. aliens who are not allowed to stay in Suriname under one of the conditions of admission and residence according to the (Articles 6,9,and 10) Immigration Law pending the decision on an application for a residence and settlement or admission as a refugee;
 - d. aliens with a residence permit who are suffering nomadic existence, or which are found without livelihoods in Suriname.

32. Detention of an alien is omitted or terminated as soon as he indicates he wishes to leave Suriname and do so and also when the opportunity exists.
33. Detention with reference to point 31 under a, shall in case exceed no longer than one month.
34. The necessary costs of deportation borne by the State, may be recovered from the alien and if he is a minor, to those who have legal custody of him.
35. The State may assured or redress the expenses made on the property of an alien in connection with the deportation of the alien and of those over whom he exercises lawful authority, if necessary levy a third seizure on the property.
36. For the debts, caused to be borne by the alien in respect of costs incurred by the State in connection with its deportation, the State has precedence over all other creditors, with the exception of mortgage and pledge.
37. The goods and funds of an alien, which the State has been given to recover the cost of removal cannot be seized by third parties.
38. Aliens who are apprehended within 6 (six) months after their arrival on board a ship, aircraft or other means of transport with a view to deportation, can be removed from Suriname by placing them on board a ship or aircraft or other means of transport by the same carrier. If this is not within reasonable time after the detention, then the cost will be recovered by the same carrier.

Remedies

39. Revision of decisions may be requested with the President of the Republic of Suriname:
 - a. Refusal of residence permit or admission as a refugee or refusing to extend the validity of a residence permit;
 - b. Granting or extending the validity of a residence permit for a shorter period than requested, or subject to restrictions or associated conditions;
 - c. Otherwise than in accordance with such a request changing the restrictions under which a residence permit or associated regulations has been granted;
 - d. Withdraw of a residence permit or an admission as refugee;
 - e. The alien whose deportation was ordered, but since three months has had his main residence in Suriname, although his stay was not permitted in accordance to the requirements of admission and residence (under Articles 6, 9 and 10) of the Immigration Law, provided that he has fulfilled the obligations for him to registration and notification pursuant under the Immigration Law during this period.
40. Revision of decisions may also be requested with the President :
 - a. Refusal of settlement;
 - b. Withdrawal of settlement;

- c. Imposing an obligation pursuant to the requirements of measurements of surveillance (Article 19 paragraph 3) of the Immigration Law;
- d. The undesirable state of aliens;
- e. Deportation of an alien whose stay in Suriname is not allowed any longer, because he ceased to belong to a category such as holder of a settlement or admittance as refugee (which the provisions of Article 10 paragraph 2 applies).

41. No revision is open for decisions on an application for a residence permit or settlement by an alien, who at the time of submission stayed in Suriname, while it was not allowed to stay in Suriname at that time.

42. Revision must be requested in writing within one month after the day on which the decision has been communicated to the person concerned.

When the revision has been requested after this period and the applicant can demonstrate that he has requested for revision as soon as possible, as reasonably required, the admissibility thereof is omitted.

43. As long as the Minister or President has not decided, the deportation is omitted of the aliens in respect of whom a decision as referred to in accordance with the remedies (Article 32 paragraph 1, sub b, c, d and e or Article 32 paragraph 2) mentioned in the Immigration law, is given.

44. The decision of the application for revision will be reasoned and the applicant will immediately be informed.

POSSIBILITIES IN SURINAME

Economy of Suriname

Suriname's its economy became more diversified and less dependent on Dutch financial assistance. Bauxite (aluminium ore) mining continues to be a strong revenue source, and the discovery and exploitation of oil and gold has added substantially to Suriname's economic independence.

Agriculture, especially rice and bananas, remains a strong component of the economy, and ecotourism is providing new economic opportunities. More than 80% of Suriname's land-mass consists of unspoiled rain forest; with the establishment of the Central Suriname Nature Reserve in 1998, Suriname signaled its commitment to conservation of this precious resource. The Central Suriname Nature Reserve became a World Heritage Site in 2000.

The economy of Suriname is dominated by the bauxite industry, which accounts for more than 15% of GDP and 70% of export earnings. Other main export products include rice, bananas and shrimp. Suriname has recently started exploiting some of its sizeable oil and gold reserves.

About a quarter of the people work in the agricultural sector. The Surinamese economy is very dependent on commerce, its main trade partners being the Netherlands, the United States, Canada, and Caribbean countries, mainly Trinidad and Tobago and the former islands of the Netherlands Antilles.

Natural resources: Bauxite, gold, oil, iron ore, other minerals; forests; hydroelectric potential; fish and shrimp.

Agriculture products: rice, bananas, timber, palm kernels, coconuts, peanuts, citrus fruits, and forest products.

Industry: Types: alumina, oil, gold, fish, shrimp, lumber.

Major new gold and bauxite mines are to be opened in 2013, providing further impetus to economic growth and government revenues. A key challenge for the economy is the containment of inflation expectation associated with the 2011 devaluation of the exchange rate, as well as the possibility that recently implement revenue measures, which focus on consumption tax increases, would add to inflationary pressures in the short run. To mitigate some of these impulses, the authorities have been and are expected to remain vigilant, tightening monetary policy as needed. Inflation levels are still high (15.4% as of November 2011) but are slowly easing.

Socio-demographic data

Suriname is the smallest independent country in South America. Situated on the Guiana Shield, it lies mostly between latitudes 1° and 6°N, and longitudes 54° and 58°W. The country can be divided into two main geographic regions. The northern, lowland coastal area (roughly above the line Albina-Paranam-Wageningen) has been cultivated, and most of the population lives here. The southern part consists of tropical rainforest and sparsely inhabited savanna along the border with Brazil, covering about 80% of Suriname's land surface.

The two main mountain ranges are the Bakhuis Mountains and the Van Asch Van Wijck Mountains. Julianatop is the highest mountain in the country at 1,286 metres (4,219 ft) above sea level. Other mountains include Tafelberg at 1,026 metres (3,366 ft), Mount Kasikasima at 718 metres (2,356 ft), Goliathberg at 358 metres (1,175 ft) and Voltzberg at 240 metres (790 ft).

Suriname is situated between French Guiana to the east and Guyana to the west. The southern border is shared with Brazil and the northern border is the Atlantic coast. The southern most borders with French Guiana and Guyana are disputed by these countries along the Marowijne and Corantijn rivers, respectively, while a part of the disputed maritime boundary with Guyana was arbitrated by a tribunal convened under the rules set out in Annex VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on 20 September 2007.

Climate

Lying 2 to 5 degrees north of the equator, Suriname has a very hot tropical climate, and temperatures do not vary much throughout the year. Average relative humidity is between 80% and 90%. Its average temperature ranges from 29 to 34 degrees Celsius (84 to 97 degrees Fahrenheit). Due to the high humidity, actual temperatures are distorted and may therefore feel up to 6 degrees Celsius (11 degrees Fahrenheit) hotter than the recorded temperature. The year has two wet seasons, from April to August and from November to February. It also has two dry seasons, from August to November and February to April.

Nature reserves

Located in the upper Coppename River watershed, the Central Suriname Nature Reserve has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its unspoiled forests and biodiversity. There are many national parks in the country: Galibi National Reserve, Coppename Manding National Park, and Wia Wia NR along the coast, Brownsberg NR, Raleighvallen/Voltzeberg NR, Tafelberg NR, and Eilerts de Haan NP in the centre, and the Sipaliwani NR on the Brazilian border. In all, 12.6% of the country's land area is national parks and lakes, according to the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

Districts of Suriname and Resorts of Suriname

Suriname is divided into ten administrative districts, each headed by a district commissioner appointed by the president, who also has the power of dismissal.

Districts:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Brokopondo | 6. Para |
| 2. Commewijne | 7. Paramaribo |
| 3. Coronie | 8. Saramacca |
| 4. Marowijne | 9. Sipaliwini |
| 5. Nickerie | 10. Wanica |

Suriname is further subdivided into 62 resorts (ressorten).

Surinamese population

Suriname has a multi-ethnic population of 524,345, 82% of which lives in the coastal area and 18% in the interior, having one of the lowest population densities in the world. Suriname's ethnic groups include: Hindustanis (27%); Creoles (17.7%); Javanese (14.6%); Maroons (14%) and Amerindians (3.7%) as well as people of European, Chinese and other descent.

An estimated 10% of the population is from Brazil. About 41% are Christians, 20% Hindus and 13% Muslim. Dutch is the official language of country, although English and Sranang Tongo (a native Creole language) are widely spoken.

The vast majority of people (about 90%) live in Paramaribo or on the coast. There is also a significant Surinamese population in the Netherlands. In 2005 there were 328,300 Surinamese people living in the Netherlands, which is about 2% of the total population of the Netherlands, compared to 438,000 Surinamese in Suriname itself.

Culture

Religion in Suriname

The predominant religion in the country is Christianity, both in the form of Roman Catholicism and various denominations of Protestantism, the Moravian Church being the oldest and largest. It is particularly dominant among Creoles and Maroons. The Creoles and to a lesser degree the Maroons, both predominantly descended from enslaved Africans, converted to Christianity during the colonial period but may still retain their Afro-American religion called Winti. Hindus form the second largest religious group in Suriname, comprising 20% of the population. The Indian descended population practice Hinduism, Islam or Christianity. The Javanese practice either Islam or Christianity. Suriname's population is 13% Muslim.

Languages

Dutch is the sole official language, and is the language of education, government, business, and the media. Over 60% of the population speak Dutch as a mother tongue, and most of the rest speak it as a second language. In 2004 Suriname became an associate member of the Dutch Language Union. It is the only Dutch-speaking country in South America as well as the only independent nation in the Americas where Dutch is spoken, and one of the two non-Romance-speaking countries on the continent, the other being English-speaking Guyana.

In Paramaribo, Dutch is the main home language in two-thirds of households. The recognition of "Surinaams-Nederlands" ("Surinamese Dutch") as a national dialect equal to "Nederlands-Nederlands" ("Dutch Dutch") and "Vlaams-Nederlands" ("Flemish Dutch") was expressed in 2009 by the publication of the *Woordenboek Surinaams Nederlands* (Surinamese–Dutch Dictionary). Only in the interior of Suriname is Dutch seldom spoken.

Sranan Tongo, a local creole language originally spoken by the creole population group, is the most widely used language in the streets and is often used interchangeably with Dutch depending on the formality of the setting.

Surinamese Hindi or Sarnami, a dialect of Bhojpuri, is the third-most used language, spoken by the descendants of South Asian contract workers from then British India. Javanese is used by the descendants of Javanese contract workers. The Maroon languages, somewhat intelligible with Sranan Tongo, include Saramaka, Paramakan, Ndyuka (also called Aukan), Kwinti and Matawai. Amerindian languages, spoken by Amerindians, include Carib and Arawak. Hakka and Cantonese are spoken by the descendants of the Chinese contract (koelie, coolie) workers. Mandarin is spoken by some few recent Chinese immigrants. English, Spanish and Portuguese are also used. Spanish and Portuguese are spoken by Latin American residents and their descendants and sometimes also taught in schools.

The public discourse about Suriname's languages is a part of an ongoing debate about the country's national identity. While Dutch is perceived as a remnant of colonialism by some, the use of the popular Sranang tongo became associated with nationalist politics after its public use by former dictator Dési

Bouterse in the 1980s, and groups descended from escaped slaves might resent it. Some propose to change the national language to English, so as to improve links to the Caribbean and North America, or to Spanish, as a nod to Suriname's location in South America, although it has no Spanish-speaking neighbours.

Owing to the country's multicultural heritage, Suriname celebrates a variety of distinct ethnic and religious festivals.

National celebrations

1 January – New Year's Eve

March (varies) – Holi-Phagwa

March/April – Easter

1 May – Labour Day

5 June – Indian Arrival Day

1 July – Keti Koti, Emancipation Day (end of slavery)

8 August – Javanese Arrival Day

9 August – Indigenous People's Day

25 November – Independence Day

25 December – Christmas

26 December – Boxing Day

There are several Hindu and Islamic national holidays like Diwali (deepavali), Phagwa and Eid ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-adha. These holidays do not have specific dates on the Gregorian calendar as they are based on the Hindu and Islamic calendars, respectively.

There are several holidays which are unique to Suriname. These include the Indian (Hindustani), Javanese and Chinese arrival days. They celebrate the arrival of the first ships with their respective immigrants.

Pagara (red firecracker ribbons).

New Year's Eve in Suriname is called Oud jaar, or "old year". It is during this period that the Surinamese population goes to the city's commercial district to watch "demonstrational fireworks". The bigger stores invest in these firecrackers and display them out in the streets. Every year the length of them is compared, and high praises are given for the company that has imported the largest ribbon.

These celebrations start at 10 in the morning and finish the next day. The day is usually filled with laughter, dance, music, and drinking. When the night starts, the big street parties are already at full capacity. The most popular fiesta is the one that is held at café 't Vat in the main tourist district. The parties there stop between 10 and 11 at night, after which people go home to light their pagaras (red-firecracker-ribbons) at midnight. After 12, the parties continue and the streets fill again until daybreak.

Education

Education in Suriname is compulsory until the age of 12, and the nation had a net primary enrollment rate of 94% in 2004. Literacy is very common, particularly among males. The main university in the country is the Anton de Kom University of Suriname.

From elementary school to high school there are 13 grades. The elementary school has six grades, middle school four grades and high school three grades. Students take a test in the end of elementary school to determine whether they will go to the MULO (secondary modern school) or a middle school of lower standards like LBGO. Students from the elementary school wear a green shirt with jeans, while middle school students wear a blue shirt with jeans.

Students going from the second grade of middle school to the third grade have to choose between the business or science courses. This will determine what their major subjects will be. In order to go on to study math and physics, the student must have a total of 13 points. If the student has fewer points, he/she will go into the business courses or fail the grade.

Tourism

The Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul in Paramaribo. Royal Torarica, was opened in the night district of Paramaribo on the Suriname River. The hotel industry is important to Suriname's economy. The rental of apartments, or the rent-a-house phenomenon, is also popular in Suriname.

Most tourists visit Suriname for the outstanding biodiversity of the pristine Amazonian rain forests in the south of the country, which are noted for their flora and fauna. The Central Suriname Nature Reserve is the biggest and one of the most popular reserves, along with the Brownsberg Nature Park which overlooks the Brokopondo Reservoir, the latter being one of the largest man-made lakes in the world. Tonka Island in the reservoir is home to a rustic eco-tourism project run by the Saramaccaner Maroons. Pangis wraps and bowls made of calabashes are the two main products manufactured for tourists. The Maroons have learned that colorful and ornate pangis are popular with tourists.

There are also many waterfalls throughout the country. Raleighvallen, or Raleigh Falls, is a 56,000-hectare (140,000-acre) nature reserve on the Coppename River, rich in bird life. Also are the Blanche Marie Falls on the Nickerie River and the Wonotobo Falls. Tafelberg Mountain in the centre of the country is surrounded by its own reserve – the Tafelberg Nature Reserve – around the source of the Saramacca River, as is the Voltzberg Nature Reserve further north on the Coppename River at Raleighvallen. In the interior are many Maroon and Amerindian villages, many of which have their own reserves that are generally open to visitors.

Suriname is one of the few countries in the world where at least one of each biome that the state possesses has been declared a wildlife reserve. Around 30% of the total land area of Suriname is protected by law as reserves.

Other attractions include plantations such as Laarwijk, which is situated along the Suriname River. This plantation can only be reached by boat via Domburg, in the north central Wanica District of Suriname.

The Jules Wijdenbosch Bridge is a bridge over the river Suriname between Paramaribo and Meerzorg in the Commewijne district. The bridge was built during the tenure of President Jules Albert Wijdenbosch (1996 - 2000) and was completed in 2000. The bridge is 52 metres (171 ft) high, and 1,504 metres (4,934 ft) long. It connects Paramaribo with Commewijne, a connection which previously could only be made by ferry. The purpose of the bridge was to facilitate and promote the development of the eastern part of Suriname. The bridge consists of two lanes (one lane each way) and is accessible to pedestrians.

The Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul is 114 years old. Before it became a cathedral it was a theatre. The theatre was built in 1809 and burned down in 1820. The construction of the Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral started on 13 January 1883.

Suriname is one of the few countries in the world where a synagogue is located next to a mosque. The two buildings are located next to each other in the centre of Paramaribo and have been known to share a parking facility during their respective religious rites, should they happen to coincide with one another.

A relatively new landmark is the Hindu Arya Dewaker temple in the Johan Adolf Pengelstraat in Wanica, Paramaribo, which was completed in the first decade of the 21st century . A special characteristic of the temple is that it does not have images of the Hindu divinities, as they are forbidden in the Arya Samaj, the Hindu movement to which the people who built the temple belong. Instead, the building is covered by many texts derived from the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures. The beautiful architecture makes the temple a tourist attraction.

Transport

Suriname and neighboring Guyana are the only two countries on the (in-land) South American continent that drive on the left.

Health

The fertility rate was at 2.6 births per woman. Public expenditure was at 3.6% of the GDP in 2004, whereas private expenditure was at 4.2%. There were 45 physicians per 100,000 in the early 2000s. Infant mortality was at 30 per 1,000 live births. Male life expectancy at birth was at 66.4 years, whereas female life expectancy at birth was at 73 years.