

# ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TO HOST CHOGM

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The National Independence Service of Thanksgiving, held at the St John's Pentecostal Church yesterday, was attended by a number of ministers of government to include: (from left) Prime Minister Gaston Browne, Minister of Works Maria Browne, Attorney General Sir Steadroy Benjamin, Minister of Health Sir Molwyn Joseph and Minister of Tourism Charles Fernandez.



## The Next Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting is coming to Antigua and Barbuda

Antigua and Barbuda will host the 2026 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in the city of St. John's.

"This decision, made during the just-concluded Executive Session of the 2024 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, in Apia, Samoa, marks a significant moment in our history as the smallest country to host this prestigious gathering of Commonwealth leaders," said Prime Minister Browne.

"The 2026 CHOGM in St. John's will be a remarkable occasion for Antigua and Barbuda to showcase the island's unique culture, warm hospitality, and progressive vision. Alongside the main summit, Antigua



and Barbuda will host several key fora that will unite youth, women, business leaders, and civil society. This underscores our commitment to inclusive dialogue on issues that matter to the Commonwealth's diverse membership, ensuring that everyone's voice is heard and valued," a jubilant Prime Minister Browne

said.

Antigua and Barbuda's selection as the CHOGM 2026 host marks a pivotal moment for the region and the country's continued leadership within the Commonwealth community. The event promises to spotlight the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Small Island Developing

States (SIDS), with a particular focus on climate change, international trade, and economic innovation. "These are urgent issues that require immediate attention, and Antigua and Barbuda is uniquely positioned to lead these discussions, given its leadership in environmental advocacy and active role in Commonwealth initiatives," he said.

Prime Minister, Gaston Browne also expressed great enthusiasm about welcoming the Commonwealth family to the Caribbean, stating, "It is an honour and privilege for Antigua and Barbuda to host the 2026 CHOGM. This gathering will allow us to demonstrate our deep commitment to the shared values of the

*cont'd on pg 3*



## GG's Deputy makes strong case for elderly and mental health care

The Governor General's Deputy, Sir Clare Roberts has made a strong case for family members and the society to show more concern for the elderly of society against the backdrop that some have been abandoned at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre and the Clare Vue Mental Hospital.

Sir Clare made the case in an impassioned address delivered Sunday afternoon at the National Independence Service of Thanksgiving held at the St John's Pentecostal Church.

The service was one of the activities marking the official programme for the 43rd anniversary of independence for Antigua and Barbuda.

"Recent reports by the Ministry of Health have highlighted the abandonment of elderly citizens at state institutions like the Clarevue Hospital for the mentally ill, and the Sir Les-

ter Bird Medical Centre. It is disheartening to hear that in the latter case, some 14 elderly patients have been left without the care and support they need, abandoned by their families even though they have no ailments requiring hospitalisation. In the former case, it is even more disheartening to learn that of the patients warded at the Clarevue Hospital over 50% are abandoned," he noted.

The Governor General's Deputy observed that while laws may make it mandatory for children to take care of their parents when they are no longer able to take care of themselves, he believes that it there is a collective sense of duty rooted in faith and respect for human dignity, that must guide the society in ensuring its elders are cherished, protected, and cared for.

According to Sir Clare, these practices are deeply



Governor General's Deputy, Sir Clare Roberts

rooted in the African traditions which influence much of the society's cultural practices.

With respect to mental health, Sir Clare is also focusing the spotlight on this growing problem.

"The mental health crisis, particularly among our youth, is becoming more

pronounced, based on a 2023 report from one of our nation's psychiatrists. We cannot afford to ignore the toll this crisis is taking on individuals, families, and communities. Mental health care must be a central part of our community's collaboration efforts, requiring us to listen, support, and create systems that foster healing and resilience," he observed.

The Governor General's Deputy is making an urgent plea for the nation to show more concern for the elderly among us...as well as those struggling with mental health challenges. "Let us all consider spending some time away from the screen and online interaction to engage in person-to-person calls or face-to-face visits," he remarked.

### *cont'd from pg 2*

Commonwealth, as well as our nation's role in fostering unity, collaboration, and sustainable progress across the Commonwealth community."

Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez who said this news is a significant development for the country's tourism product, outlined that the government extends a warm invitation to all Commonwealth members and their citizens to join in what promises to be a landmark event for the Commonwealth and the world.

"The country looks forward to creating a memorable and impactful experi-

ence for all attendees, strengthening connections and inspiring collaboration for a prosperous future," he said.

The High Commission of Antigua and Barbuda in London under the direction of the High Commissioner, Her Excellency Karen-Mae Hill, will serve as the CHOGM 2026 focal point.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is a biennial summit of leaders from the 56 Member States of the Commonwealth to discuss and promote shared values, development initiatives, and cooperative solutions to global challenges.

# Local News



## Pastor Ivor Davis: Every voice matters!

“Every voice matters, my voice matters’ was a central theme of the sermon delivered by Reverend Ivor Davis on Sunday at the National Independence Thanksgiving Service held at the St. John’s Pentecostal Church of Restoration.

Rev. Davis drew parallels from the Book of Nehemiah in the Bible where the task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem was made a community effort with everyone collaborating with each other to get the job done.

“Collaboration doesn’t mean we never disagree or face challenges. But it does mean we face challenges together, pooling our resources, our ideas and efforts to find solutions,” he remarked.

He likened the nation to a family with persons performing different roles, from the prime minister and leader of the opposition to the police and teachers. “Pooling our resources and ideas will require open communication with all



Reverend Ivor Davis members of the family, the community. There are times when voices get lost as we communicate for some reason or other, but here me my people, every voice matters, my voice matters,” he stated.

According to Rev. Davis it is important to listen to everyone in society as ‘even the dull and ignorant have a story’. To illustrate this point, he again returned to scripture where in 1 Corinthians 12:18-20 it states: But in fact God has placed the parts of the body, every one

of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

“This passage reminds us of our diversity, our uniqueness and our essential functions. Your voice matters, your contribution can lead to a solution,” he remarked.

The call, Rev. Davis emphasized, is for collaboration and teamwork. “We have heard it said time and again: there is no ‘I’ in team, but the team is usually uniformed and speaks to unity. Nehemiah and his team were united. He played the leading role, but there was unity, they listened and followed his instructions, his directives. Consider how Nehemiah united the people from various tribes and social classes to rebuild Jerusalem’s wall,” he declared.

Rev. Davis reiterated that unity means working together despite and even because of differences.

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## Youth representative wants changes to school's curriculum

The youth representative participating in this year's National Independence Thanksgiving Service is recommending changes to the current school's curriculum.

In extending greetings on behalf of the Ottos Comprehensive School, Jhana Parades, noted that her school is this year celebrating its 50th anniversary and was a mere seven years old when Antigua and Barbuda attained political independence on November 1, 1981.

Reflecting on the theme for this year's independence celebrations, Parades said there are some changes she wishes to see to the curricu-

ulum.

"As a young and proud Antiguan and student of OCS, I would like to see a greater focus placed on developing career, mentorship and public speaking programmes; eco-friendly projects; cultural diversity workshops and an increase effort to incorporate sports meaningfully in our national curriculum. The time has also come for us as a nation to seriously consider the teaching of Civics in all of our schools," she suggested.

She referenced the school's recently held anniversary service where Dr. Emmanuel Elizee, himself a former OCS student, shared an interesting acronym to



Jhana Parades

describe what or who OCS represents. O - Overcomers, C-Conquerors and S- Survivors, noting that these traits could be adopted nationally.

"I think that this is quite applicable for us to embrace

on a national level as we celebrate our independence. Let us as a people - and I make a special appeal to our youths to realize that we are O – overcomers. We must overcome the numerous obstacles that we may encounter. Let us C - conquer and silence the voices of negativity that may try to hinder us from achieving our individual goals and our collective efforts to foster community collaborations. Let us S- be survivors as we maximize the gains on a global level," she urged.





# Local News



## National service brings together cross section of society

The prime minister was applauded for his dedication to duty for getting back to the country from official duties in Samoa in the Pacific in time to fully participate in the National Service of Thanksgiving held on Sunday afternoon.

Governor General's Deputy, Sir Clare Roberts, commended Prime Minister Gaston Browne, for his successes at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa, but also for doing everything possible to get back to the country to participate in several Independence and



other important events.

Sir Clare also congratulated the prime minister for successfully making a bid to host the next CHOGM in 2026.

During the service, both PM Browne and the Leader of the Opposition, Jamale Pringle read lessons.

In attendance were members of the Cabinet, members of parliament, members of the diplomatic corps, the clergy, the judiciary as well as senior members of government.

Also in attendance were



representatives of the uniform bodies including the Immigration Department, the Customs Division, the Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force, the Coast Guard, the Emergency Medical Services and the Nurses

Association.

There were also representatives from groups such as the Red Cross, the St John's Ambulance Brigade, the Boys Scout, the Ex-Ser-vicemen Association and the Girls Guides.





## Reduction in price of flour...an Independence gift

Antigua and Barbuda and several Eastern Caribbean countries will likely see a reduction in a number of flour-based products as the producers of flour- the Eastern Caribbean Group of Companies (ECGC) has announced a reduction in the price for flour.

In a statement, the ECGC said the reduction is an independence gift to Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, St Kitts-Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Montserrat, British Virgin Islands and Anguilla. It said the price reduction went into effect on Friday in Kingstown and on November 1 in the other islands.

“The price reduction is expected to benefit consumers, bakeries, and businesses throughout the region,” the ECGC said, noting that prices across the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) will be lowered on both bulk flour and the retail packaged flour sold in supermarkets.

The price of a 100 lb-sack of flour will fall by between six and 10 EC dollars (One EC dollar=US\$0.37 cents), ECGC said, adding that “consumers will now see the retail prices drop by an average of EC 0.10 cents per pound on the popular bagged out flour sold in their community stores...”


At the same time, premium packaged brands

will reflect an EC\$0.30 to EC\$0.90-cent decrease on the supermarket shelf.

The company said this strategic price adjustment aligns with the independence celebrations of OECS member states, with St Vincent and the Grenadines celebrating 45 years of political independence from Britain on Sunday, followed by Antigua and Barbuda on November 1, Dominica two days later and Barbados on November 30.




ECGC chief executive officer, J. Robert Cato, said the price reduction was made possible by recent capital investments in the business, improved efficiency, and favourable market conditions.



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## Antigua and Barbuda, Morocco sign new enhanced cooperation agreement

Antigua and Barbuda and the Kingdom of Morocco have agreed to the implementation of a very ambitious Road Map for the period 2024 to 2026, designed to deliver a series of economic promotions and investment opportunities.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P. Chet Greene, recently visited Morocco where he held discussions with his counterpart Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nasser Bourita, to discuss ways of consolidating the longstanding bilateral relations and to explore strategies for improved functional cooperation.

During the deliberations, Minister Greene extended greetings from the Hon. Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, thanking him for his support for South/South Cooperation.

Minister Greene noted the fact that diplomatic relations between Antigua and Barbuda and Morocco were established since 2007 based on shared core values such as a support for democracy, the rule of law and the universal respect for human rights.

He reiterated Antigua and Barbuda's recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over its Sahara and that the Autonomy Initiative is the only realistic, serious, and credible solution to the issue of the Moroccan Sahara within the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Morocco over its southern provinces.

Minister Nasser Bourita, expressed appreciation for Antigua and Barbuda's support to the Kingdom of Morocco and His Majesty's vision for 'South/South Cooperation based on effectiveness, solidarity and pragmatism.

He further stated that the vision of Morocco is to uphold stability and se-



Foreign Minister E.P. Chet Greene with his Moroccan counterpart, Minister Nasser Bourita

curity in the Caribbean region through concrete socioeconomic projects.

It was against this background that on Monday 21st October, Minister Green and Minister Bourita signed a new Road Map of Cooperation, for the period 2024-2026, to further deepen and consolidate bilateral cooperation through exchange of experience and expertise in different fields of common interest.

According to Minister Greene, "I am delighted to formalize a cooperation agreement that will deliver a variety of engagements, projects/programme in areas such as Education, Technical cooperation, Fertilizers and soil fertility, economic promotion and investment, culture and civil society partnerships, financial assistance to support development projects and exchange of visits.

"I am of the firm believe that this new road map of cooperation for the period 2024 to 2026 will be mutually beneficial and will serve to bring the people of our two countries closer together."

The Road Map for Cooperation will provide assistance in the following areas through:

- Support for the ABAS Centre of Excellence and Data Hub.

- Organizing learning visits to Morocco for officials from Antigua and Barbuda.

- Offering scholarship programmes for students from Antigua and Barbuda to pursue their higher education in Moroccan universities and vocational training centers.

- Capacity building programs for officials from Antigua and Barbuda in various fields and themes.

- Sending Moroccan experts in multiple sectors (Agriculture, Education and Arts and Culture) to Antigua and Barbuda:

- Sending delegations of Moroccan economic operators to Antigua and Barbuda to develop win-win business partnerships with local operators and promote various investment opportunities to carry out joint projects in priority sectors of interest for Antigua and Barbuda.



## One down...many more to go!

Barbuda International Airport handled its first international flight on Friday with both the visitors and the local team of officials giving the entire process an enthusiastic 'thumps up'.

The flight, was a private jet that brought two passengers and a four-member crew to the island for what was reported as a business meeting.

After spending a few hours on the island, they departed. But not before expressing satisfaction with the airport, with the pilot noting that it was better than many from which

he has operated over the years.

Two senior officers of the Immigration Department, Jo-Anne Smith and Louvincia Kirwan, journeyed to Codrington on Thursday to engage in a walk-through with the team who will be based at the new airport.

Headed by Hildina Gore as supervisor, the team will soon comprise all Barbudans. For now, the Barbudan Immigration officers will undergo an intense period of training to bring up to a state of readiness to handle all immigration requirements at the



Jo-Anne Smith, left, and Hildina Gore.

new airport.

Kirwan reported that the entire process went 'very well' without any hiccups. Both she and Small, worked along with Gore to process the passengers. A customs officer was also on hand to complete the border clearance

procedures.

Chief Immigration Officer, Katrina Yearwood, reported that as the Christmas holidays approach, there are many more flights slated for the Barbuda airport that will keep both immigration and customs departments busy.



## AGS, Greenbay Primary Schools Panorama champions 2024!

The National Schools Panorama competitions held among the nation's primary and secondary schools were held Saturday night with a large number of spectators in attendance.

Six steelbands from the primary schools took part in the competition. In the end, the Greenbay Prima-

ry School with its rendition of 'Out Dey' by Claudette Peters emerging as the winner in the category. Second place went to Villa Primary and Nelvie Gore of Willikies placing third.

In the secondary schools' category, nine steelbands participated with the Antigua Grammar

*cont'd on pg 10*



# Lady Williams named a Commander of the Order of St. John

The Governor General's wife, Sandra Lady Williams has been admitted to be a Commander of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem on the instructions of His Majesty King Charles III. The investiture took place on October 22nd at the Priory in St. John's Gate, London.

The ceremony was conducted by Prior Stuart Shilson and Chancellor Simon Williams. Others present included Governor

General Sir Rodney Williams, Knight of the Order and Dean Paul Williams.

The motto of the order is "For the faith and in the service of humanity." "In response to the welcome, Lady Williams graciously accepted the honour.

She said, "Thanks to everyone who had a part to play in bestowing this award on me. I'm very humbled. And hopefully deserving.

"Two weeks ago, I  
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School emerging as winner of the category with its rendition of Swallow's 'Subway Jam'. Second place went to Princess Margaret School and third place went to the St. Joseph's Academy.

The panorama competitions took place at the Deep Water Harbour which allowed for multiple bands to be set up simultaneously as organisers seek to save time, a critical element of all panorama competitions.





*cont'd from pg 10*

found myself facing death. In fact, the medical team in Beijing said that had I delayed one minute more, it would have been too late. And at that moment, nothing at all matters.

"Nothing in this world matters. And it is really then that you are faced with the

real meaning and purpose of life: to live for each other, and to love each other.

"I know it's a hard concept to grasp in this rat race of a world when it boils down to survival of the fittest. But grab as much as you may — you can only use so much STUFF and you certainly can't take it

with you.

"All of this to say - the life of the Order of St John has been dedicated to helping mankind in the true spirit of the real purpose of humanity.

"We can't thank you enough for your selfless contribution to global charity."

Lady Williams stated that she was fortunate enough to be involved with the work of the St John Hospice in Antigua, and the St. John Ambulance in the United Kingdom.

"I pledge to continue to help as much as I can — as long as there is breath in my body," she stated.



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# Opinion



## Sun of a beach or what?

By Tony Deyal

Have you heard about how much meat pastries cost in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad as well as the rest of the English-speaking Caribbean? An old sailor in a Port-of-Spain bar told us that in Jamaica, beef pies cost \$1.50. Goat pies cost around \$2 and apple pies are about \$2.50. In Trinidad the prices are roughly the same.

Cheese and onion pies are \$1.50, steak and onion pies are \$2 and cherry pies are \$3. In Barbados a mushroom pie would cost about \$4 and vegetable pie is about \$1.75.

When we asked him why he's telling us all this, he replied, "These are the Pie rates of the Caribbean."

But it's not just the pie but the sky. It is the sun of a beach in the Caribbean and the sense of humour wherever we go. It is what our visitors, local or foreign, consider our warmth, hospitality, music, dance and food!

We joke and laugh everywhere and every time, even if it is merely to keep our pain, or even anger, in control. This is why I put the people first.

Even though I am a son of a beach, the sand, sea, sun and (some say) sex, are secondary. The people of the entire region are funnier than Richard Pryor, Chris Rock and Joan Rivers put together. Here are examples from the three countries of

our Caribbean pie-rate.

We start with Barbados. From the day, 32 years ago when I started my columns, it was not the sea but the cricket where humour and concern were the players in the middle. I had long dreamt of the day when I would sit in the stands of Kensington hearing the "Hoi! Hoi!" of the hoi-polloi, their "Cor Blimeys" and the agonised "Jeez-U" of puzzlement and exasperation. "Give Hooper the ball," a woman shouted.

Her companion told her it is the new ball and Hooper cannot use it. "Why not?" she demanded. "What they have against the boy?" Ambrose twice beat Sohail outside the off stump. "Hoi! How he fishing so? He from Oistins?"

Then the game stopped and the lady asked her friend "What happening?" He explained, "The umpire offer them the light." She was angry, "But how he could come from England and give them we light? Like the man cornfuse!"

I owned a car, a MOKE, a word which the dictionary says is "a donkey or a stupid fellow."

When I took it to a mechanic, he told me, "Mister, is either you or the car. Is better you change the car and keep the oil." I asked him, "What for? To fry saltfish?" He laughed.

Both of us knew that in Barbados especially, "Nothing in the world is sweeter



Tony Deyal

than saltfish". In fact, here is a joke that I first heard in Barbados.

After the first humans were created and made love for the first time, the Lord appeared and asked Adam, "How didst thou like it?" Adam admitted it was incredible. The Lord asked, "What about Eve?" Adam smiled knowingly and said, "She liked it too."

The Lord then asked for Eve, and Adam replied that she was in the river, washing. Suddenly the sky darkened, and the winds roared. Adam was alarmed and asked, "What's the matter, Lord? What's wrong?" And the Lord boomed in frustration, "Now I'll never get that smell out of the fish."

Next was Jamaica where, from the moment I arrived, I learnt that it was "TING country". When I asked why that name I was told, "no big ting".

What makes it more than a thing apart in the "Jam", is that the missing "h" is

added to words like "egg", "omelette" and "auspice". It is true that most Caribbean people say, "Tings bad, boy. Tings brown." The great Jamaican group, the Merry Men, sang, "All you hear this ting./ My girlfriend, promise to give me some ting./ And the bells goin' ring/ and the birds goin' sing./ Cause she promise to give me some ting, ting, ting."

This is where I also heard my favourite "ting" joke. In a bar in the country this "bad-john" or "tough man" sat drinking his liquor with his henchmen around him, when suddenly a stranger came up to him, smiled and without warning, touched him on his ear "Ting!"

The bad-john was angry and upset and he grabbed the stranger intending to do him grievous bodily harm. Undaunted, the stranger smiled sweetly and again touched the bad-john on his

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# Opinion

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ear, "Ting!"

The bad-john was now so angry that he started to laugh, almost hysterically, demanding an explanation.

The stranger, smiling sweetly, said that he was from Mars. The bad-john said, "Who you trying to fool? You look just like we." Smiling, the stranger unzipped his outer-skin, clothes and all, and stood revealed for what he was.

The bad-john was stunned for a moment and then laughed, "You Martians look real funny. What are you? Man or woman, or what?" The stranger grinned and said softly, "Man." This completely threw the bad-john.

He stuttered, "But how you could be a man? You have no ... no ... You don't look like a man. How you make love on Mars then?" The stranger smirked, looked at the bad-john, and

touched him on his ear, "TING!"

As we move into Trinidad, the big "ting" now is crime, and it takes me back to a criminal named "Ghost". He was what the US would call a "Don" or powerful Mafia leader. Before he came into the picture most of us used to suck our teeth and say loudly, "I Don!" However, this meaning as "finished" or "done" ended when ghost was around.

One Christmas Eve night, ghost went with his friends into a rum-shop and asked the owner for rum, scotch, wine and beer. Ghost saw me passing on my way to midnight mass where my girlfriend was waiting for me and demanded I take a drink with him. Regardless of how much nerve I had, it was not enough to tell ghost, "Sorry!"

As I took my beer, the owner of the shop handed "ghost" a piece of paper. Ghost asked the owner, "What

is this? What the so-and-so is this?" "This is the bill," the owner replied.

Ghost, after a long took at the owner, and in a tone which was a mixture of mockery and menace told the frightened man, "Well let me tell you this, and tell everybody what I say, my name is crime and crime don't pay!"

My missing church visit reminded me of the man who went to apologise to his very religious girlfriend for not meeting her in church. However, he still ended up on her bed below a sign which read, "I need thee every day." The next day the man put up his own sign, "Oh Lord, give me strength."

***Tony Deyal was last seen asking the Almighty, "Lord, considering the kind of criminals and pie-rates we have in Trinidad, if you give me strength you also have to give me a gun, bullets, and then some bail money too."***



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# Business



## Guyana wants private investment to develop a safari-type zoo

CMC - The Guyana government has signaled its intention to seek private investors to develop a safari-type zoo model here, placing greater emphasis on wildlife conservation.

Speaking at a public consultation on the restoration of the Zoo and Botanical Gardens, Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo, said that the restoration project will see greater emphasis being placed on wildlife conservation, and a keen effort to create interactive spaces to educate visitors on the country's biodiversity.

Jagdeo said that the government recognises the tourism potential and the thrilling experience a safari-style zoo venture can have for Guyana.

Generally, this model is one where visitors can drive through large enclosures to view animals in more natural settings, similar to a real safari.

It often features a drive-through experience, allowing visitors to observe animals from their vehicles.

"We believe that you can have a safari-type zoo in the country, where animals are just out in the open.

"And we want to issue a prospectus where we will give support to any private investor who wants to do this arrangement," he said.



Guyana Zoo and botanical gardens.

Jagdeo told the consultation many people in the region may have never seen or experienced this kind of model, or had the opportunity to interact with the many exotic animals Guyanese are familiar with.

"We believe that in the Caribbean, this would be a huge draw to Guyana," he said, adding that the restoration of the National Zoological Park and the Botanical Gardens is not primarily focused on providing sensational wildlife exhibitions.

"This is not the only opportunity," he said, noting that many of the other revenue-generating measures and wildlife experi-

ences would be better suited to a safari-style zoo.

"There is a private zoo being developed on the East Bank too, so people can go to different places.

"This [national zoo] has a slightly different purpose, so it is not one where we have a large number of animals, and keep them in cages and things like that. It is a different concept."

Jagdeo said rather, the upgrades to these areas are aimed at exposing visitors to Guyana's diverse landscapes, while bringing greater awareness to the climate challenges faced by the country and the various ways these are being tackled.

The upgrades to these

areas are aligned with the expanded Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS 2030), which emphasises biodiversity protection, water management, the maritime economy, climate adaptation and the energy transition.

Similarly, the government in partnership with the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) has a wider plan in place to transform and beautify Guyana's urban landscape.

Through this partnership, an estimated 50,000 flowering trees will be planted along the urban area, including on the East Bank Demerara, the Soesdyke-Linden Highway and in Georgetown.



## Montserrat: Premier Meade released from hospital

CMC - Newly elected Premier of Montserrat, Reuben Meade is expected to turn up for work on Monday after he was released from hospital on Saturday, according to a statement issued by his family.

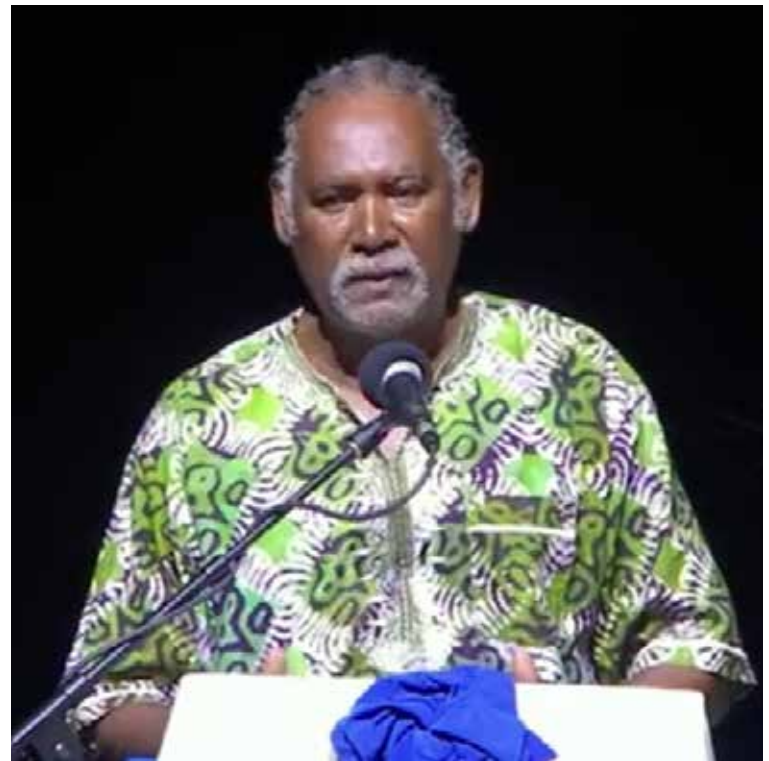
The statement gave no details regarding the hospitalisation of the 70-year-old politician, who had returned from retirement to lead his newly formed United Alliance (UA) to victory in the October 24 general election on the British Overseas Territory.

"There was an incident involving my father at the conclusion of the swear-

ing-in ceremony for the new government on Friday evening. Out of an abundance of caution, he was taken to Glendon Hospital to be evaluated. He was kept overnight for observation but has since been released and is doing well and back to being his jovial self," said the statement released by his son and media and public relations practitioner, Ben Meade.

"On behalf of my father and our family, I express our profound gratitude to the medical professionals who oversaw his care and to all who sought to pro-

*cont'd on pg 16*



Premier of Montserrat, Reuben Meade

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# Regional News



Soldiers patrol amid the sound of gunshots heard in the distance, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Thursday, October 17, 2024. (AP Photo/Odelyn Joseph)

## US airline temporarily suspends flights to Haiti's capital

At least one US airline on Friday temporarily cancelled flights to Haiti's capital after gang members opened fire and hit a UN helicopter flying near the country's main airport.

Spirit Airlines said in a statement to The Associated Press that its daily flight from Fort Lauderdale to Port-au-Prince has been suspended through Sunday.

"The safety of our

guests and team members is a priority," the Florida-based airline said, adding that it was closely monitoring the situation.

The announcement comes a day after a UN helicopter was hit by gunfire, forcing it to make an emergency landing in Port-au-Prince shortly after it had departed the main airport.

The UN Humanitarian Air Service helicopter, which was carrying three

crew members and 15 passengers, landed safely, according to the World Food Program.

The shooting comes as gang violence surges across Haiti's capital and beyond in recent days, raising concerns that a UN-backed mission led by Kenyan police is struggling to contain the violence. Thousands of people have been killed or injured this year, and more than 700,000 have been

left homeless in recent years as a result of the ongoing gang violence.

"There's a lot that needs to be done to give hope," Leslie Voltaire, president of Haiti's transitional presidential council, said at a press conference on Friday. "I am not satisfied. Right now there are no results. We should do more to improve people's lives."

US and Haitian officials including Voltaire have said the Kenyan mission lacks personnel and funding and have requested that it be replaced by a UN peacekeeping mission.

Earlier this year, coordinated gang attacks forced the government to close Haiti's main international airport for nearly three months.

*cont'd from pg 15*

vide immediate assistance at the Montserrat Cultural Centre, as well as all who have called and messaged to express well wishes."

He said he has no doubt that his father, who served as the island's first premier between 2010 and 2014, and had also served as chief minister on two occasions between 1991 and 2010, "after relaxing this weekend, he will be ready

to get down the business of the tough task of leading the newly elected government in their pursuit of making life better on Montserrat.

"My father will be able to say more on his own behalf at an appropriate time.

"While this is a matter of national interest, and while we appreciate your concern, we now ask that you respect our family's privacy this weekend," the statement added.



# New wave of mass killings in Sudan alarms UN

By Farouk Chothia

A senior UN official in Sudan says she is deeply troubled by reports of “atrocious crimes” in the central Gezira state, including the mass killing of civilians by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

Clementine Nkweta-Salami’s comments came after an activist group said that at least 124 people were killed by the RSF in attacks on villages over the past week.

The RSF has denied targeting civilians, saying its fighters are clashing with militias armed by the military.

The 18-month conflict in Sudan has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced more than 11 million.

Gezira state turned into a major battleground last week after the RSF suffered a major blow when one of its commanders, Abu Aqla Kayka, defected to the military.

The army said he had brought “a large number of his forces” with him, in what it described as the first high-profile defection to its side.

In response, the RSF said its fighters would defend themselves and “decisively deal with everyone carrying arms”.

Ms Nkweta-Salami,



Escalating conflict in Sudan's Gezira state has forced civilians to flee.

the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, said that preliminary reports suggested that the RSF had carried out a major attack across the state between 20 and 25 October.

She added that it led to mass killings, the raping of women and girls, the widespread looting of markets and homes and the burning down of farms.

Ms Nkweta-Salami said the “atrocious crimes” were on a scale similar to those seen in Sudan’s Darfur region last year, when the RSF was accused of “ethnic cleansing” communities seen to be opposed to it.

Ms Nkweta-Salami said the death toll was still

unclear, but preliminary reports suggested that scores of people were killed in Gezira state.

In a statement on Saturday, the Wad Madani Resistance Committee, which campaigns for an end to the conflict and democratic rule in Sudan, said the RSF was committing “extensive massacres in one village after another”, the Reuters news agency reported.

The Sudanese doctors’ union called on the UN to push the two sides in the conflict to agree to safe humanitarian corridors into villages that were facing “genocide” at the hands of the RSF.

The doctors’ union added that rescue opera-

tions had become impossible and that the army was “incapable” of protecting civilians.

The conflict in Sudan broke out in April 2023 after a fall out between the commanders of the Rapid Support Forces and military, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo and General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan respectively.

The two had jointly staged a coup in 2021, derauling Sudan’s transition to democracy, but then got involved in a vicious power struggle.

The two leaders have refused to sign a peace deal, despite efforts by the US and Saudi Arabia to broker an end to the conflict.

## Japan's ruling party loses its majority in blow to new PM

By Shaimaa Khalil

The coalition led by Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has lost its majority in parliament, its worst result for over a decade.

Opposition parties secured more than half the seats in the lower house, provisional election results showed.

With 22 seats left to declare, the LDP and its coalition partner, the much smaller Komeito, had gained 208 seats to the opposition's 235.

A party needs a majority of 233 seats in the lower house of Parliament, the Diet, to govern alone.

The result of the general election has triggered uncertainty about how the world's fourth-largest economy will be governed.

The largest opposition party, the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP), had won 143 seats at around 02:00 JST (17:00 GMT), according to NHK.

The election was called by the LDP's new leader Shigeru Ishiba three days after he was selected as new leader, before he had been officially sworn in as prime minister.

"Voters have handed us a harsh verdict and we have to humbly accept this result," he told NHK.

It comes after a tumultuous few years for the LDP



The election was called by the LDP's new leader Shigeru Ishiba before he had been officially sworn in as prime minister.

which saw a "cascade" of scandals, widespread voter apathy and record-low approval ratings.

The party had seen approval ratings of below 20% earlier in the year, in the wake of a political fundraising corruption scandal.

Yet opposition parties have failed to unite, or convince voters they are a viable option to govern.

The main opposition party had an approval rating of just 6.6% before parliament was dissolved.

"It is so hard to make decisions to choose parties, I think people are losing interest," Miyuki Fujisaki, a long-time LDP supporter who works in the care-home sector, told the BBC ahead of polls opening.

The LDP, she said, has its problems with alleged

corruption, "but the opposition also does not stand out at all".

"They sure complain a lot, but it's not at all clear on what they want to do," the 66-year-old said.

For all the apathy, politics in Japan has been moving at a fast pace in recent months.

Shigeru Ishiba took over as prime minister after being voted in by the ruling party following his predecessor Fumio Kishida - who had been in the role since 2021 - making a surprise decision to step down in August.

The move to call the election came at a time when the LDP is desperate to restore its tarnished image among the public. Ishiba - a long-time politician who previously served as defence minister - has de-

scribed it as the "people's verdict".

A series of scandals has tarnished the ruling party's reputation. Chief among them is the party's relationship with the controversial Unification Church - described by critics as a "cult" - and the level of influence it had on lawmakers.

Then came the revelations of the political funding corruption scandal. Japan's prosecutors have been investigating dozens of LDP lawmakers accused of pocketing proceeds from political fundraising events. Those allegations - running into the millions of dollars - led to the dissolution of powerful factions, the backbone of its internal party politics.

"What a wretched state the ruling party is in," said

*cont'd on pg 19*



## Antiguan government and CWI team up for reduced ticket prices for ODIs

The Government of Antigua & Barbuda, in collaboration with Cricket West Indies (CWI), is commemorating the nation's 43rd anniversary of independence by offering special ticket discounts for the first two One Day Internationals between the West Indies and England.

The matches, set for Thursday, October 31 at 2 pm and Saturday, November 2 at 9:30 am, will take place at the iconic Sir Vivian Richards Stadium.

This partnership, driven by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries, presents an exclusive chance for fans residing in Antigua and Barbuda to celebrate their national heritage and rally behind their team at significantly reduced prices, available while supplies last.

The Honorable Daryll Matthew, Minister of Education, Sports & Creative Industries, expressed his enthusiasm.

"Antigua and Barbuda has produced renowned cricket icons such as Sir Vivian Richards, Sir Andy Roberts, Sir Richie Richardson, and Sir Curtly Ambrose, all of whom have elevated our nation's legacy on the world stage.

"Their achievements were fueled by the strong support from fans at

home, and through this initiative, we aim to inspire the same dedication for today's cricket talents," Matthew said.

CWI's Chief Operating Officer, Lynford Inverary, said, "As we celebrate Antigua and Barbuda's independence, this partnership exemplifies the strength and unity of the Caribbean.

"Cricket has long been a unifying force across our region, and with these special ticket offers, we're thrilled to provide fans with a memorable way to

celebrate our shared heritage and support the West Indies team."

Starting Saturday, October 26, fans based in Antigua can purchase these discounted tickets online at [tickets.windies.com](https://tickets.windies.com) or at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium box office between October 26-30, from 10 am to 6 pm.

On match days, the box office opens at 10 am on Friday, October 31, and at 6:30 am on Saturday, November 2.



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NORTH STAND 2	XCD 55	XCD 55
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[tickets.windiescricket.com](https://tickets.windiescricket.com)

*cont'd from pg 18*

Michiko Hamada, who had travelled to Urawa station, on the outskirts of Tokyo, for an opposition campaign rally.

"That is what I feel most. It is tax evasion and it's unforgivable."

It strikes her as particularly egregious at a time when people in Japan are struggling with high prices.

Wages have not changed for three decades – dubbed "the lost 30 years" – but prices have risen at the fastest rate in nearly half a century in the last two years.

This month saw more price hikes on thousands of food products, as well as other day-to-day provisions like mail, pharmaceuticals, electricity and gas.

"I pay 10,000 yen or

20,000 yen (\$65 - \$130; £50 - £100) more for the food per month (than I used to)," Ms Hamada said.

"And I'm not buying the things I used to buy. I am trying to save up but it still costs more. Things like fruit are very expensive."

She is not the only one concerned with high prices. Pensioner Chie Shimizu says she now must work

part-time to make ends meet.

"Our hourly wage has gone up a bit but it does not match the prices," she told the BBC as she picked up some food from a stand at Urawa station.

"I come to places like this to find something cheaper and good because everything in regular shops is expensive."



Players of the All Saints United football team. (File photo)

## Second win for All Saints United and Garden Stars in Premier League

Reigning champions Special Security Services and Bitar Pizza All Saints United, and Garden Stars notched up their second win in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Saturday.

All Saints United overcame a two-nil deficit to snatch a 3-2 victory against newly promoted Five Islands FC in the last game of a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Blake Thompson conceded an own goal in the eighth minute, and Darbel Tito scored in the 21st minute to give Five Islands a 2-0 lead.

D'Andre Bishop scored his first of two goals in the 35th minute to reduce All Saints United's deficit as Five Islands took a 2-1 lead into halftime.

But Five Islands started the sec-

ond half poorly, as they were reduced to 10 men in the 48th minute after Jamal Joseph picked up his second booking (yellow card) and was expelled.

Bishop snatched the equalizer for All Saints United when he scored his second goal of the match in the 68th minute. All Saints United were also reduced to 10 men in the 72nd minute when Tyquan Terrell was expelled after he received a red card for using insulting and abusive language to the referee.

But two minutes before the end of regulation, Tiquan Isaac snatched the winner for All Saints United with an 88th-minute conversion as Five Islands crashed to their second loss in as many games.

Garden Stars made it two wins in

two matches by snatching a one-nil victory against Pigotts Bullets in the first game on Saturday. Terek Charles scored the only goal of the match in the fifth minute as the Pigotts Bullets suffered their first loss after winning their opening encounter.

John Hughes notched up their first win in two outings by prevailing 3-1 against former Premier League champions Greenbay Hoppers in Saturday's second game.

Bryan Daniel had a double conversion with goals in the 31st and 42nd minutes, and Deno Bryan scored the third goal for John Hughes with an 87th-minute conversion.

Tyree Archibald scored a consolation goal in the 64th minute for the Greenbay Hoppers, who slumped to their second defeat in as many games.



# Lewis century powers West Indies to consolation ODI win against Sri Lanka

PALLEKELE, Sri Lanka (AP) — Evin Lewis' unbeaten 102 steered West Indies to a consolation victory against 2-1 series winner Sri Lanka in the third and last One-Day International on Saturday.

Lewis, playing his first ODI since 2021, hit a straight six to bring up the winning runs and his fifth ODI century off 61 balls. The opener played through even after rolling his left ankle on 51.

The West Indies reached a revised victory target of 196 for two, via the Duckworth Lewis Stern (DLS) Method, in reply to Sri Lanka's 156 for three after a five-hour rain delay reduced the match to 23 overs per side at Pallekele International Stadium.

Pathum Nissanka, dropped before he scored and on 17, and Avishka Fernando, also dropped, opened with an 81-run stand in 17 overs for Sri Lanka followed by the rain delay.

When play resumed, Kusal Mendis hit the first four deliveries to the boundary. Nissanka reached his 15th ODI half-century off 58 balls before he was run out for 56.

Mendis went on to a 19-ball half-century and



Sherfane Rutherford, left, and Evin Lewis put up a solid stand for West Indies against Sri Lanka in their third and final ODI in Pallekele, Sri Lanka, on Saturday, Oct 26, 2024. (AP)

was dropped twice before finishing 56 not out after nine boundaries and a six over midwicket.

The West Indies lost their first wicket on 36, but Lewis and captain Shai Hope combined to add 72 runs for the second wicket.

When Hope was caught for 22, Lewis was joined by Sherfane Rutherford and they guided the West Indies to victory by eight wickets

with one over to spare.

Rutherford took just 26 deliveries for his fourth ODI half-century, an unbeaten 50 including three sixes and four fours.

He also scored 74 and 80 in the series, but Sri Lanka captain Charith Asalanka was named player of the series for scoring 145 runs and taking two wickets.

During the final match

of the series, 17-year-old Antiguan Jewel Andrew made his ODI debut and became the youngest to play for the West Indies in this format.

Andrew, Lewis, and Matthew Forde were three changes made to the West Indies team from the previous game. They replaced Romario Shepherd, Alick Athanaze, and Hayden Walsh Jr.



The Princess Margaret School Under-20 Boys team. (Photo by Elwin Francis)

## State College suffers first loss in Under-20 boys division

Reigning champions Antigua State College suffered their first loss in defense of the Under-20 Boys Division in the Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth, Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup on Friday.

After winning their first three matches, Antigua State College lost 2-1 against Princess Margaret School at the PMS playing field.

Jevaughn Parker scored in the 30th minute to give State College a one-nil lead. But Princess Margaret School responded to snatch victory with goals by Greg Williams in the 46th minute and Johnathan Shoy in the 60th minute.

Both State College and Princess Margaret School now have nine points apiece and identical records of three wins and one defeat from four matches.

All Saints Secondary and the Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continued Education (ABICE) also recorded wins in their latest Under-20 Boys Division

matches.

All Saints Secondary joined State College and Princess Margaret School at the top of the standings with nine points each after claiming their third win in four matches with a 2-0 victory against Clare Hall Secondary at the Clare Hall playing field.

Jevaughn Jarvis scored in the second minute, and Amunra Peters had an eighth-minute conversion for All Saints Secondary. Clare Hall Secondary remain on six points after suffering their second loss in four matches.

ABICE claimed their second win in three matches by snatching a one-nil victory against Ottos Comprehensive School at Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

Player of the Match Malik Charles scored the only goal of the match in the third minute to secure victory for ABICE as Ottos Comprehensive School suf-

fered their third loss in four matches.

The secondary schools' football league will continue with five second-round matches in the Under-16 Boys Division on Monday (today).

Jennings Secondary School will face Ottos Comprehensive School in the first game of a double header at the Golden Grove playing field at 2:15 pm.

Antigua Grammar School and St. Mary's Secondary School will clash in the second game at 3:30 pm.

Sir Novelle Richards Academy will take on defending champions Princess Margaret School in the first game of a double header at the Potters playing field at 2:15 pm. Glanvilles Secondary School will tackle Clare Hall Secondary in the second encounter at 3:30 pm.

Irene B. Williams Secondary School will clash with All Saints Secondary School at the Swetes playing field at 2:15 pm.



## Former Premier League contenders off to winning starts in First Division

The three of the four teams that were demoted from the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division last season have made successful starts in their quest to return to the nation's top domestic league next season.

The Ottos Rangers FC, SAP FC, and Empire FC all recorded wins in their opening matches in the 2024-25 ABFA's First Division.

Junior Benjamin scored a hat trick to help the Ottos Rangers snatch a 5-4 victory against Police at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

Benjamin had conversions in the 38th, 43rd, and 44th minutes; Kylan Isaac opened the scoring with a 17th-minute conversion; and Howayne James scored the final goal for Rangers in the 90th minute.

Josue "Naymar" Arias also failed to convert a penalty kick in the 35th minute for Rangers.

Dimitri Scotland had conversions in the 40th and 81st minutes; Jomol Semper scored in the 27th minute; and Adrian Baron converted a penalty kick in the 55th minute for Police.

In a battle between two teams that were relegated

from last season's Premier Division, SAP FC prevailed 4-2 against Swetes at the Bolans playing field.

The goal scorers for SAP FC are Devonta German in the 11th minute, Peter Byers in the 22nd minute, Tyrique Tonge in the 60th, and Jermaine Browne in the 68th minute.

Vashawn James scored in the 27th minute, and Clive Sansculotte had a 55th-minute conversion for Swetes, which ended the game with 10 men after T'Noy Andrew received a red card and was expelled in the 40th minute.

Empire romped to an emphatic 5-0 victory against the Liberta Blackhawks at Ball Beef in Liberta.

Nyque Watkins scored in the 12th minute, Jomo Andrew had a 23rd-minute conversion, and Devontae Frederick scored in the 26th minute to give Empire a three-nil halftime lead.

Empire wrapped up the match with two second-half goals by Rajiel Parchment in the 54th minute and Mickle Culzac in the 61st minute.

Belmont and English Harbour got off to a winning start in the ABFA's Second Division on Friday. Oshane Blackwood and Clarence Marsh both struck hat tricks



in English Harbour's 10-1 drubbing of TAMO FC at English Harbour.

Blackwood had conversions in the 7th, 19th, and 39th minutes, while Marsh scored in the 36th, 72nd, and 84th minutes.

Akeem Weekes scored twice with conversions in the 12th and 48th minutes, while the other goals for English Harbour were scored by Delroy Simpson in the 10th minute and Otis Polimis in the 77th minute. Jahiem Grant scored a consolation goal for TAMO FC in the 82nd minute.

Jahvier Joseph scored twice as Belmont prevailed

4-1 against CPTSA Wings at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

Joseph had conversions in the 6th and 14th minutes, Iandre Hodge scored in the 16th minute, and Zamaal Greene had a 76th-minute conversion for Belmont FC. Kimmani Gyles scored the only goal for Wings in the 32nd minute.

But the game between Blackburn Palace FC and Real Blizzard FC was not played due to an unmarked PMS playing field, and there wasn't any play in the encounter between host Golden Grove FC and Earthquake FC.

## Antigua advance to final of ECVA Men's Championship

Defending champions and hosts Antigua and Barbuda remained on course for a successful defense of their title in the 2024 Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association's (ECVA) Senior Men's Championships at the YMCA Sports Complex on Sunday.

Antigua and Barbuda extended their unbeaten run to beat former perennial champion St. Lucia 3-1 in the semi-finals at the indoor volleyball stadium in St. John's and advanced to the final to face fellow unbeaten team Dominica in the final later that same night.

The Antiguan prevailed 25-22, 16-25, 25-21, and 27-25 against the St. Lucians, while Dominica booked their spot in the final by ousting Grenada 3-0 in the second semi-final, winning 25-18, 25-19, and 25-23.

Antigua and Barbuda defeated Grenada 3-1 (25-13, 20-25, 25-18, and 25-22) in their final preliminary round encounter to finish top of Group A in their five-team round-robin pool play.

Antigua and Barbuda prevailed 3-0 against St. Eustatius in their opening



Antigua and Barbuda's opposite hitter Adrian Constant goes on the attack against Grenada during their Pool A match in the 2024 Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association's Senior Men's Championships at the YMCA Sports Complex on Saturday, October 26, 2024. (ABAVA)

encounter. The Antiguan ousted the British Virgin Islands (BVI) 3-0 (25-11, 25-19, and 25-19) and overcame a 2-0 deficit to snatch a hard-fought 3-2 victory against Bermuda (24-26, 27-29, 25-19, 25-14, and 15-9).

Losing to Antigua and Barbuda was the first loss suffered by Grenada in the

tournament. The Grenadians advanced to the semi-finals after finishing second in Group A. Grenada recorded 3-1 victories against Bermuda and the BVI and defeated St. Eustatius 3-0 in pool play.

Dominica won all their matches in pool play to finish at the top of Group B. The Dominicans recorded

3-1 victories against Anguilla, St. Maarten, and St. Lucia and prevailed 3-0 against Saba.

The St. Lucians qualified for the semi-finals after finishing second in Group B. St. Lucia recorded 3-0 victories against Saba, Anguilla, and St. Maarten in their other matches in pool play.