



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

POINT **EXPRESS**

TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

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Celebrating Our Independence



Antigua and Barbuda

FROM COMMUNITY COLLABORATION TO GLOBAL GAINS



HAPPY 43RD INDEPENDENCE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

from K.M. Morgan Mens Collection and Modern Chic Women's Collection as we celebrate leveling up from Community collaboration to Global Gains.



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Independence Messages

PAGE 3

Message from His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General of Antigua & Barbuda on the 43rd Anniversary of Independence

November 1, 2024

My Fellow Citizens and Residents of Antigua and Barbuda,

On this, our nation's 43rd Independence Day, my family and I join you in celebrating another year of progress and resilience. This year, we gather under the theme, "From Community Collaboration to Global Gains", a theme that reminds us of the strength we find in unity and the potential we unlock through cooperation.

The power of community collaboration has held a special meaning for me over the past few weeks during challenging times. My family and I were deeply moved by the tremendous outpouring of support, prayers, and well-wishes from citizens, residents,

and friends, both at home and abroad. The exemplary cooperation demonstrated by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, the Government of the People's Republic of China, and the Chinese Ambassador and her team reflects the very essence of our independence theme. My heartfelt gratitude to you all.

In keeping with this spirit of celebration, I also extend my congratulations to this year's national honorees selected by the Honours Committee. Their achievements reflect the resilience and dedication of many unsung heroes who quietly strengthen our nation. Each year, we recognize a select few who have gone above and beyond

cont'd on pg 4



Governor General Sir Rodney Williams



The graphic features the Antigua and Barbuda flag on the left. In the center, there is a circular logo for the Social Security Board (SSB) with the text "SSB BAB" and "growing to provide for you" below it. To the right of the SSB logo is a circular inset showing a scenic view of Antigua and Barbuda. Further right is a large "43" with a sunburst inside the "3", and the text "YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE" below it. Below this is the text "Antigua and Barbuda FROM COMMUNITY COLLABORATION TO GLOBAL GAINS". At the bottom right, there is a quote: "The Directors, Management and Staff of the Antigua and Barbuda Social Security Board, congratulate the people of Antigua & Barbuda on its 43rd year of Independence." Below the quote is an image of a windmill. In the bottom left corner, there is contact information for the Social Security Board, including a P.O. Box, address, telephone number, email, and website, along with Facebook and Instagram icons.

**P.O. Box 1125
Long Street
St. John's, Antigua
Tel: 1-268-736-3000
Email: socsec@socialsecurity.gov.ag
Web Site: www.socialsecurity.gov.ag**

43 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE
Antigua and Barbuda
FROM COMMUNITY COLLABORATION
TO GLOBAL GAINS

The Directors, Management and Staff of the Antigua and Barbuda Social Security Board, congratulate the people of Antigua & Barbuda on its 43rd year of Independence.

Independence Messages



cont'd from pg 3

in their service, while remaining equally grateful to those who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make invaluable contributions to Antigua and Barbuda.

Community and collaboration begin close to home. It starts with community groups, neighbours, friends, and families, who share common interests and work together to make a difference. Whether it's addressing waste disposal, beautifying neighborhoods, or creating safer spaces, these efforts uplift us all. Each small, collective action builds the foundation of a stronger, more cohesive society, creating a ripple effect that touches every part of our national community.

Yet, as we reflect on our contributions locally, we must also recognize our place within the wider world. Just as communities collaborate to improve their local surroundings, so must we, as a small island nation, engage with other countries to address shared chal-

lenges that affect us all. When nations unite to tackle global issues like climate change, environmental protection, and sustainable development, our combined efforts have a profound impact. Together, we move from community-driven initiatives to global progress.

Environmental concerns are especially pressing for small island developing states like ours. Our beloved Antigua and Barbuda is particularly vulnerable to climate change, with rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and increasingly intense hurricanes threatening our ecosystems. Our coral reefs, vital marine environments, and coastal habitats are under threat, endangering the natural beauty and biodiversity that we hold dear and upon which our tourism and marine industries depend. Community collaboration in environmental protection, both locally and internationally, is therefore essential, not only to preserve our natural heritage but also to secure our future.

Today, as we celebrate 43 years of independence, let us commit to advancing our communities through unity, respect, and stewardship. Let us stand in solidarity with the global community, recognizing that the challenges we face are not ours alone. Through purposeful collaboration, we can work toward a future where all nations, large and small, share the benefits of a healthy, resilient planet.

Fellow citizens, residents, and friends, Happy Independence to each and every one of you. May we continue to move from strength to strength, grounded in community and rising to meet global challenges together.

May God bless Antigua and Barbuda.

Sincerely,

His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams
GCMG, KGNG, KSt.J, DSc, PhD
(h.c.), MBBS, FCAMA
Governor-General of Antigua and Barbuda



ANTIGUA
AND BARBUDA



HAPPY
INDEPENDENCE
DAY ANTIGUA
AND BARBUDA

Independence Messages



Independence Day Message 2024 from Prime Minister Gaston Browne

1st November 2024

I join in wishing the entire nation and all of its people, at home and abroad, a happy and memorable 43rd Anniversary of Independence.

“From Community Collaboration to Global Gains,” is this year’s theme. Truly, it reflects the ambitions which our country has set for itself and its people, with the expectation of influencing our regional neighbours and guiding the multilateral institutions of which Antigua and Barbuda is a member.

In May 2024, the Fourth International Conference on the Sustainability of Small



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Island Developing States (SIDS4) was held in Antigua; through planning and collaboration, a conference center was constructed that enabled all 194 United Na-

tions Member-States’ delegations to be seated comfortably.

Volunteers and professional protocol officers conjoined their efforts to

ensure a warm welcome for more than 5,000 delegates, who experienced an incident-free conference, and a safe departure. The diplomats ensured a successful outcome of SIDS4, as evidenced by the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (The ABAS).

Antigua and Barbuda has already been voted to host the Organization of American States General Assembly in 2025, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2026. These international conferences are made possible by the new conference

cont'd on pg 8

**THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ANTIGUA
CONGRATUALTES ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
ON IT'S 43RD ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE**





1ST OF NOVEMBER

**ANTIGUA AND
BARBUDA**

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Happy

43
YEARS OF
INDEPENDENCE

Antigua and Barbuda

ABTB
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA TRANSPORT BOARD

Independence Messages



HAPPY
43RD
INDEPENDENCE

FROM
The Minister of Public Utilities,
The Board of Commissioners,
and The Management and Staff.

Apua

cont'd from pg 6

center and the willingness of the many volunteers and professionals who are expected to give of their time and talent: From Community Collaboration to Global Gains.

The issue of reparations continues to occupy the drive and insistence of CARICOM Heads. The idea of compensating the exploited for hundreds of years of deliberate under-development and inhumane exploitation—which defined our country's 300-year modern history—is a just and lawful cause.

As our country battles the developed countries for their history of polluting the skies with unwanted gases

and billions of tons of particulate matter, each year, our safety is imperiled and the altered global climate threatens to disrupt normalcy on our planet. We are compelled to fight.

Our country's sovereignty, now 43 years old, makes us but a youth among states that were formed since 1776 or 1804. Yet, our impact on world affairs cannot be disregarded. We will continue to secure a better world for future generations of nationals and Caribbean citizens.

**Honourable Gaston
Browne M.P.
Prime Minister**

FORM P7

THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

(Rule 15)

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
ANUHPB 2024/0290

In the Estate of "CARLOS GUILLAMON" also known as "CARLOS GUILLAMON SIERRA", late of
Houston Texas, USA, Deceased.

ADVERTISEMENT OF APPLICATION FOR GRANT

FIRST PUBLICATION

TAKE NOTICE that an Application has been filed by **NELVA ELENA ANGULO BOZO** of 2918 Meadowglen CV, Houston, Texas 77082, United States, for a Grant of Letters of Administration to the Applicant who is the surviving spouse of the deceased, the deceased having died intestate on the 7th day of May, 2019.

Any person having an objection to the Grant of Letters of Administration to the Applicant shall file an objection within fourteen (14) days of the publication of this Notice.

Dated the 31st day of October, 2024

TALIA N. DACOSTA
STAPLETON CHAMBERS
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW
FOR THE APPLICANT



Happy 43rd Independence
to the Government and People
of Antigua and Barbuda.

From Community
Collaboration to
**Global
Gains**

www.acbonline.com



Independence Messages



Message from Hon. Daryll Matthew, Minister of Education, Sports and The Creative Industries, and Member of Parliament for St. John's Rural South

As we celebrate 43 years of nationhood, we reflect on how far we have come as a united and resilient people. This year's theme, "From Community Collaboration to Global Gains," is as significant, as it is timely, since it speaks to the strength that arises when we work together.

Today, as we embrace a more interconnected world, we are reminded that the strides we make at home contribute to our global impact. Indeed, we have shown global leadership in addressing the challenges of Climate Change, in our advocacy for Small Island Developing States, and in delivering to



Hon. Daryll Matthew

the sporting world a spectacular Cricket T20 World Cup.

These monumental achievements demonstrate that in every village and school, every family and

community, the spirit of collaboration brings about meaningful progress. Through partnerships, education, and a commitment to mutual growth, we are shaping a generation ready to excel on the world stage.

As Minister of Education, Sports, and the Creative Industries, I am inspired by the talent and determination of our young people, and I am proud of our strides in empowering the next generation with the tools and knowledge they need to lead. Our young people carry the promise of our nations' future, and when we invest in their future, we strengthen our communities and our standing in the world.

Each year, we honor the sacrifices of those who came before us, those who dared to dream of an independent and prosperous Antigua and Barbuda. Their spirit lives on in our aspirations, in our culture, and in our achievements. Together, let us continue to build on their legacy, ensuring that each step forward reflects the spirit of hard work, and mutual accomplishment embodied in our national motto, "Each Endeavoring, All Achieving".

Happy 43rd Independence, Antigua and Barbuda! Let us never underestimate the power of community and the limitless potential we can achieve together.

Hon. Daryll S. Matthew



LONG MAY OUR FLAG WAVE AS WE CELEBRATE OUR 43RD YEAR OF POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE !

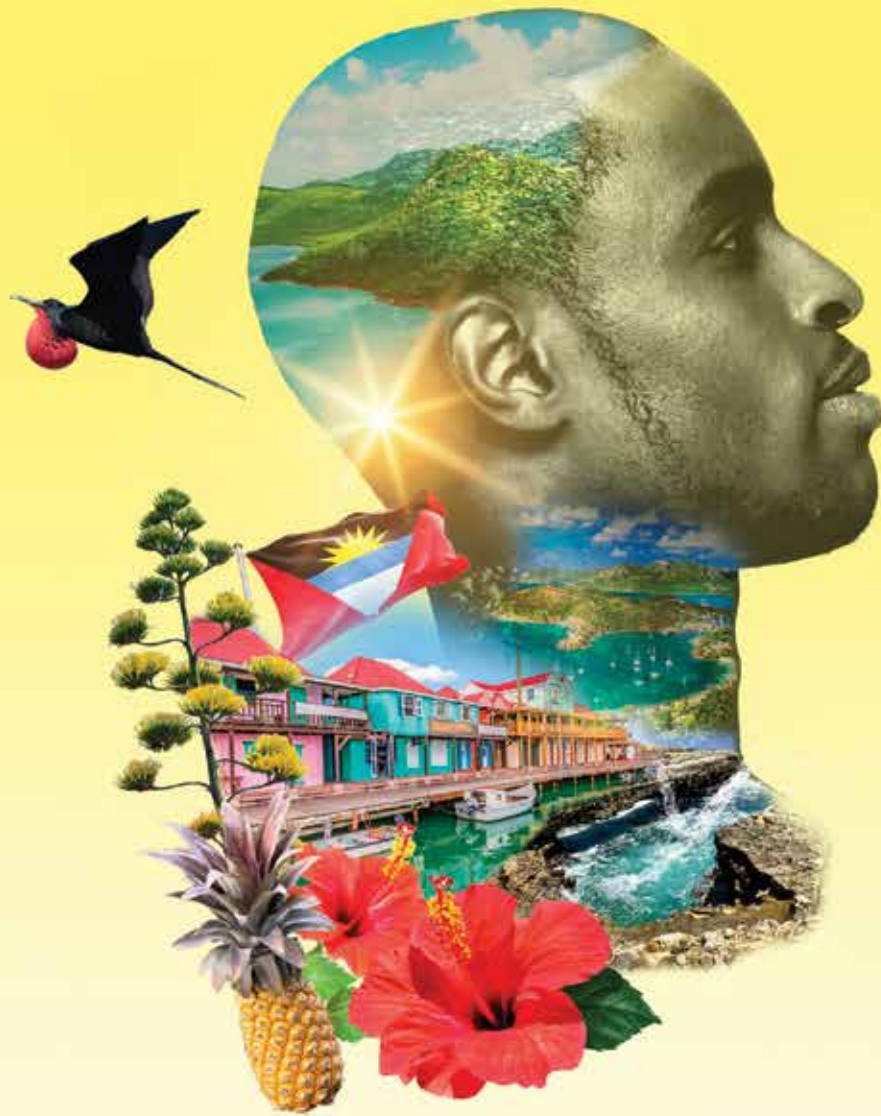
HAPPY INDEPENDENCE ANTIGUA & BARBUDA



FROM THE BOARD, MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF THE CENTRAL MARKETING CORPORATION



HONOURING OUR
LEGACY
EMBRACING GLOBAL VISIONS



Happy 43rd Independence to Antigua and Barbuda

Today we celebrate the creativity that shapes a
brighter, more prosperous future for our nation.

Independence Messages



Message from Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries, Senator Shenella Govia



Happy 43rd Independence Day, Antigua and Barbuda! We proudly celebrate our rich history, vibrant culture, and the journey our nation has undertaken since gaining independence.

This year's theme, "From Community Collaborations to Global Gains," beautifully encapsulates the essence of our progress.

Independence means more than just freedom; it signifies our strength and resilience as a nation. It is

a call to action for all of us to come together.

Independence represents the dreams and aspirations of our ancestors, who fought tirelessly for the liberty we enjoy today. It's a commitment to building a future where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

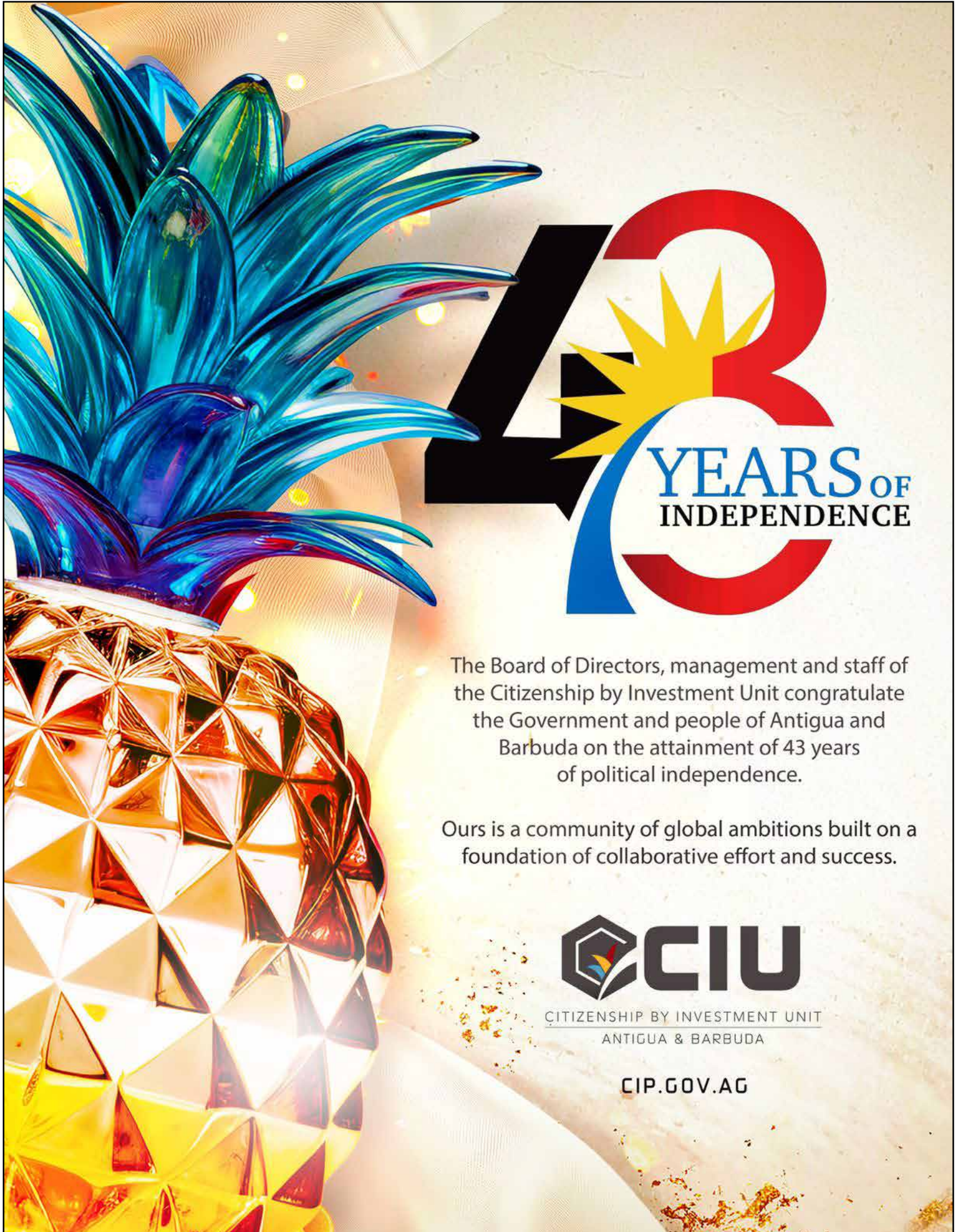
May we continue to nurture our communities, knowing that through collaboration, we can achieve great things and ensure that the gains we make resonate far beyond our shores.

GLOBAL BANK OF COMMERCE

Global Bank of Commerce joins in wishing the
nation of Antigua and Barbuda a
Happy 43rd Anniversary of Independence.

*From Community
Collaboration to Global Gains*

www.globalbankofcommerce.com



The Board of Directors, management and staff of the Citizenship by Investment Unit congratulate the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda on the attainment of 43 years of political independence.

Ours is a community of global ambitions built on a foundation of collaborative effort and success.



CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT UNIT
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

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Independence Messages



Independence Message from Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission Chair Ambassador Elizabeth Makhoul

Greetings,

As we approach November 1st, 2024, we stand on the threshold of a monumental celebration—our nation's 43rd year of Independence. With immense pride and joy, I extend heartfelt wishes to all Antiguan and Barbudans at home and abroad. This year's theme, Antigua and Barbuda: From Community Collaboration to Global Gains, encapsulates our journey, achievements, and aspirations as a resilient nation.

This Independence Day invites us to reflect deeply on the strength that emerges from unity and collective effort. Our forebears fought valiantly for the freedom we cherish today. Their courage and commitment to our nation serve as a powerful reminder that

when we come together as a community, we can pave the way for remarkable progress and elevate our standing on the global stage.

In recent years, Antigua and Barbuda has showcased our people's extraordinary talent and creativity. From our vibrant culture to our burgeoning industries, we have harnessed the spirit of collaboration to achieve remarkable gains. Whether it is delivering memorable festivals and events, enhancing our tourism, championing our arts, or developing innovative solutions to modern challenges, we have set a standard for nations to emulate.

As Chairlady of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission, I am

cont'd on pg 16



Ambassador Elizabeth Makhoul



Simone Sanguinette-Hadeed

Architect, Antigua and Barbuda



Happy Independence, Antigua and Barbuda!

As we honour 43 years of independence, let's celebrate the proud heritage, vibrant culture and colours that are inspired by the natural beauty of our nation.



0029

0666

1127

1063

0697



from the Caribbean Design Collection

Heyday



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Celebrating

43

Years of
INDEPENDENCE

FROM COMMUNITY COLLABORATION
TO GLOBAL GAINS

Independence Messages



cont'd from pg 14

privileged to oversee our Independence celebrations, which truly reflect our unity and diversity. Our theme was meticulously chosen and designed to celebrate who we are and what we have accomplished together. Kicking off on October 23rd with our Barbuda activities, culminating on November 1st with our vibrant Independence Food Fair alongside the Ceremonial Parade, eleven (11) days of national pride and captivating experiences.

A clarion call was heard inviting every citizen and every visitor to support our 43rd Independence festivities to immerse in the spirit of who we are as a people. My young people made me proud, showing their steadfastness, with over seven thousand (7000)

students participating in our National Youth Rally and fifteen (15) schools participating in ACB Caribbean Panorama, making these events the

largest we have seen to date. Permit me to extend heartiest congratulations to the Greenbay Primary School and Antigua Grammar School, the 2024 ACB Caribbean Panorama Champions. Young People, stay focused as we transition to Global Gains. ACB Caribbean, when we speak of community collaboration, it's through corporate citizens like you and as Chairperson, I publicly recognize and thank you on behalf of the Hon. Daryll S. Matthew, Minister of Education, Sports and Creative Industries and the Commissioners of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission.

Let us take this moment to recognize not only the journey we have traveled but also the challenges that lie ahead. Together, we can build a sustainable future fueled by collaboration and shared values. As we continue to forge global gains, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to inclu-

sion, empowerment, and progress for all.

On this momentous occasion, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to each of you—every Antiguan and Barbudan—for your unwavering dedication to our beloved twin island nation of Antigua and Barbuda. Our strength lies in the unity of our purpose and our shared dreams. Let us continue to work together, uplift each other, and inspire future generations to embrace their identity and potential.

So, as we celebrate our 43rd Year of political independence, let us stand together with pride. Let us raise our flag high, proclaiming boldly, "Antigua and Barbuda, a Nation United, Moving Towards Global Gains!"

Warm regards,

Amb. Elzabeth Makhoul

Chairperson

Antigua and Barbuda Festivals

Commission

**HAPPY INDEPENDENCE
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

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Congratulates the Nation of

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

on its



ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE

FROM COMMUNITY COLLABORATION TO GLOBAL GAINS

Independence Messages



Message from Sir James Carlisle: A reminder of God's kindness to our nation at Independence

September 12, 2024 will go down in history as a day when many prayers were offered for God to intervene in our nation's affairs. The Day of Prayer was in response to the worrying increase in crime especially among young men.

As a follow-up, the Honourable Gaston Browne met with gang leaders and participated in a football match with them. In doing so he showed that he was willing to meet the young men where they are.

Many of these youngsters have re-entered the education system. I have no doubt that they will succeed if they are given the necessary support and encouragement. Teachers, parents and members of the wider society must work together.

The police have stepped up their activities. Several guns have been confiscated and a number of arrests made.



Sir James Carlisle GCMG

Despite what has been done, crime has continued to rise. It is an indication that there is still more work to be done.

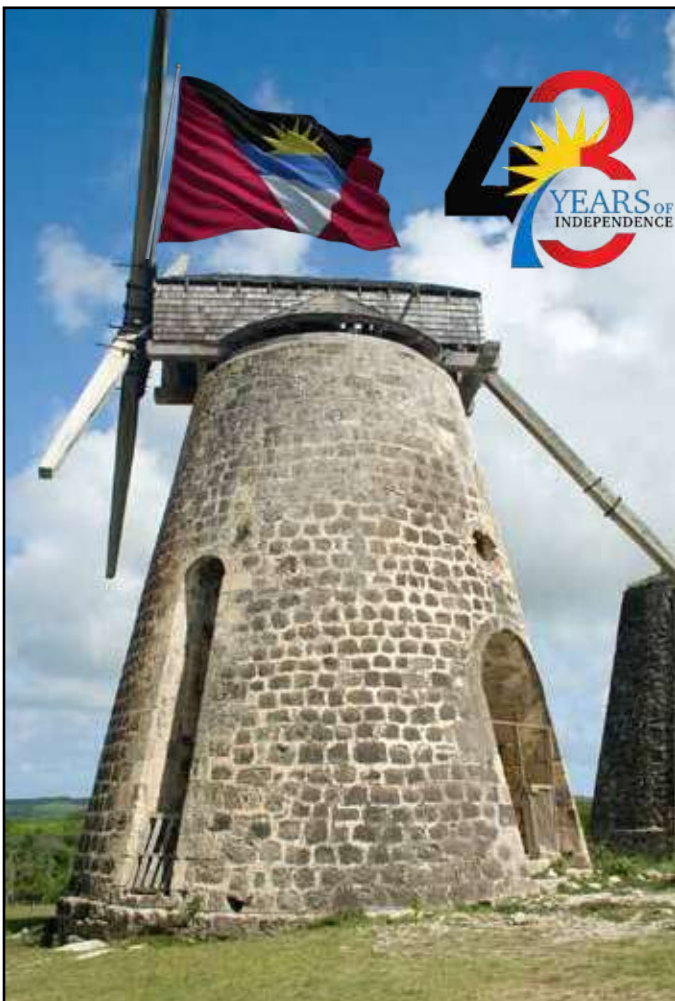
I believe that church leaders of every denomination can play an even bigger role in helping to resolve this problem. The re-introduction of prayers in schools is a good start but every effort should be made to encourage our young people to attend church. Research has shown

that church attendance is associated with greater life satisfaction, among other things.

There are those who will say that when we acquire education, God should be taken out of the picture. They prefer to listen to the advice of atheists like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. But I would like to remind them that Francis Collins who led the Human Genome Project is a firm believer in God. He is a more eminent scientist than Dawkins or Hitchens.

As we celebrate the 43rd Anniversary of independence, let us remind ourselves of the admonition given by the Apostle Paul given in 1Thessalonians 5:17. "Pray without ceasing." Our nation needs prayer all the time.

*Sir James Carlisle GCMG
Governor-General Emeritus*



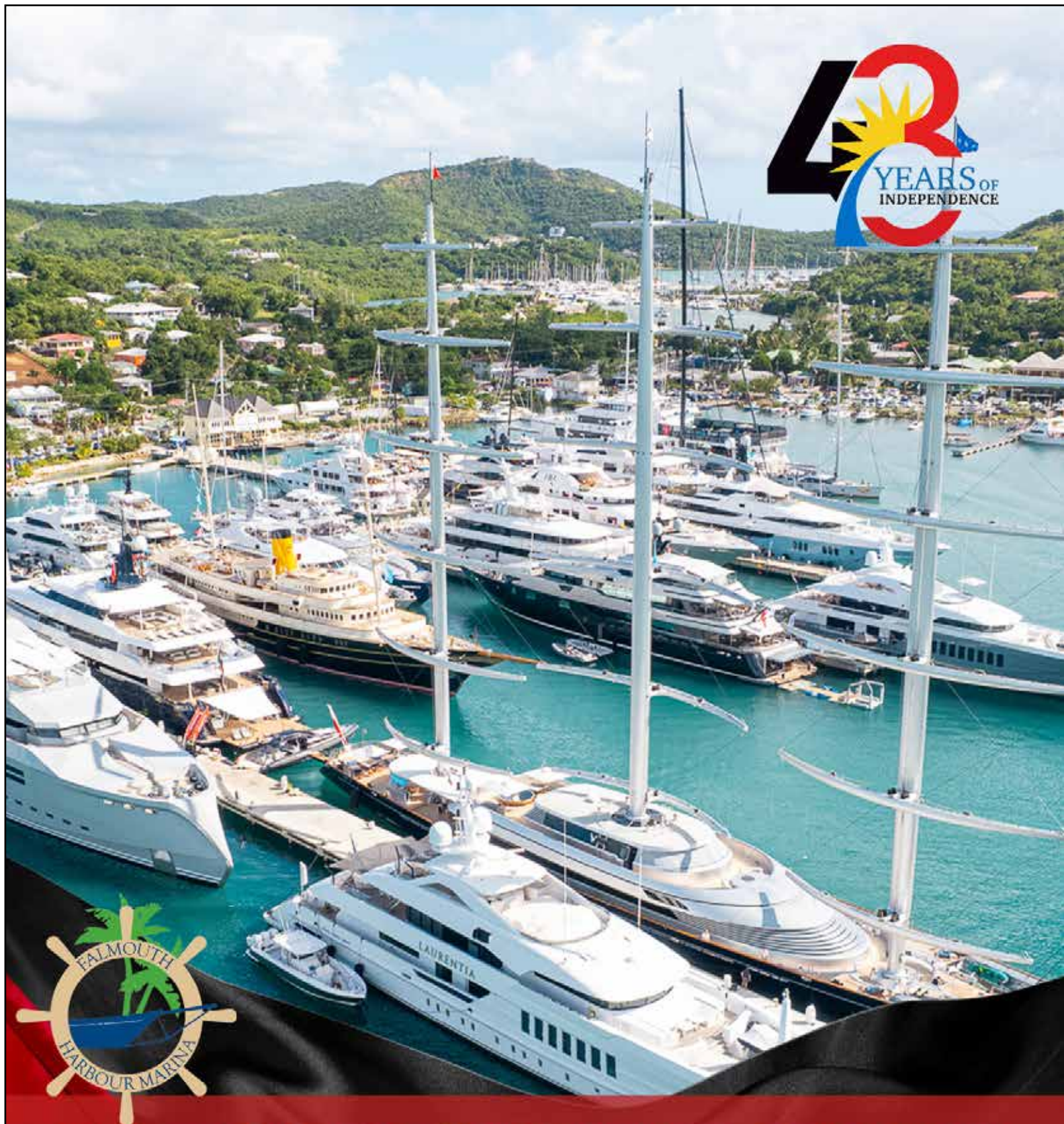
Happy 43rd Independence
Antigua and Barbuda

**From the management and
staff of Total Imports
Supplies Ltd.**

*Celebrating the resilience, unity and
pride of our people.*

**#8 Paynters Industrial Park
Sir Sydney Walling Hwy
St. John's | Antigua
268-736-8802**





Just 13 years after our nation attained independence, a group of visionary, indigenous Antiguan's pooled their financial and other resources and established Falmouth Harbour Marina.

We experienced many obstacles along the way but today Falmouth Harbour Marina is now recognized as Antigua's Premier Superyacht Marina. We are proud of this great and blessed country. Happy 43rd Anniversary Antigua and Barbuda.

Independence Special



The Antigua and Barbuda Economy at Independence 2024; A success story to tell

The Antigua and Barbuda economy has regained all the grounds it lost during the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic when it lost more than twenty percent of its value. Tangible indicators of the strength and performance of the economy will come to light when all the data is presented to the Ministry of Finance at the end of the year. New records are expected to be established in revenues; an economy valued at over \$6 billion and growth rate that averaged approximately eight (8) percent over the last several years.

It is instructive too, that the economy will out-perform the forecast of leading international institutions; the International Monetary Fund has predicted growth of just over four percent for 2024, while the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is predicting that the economy will grow by six percent.

However, in the words of Financial Secretary, Rasona Davis-Crump, who provided insights into the economy as the country celebrates its 43rd anniversary of Political Independence, real growth for the year will be between seven (7) and eight (8) percent.

"We continue to rebound (from the pandemic) very, very strongly as we expect growth of between 7 and 8 percent for 2024. There are projections by ECLAC on one hand, which indicates that the growth will be 6.3 percent, however, the figures upon which those projections are based, are from June this year. The IMF has projected 4.9 percent," she revealed.

Davis-Crump said she is not too concerned about the projections at this point as in the end 'the figures will bear things out' when the actual data arrives at the end of the year. That's important according to the Financial Secretary as



there are many uncertainties, mainly international, that could still impact the economy negatively.

"There are many things that are unfolding that could have knock-on effects on the economy positively or negatively. However, based on where we are today with the projects that are in the pipeline in terms of hotels, business expansion or private home construction coupled with the significant performance in tourism, I would say that we are looking very good," she declared.

Tourism is the main driver of the Antigua and Barbuda economy and recent data indicates that the sector has already bypassed the figures for 2019, generally seen as the best performing year on record for Antigua and Barbuda tourism.

At a meeting in St. John's to discuss plans for Antigua and Barbuda to host Caribbean Marketplace next year, CEO of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), Vanessa Ledesma said the Caribbean continues to show impressive growth with a 16% increase in international arrivals compared to 2023, ranking second only to the APAC region. "Antigua and Barbuda, in particular, is leading this surge, with an expected 17% growth in overseas arrivals from October to December, just behind

St. Maarten. Moreover, Antigua and Barbuda stands out as the top-performing destination in terms of seat capacity growth, with a remarkable 19% increase over last year. These statistics clearly demonstrate the value Antigua and Barbuda brings as the host of Caribbean Travel Marketplace 2025, cementing its position as a key player in regional tourism," she observed.

Similar sentiments were expressed by the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association in their report on the cruise sector just last week. It showed that Antigua and Barbuda ranks only second to St. Kitts Nevis in terms of passenger and crews spending among Eastern Caribbean destinations. The total for Antigua and Barbuda was US\$89.1 million. This as the number of cruise calls and passengers continues to grow.

There are going to be several significant developments in the 2024/25 winter cruise season. Firstly, the Arvia, which has been home-porting in Antigua and Barbuda over the past two seasons, will be overnighing in the St. John's Harbour during its nine scheduled visits this season. Secondly, both the Falmouth Harbour and Barbuda will see more cruise calls this season; Falmouth Harbour will

cont'd on pg 22

Happy 43rd Independence

Antigua and Barbuda!

The Board of Directors and members of the ABHTA celebrates our nation's strength, unity, and vibrant culture.

Here's to a future that honours our heritage and embraces boundless possibilities.

Happy Independence Day!



ABHTA

ANTIGUA BARBUDA HOTELS & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

📞 1.268.462.0374/4928

🌐 www.antiguahotels.org

📍 Antigua and Barbuda Hotels & Tourism Association
Island House . Newgate Street. St. John's. Antigua



@antiguahotels

Independence Special



cont'd from pg 20

get more than forty and Barbuda is over twenty calls.

Size of the Economy

The Antigua and Barbuda economy has doubled in size between 2014 and 2024. Based on data from the Ministry of Finance, the economy will value in excess of \$6 billion by yearend. Up from the roughly \$3 billion in 2014. There are signs that the country's economy is back on track with the pandemic decline a distant sight in the rearview mirror.

"At the end of 2019, the value of the economy (market prices) was \$4.5 billion. Based on the growth that we have achieved so far, we are looking at in excess of \$6 billion for 2024. This growth is expected to continue into 2025. Our projections are that by the end of 2025 we will be at \$6.5 billion, roughly \$2 billion more than it was for 2019," Davis-Crump remarked.

She added that 'all this is predicated' on the expectations that the anticipated growth in tourism and in construction will continue.

Revenue growth

Another indicator of the performance of the economy has been the growth in revenues for the year. This year, the government added two percent to the ABST to move it from 15 percent to 17 percent along with other measures

to improve revenues. The year is not yet over and the government revenues have seen strong growth in the first ten months of the year.

The financial secretary is confident that the ABST, which was projected at \$413.6 million this year, will be surpassed when the final figures are tabulated. Comptroller of Customs, Raju Boddu is reporting that as of October 31, 2024, revenues at his department totaled \$397.1 million compared with \$327.6 million for the same period last year. This is an increase of \$69.50 million, or an increase of twenty-one point two one percent (21.21%). For the month of October, revenues amounted to over \$46 million, another increase over the amount for the same month last year.

Concerns

Despite the good news and supporting data about the performance of the Antigua and Barbuda economy, the financial secretary expressed two main areas of concern. One has to do with collections. She said based on the size of the economy estimated at \$6 billion and with government expected to collect 20 percent of that in revenue, a quick calculation shows that the amount that goes into government's coffers from taxes etc., should be \$1.5 billion. "We are not there yet; in fact, we are not at the billion dollar mark yet and that is a concern. It

also speaks to a high level of non-compliance and these are issues that must be dealt with sooner rather than later," she emphasized.

Davis-Crump is also concerned about the state of the country's infrastructure. She said she recently queried a visiting consultant and asked what would be his initial impression of the country as a first-time visitor with little prior knowledge. She indicated that the consultant's observations were that there are visible signs that things are happening, but that the country's infrastructure did not quite reflect the state of the economy.

According to Davis-Crump, the team at the Ministry of Finance is working diligently to provide the resources to the critical ministries so that they can do the job of improving the country's infrastructure.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who is also the Minister of Finance, announced earlier in the year that the government has spent \$20 million to acquire equipment for the Ministry of Works to undertake a massive road repair and improvement programme that is slated to start in the first quarter of next year.

These were two of her concerns overall, however the financial secretary is happy with the state of the Antigua and Barbuda economy.



**HAPPY 43RD ANNIVERSARY
OF INDEPENDENCE
FROM**

THE HADEED GROUP OF COMPANIES



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Independence Special



Reparatory justice for Independence: Stop pruning the colonial tree

By Dorbrene E. O'Marde

On the achievement of independence in 1981, UWI theoreticians had labeled the framework within which we, Antigua and Barbuda and other small Caribbean territories operated as that of a 'stationary village-state' in a condition of subsistence equilibrium punctuated by the disequilibria of limited grants, remittances from abroad, and market subsidies for export agriculture...'. Not much has changed in the last forty-three years except that the market subsidies have disappeared and tourism has become our main export.

In Antigua and Barbuda specifically, the following is of importance. 'For over 200 years until the early 1950s Antigua was deliberately made a monoculture economy – sugar', producing a situation where 'labour and



Dorbrenne E. O'Marde

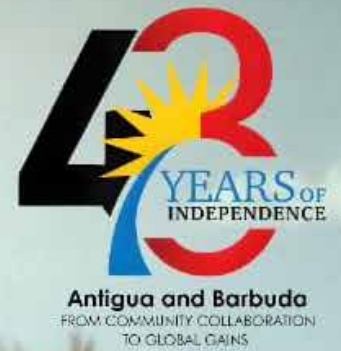
land were therefore, completely tied up by the sugar barons and no cultivation of food crops was possible'.

By 1980 the pattern established by slavery/colonialism that 'any food supplies as were necessary could be imported from elsewhere' manifested itself in the fact that the food import bill represented over twenty-five percent (25%) of the country's total imports in terms of cost. The balance of trade deficit was approximately sixty percent (60%).

The colonial sugar policy had 'fostered a deliberate decision to ignore the educational development of the people. The legislature, dominated by the sugar barons, saw no benefit in educating workers needed for their fields and therefore, they simply ignored education altogether'. It was the churches until 1914 that provided basic education for the masses.

There were two main philo-
cont'd on pg 26





Happy Independence to Antigua and Barbuda, my adopted homeland! The Ayre Group of Companies is proud to stand with the people of this beautiful nation, through our commitment to social responsibility and community growth. We extend our warmest wishes for continued success, prosperity, and unity. Happy Independence Day!

AYRE
VENTURES


CALVINAYRE
FOUNDATION

CALVINAIR
HELICOPTERS

Independence Special



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sophical approaches to our independence. Lester Bird, then the main thinker and speaker of the ruling Antigua Labour Party saw independence primarily as an achievement of freedom – the ability to tell the world ‘We are free. We are our own masters. We are an independent nation’. On occasion though, he did suggest that political independence was not ‘an end in itself’.

The thinking on the left voiced by Tim Hector and other columnists in the Independence Issue of ‘OUT-LET’ saw Independence as the transfer of power – ‘the

struggle to establish a national economy and thereby real democracy. They reasoned that without a national economy – owned and controlled by the people, for the people – ‘the political elite that wishes to retain the old order will govern under the pretense of democracy, but will use the full measure of bluff and bluster, sham and jam, jobbery and bribery, fraud and corruption, the threat or the reality of nation brutal force.

Our artists – led by King Short Shirt/Shelley Tobitt and other calypsonians and the drama of the Harambee Open Air The-

atre, infused with Caribbean regionalism, were quite clear that ‘Independence in this region don’t mean a damn, it we can’t be independent as one’. Their concern, understandably, was about the forging of a regional culture. The fear of one writer Ako Muntu was that we were achieving independence under a government ‘actively engaged in repressing expression’. He held that a government which could be described ‘as enemies of the people was by definition ‘enemies of culture and of the spiritual values of the nation.’

George Lamming in a

pre-independence address here raised the question of power and provided a glum assessment of the Caribbean Independence Project initiated in 1962 in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago: ‘If we try to face this question [of power] seriously, whatever island territory we choose, we may discover that there has been little cause for celebration. This doesn’t mean that Independence is an undesirable attainment. It means that we might show a greater respect for ourselves if we approached it in an attitude of mournful silence. It would also be less expensive.’

Those were the philosophies. Some of the facts were that Antigua and Barbuda at attainment of independence shared many of the characteristics of the OECS member states:

1. Small resource-challenged, structurally dependent, open economy, which is prone to natural disasters. Hugely dependent on capital flows from overseas whether by way of foreign direct investment, grants or loans, and remittances. Subject to the vagaries of international trade and dictates of the leaders of the capitalist world.

2. Small in terms of acreage that extensive agricultural production is constrained.

3. Small population with high dependency ratios yielding very limited domestic market or internal demand. Chronic unem-

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ployment and low labour productivity.

4. Marked by an insufficiency of well-developed tourism infrastructure.

5. Possessed of limitations in its private sector, especially regarding its size, an insufficiency of competitively priced credit facilities, the comparatively high cost of utilities, the lack of creativity and risk-taking, and public sector inefficiencies.

Today after forty-three years of independence, many of the characteristics have not changed. We are still small, resource challenged and now - with the intensifying ravages of climate change - prone to natural disasters. We are still plagued by high youth unemployment rates and a seemingly related malaise of growing violent crime. We are still buffeted by 'the vagaries of interna-

tional trade and dictates of the leaders of the capitalist world.' and remain without bureaucratic and private sector creativity to resist or even mitigate such.

Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Dr Ralph Gonsalves opines that 'the challenging socio-economic matrices, and connected phenomena, in the member-states of the OECS flow from pre-existing structural vulnerabilities and the history of the region's political economy - shaped primarily by colonial slavery and colonial governance.

There are positives. Between 1981 to 2021, the economy of Antigua and Barbuda has expanded almost fourfold (EC\$705.5m to EC\$2,807.7m, equivalent to USD \$261.1m to \$1,039.5m) at an annual average growth rate of below 3.1%. But this is through the expansion of a mono-crop



economy. We cannot claim much success elsewhere. Questions can be raised about the ownership and management of the 'commanding heights' of our

economy, one still plagued by the fear of economic co-operation among nationals.

The value of agriculture, forestry, and fishing as a share of GDP has more than halved, falling from 5% to 2% in 2022.¹¹ Only 18% (of a potential 30%) of our territory is used for agriculture. We continue to rely on food imports to feed ourselves, importing the global inflation of costs that result in prices that now challenge large sections of our population. Support to vulnerable groups through social security, medical benefits, pension schemes and programmes for price control attempts however to mitigate against the rising cost of living.

The reality is that for
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the past forty-three years we have not done much more than prune the colonial tree. Yes, we have made minor amendments to some aspects of colonial institutions and governance but little has changed.

The reparatory justice movement as defined by the CARICOM Reparations Commission seeks financial compensation and non-financial resources to repair the harm done to our people and countries by European leadership of the genocide of indigenous peoples, the slave trade and the enslavement of Africans and their

descendants in the region.

The movement also calls on our regional governments to strengthen both economic and political unity and enable internal efforts to heal citizens and institutions from the psychological trauma they have experienced.

It demands an invigoration of the teaching of our history; the recognition and honour of those who led efforts that brought us through the hell of our colonial past; and places emphasis on the promotion of cultural heritage.

Many issues – legacies of enslavement and

colonialism - have remained unchanged since the achievement of political independence. Our colonial-granted constitution and its protective Civil/public service scream for reform; our parliamentary leaders still swear allegiance to the King of England and his family and successors; our judicial system is still subservient to the colonial Privy Council; laws demeaning of human rights still remain on our books threatening cat-o-nine tail whippings and arbitrary arrest for congregation and traditional healing/religious practices; the images of au-

thority and prestige are not of our people – witnessed on our stamps and passports and money, repeated on reference to many of our schools and parks and streets and towns/villages.

Hopefully, the addition of the Five Island Campus of The University of the West Indies will focus attention to the content and praxis of education and the structure and focus of health care provision which remain virtually unscathed by serious national considerations.

Reparatory justice measures must be intrinsic to our development agenda. Without them, we should adhere to George Lamming's proposed attitude of 'mournful silence' when we proclaim independence. Unfortunately, we do not – holding instead loud colonial styled celebrations, clothed in Indian madras wear.

We must address the formidable historical legacy of a widespread lack of racial self-respect and the concomitant challenge of inspiring national self-confidence.

I hold therefore that our Independence Project will not be successful until the pre-existing structural vulnerabilities caused by enslavement and colonialism are addressed and made right through reparations.

The interdependence of our independence thrust and the struggle for reparations must be understood and addressed as we struggle for national development.



Education: Relevance for Growth and Development in Antigua and Barbuda

Education has been and continues to be at the root of development in Antigua and Barbuda. Dating back to the 17th century, education has maintained charting the course for advancement, growth and Antiguan and Barbudan cultural expansion. Significant time periods such as the 1830's- with the work of religious organizations; the 1840's- with Antigua becoming the teacher training hub for the Eastern Caribbean and the 1880's with the Middle-Class Education Act, leading to the birth of numerous educational institutions, education undoubtedly has been the genetrix of growth for this great nation state.

The late 1900's and early 2000's saw universal primary and secondary education, with schooling being compulsory for children between the ages of 5 to 16. While early childhood education continues to be predominantly private, growth must be celebrated in the solid foundational learning provided through the opening of the Maria Holder Early Childhood Resource Center as the fifth government pre-



Kadian Camacho
school and early childhood training center on island.

Applaudable growth is also seen in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as well as in higher education. The opening of the Harrison's Centre- Antigua and Barbuda's School of Continuing Education along with legacy institutions

such as the Antigua State College (ASC); Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute (ABHTI); Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Technology (ABIIT) and off-shore institutions such as The American University of Antigua (AUA), The American International College of Arts and Sciences (AICA-SA) and the University of Health Sciences Antigua, all play a major role in creating the envisioned "harmonious, prosperous, and modern Antigua and Barbuda founded on the principles of sustainability and inclusive growth; where equality of opportunity, peace, and justice prevail for all citizens and residents" (MTDS 2015).

At the pinnacle of this journey lies the opening of the fourth landed campus of the University of the West Indies- Five Island Campus (UWIFC) in 2019. According to the Services Sector Policy and Expansion Plan of the Ministry of Trade, Commerce, Industry, Sports, Culture and National Festivals (2017), openings now exist
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for Antigua and Barbuda to be incorporated into the global education services value chain. Pathways have now been forged to supply training and development courses to meet the varying needs of local, regional and international businesses. Undoubtedly, it is fair to say that Antigua and Barbuda provides way beyond basic education for its population and has therefore met the Education for All goal that was set for 2015.

With this strong background, the education system in Antigua and Barbuda must thrive and continue to evolve, shouldering the sustainable growth of the twin island state.

Knowledge, education and literacy must therefore remain current and relevant.

In its most traditional sense, literacy is the ability to read and write. However, today literacy refers to read-

ing and writing at a level adequate for communication, or at a level that enables one to successfully comprehend and communicate in society. This means that education and literacy play a role in providing access to power. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines literacy as a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his/ her goals, to develop his/ her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in wider society. This definition makes literacy synonymous with modern knowledge. This knowledge is measured in turn by general access, adult literacy and mean years of schooling. These indicators speak to the extent to which members of society are willing to embrace opportunities related to further and continuing education toward improving the very



quality of their lives, such as ICT's. If society is to continue to modernize, the institutions vested with the process must also modernize. The ICT in Education Policy (2013) has played a significant role in ensuring that there have been multiple initiatives to provide technological devices to

students and teachers since its inception. There has also been a focus on internet penetration in schools, where all public schools now have access to the internet, albeit with varying bandwidth, speed and spread across compounds. The onslaught of COVID-19 has taught us that much more needs to be done to ensure that all schools have the capacity to conduct online teaching and learning. This is not just in case of another pandemic, but to cater for the needs of diverse students and the evolution of global commerce.

Global commerce has been impacted upon by Generative Artificial Intelligence (GENAI), which has grown in popularity worldwide, and is changing the approach to and evaluation of teaching and learning. The University of the West Indies Five Islands Cam-

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pus (UWIFIC) has championed this through its AI policy, and the hosting of the inaugural AI conference in 2024, which brought education researchers from across the world and AI creators in one space to evaluate the transformative impact of GENAI on education.

With the rapid increase in the use of AI by students, from helping teachers save time by automating tasks, to improving teaching effectiveness by personalizing learning for students, there is significant potential for GenAI to benefit the sector. At the same time, there is considerable concern about the risks it presents, as well as skepticism about whether these can be mitigated. What is certain is that its use must be accompanied by great responsibility and ethical considerations.

This brings to fore the importance of continuous professional development of educators; not just concerning AI in education, but all aspects of the education journey. Educators are key to the teaching and learning process and can only impart current and relevant content using appropriate pedagogy, if they too experience continu-

ous learning.

Much research has been done on this globally, however local research is deficient. The UWIFIC moved swiftly into action to increase educational opportunities for educators by providing bachelor's and master's degrees in education; and scholarships have been provided to educators to access the same. In September 2024, UWIFIC admitted its first cohort of PhD students.

It is the firm belief of this writer that "research is at the very heart of the development of any society. For without research and research driven decisions and initiatives, a society simply paces the treadmill of time". PhD students and other researchers in Antigua and Barbuda now also have a local avenue to share their research through the annual Ministry of Education Research Symposium, which also offers publication opportunities.

This means not only is a local repository of research being created, the appetite for research among Antiguan and Barbudans is being revived.

This is further incentivized through the Education Research Grant offered through the ministry's research department as well as the Student Researcher of the Year Award created to encourage a culture -change surrounding the importance of research and data usage by targeting emerging generations.

The conclusion one can draw is that much has been done to ensure that education in Antigua and Barbuda continues to evolve and cater for the changing needs of education stakeholders.

But all has not been accomplished. It is important to celebrate what has been achieved and from where the nation state has come, but it is equally important that investments must be made in education to ensure that our development is sustainable.

Where the government is unable,



the private sector must be invited to engage in more scholarship opportunities for studies and research at the highest level. The recent Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) 4 Conference was held in Antigua at the conference facility at the American University of Antigua campus.

Antigua's hosting of the SIDS 4 Conference at an educational institution was not only memorable, meaningful and profound, but it was also symbolic of the fact that education is the vehicle toward the development of these states. Antigua and Barbuda continues to move towards an education system without barriers.

One in which "coloring outside the lines" as suggested by the Education Sector Strategy is possible and encouraged. As one student writer puts it, "we are truly living in an exciting time! So much still needs to be done, but so much has been achieved...I look forward to the day when the only cost [to my education] is how much I am willing to study; or how much I am willing to read. This is the day when there will be no economic barrier to my learning." (Ethan Camacho 2024)



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Culture, its meaning, its significance and its relevance

By Khan Cordice

In our society, the term “culture” encompasses a variety of meanings. For some, it refers to the practices and traditions of older generations. For others, it involves artistic expressions such as dance, music, theater, writing, or visual arts. At its most basic level, culture can be defined as a way of life that evolves in response to environmental influences. Personally, I see culture as our collective ability to understand, accept, and showcase our identity through socialization institutions, including schools, churches, community groups, and, most importantly, families.

In our community, there is often a misunderstanding of culture and how it is preserved and transmitted. The idea that the responsibility for culture rests with any one individual or entity is misguided. In reality, culture is the collective responsibility of everyone who lives in our twin-island nation, including newcomers who have settled among us.

One difficult truth to accept is that culture is always changing, influenced by numerous factors. For instance, what did our culture look like 43 years ago? As a 34-year-old, I can only draw from photos, videos, and the stories of those who experienced that time firsthand.



Some argue that, over the past 43 years, our culture—once driven by community engagement—has been heavily shaped by our Afro-European and British heritage. This influence is evident in our daily lives, from our clothing and cuisine to our artistic expressions and educational systems. Many believe that our culture now feels different, and while this may be true, we must consider whether this change signifies regression.

If we adopt a negative perspective, we might conclude that we have lost much of what we once cherished, moving away from traditions that defined us 10, 15, or even 40 years ago. But is this truly the case?

From a positive viewpoint, change does not necessarily mean loss. Consider a building undergoing renovation; it requires adaptations driven by various factors—whether for hurricane readi-

ness, climate change, or modernization. Rarely would one argue that the essence of the building is lost; rather, it has been upgraded. Similar principles apply to culture.

Most discussions about culture tend to be one-dimensional, yet culture is inherently dynamic. What constituted “culture” in 1981 differs from what it was in 1938. This evolution is a natural aspect of life and can be seen in historical periods across Europe and in the evolution of art. However, I argue that we in Antigua and Barbuda have not yet fully defined what our culture entails.

Fast-forwarding 43 years, our communities look and feel different. We now share spaces with new faces, technologies, and influences from around the world, largely due to the internet. This evolution is not negative; it reflects our growing multicultural society, where we coexist with people from diverse back-

grounds. Consequently, our culture must evolve. If our society changes, so too will our culture. Preserving our heritage will showcase our progress as a community.

I often reference Parang as an example of an adapted culture that emerged from the blending of Trinidadian and Spanish influences. What about Afrobeat and other multicultural musical styles and dances?

Through acceptance of our evolving identity, we can expect the emergence of new artistic styles, cuisines, clothing, and architectural designs that will benefit our society in many ways. 43 years later, I am grateful for everyone who has contributed to the Antigua and Barbuda we enjoy today. Is it perfect? Far from it. Yet, we have made significant strides as a community, and we must remain resilient in pushing our twin islands forward for future generations.

I urge families, community organizations, churches, schools, and government ministries to continue defining what Antigua and Barbuda represents, ensuring that our nation remains one of the most remarkable places to live 43 years after independence. Happy 43rd Independence Day, Antigua and Barbuda! “From Community Collaboration to Global Gains.”

Nature and Nation: Celebrating Antigua and Barbuda's identity through our environment

By Shanna Challenger | Environmental Awareness Group

As Antigua and Barbuda celebrates its 43rd anniversary of Independence, we reflect on the enduring spirit of our nation under the theme “Antigua and Barbuda: From Community Collaboration to Global Gains”. This theme resonates deeply as it highlights the importance of unity and collective action to address both local and global challenges, including our environment. Whether hiking on your favourite trail, enjoying a delicious fruit from your garden, or relaxing on any of our 365 beaches, the lives of Antiguan and Barbudans are intrinsically linked to our environment serving as a source of pride and sustenance for our communities. However, as we embrace this milestone, it is essential to recognize that our independence also carries a responsibility—to protect and preserve the natural treasures that define our islands. In this spirit of collaboration, we must unite to address pressing environmental issues, ensuring that our national symbols and endemic species—reflecting the beauty and resilience of our land—are safeguarded for future generations.

Our Natural Landscape

With a combined area of 171 square miles, Antigua, Barbuda, and Redonda are renowned for their breathtaking natural beauty featuring a diverse range of ecosystems including lush forests, thriving mangrove wetlands and vibrant coral reefs that play a crucial role in our islands' environmental health. Although you cannot put a value on all the ways the natural world enriches our lives, these ecosystem services are the tangible and intangible benefits that humans receive from nature, underpinning almost every aspect of human well-being, including our health, security, and economy. These services include provision of food for us to eat, oxygen for us to breathe, and protection from natural disasters, emphasizing the interconnectedness of nature and community. Moreover, many of our ecosystems provide aesthetic and recreational value, serving as a backdrop for our cultural events, celebrations, and tourism product, reinforcing the idea that preserving the environment is integral to maintaining Antigua and Barbuda's identity.

Our National Symbols

Antigua and Barbuda has several national symbols that reflect our deep connection to nature, starting



with the National Flower – the Dagger Log or Century Plant (*Agave karatto*), known for its golden yellow flowers and its sturdy and resilient stem that was formerly used to make fishing rafts. Equally significant are our National Bird – the Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*), and our National Sea Creature, the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). The Magnificent Frigatebird, with its striking appearance and impressive wingspan, symbolizes freedom and grace. Males are known for their bright red pouches inflated like a balloon during

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the breeding season to impress the females who have a white underbelly. They create an iconic “M” silhouette while soaring in the air and over 8,000 individuals can be found in Barbuda—the largest breeding colony in the Western Hemisphere.

Once thought to be so abundant in our waters that you could “walk from Antigua to neighbouring islands on their backs without getting your feet wet,” Hawksbill Turtles are now critically endangered due to habitat loss, pollution, and illegal hunting. As a national symbol, the Hawksbill represents not only the beauty of our marine life but also the urgent need for conservation efforts. Protecting their nesting sites and promoting sustainable practices are crucial for their recovery and the health of our oceans and the coral reef habitats where they live.

While many nations proudly dis-

play their endemic species as national symbols, Antigua and Barbuda’s National Animal, the European Fallow Deer (*Dama dama dama*), serves as a reminder of our complex relationship with nature. Introduced to Barbuda in the late 1700s for sport, this invasive deer has become a significant part of our sister island’s landscape, yet it raises critical questions about the implications of such introductions on native biodiversity. Originally seen as a symbol of colonial dominance and pest that stripped vegetation, traditional cultural practices and attitudes on Barbuda value the deer as a hunting resource, tourist attraction and provision of wild meat.

Understanding that our national animal is a non-native species encourages a broader dialogue about environmental stewardship as our tri-island state is home to eight species that are unique to Antigua, Barbuda and Redonda including the Antiguan Racer

(*Alsophis antiguae*), Barbuda Warbler (*Setophaga subita*) and Redonda Ground Dragon (*Pholidoscelis atratus*). The notable absence of these endemic species and lack of recognition at the national level, highlights the need for a deeper understanding and reflection on our ecological identity and the importance of supporting species that genuinely reflect our unique Antiguan and Barbudan environment. By educating ourselves and our community about the impacts of such species, we can better appreciate the need to focus on conservation efforts that protect and restore our native flora and fauna and work towards a future where Antigua and Barbuda’s national symbols reflect the true essence of our islands’ biodiversity.

Our Environmental Challenges

Despite its stunning beauty, Antigua and Barbuda faces significant environmental challenges that threat-

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en our natural heritage. Climate change is at the forefront, causing extreme heat, rising sea levels and more frequent extreme weather events, which put both our coastal ecosystems and local communities at risk.

Coral bleaching is a pressing concern, affecting the health of the vibrant reefs that are vital for marine biodiversity and the livelihoods of fisherfolk. As tourism and urbanization expand, our natural habitats are often sacrificed for infrastructure, leading to habitat fragmentation and loss of biodiversity. This rapid development can put additional pressure on native species, making it crucial to implement sustainable practices that protect our natural heritage.

Additionally, invasive alien species such as Rats, Mongooses, and Giant African Snails also pose significant threats to our ecosystems, disrupting the delicate balance of our native wildlife by becoming predators that decimate populations of endemic fauna. Worryingly, the Agave Snout Weevil (*Scyphophorus acupunctatus*) has become a significant threat to our beloved Dagger Log.

This 'Agave Assassin' is a tiny invasive pest that has been rapidly spreading a reign of destruction. With its distinctive needle-like snout, the Weevil damages the plant by burrowing into the heart of Agaves to lay its eggs and spread deadly bac-



teria. The larvae eventually burrow into the soil to grow, emerging later as a new plague of adult agave snout weevils. Once infected, the Dagger Log leaves appear wilted and wrinkly, and as it is no longer anchored by roots, will easily fall over onto its side revealing a mushy, foul-smelling core infested by plump, squirming, half-inch, cream-coloured grubs with brown heads.

The decline of the Dagger Logs due to the weevil impact has not only affected individual plants but also the broader ecological landscape, especially in environmentally sensitive areas such as the Nelson's Dockyard National Park and the offshore islands where Agaves normally thrive.

As we celebrate our independence and the beauty of our national symbols, we must remain vigilant about these threats, working together to implement innovative solutions to protect Antigua and Barbuda's unique environment.

Our Conservation Ef-

forts

Considering the environmental challenges Antigua and Barbuda face, there is an urgent need for actions to mitigate their impacts and strengthen our resilience. Supporting environmental NGOs and implementing environmentally conscious practices in your daily lives is more crucial than ever.

Nature reserves are critical sanctuaries for protecting biodiversity, and local NGOs advocate for the establishment and maintenance of these protected areas, including the Nelson's Dockyard National Park, North East Marine Management Area (NEMMA) and the Redonda Ecosystem Reserve (RER). Organizations like the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG), Elkhorn Marine Conservancy (EMC), Adopt-A-Coastline, barbudaGO etc. are dedicated to preserving our natural resources and educating the community about sustainable practices.

Nationally, there are several initiatives being implemented by these organiza-

tions including endangered species recovery, ecosystem restoration, recycling, beach cleanups, tree planting, environmental education, and coral restoration, which are also vital components of a holistic approach to conservation. These activities not only enhance community engagement but also contribute to the overall health of our ecosystems. Volunteering, joining or donating to these local initiatives provides an opportunity for individuals to make a tangible impact, fostering a culture of stewardship within our communities.

Conclusion

As we celebrate our independence, it is vital to reflect on the deep connection between the natural environment, our national symbols, and our cultural identity. By working together—whether through volunteering, donating, or participating in local initiatives—we can protect Antigua, Barbuda and Redonda's unique environment and ensure that our rich biodiversity endures for future generations.

Together, we can turn our collective commitment into action, fostering a sustainable future that honours both our natural and cultural heritage. Prioritizing our natural environment is a testament to the resilience of Antigua, Barbuda and Redonda's natural landscape and the spirit of our people. Who knows – maybe one day we'll even add a God Bless Redonda verse to the beloved song.

Independence Special



Barbudans: Embrace the change of a modern, developed Barbuda going forward

A person reflection

By Arthur Nibbs

Antigua and Barbuda gained Independence from Britain on 1 November, 1981. The question is, how have both islands developed since Independence so as to indicate the presence of positive changes for the islands.

Whilst it is evident that there has been positive development on mainland Antigua, the same is less evidently true for the sister island Barbuda.

Reason being: The BPM

head Barbuda Council has been dominating the leadership at the Council for 38 of the 42 years of Independence.

The successive heads BPM Council have made it their duty to oppose every development project offered to the Council; hence an economic stagnation prevailed on the island.

However, there was new hope brought to the Barbudan People, when in 2013, the ABLP attained leadership at the Barbuda Council.



Arthur Nibbs

In quick time, the people of Barbuda witnessed the finalization of the lease for the

Barbuda Belle Resort – Barbuda.

In short order the new ABLP-led Council set about to put the Council's Financial house in order.

A court case between Social Security and Barbuda Council for the nonpayment of contributions to Social Security by the Barbuda Council totaling \$12 million was averted and a payment plan granted to the Council.

There were general elections in Antigua and Barbuda in 2014. The ABLP was victorious at the polls to include the member from ABLP – Barbuda Hon. Arthur Nibbs. He continued the positive development changes for Barbuda.

There was approval of two major Hotel Resort Projects for Barbuda within the first 6 month-rule of the Gaston Browne-led ABLP Government. Namely the PLH – Peace, Love and Happiness and Paradise Found LLC (Robert De Nero)

Today, the PLH Project is
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in full swing providing employment for Barbudans, Antiguan and individuals from further afield. The Paradise Found (Robert De Nero) Project was delayed however, due to a court case brought against the Project and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda. However, the court case has been settled and the construction on the Paradise Found Project is in full swing heading towards completion.

A significant part of the change Barbudans are asked to embrace, is the opening of the Barbuda International Airport. This is indeed a significant and momentous occasion for Barbudans in particular. Barbuda will soon accommodate commercial traffic from international carriers. It is instructive to note, according to key BPM supporters, the airport site was home to the famous Barbuda Red Foot Land Turtle.

Barbudans, the change you are asked to embrace continues. Towards the early part of 2025, you will witness the start of the construction of a Rosewood Brand Resort on Barbuda followed closely by another renowned brand to be announced.

Also high on the agenda for a modern developed Barbuda, is a state of the art primary school to be constructed in the Luis Hill area. This facility was a gift to the people of Antigua and Barbuda by the government and people of the Dominican Republic. There was and

still is great friendship between Prime Minister Browne and government and people of the Dominican Republic. Included in the school facility will be an area for the disaster management and shelter facilities.

Renewable energy for Barbuda: The Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda led by the Hon. Gaston Browne made a wise and bold decision to declare Barbuda "The Green Island" as it relates to energy production.

Currently, Barbuda is powered by up to 75% solar energy and will be expanded rapidly to 100% alternative energy.

New docking facilities for Barbuda: Discussions are in advanced stages on the relocating of the docking facility on Barbuda.

It is expected for Barbuda to share in the offerings generated by the cruise tourism, also the full benefits from the dollar barrel initiative.

Now, we saved the best and the most serious issue for last: the ownership of land in Barbuda. For many years there has been gross contention between the government of Antigua and Barbuda and the Council and majority of the people of Barbuda over the ownership, management and control of land on Barbuda.

It is the position of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda that the land on Barbuda are crown lands held by the crown on behalf of the people of the

state of Antigua and Barbuda.

To the contrary, the position of the Council and people of Barbuda was the lands are Crown Lands, held by the crown on behalf of the people of Barbuda.

The issue of land on Barbuda was placed before the courts by the Council and people of Barbuda.

From the High Court to the Appeals Court and finally at the UK Privy Council. At the end of the day the final decision handed down by the UK Court was the land in Barbuda is owned by the crown.

Fellow Barbudans listen to the call. You must learn how to seize opportunities that arise from adversities.

The Hon. Prime Minister and Government of Antigua and Barbuda have made an offer to the Barbudan People: The offer is, every Barbudan at the age of 18 years and over, will be entitled to receive one (1) acre of land for the cost of \$1.00.

Barbudans this is Christmas in November for Barbudans with this offer. My advice to you Barbudans, take it and run fast. This, to Barbudans is life, and an end too. Take it Barbudans and be personally empowered.

Thanks to the Hon. Prime Minister Gaston A. Browne and his Government.

Power to the Barbuda People!

Power to the People of Antigua and Barbuda!

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE

Independence Special



The UWI Five Islands Campus Celebrates Antigua and Barbuda's Independence: A Call for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development

As Antigua and Barbuda proudly celebrates another year of independence, UWI Five Islands Campus extends its heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of this resilient nation. Over the years, we have witnessed tremendous strides in sports, culture, and economic growth.

The achievements of our athletes on the international stage, including the remarkable accomplishments of Rai Benjamin, Cejhae Greene and Team Antigua Island Girls, the vibrancy of our cultural expressions, and the strengthening of our economy, are a testament to the enduring spirit of the Antiguan and Barbudan people. However, as we celebrate, we must reflect on the journey ahead and the work required to achieve a future where every citizen prospers.

Inclusive Growth for a Stronger Nation

Our nation's independence reminds us that freedom is more than a declaration; it promises prosperity, justice, and opportunity for all. In the face of global challenges and local realities, we must ensure that no one is left behind. Inclusive growth should be our



Professor Justin Robinson

mission. It is not enough to measure progress by GDP growth — we must assess how that progress reaches every corner of society, from our cities to our rural communities.

We must address the persistent issue of poverty head-on. Many of our population live in conditions that deny them the full fruits of independence. The eradication of poverty, the expansion of paved roads, and the installation of streetlights in underserved communities are not luxuries but essential rights. These are the pathways to education, employment, and safety, representing the infrastructure of dignity.

Achievements and

Triumphs: The Foundation for Future Success

Antigua and Barbuda has much to be proud of. Our athletes have brought home international accolades, from track and field victories to cricket and sailing triumphs, highlighting our nation's talent and competitive spirit.

In particular, Rai Benjamin's extraordinary achievements on the global stage in track and field have made our nation proud, showcasing the exceptional talent that Antigua and Barbuda produces. Our cultural heritage, from the music of the steelpan to the vibrant colours of Carnival, is celebrated worldwide. Our economy, too,

has shown resilience, with growth in tourism, finance, and emerging industries. These achievements are not just markers of our progress but also sources of inspiration for our future endeavours.

But as we celebrate these accomplishments, we must ask ourselves: How can we build on these successes to create an even better Antigua and Barbuda? How do we use these moments of national pride as stepping stones for long-term, sustainable development? The answer lies in leveraging our local successes for global impact—from community collaboration to global gains.

From Community Collaboration to Global Gains

Our achievements as a nation are not isolated events. They are the result of years of dedication, collaboration, and shared effort. Whether it's on the track or in the classroom, it is our collective work that drives individual success. Sir Viv Richards, Sir Curtley Ambrose, Sir Richie Richardson, Sir Andy Roberts started began the journey to global stardom from right here in Antigua and Barbuda, nurtured by

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Antigua and Barbuda:
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Independence Special



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a supportive community. This is a powerful reminder that the strength of our nation lies in its people and in our ability to work together.

As we move forward, it is imperative that we continue to foster collaboration within our communities to solve our greatest challenges. Whether it is tackling climate change, enhancing education, or building sustainable industries, we must work together.

Through strong community ties and collective effort, we can turn local victories into global gains, ensuring that Antigua and Barbuda not only thrives within its borders but also shines on the international stage.

The Cognitive Revolution: A Call to Build Sustainably

In answering these questions, we can draw lessons from history as far back as the Cognitive Revolution, when our ancestors discovered the power of thought, language, and collective action.

This revolution set humanity on the path to becoming Earth's dominant force, not through brute strength, but through our ability to imagine, plan, and collaborate.

The discovery of fire was a crucial turning point in this revolution. Fire gave us warmth, light, and the ability to cook food, but it also symbolised the beginning of human innovation. Just as fire propelled our ancestors

forward, today, we stand on the brink of a new revolution—one where we must use our cognitive capacities to innovate for sustainability.

As we look to the future, the same revolutionary thinking that sparked humanity's progress must now be applied to building sustainable organizations and systems.

We need institutions that promote green energy, protect our natural resources, and foster economic models that include all members of society. We must embrace technology not as a replacement for human labour but as a tool for elevating the potential of every citizen.

A Call to Action

On this anniversary of independence, The UWI Five Islands Campus calls on every Antiguan and Barbudan to take personal and collective responsibility in shaping the future we desire. Whether you are a student, a teacher, a business leader, or a government official, your actions matter.

As individuals, we must commit to lifelong learning, embrace innovation, and take steps to reduce the impact of our environmental footprint. Education is the key to unlocking our potential and driving progress. Each of us has a role in building the Antigua and Barbuda we want.

As organizations, from schools to businesses, we must foster environments that encourage creativity, responsibility, and sustainability. We

must build institutions that stand as beacons of progress and equality.

As a nation, we must support policies that promote inclusive growth, combat poverty, and provide critical infrastructure for all communities. Expanding paved roads, street lighting and quality public utility services are not just about convenience; it is about ensuring that every citizen has access to the basic services necessary for a decent life.

The Future Is Ours to Build

Our independence is both a gift and a responsibility. As we look to the horizon, let us remember that the future is not predetermined—it is shaped by our actions today. As Prime Minister Honourable Gaston Browne says, "You don't get what you deserve, you get what you fight for!"

Just as our ancestors used the fire of innovation to propel humanity forward, we, too, must harness our cognitive power to create a nation where every citizen has the opportunity to thrive.

Let us commit to building a more inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous Antigua and Barbuda where the flames of innovation and collective effort light the way for future generations.

Happy Independence Day, Antigua and Barbuda! Let us march forward together, united in purpose and driven by the power of possibility.

Address by His Excellency Sir Clare Roberts KCN, KC, Governor General's Deputy of Antigua and Barbuda at the National Heroes Wreath Laying Ceremony on October 25, 2023

*Hero's Park, Tomlinson's,
St. George's
Antigua and Barbuda*

Honourable Prime Minister
Members of Cabinet
Members of Parliament
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Senior Public Servants
Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is my distinct honour and privilege to stand before you today, on behalf of our Governor General, His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams, as we gather to celebrate the lives and legacies of our six National Heroes. Though His Excellency is abroad, he sends his heartfelt greetings, and I am humbled to address you on this occasion as we pay tribute to those remarkable individuals who shaped and is still shaping, the history and destiny of Antigua and Barbuda.

Today, we reflect on the greatness



of those who came before us—men and women who faced the pressing challenges of their time with courage, vision, and unwavering determination. These heroes—King Court, Dame Nellie Robinson, Sir Vere Cornwall Bird, Sir George Hubert Walter, Sir Lester Bryant Bird, and Sir Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards—were not only champions of their day, but also beacons for the future, laying the foundation upon which our nation now stands

proudly, independent for 43 years.

The question we must ask ourselves is this: What can we learn from their legacy, and how can we rise to the challenges of our time in a manner that reflects the same level of courage and service? As we lay these wreaths today, let us honour not just the lives of our heroes, but also their spirit of recognizing the critical needs of their day and working tirelessly to address them.

Each of our National Heroes identified the most pressing challenges of their era and took action. Whether it was Sir Vere Bird's fight to liberate our people from colonial rule, Dame Nellie Robinson's efforts to uplift the nation through education, Sir George Walter's advocacy for economic empowerment, Sir Lester Bird's contributions to the nation's development and modernisation, or Sir Vivian Richards' representation of national pride on the global stage, these figures did not shy away from the difficulties before them.

In our time, we face new challenges. Climate change threatens our environment and livelihoods, youth violence is on the rise, workplace pro-

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National Heroes Address



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ductivity and educational performance—especially in mathematics—are concerns we must address. Yet, in the spirit of our National Heroes, these are challenges that we too can overcome. What will our generation be remembered for? What voids will we fill? What shackles will we break? How will we lift the name of Antigua and Barbuda?

The theme of this year's Independence celebrations—From Community Collaboration to Global Gains—reminds us of the power of working together for the greater good. Our National Heroes worked within their communities, but their impact reached far beyond.

They showed us that



through collaboration, whether with family, friends, or neighbours, we can build a stronger nation. It is this spirit of collaboration that is essential if we

are to address the modern needs of our society.

Imagine the progress we could make if each one of us sought to collaborate with likeminded, forward

thinking individuals—those who are committed to positive change and national development. If we each strive to address the challenges in

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National Heroes Address

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our families, villages, communities, workplaces, and institutions, we can collectively transform the future of our nation. Just as our National Heroes did, we can make a difference at both the local and national levels.

It is this type of national impact that invites consideration for National Hero status. To be a National Hero is not just to achieve personal success, but to uplift an entire people—to transform lives through service, perseverance, and a vision for a

better future. Each one of us has the potential to follow in the footsteps of our National Heroes by contributing meaningfully to the growth and advancement of Antigua and Barbuda.

Let the lives of our heroes inspire us to identify the

existing challenges that hinder our progress—whether it be the development of innovative solutions in the fields of public utilities, education, governance, or climate action. We must all commit to rising to the occasion, to becoming part of the solution, and to lifting our nation to new heights.

As we remember the sacrifices and contributions of our National Heroes today, let us resolve to continue their work. Let their lives be our inspiration to serve selflessly, to collaborate for the greater good, and to leave a lasting legacy that future generations will be proud to honour.

May God bless Antigua and Barbuda. Thank you.



Independence Business Decoration Competition



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Permanent Secretary - Ministry of Education, Sports and **Creative Industries**
Chairperson - Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission



Independence Business Decoration Competition



Messages from foreign governments



Note No. PE 388/2024

The Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade, Civil Aviation and Diaspora Affairs of Saint Lucia presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Trade & Barbuda Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, and has the honour to request transmission of the following congratulatory message from the Honourable Philip J. Pierre, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, to the Honourable Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda:

QUOTE:

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the Government and people of Saint Lucia, it is my honour to extend my warmest congratulations to you and the citizens of Antigua and Barbuda on this joyous occasion of your 43rd Independence Anniversary.

This momentous milestone is representative of another fortuitous year added to over four decades of your twin nation's relentless commitment to fostering national pride amongst its people. Your country's theme, 'From Community Collaboration to Global Gains', emboldens an understanding that in the face of regional and global challenges, inclusivity, perseverance, self-determination, strength and unity are the core principles that govern the prosperity of small island states.

Being a fellow member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), upholding similar values and aspirations, Saint Lucia stands in solidarity with Antigua and Barbuda and recognises the enduring bonds of friendship and co-operation that unite our peoples. As you embark on this momentous journey, I wish for continued peace and wellbeing for your beautiful country and its people. May the fundamental principles that have inspired and guided your nation's progressive path forward, remain a pillar for an even brighter future for all your citizens.

As Antigua and Barbuda gears towards its celebrations, let us reaffirm our commitment to strengthening the bonds of friendship and co-operation between our nations. Through our joint efforts, let us continue to work towards a Caribbean region that is characterised by unwavering fellowship, prosperity and shared opportunities for all.

Once again, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to you and the people of Antigua and Barbuda during this time of celebration and national excellence.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

UNQUOTE

The Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade, Civil Aviation and Diaspora Affairs of Saint Lucia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Trade & Barbuda Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, the assurances of its highest consideration.



Castries, October 22, 2024

**Minister of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Trade & Barbuda Affairs
Saint John's
Antigua and Barbuda**

Messages from foreign governments



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Note verbale

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Port of Spain
POR/24-208

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, and has the honour to forward Independence Day greetings from His Majesty King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands to His Excellency Sir Rodney Errey Lawrence Williams, Governor-General of Antigua and Barbuda.

Quote

His Excellency
the Governor-General of Antigua and Barbuda
St. JOHN's

On the occasion of your National I extend to Your Excellency my congratulations and best wishes for the well-being of the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

Willem-Alexander R.

Unquote

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda the assurances of its highest consideration.



Port of Spain, 30 October, 2024

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda
St. John's

Messages from foreign governments



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Confederaziun svizra

Message from Ms Viola Amherd,
President of the Swiss Confederation,
to His Excellency Sir Rodney Errey Lawrence Williams KGN, GCMG, KStJ
Governor-General of Antigua and Barbuda,
on the occasion of the Independence Day celebrations on 1 November 2024

Bern, 30 October 2024

His Excellency
Sir Rodney Errey Lawrence Williams KGN, GCMG, KStJ
Governor-General of Antigua and Barbuda
Saint John's

On behalf of the Swiss Federal Council and Switzerland's citizens, it gives me great pleasure to offer my warm congratulations to you and your fellow citizens on the occasion of this year's Independence Day of Antigua and Barbuda. I also convey to you my best wishes for your personal well-being, as well as a happy and successful future for your country and its citizens.

Respect for international law, human rights and the universal principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter remain our best compass in striving towards a world of peace and prosperity.

I very much appreciate that our two countries continue to enjoy excellent ties, which I am confident we will be able to develop and deepen in the years to come.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Viola Amherd
President of the Swiss Confederation

Messages from foreign governments

(Translation)

H.E.Sir Rodney Williams
 Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda
 St.John's
 Antigua and Barbuda

Your Excellency,

On the occasion of the 43rd anniversary of Independence of Antigua and Barbuda, I extend warm congratulations and best wishes to the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Chinese government and people.

Antigua and Barbuda is an important country in the Caribbean region, which has been committed to economic and social development of its own country, and has been playing an active role in international and regional affairs since independence. I attach great importance to the development of China-Antigua and Barbuda relations, and stand ready to work with you to continue to deepen exchanges and cooperation between our two countries in various fields for the betterment of our peoples.

Wish your country more prosperity and your people more happiness and well-being.

Xi Jinping
 President of the People's Republic of China
 Beijing, November 1, 2024

*Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco
 Castries*



سفارة المملكة
 المغربية
 كاستريز

174/24

The Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Saint Lucia presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Trade and Barbuda Affairs Antigua and Barbuda and, has the honor to enclose herewith, a copy of the Congratulatory Letter addressed by His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, to His Excellency, Sir Rodney Williams, Governor-General of Antigua and Barbuda, on the occasion of Antigua and Barbuda National Day.

The Embassy would appreciate the kind assistance of the esteemed Ministry in forwarding the enclosed letter to its highest destination.

The Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Trade and Barbuda Affairs Antigua and Barbuda, the assurances of its highest consideration.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Trade
 and Barbuda Affairs
 Antigua and Barbuda
 October 28th, 2024

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Antigua and Barbuda

FROM COMMUNITY COLLABORATION
TO GLOBAL GAINS



HAPPY **43RD** INDEPENDENCE TO ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA



From the Hon. Daryll S. Matthew, Minister of Education,
Sports and Creative Industries, in collaboration with the
Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission:

**"Extends greetings as we transition
from Community Collaboration
to Global Gains."**

