



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
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Cabinet cautions elements of the Barbuda Council

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Foreign Affairs Minister E.P Chet Greene, his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Vieira and Prime Minister Gaston Browne

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Cabinet cautions elements of the Barbuda Council

The Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda meeting on Wednesday 22nd January 2025, has learned that certain elements within the Barbuda Council have acted to prevent work to begin at Louie Hill, Barbuda, where more than 200 homes, a mall, and other infrastructural works are to be constructed.

They have placed two government-owned trucks in the path of the excavator that has been authorized to commence the clearing of unwanted vegetation from land on which the new buildings are to be constructed.

In the interest of order and peace, the Cabinet took the decision to warn the Barbuda Council of the fundamental right which the Central Government exercises over crown land in Antigua and Barbuda. The Barbuda Council is reminded of the Privy Council's decision recently rendered, which the Council initiated. The Cabinet wishes to ensure that no harm is suffered by anyone, and that no property is destroyed by the illegal action of the Council members.

The Cabinet continues to do its best to ensure that decisions taken by the

Cabinet to improve housing, to ensure legal ownership of land in Barbuda by those who reside there and those who were born on the island, and those citizens who qualify are fulfilled. As Barbuda develops, no-one is to be left behind, the Cabinet repeated. As Barbuda is brought into the economy of Antigua and Barbuda in a meaningful way, resistance by those who wish to stand in the way of progress cannot be tolerated.

The continued resistance of elements within the Barbuda Council shall not be permitted.

Minister of ICT's urges persons not to desist from soliciting on his behalf



The Minister of Information Communications Technologies, Melford Nicholas, has issued a warning to the public to be aware that person/persons have been using his name to solicit various things from members of the public purportedly on his behalf. In a media statement issued overnight, Minister Nicholas,

is warning those involved in this act of fraud to desist immediately or suffer the consequences.

The following is the full text of the release from the minister;

Please be advised that I Melford Nicholas the Minister of ICTs, Utilities and Energy have not given consent to any group of persons to solicit any resources, financial or material from any member of the business community.

"It has come to my attention that person/persons unknown to me have been making verbal representation via telephone to various members of the business community repre-

senting that they are Melford Nicholas".

Regrettably, some business persons may have fallen prey to this fraudulent representation.

"I am therefore using this medium to notify and advise all persons in the business community that they should engage any future representation with suspicion and scrutiny with the prior knowledge that I am hereby disclosing that I have not authorized any such solicitation on my behalf".

It has never been my practice, it is not my way, so please therefore be guided accordingly.

Antigua and Barbuda ‘happy to be fully aligned’ with Brazil on many issues



Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Minister Mauro Luiz Vieira.



Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P. Chet and Minister Mauro Luiz Vieira.

Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne says the country is ‘happy to be fully aligned’ with Brazil on many issues as both countries expressed a desire to strengthen the existing relations they now enjoy.

PM Browne was speaking on Wednesday as he, along with Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P. Chet Greene and a team from the foreign affairs ministry, welcomed a high-level delegation from Brasilia, headed by Foreign Minister Mauro Luiz Vieira.

The prime minister noted that Brazil not only has the largest economy in South America with a large population but through its membership of the grouping BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) Brazil is emerging as an increasingly influential country on the international stage.

“We are social democrats and we are aligned in terms of certain principles

such as supporting democracy, equity for all and you should know that Antigua and Barbuda was the first country in the OECS to sign on to the Hunger Initiative launched by the Brazilian President Lula. I also wish to commend President Lula who is a true socialist who wants to ensure that there is equitable distribution of wealth in Brazil but elsewhere around the world,” he observed.

PM Browne stated that these are principles ‘dear to our hearts’ and as a small developing country, and a very vulnerable one, Antigua and Barbuda wants to make sure that it plays its part in bring some equity to all and to ensure that no one is left behind.

In response, the Brazilian Foreign Minister Vieira, said one of the priorities of President Lula is to strengthen relations with every country in the Caribbean region.

“We want to strengthen the relations

in terms of trade, cooperation as well as political consultation. President Lula, as you know, is very involved in the issues of development. We just completed our chairmanship of the G20 nations grouping where we introduced many initiatives. We are happy that Antigua and Barbuda has already signed on to the Global Initiative Against Hunger and Poverty. That is very, very good and President Lula has been informed and he too is happy about this,” Foreign Minister Vieira explained.

The foreign minister reported that Brazil will host the annual meeting of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) this year as it is a member of the bank and he issued a special invitation for PM Browne to attend as President Lula wants to convene a gathering of Caribbean leaders in Brasilia at that time.

Government is looking towards Brazil for better prices to fight inflation



Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Foreign Minister, E.P. Chet Greene

As consumers in Antigua and Barbuda grapple with inflation most of which is imported, the government is looking to Brazil as a source for quality products at prices cheaper than from other sources.

This was one of the points raised on Wednesday when a high-level team from Brazil led by Foreign Minister Luis Vieira paid a visit to Antigua and Barbuda for meetings with senior government representatives.

During the meeting, both Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Foreign Minister, E.P. Chet Greene addressed the issue of rising prices

of goods that are imported and expressed a desire to explore Brazil as an alternative, yet cheaper, source for some items.

“We have an air services agreement which we hope to ratify as we are looking to have direct trade between Antigua and Barbuda and Brazil. Much of your products go to North America then we import them from North America. If we can have direct air and sea links, I believe that we can increase the amount of business that we conduct with Brazil. There is no doubt that your prices are generally more competitive, your product quality is extremely good and I



High-level team from Brazil led by Foreign Minister Luis

Vieira believe one of the areas that we can explore is the importation of soybeans for animal feed as we are trying to address the issue of our food insecurity,” PM Browne noted.

According to the prime minister the animal feed that is imported is deemed ‘very expensive’ and he thinks getting these products from Brazil will be better for all.

For his part, Minister Greene, who is also responsible for Trade, said importing goods from Brazil will help the government in its efforts to reduce inflation.

“An important issue to

consider is, how can we expand the trade ties between our countries. Brazil is known for its manufacturing sector and Antigua and Barbuda is known as a consuming sector as the question of the cost of living and controlling of prices is always a concern of government, especially in a small country like ours. In today’s geopolitical realities, Brazil can leverage its south-south relations to impact the cost of living that we are troubled by in Antigua and Barbuda,” Greene stated.

He noted that the visit of his Brazilian country is ‘timely’ given the current state of international affairs.

Sustained training for Police Officers

The Police Administration has embarked on a sustained programme of training for officers of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda as it seeks to improve the human resources generally as well as the skills-set of the officers individually.

Head of the force's administration department, Deputy Commissioner, Everton Jeffers, has reported that over the past year several hundred officers have been exposed to a wide variety of training courses held locally, regional and internationally.

He said the work of the administration department of the force impacts the operations department and having officers exposed to the requisite training will impact the overall efficiency of the force.

“A total of 214 persons were training locally in various disciplines. Another 47 were trained regionally, 15 were trained internationally while some 381 persons took part in regional webinars and 129 persons took part in international webinars. This extensive training for our officers speaks volume as if our men

and women are properly trained it will redound to their proper functioning on the job,” the deputy



commissioner explained. He remarked that the training initiative for officers will continue during this year as proper training is at the cornerstone of all that the officers do as law enforcement.

Deputy Commissioner

Jeffers also welcomed the completion of renovations to the All Saints and Bolans police stations,

of the city with its location at the top of Market Street. People are not too familiar with the station

but he made a call for the completion of the renovations to the St. John's Police station noting its centrality to everything that happens in the city. “It is very important for us to have that station which is in the centre

located at Dredge Bay so we need to get St. John's station back up and running because of its centrality; you can walk from anywhere in the city to the police station with ease because of its location,” he remarked.

Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre Marks Maternal Health Awareness Day January 23, 2024

SIR LESTER BIRD MEDICAL CENTRE



MATERNAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY

— JANUARY 23, 2025 —

KNOW WHAT'S AT STAKE

Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) is joining the global community in recognizing Maternal Health Awareness Day today January 23, a day dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of maternal health and the well-being of mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period. The day highlights the ongoing need to improve healthcare for women, reduce maternal mortality, and promote healthy pregnancies and births.

At SLBMC, the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department and the Maternity Department work tirelessly to provide high-quality care to mothers and babies, with a focus on promoting safe deliveries, providing prenatal education, and addressing the various challenges that can impact maternal health.

Dr. Nicole Roberts, Chair of SLBMC's Obstetrics & Gynecology Department, emphasized the importance of Maternal Health Awareness Day:

“Maternal health is a cornerstone of a healthy society, and today we take the time to reflect on the strides we've made and the work still to be done. We are committed to ensuring that all mothers in our care receive the best possible treatment, support, and education throughout their pregnancies and beyond. By raising awareness, we not only help save lives but also empower women to take charge of their health, making informed choices for themselves and their families.”

Ann-Marie Browne-Isaac, Nurse Manager of SLBMC's Maternity Department and Outpatient Clinic

and Chair of the Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission committee, echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the role of healthcare providers in supporting maternal health:

“Maternal Health Awareness Day is a reminder of the vital role that quality care plays in the well-being of mothers and their babies. We, as a team, work together to provide comprehensive, compassionate care that addresses both physical and emotional needs. It is important to continue educating women about healthy pregnancies, the importance of regular check-ups, and the support systems available to them. Our goal is to ensure that every mother feels valued, safe, and cared for during one of the most significant times in her life.”

SLBMC Head of Market-

ing and Communications, Salma Crump remarked, “I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our dedicated Obstetrics and Gynecology team as childbirth is a special and emotional experience, and for most mothers, it's a time when they come in with anticipation and hope, expecting to leave with joy. At SLBMC, we witness this multiple times every day but achieving this requires a seamless collaboration of many moving parts. It's a true reflection of the skill, expertise, and training of our team. We are proud of our progress in maternal health outcomes here at the hospital, but we are well aware that we must continue to do more—because every mother deserves the opportunity for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. We remain committed to making that a reality for all.”

The observance of Maternal Health Awareness Day aligns with SLBMC's ongoing commitment to improving maternal health outcomes and providing essential care and resources to families in Antigua and Barbuda. The hospital's dedication to maternal health extends beyond today's observance, with a focus on continuous education, preventive care, and support for women at all stages of motherhood.

Renal Society donates angiography table and lead aprons to SLBMC

The Antigua and Barbuda Renal Society has donated an angiography table and two lead aprons, valued at over fifteen thousand dollars, to Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC).

This donation is a significant addition to SLBMC's medical equipment and will greatly enhance the hospital's capabilities in providing high-quality healthcare to its patients, particularly those with kidney-related conditions.

The angiography table, a state-of-the-art piece of medical equipment, will facilitate advanced diagnostic imaging procedures. This will improve the accuracy and efficiency of treatments for patients requiring vascular intervention. Additionally, the two lead aprons will offer critical protection to the medical staff from radiation exposure during such procedures.

Dr. Ian Thomas, Nephrologist and Internist at SLBMC, expressed his gratitude for the donation, "We are extremely grateful to the Antigua and Barbuda Renal Society for this very generous donation. The angiography table will enable us to perform more precise diagnostic procedures, while the lead aprons will ensure the safety of our healthcare team. This donation is an incredible asset to our

operating theatre and will directly enhance the quality of care

Barbuda. We are excited to see the positive impact this will



we provide to our patients."

Head of Marketing & Communications at SLBMC, Salma Crump added,

"The Antigua and Barbuda Renal Society has been an invaluable partner in supporting healthcare improvements in our community. This donation brings essential diagnostic tools closer to home for our patients, allowing us to provide advanced care right here in Antigua and

have not only on our renal services but our operating theatre generally — and are deeply appreciative of the Renal Society's ongoing commitment to bettering the health of our people."

The donation underscores the ongoing efforts of the Antigua and Barbuda Renal Society to support local healthcare initiatives and provide resources that enhance medical services for residents of Antigua and Barbuda.

Local News



Three Men in Police Custody For Stealing Goats

Police are questioning three men who were found in possession of livestock suspected to be stolen.

On Tuesday, January 21, police officers attached to the Parham Police Station were patrolling, when they came across a motor

car parked in some bushes near the Pares Secondary School with three men.

As the officers were approaching the vehicle, one man ran, while the other two were quickly taken into custody.

The vehicle was searched and three goats were found inside of the trunk. The third suspect was later apprehended and they were all taken to the police station for questioning. The vehicle was also seized and the animals were released to their owner.

Pares Man in Police Custody For Unlawful Possession of Ammunition

Police are questioning Tareeque Laville of Pares Village in connection with unlawful possession of ammunition.

On Tuesday, police officers

attached to Parham Police Station executed a search warrant at the home of the 20-year-old and found four 9mm rounds of ammunition.

The search was in connection with an ongoing investigation into the theft of livestock animals. He was taken into custody as the police continue with their investigations.

17-year-old charged with Robbery

A 17-year-old boy is arrested and charged by police with Robbery.

The Golden Grove

youth is accused of robbing a resident of Sutherlands on December 5, 2024 of his fanny pack containing bank

cards, social security card, and a mobile phone. He is alleged to have been armed with a cutlass at the time of

the offence. The alleged incident occurred at the West Bus Station.

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Dominica: Rain fails to dampen spirit of Opening of Carnival



Dominica including Kalinagos, Sensay, Bann Movay, darkies, bwa bwa (stilt walkers) and lapo kabwit bands. They were joined by more contemporary flag wavers, pageant beauties and corporate floats. The sounds of local acts like Triple Kay International and Signal Band set the perfect Carnival mood, adding to the lively atmosphere. While the event didn't go exactly according to plan, Andrew highlighted the heartfelt tribute to the

late Franky Bellot, a local businessman, as a key moment of the day. The parade ended with a spectacular showcase of Mas Domnik on Dame Eugenia Charles Boulevard, before moving to the Windsor Park Stadium for the highly anticipated band splash. This marked the official launch of Mas Domnik 2025. Carnival in Dominica is scheduled for March 3 and 4, 2025. *(Loop Caribbean)*

Persistent rain did not dampen the activities to mark the opening of Carnival in Roseau over the weekend.

Even with the many challenges the inclement weather brought, Events Manager at Discover Dominica Authority Ayodele Andrew has rated this year's opening a grand success.

"We had some hold up with the weather, something we have no control over. This caused some of the troops to fall in a little late in the parade," she told the media while commending the police for the support provided on the road to execute the event.

"Without them this would not have been possible," she said.

The parade began at Pottersville on the outskirts of the city and proceeded through the streets of Roseau.

On display were traditional aspects of carnival in



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Caribbean rights advocates go to court over birthright citizenship issue

Caribbean immigrants' rights advocates have filed a lawsuit against the Donald Trump administration over his executive order that seeks to strip babies born in the United States (US) of their citizenship.

The case was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), ACLU of New Hampshire, ACLU of Maine, ACLU of Massachusetts, Asian Law Caucus, State Democracy Defenders Fund and Legal Defense Fund on behalf of organisations with Caribbean and other members whose babies born on US soil will be denied citizenship under the order.

"Denying citizenship to US-born children is not only unconstitutional; it's also a reckless and ruthless repudiation of American values," said Anthony Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union. "Birthright citizenship is part of what makes the United States the strong and dynamic nation that it is. This order seeks to repeat one of the gravest errors in American history, by creating a permanent subclass of people born in the US who are denied full rights as Americans," he added.

"We will not let this attack on newborns and future generations of Americans go unchallenged.

The Trump administration's overreach is so egregious

that we are confident we will ultimately prevail," Romero said.

The ACLU said Birthright citizenship is the principle that every baby born in the United States is a US citizen. It said the Constitution's 14th Amendment guarantees the citizenship of all children born in the United States — with the extremely narrow exception of children of foreign diplomats — regardless of race, colour or ancestry. Specifically, the 14th Amendment states that "all persons born or naturalised in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside".

The ACLU noted that the 14th Amendment was ratified in 1868, overturning the Dred Scott decision that denied Black Americans the rights and protections of US citizenship.

In 1898, the US Supreme Court confirmed in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* that children born in the United States to Caribbean and other immigrant parents were entitled to US citizenship, said the ACLU, adding that "the principle has remained an undisturbed constitutional bedrock for over a century".

"Birthright citizenship is guaranteed in our constitution and is absolutely central to what America stands for," said Cody Wofsy, deputy director of the ACLU's Im-

migrants' Rights Project and lead attorney in this case.

"Denying citizenship to babies born on US soil is illegal, profoundly cruel and contrary to our values as a country."

Theo Oshiro, co-executive director of Make the Road New York, said: "Birthright citizenship is a cornerstone of our democracy."

"Our members, who come from all over the world, have created vibrant communities, loving families, and built this country over generations.

To deny their children the same basic rights as all other children born in the United States is an affront to basic values of fairness, equality and inclusivity.

"We are grateful for the bravery of our members who have taken on this case, and are prepared to fight alongside them," Oshiro added.

The ACLU said the order will also stigmatise and send a message of exclusion not only to children directly impacted by the order but many others who will have their citizenship questioned because of their race or who their parents are.

"Excluding people born here will also create a permanent underclass of those who have never been to another country and may be rendered stateless," it added.

On Tuesday, New York Attorney General, Letitia James said that she and a coalition of 18 states, as well

as the City of San Francisco, are challenging President Trump's executive order. They have filed a lawsuit in the US District Court for the District of Massachusetts seeking to stop the president's "unlawful action, which violates the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution and will harm American children.

"The great promise of our nation is that everyone born here is a citizen of the United States, able to achieve the American dream," James told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC). "This fundamental right to birthright citizenship, rooted in the 14th Amendment and born from the ashes of slavery, is a cornerstone of our nation's commitment to justice."

"Our constitution is not open to reinterpretation by executive order or presidential decree. President Trump's attempt to undermine the fundamental right to birthright citizenship is not just unconstitutional, it is profoundly dangerous," she said, adding that the action is being taken to uphold the integrity of the US Constitution.

James said that starting February 19, babies born to parents who are lawfully in the US on certain visas or are undocumented will be denied their most basic rights and forced to grow up under the threat of deportation. (*Jamaica Observer*)

Belizean soldier charged with murder of colleague

A 32-year-old Belizean lance corporal has been charged with the murder of another member of the Belize Defence Force (BDF) following a shooting at the Crique Sarco Conservation Post in Toledo, the country's southernmost district Sunday night.

Alfredo Robinson Junior has been charged with the murder of Private Clive Baizar.

Reports are that several Belizean soldiers were on duty when an altercation escalated to violence between Baizar and Robinson, after which several shots were fired.

Baizar succumbed to multiple gunshot wounds, while another



Alfredo Robinson Junior

patrol member, Brandon Guzman, sustained two gunshot wounds and is currently in stable condition.

Robinson is expected to be arraigned later this week.

Meanwhile, BDF commandant, Brigadier General Azariel Loria says the accused is known to be quiet in nature and that after the incident, he appeared to be in shock.

“The character or the behaviour of Robinson, from what I got to understand after talking to the men on the ground and the commanding officer out there, is that he is reserved in nature.

“He is reserved, he often is secluded, he likes to seclude himself. And he is affectionately called Viejo — Viejo meaning old man because of the way he acts,” he added. (*Jamaica Observer*)

Regional artists invited to showcase their work aboard Royal Caribbean

Royal Caribbean International is bringing new opportunities for Caribbean artists to showcase their work to the world, with the return of its Artist Discovery Program.

The program invites emerging artists from across the region to contribute to the vibrant culture onboard Star of the Seas, the company's newest vacation vessel set to debut in August 2025 from Port Canaveral, Florida the company announced.

Following its successful introduction on Icon of the Seas, the Artist Discovery Program offers a platform for up-and-coming Caribbean artists to create large-scale murals and other art pieces that capture the essence of the region.

These works will be displayed in

prominent locations aboard Star of the Seas, such as the Royal Promenade, embarkation area, and Suite Sundeck Lobby.

Jay Schneider, Chief Product Innovation Officer of Royal Caribbean, expressed excitement about the program's return saying, “We can't wait to be awestruck by visionary artists across the Caribbean.”

He said last year's response was overwhelming, with over 140 artists submitting pieces from 25 countries across the Caribbean that beautifully represented the allure of the region.

This year, the programme will commission selected artists to create iconic murals that will become part of the ship's curated art collection. The murals will reflect the vibrant beauty

of the Caribbean, from its people to its landscapes, offering guests a truly immersive experience during their vacations, the informed.

Each selected artist will receive a grant ranging from \$20,000 to over \$100,000 to bring their vision to life.

The winners will work closely with Royal Caribbean's team to realize their concepts in Turku, Finland, where Star of the Seas is currently under construction.

To apply, artists must submit five samples of previous work, an artist statement, and a CV.

Submissions are open until February 15, 2025, and can be made online through Royal Caribbean's official website. (Loop Caribbean)

Murdoch's UK tabloids apologize to Prince Harry and admit intruding on the late Princess Diana



Prince Harry

Prince Harry claimed a “monumental” victory Wednesday as Rupert Murdoch’s U.K. tabloids made an unprecedented apology for intruding in his life for years and agreed to pay substantial damages to settle his privacy invasion lawsuit.

News Group Newspapers acknowledged its private investigators and journalists targeted Harry with phone hacking, surveillance and misuse of private information. The company offered him a “full and unequivocal apology” for intrusion by the now-defunct News of the World and its sister tabloid The Sun.

The statement, read out at the High Court in London by Harry’s attorney David Sherborne, even went beyond the scope of the case to acknowledge intruding on the life of Harry’s mother, the late Princess Diana, and the impact it had on his family.

“We acknowledge and apologize for the distress caused to the duke, and the damage inflicted on relationships, friendships and family, and have agreed to pay him substantial damages,” the settlement statement said.

News Group has long acknowledged that phones were hacked by staff at

the News of the World, the weekly newspaper that Murdoch shut down in 2011 amid a public outcry over tabloid snooping. But this is the first time the company accepted wrongdoing at The Sun, a paper that once sold millions of copies with its formula of sports, celebrities and sex — including topless women on Page 3.

Harry, 40, the younger son of King Charles III, had vowed to take his case to trial to publicly expose The Sun’s misdeeds and win a court ruling upholding his claims. He and Tom Watson, a former Labour Party member of Parliament, were the only two

remaining claimants out of more than 1,300 others who had settled lawsuits against News Group Newspapers.

The trial was due to start Tuesday, but was postponed amid last-minute negotiations that led to the dramatic settlement announcement.

Although the settlement means Harry will not get his day in court, his lawyer said it delivered the accountability he sought for himself and hundreds of others who were snooped on with intercepted voice-mails, tapped phones, bugged cars and various forms of deception. (*Associated Press*)

Over a million people flee to South Sudan as Sudan conflict grinds on: UN

More than one million people have fled the war in Sudan to seek refuge in neighbouring South Sudan, according to the

(SAF) erupted in April 2023 to more than a million, according to the statement issued by the UN High Commissioner for

generosity, welcoming those in need and sharing what little resources they have, but they cannot shoulder this massive



United Nations.

In its latest update on one of the world's worst displacement crises, the UN issued new data on Tuesday showing that more than 770,000 people have fled through the Joda crossing on South Sudan's northern border with Sudan in the last 21 months.

Tens of thousands more have crossed the border at other points, bringing the total to have fled to South Sudan since the war between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces

Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

"The arrival of over a million people into South Sudan is a stark and sobering statistic and truly shows the increasing scale of this crisis," the UNHCR's Sanaa Abdalla Omer said.

Most crossing the border are South Sudanese nationals who had previously fled from civil war in the world's newest country, the statement noted.

"The people of South Sudan continue to show extraordinary

responsibility alone," Omer added.

Two transit centres in Renk County on South Sudan's northern border, which have been designed for fewer than 5,000 people, are now hosting more than 16,000.

The UN has called for more support for both displaced people and the communities hosting them, warning that resources in South Sudan such as healthcare, water and shelter had become "dangerously overstretched". (*Al Jazeera English*)

Trump puts all US government diversity staff on paid leave 'immediately'

President Donald Trump has ordered that all US government staff working on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) schemes be put on immediate paid administrative leave.

The White House confirmed that all federal DEI workers had to be put on leave by 17:00 EST (22:00 GMT) on Wednesday, before the offices and programmes in question were shut down.

In an executive order issued on Tuesday, Trump also called for an end to the “dangerous, demeaning and immoral” programmes.

Since re-taking office on Monday, the president has acted swiftly on a number of key pledges through a raft of unilateral actions. He repeatedly attacked DEI practices on the campaign trail, arguing that they were discriminatory.

DEI programmes aim to promote participation in workplaces by people from a range of backgrounds.

Their backers say they address historical underrepresentation and discrimination against certain groups including racial minorities, but critics say such programmes can themselves be discriminatory.

In his inaugural address, Trump pledged to “forge a society that is colour-blind and merit-based”.

A memo, first seen by CBS, the BBC’s US partner, was sent from the US Office of Personnel Management to the heads of government agencies on Tuesday, instructing them to place DEI employees on leave.

It also made a number of requests, including the removal of public websites for DEI offices.

By Thursday, federal agencies must compile a list of DEI offices and workers. By 31 January, agencies must

The executive order requires federal hiring, promotions and performance reviews “reward individual initiative” rather than “DEI-related factors”.

It revokes a 1965 executive order signed by former Pres-

the merit-based civil service and turn federal hiring and firing decisions into loyalty tests,” said AFGE national president Everett Kelley in a statement.

Tuesday’s executive order comes on the heels of



submit “a written plan” for executing lay-offs in DEI offices.

Trump’s executive order, meanwhile, took aim at what it called the “illegal” policies of DEI and DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility), framing them as being in opposition to US law.

It said these policies had the capability to “violate” important underlying civil rights laws that protect Americans from discrimination.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said the move “is another win for Americans of all races, religions, and creeds”, and fulfils a campaign promise made by Trump.

ident Lyndon B Johnson that makes it illegal for federal contractors to discriminate on the basis of “race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin” in their hiring.

The order also requires the attorney general to submit, within 120 days, recommendations “to encourage the private sector” to end similar diversity efforts.

The American Federation of Government Employees, a union representing 800,000 federal workers, said that diversity programs had reduced gender and racial pay disparities in the federal workforce.

“Undoing these programs is just another way for President Trump to undermine

another one that pledged to put to an end to programmes deemed “radical and wasteful” by Trump.

That one, signed on Monday, declares that all DEI offices, positions and programmes be terminated within 60 days, “to the maximum extent allowed by law”.

It is unclear how many government employees would be affected by these orders.

Several large US companies have ended or scaled back their DEI programmes in recent weeks, including McDonald’s, Walmart and Facebook parent company Meta.

Others, like Apple and retailers Target and Costco, have publicly defended their DEI programmes. (*BBC News*)

Swiatek locks in Keys semi-final, Sinner sizzles at Australian Open



Iga Swiatek celebrates after beating Emma Navarro in her Australian Open women's singles quarter-final at the Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne, Australia, on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. (AP)

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Iga Swiatek booked her second Australian Open semi-final with another spectacular display on Wednesday, while Americans reached the last four of the men's and women's singles at Melbourne Park for the first time in 16 years.

Defending champion Jannik Sinner was also at his impressive best as he dismantled local favourite Alex de Minaur 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 for his 10th victory over the eighth seed in as many matches and returned to the last four at Melbourne Park.

Polish world number two Swiatek mowed down eighth seed Emma Navarro 6-1, 6-2 at Rod Laver Arena and faces another American in Madison Keys, who overhauled Elina Svitolina 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Ben Shelton wore down Italian Lorenzo Sonego 6-4, 7-5, 4-6, 7-6(4) in a highlight-laden clash and ensured the United States has

players in the men's and women's semi-finals for the first time since Andy Roddick and Serena Williams in 2009.

Searching for her first Grand Slam title, Keys will be hard-pressed to go further than Swiatek, who has crushed all five of her opponents at this tournament and is the only woman in the semi-finals to avoid dropping a set.

Most eyes have been focused on the top half of the women's draw, where title favourite and double defending champion Aryna Sabalenka booked a semi-final with Paula Badosa on Tuesday.

But it may be the free-swinging Swiatek in pole position for the title, having lost only 14 games in her five matches.

Keys had earlier blasted into a third Australian Open semi-final with characteristic aggression, 10 years after making her first at Mel-

bourne Park.

The 29-year-old from Rock Island, Illinois, had lost the last two of her three major meetings with Svitolina, most recently in the fourth round of the 2019 US Open.

Keys raised her game, though, breaking Svitolina in both the final sets while staying rock-solid on serve.

Shelton, the 21st seed, is the last American in the men's singles draw, having carried on after the third round demise of US Open runner-up Taylor Fritz and the quarter-final exit of 12th seed Tommy Paul.

Donning a white headband and a technicolour outfit, the 22-year-old brought a matching attitude to centre court as he yelled his way to victory in the first two sets and often cheered Sonego's mistakes.

Shelton wrapped up the match with a booming crosscourt forehand and high-fived his ecstatic father-coach Bryan Shelton, a former ATP title-winner.

A stern test awaits the American upstart, as top seed Sinner was at his brutal best to tear apart De Minaur in the late match and reach his second semi-final in Melbourne.

The early exchanges saw both players flex their muscles with heavy shot-making but there was only going to be one winner when Sinner broke for the first of six times.

Defeat extinguished local favourite De Minaur's ambitious bid to end Australia's 49-year wait for a men's champion at Melbourne Park since Mark Edmondson's triumph.

India beats England in first T20I



India's Abhishek Sharma, left, plays a shot during the first T20 International against England at Eden Gardens in Calcutta, India, January 22, 2025. (AP)

KOLKATA (Reuters) - Opener Abhishek Sharma's sensational power-hitting secured India's comprehensive seven-wicket victory against England in the opening T20 International at the Eden Gardens on Wednesday.

The left-hander clobbered eight sixes and five fours in his scintillating 79 off 34 balls as India chased down a modest 133-run target in 12.5 overs.

The visitors' skipper Jos Buttler struck 68 off 44 balls but England were all out for 132 in exactly 20 overs, which was never going to test the explosive batting lineup of T20 world champions India.

Left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh gave India a strong start, removing both England openers Phil Salt and Ben Duckett inside three overs after the home side elected to field.

Buttler counter-attacked, hitting Hardik Pandya for four fours in an over, throwing him out of the attack after the seamer's two expensive overs.

Varun Chakravathy (3-23) was pressed into service instead and the lanky spinner dismissed Harry Brook and Liam Livingstone in the same over as England limped to 74-4 at the halfway stage of their innings.

Buttler raced to a

34-ball fifty before Chakravathy dismissed him caught in the deep by a diving Nitish Kumar Reddy. Left-arm spinner Axar Patel and seamer Pandya claimed two wickets apiece.

India looked in a hurry when they began their chase. Sanju Samson milked 22 runs including four fours and a six off Gus Atkinson's first over, prompting Buttler to withdraw the bowler.

Jofra Archer dismissed Samson for 26 runs and India captain Suryakumar Yadav in the same over but boundaries kept flowing.

Abhishek hit Mark Wood for back-to-back six-

es and meted out the same treatment to England spinner Adil Rashid en route to a 20-ball fifty.

Rashid spilled a return catch when Abhishek was on 29 and it proved costly as the opener stepped on the gas immediately after the reprieve.

Rashid eventually dismissed the opener in the 12th over but India comfortably prevailed in a match that marked the beginning of England's white-ball era under coach Brendon McCullum.

Chennai hosts the second T20 of the five-match series on Sunday.

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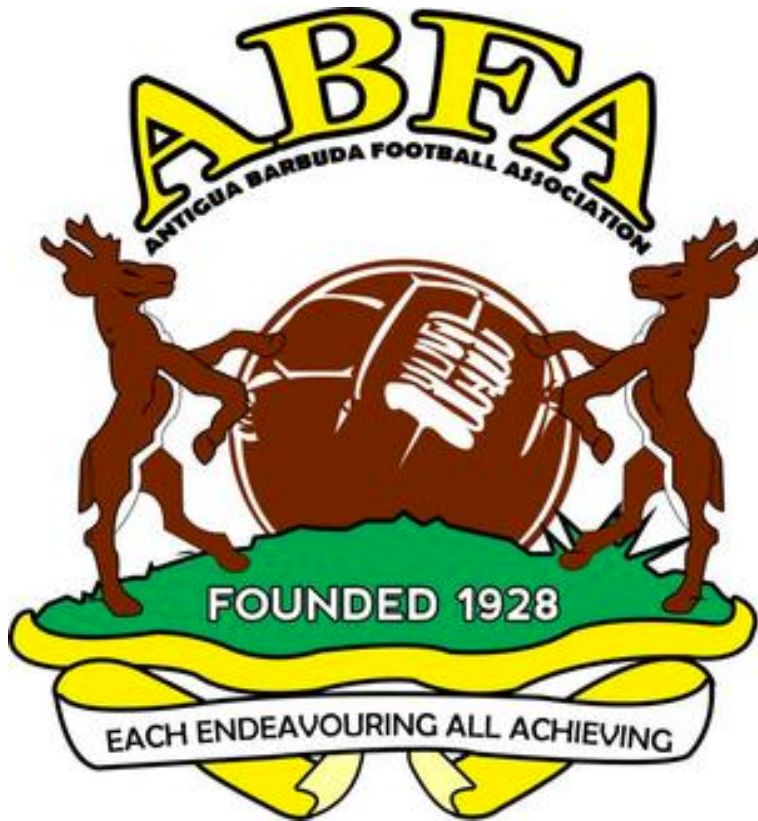
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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Scorpions move to top of First Division League



The Freeman's Village Scorpions have taken over as the new leaders of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division league.

The Freeman's Village Scorpions claimed their seventh win in 11 matches with a 5-0 drubbing of Lion Hill FC at the Freeman's Village playing field on Tuesday.

Robert Abraham scored in the fifth minute, Roy Gregory had a 27th-minute conversion, and Millique London struck home in the 35th minute to give the Scorpions a three-nil lead at

halftime.

The Scorpions wrapped up the match in the second half with two more goals, scored by Darius Hector in the 58th minute and Kahlique Kellman in the 71st minute.

The result allows the Freeman's Village Scorpions to jump from fifth place to the top of the First Division by advancing to 23 points from 11 matches. Lion Hill will remain on six points after suffering their sixth defeat in 10 encounters.

Jennings United won their latest match to accompany the Ottos Rangers and SAP FC in

joint second place in the First Division.

Jennings United extended their unbeaten run to claim their sixth win in nine matches with a 2-1 victory against Bendals at the Jennings playing field.

The Jennings men had to overcome a one-nil deficit after Kaijah Matthew scored in the seventh minute to give Bendals the lead.

But goals by Daryl Massicot, who scored the equalizer in the 28th minute, and Shaquille Watkins with the winning conversion in the 63rd minutes, snatched victory for Jennings United.

Bendals will remain on 10 points after suffering their fifth loss in 11 matches. The result allows Jennings United to advance to 21 points, the same as the Ottos Rangers and SAP FC.

Jennings United and Ottos Rangers remain the only two sides in the 14-team round-robin league yet to lose a match in the competition. Both teams have played nine matches, two less than SAP FC.

FC Master Ballerz recorded their fourth

win in 10 matches by snatching a one-nil victory against Police FC at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

Teejay Roberts scored the only goal of the match in the 32nd minute.

The result allows FC Master Ballerz to advance to 13 points from 10 encounters. Police will remain on six points after suffering their eighth defeat in 10 encounters.

Meanwhile, the Young Lions of Old won their latest match in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's Second Division League on Tuesday.

The Young Lions claimed their fifth win in 10 matches with a 3-0 victory against Blackburn Palace at the Old Road playing field.

Xavier Browne found the back of the net twice with conversions in the 34th and 74th minutes after Geraldo Browne scored the opening goal in the third minute.

The Young Lions advanced to 17 points from 10 encounters, while Blackburn Palace will remain on 12 points after suffering their fifth defeat in nine matches.

Winning starts for three teams in school basketball league

Three teams made winning starts to their campaigns in the MiniBoys Primary Division of the 2025 Inter-School Basketball League on Tuesday, which is organized by the Ministry of Sports and sponsored by Cool and Smooth.

Mary E. Pigott, Cedar Grove, and Greenby Primary schools all won their opening matches in this year's competition at the JSC Sports Complex.

Marcus Weekes hit two crucial free throws to allow Mary E. Pigott Primary to snatch an 8-7 victory in triple overtime against Golden Grove Primary.

Weekes led his team's scoring with four points in the keenly contested Miniboys Primary encounter.

Cedar Grove Primary romped to an emphatic 21-2 victory against Potters Primary. Emeka Daniel sank 10 points, and Khai Chaden scored six points for Cedar Grove Primary.

The Greenbay Primary prevailed 13-6 against the S.R. Olivia David Primary of Bolans in their encounter.

Raylil Rodriguez converted eight points for Greenbay Primary, while Ashorn Davis scored all six points for S.



Coach Oslyn "Pigeon" Gregory engages the players of the Mary E. Pigott Primary miniboy team during a timeout in their encounter against Golden Grove Primary in the Inter-School Basketball League at the JSC Sports Complex on Tuesday, January 21, 2025. (Photo courtesy of the School Basketball League)

R. Olivia David Primary.

All games that were scheduled for Wednesday were postponed. Matches

in the Inter-School Basketball League will resume at the JSC Sports Complex on Thursday (today).

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spending more time at the crease and sticking to the fundamentals.

"As I said before, we just need to apply ourselves and spend time at the wicket. We need to sit down and think about the way we go about our batting, apply ourselves, and come out and execute," she emphasized.

Despite the loss, Ramharack noted some positives, particularly from the team's bowling unit and the lower-order contributions.

"We had some bowling targets as a group, and we were able to hit

those targets. I think the way (Aaliyah) Alleyne and Cherry (Cherry-Ann

Fraser) batted are good signs for us as a batting group. But again, we just

have to look at where we fell short and come back," she noted.

With the ICC Women's World Cup qualifiers fast approaching, Ramharack underscored the importance of bouncing back strongly in the final ODI.

"Looking ahead to the qualifiers, we really want to know who we're going to play against, and obviously, Bangladesh has a shot at that (automatic qualification). So, we're going to come harder next game so that it's a bit easier for us," the Trinidadian declared.



West Indies off-spinner Karishma Ramharack bowls against Bangladesh during the second One-Day International against Bangladesh at Warner Park in St. Kitts on Tuesday, January 21, 2025.

Bangladesh beat West Indies women to tie ODI series

Bangladesh Women secured a dominant 60-run win over the West Indies Women in the second One-Day International (ODI) at Warner Park in St. Kitts on Tuesday to tie the three-match series at 1-1.

fours. Karishma Ramharack took career-best four for 33 from 10 overs, and Aaliyah Alleyne captured three for 24 in 5.5 overs for the West Indies.

Looking to follow up a dominant chase in

threws (16), Aaliyah Alleyne (15) and Karishma Ramharack (13) being the only other batters to get to double figures.

Bangladesh were excellent with the ball as a whole with Nahida Akter

Both teams will meet in the series decider at the same venue on Friday.

Meanwhile, West Indies off-spinner Karishma Ramharack has emphasized the need for the team's batters to focus on proper execution as they prepare for the series-deciding third ODI against Bangladesh.

The clinical bowling effort from the visitors in the second ODI exposed vulnerabilities in the Windies' batting approach, something Ramharack is keen to see addressed in Friday's final encounter.

"It's always good to be in the wickets. I'm really happy to get career-best figures, but I would have liked to win the game obviously," Ramharack said in a post-game interview, pointing to a lack of application at the crease as a key issue.

"I guess we didn't apply ourselves in the middle. We lost wickets in clusters, and that really put the team under pressure," she admitted.

Ramharack believes the solution lies in
con't on pg 23



West Indies women's Cherry Ann Fraser bats against Bangladesh during the second One-Day International against Bangladesh at Warner Park in St. Kitts on Tuesday, January 21, 2025. (Photos courtesy of CWI Media)

The hosts restricted Bangladesh to 184 all out from 48.5 overs after West Indies skipper Hayley Matthews won the toss.

Captain Nigar Sultana led the way for the Bangladeshis with 68 off 120 balls, including five

the first game on Sunday, the West Indians faltered mightily this time around, being dismissed for 124 in only 35 overs.

Shemaine Campbell led the way with 28, with Cherry Ann Fraser (18 not out), Hayley Mat-

leading the way with three for 31 from her 10 overs.

Fahima Khatun (two for 17 from five overs), Rabeya Khan (two for 19 from eight overs) and Marufa Akter (two for 35 from eight overs) were also very good in support.