

# Prime Minister Browne calls for greater dialogue and collaboration between CARICOM and the EU

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Asabi Charles (white cap) and team take charge of ABLP St John's City East branch

*Story on Page 10*



## Prime Minister Browne calls for greater dialogue and collaboration between CARICOM and the EU

During an engagement with President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, a call was made by Prime Minister Gaston A. Browne, for greater engagement between CARICOM and the European Union (EU). The Prime Minister stated that persistent misunderstandings regarding the management of Citizenship by Investment Programmes in the region would require further dialogue to ensure that European leaders understood the importance of these programmes to the development of the region. He also assured the European delegation that the necessary due diligence was being adhered throughout the management of these programmes.

Prime Minister Browne also highlighted the issue of climate change, and in particular carbon pricing. He stated that Europe generates approximately



Prime Minister Gaston A. Browne

\$2 Billion from carbon pricing, and he made a further call for enhanced collaboration with Europe and the Caribbean on this matter. The Prime Minister suggested that the EU could provide technical cooperation to CARICOM Member States, to enhance their capac-

ity so that the region could extract the benefits of carbon pricing.

Prime Minister Browne further called for a summit to be hosted in the region between CARICOM and the EU, to discuss issues related to trade; ICTs; Artificial Intelligence (AI); climate change; human resource development; and reparations.

The proposed summit was warmly received by CARICOM Heads and the European delegation. Moreover, he suggested that the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) be repurposed to be more community-based to ensure that there are greater benefits for the wider population. The Prime Minister also advocated for increased funding and cooperation in maritime transportation, renewable energy and food security.

## Prime Minister Browne highlights the issue of decarbonization in the fight against climate change

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has called for a further push towards a globe that is decarbonized in remarks made at the 48th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM. He stated that the issue of decarbonization must remain at the forefront in the fight against climate change, as the survival of the planet depends on this.

During his remarks the

Prime Minister thanked the Secretary General of the United Nations (UNSG), Antonio Guterres, who addressed the meeting prior, for his support towards the plight of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and described the UNSG as 'a champion of SIDS'. The Prime Minister also highlighted the success of the SIDS4 Conference which Antigua and Barbuda hosted in May, 2024. He called for

collaboration of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) and the Bridgetown Initiative, in order to maximize access to concessional funding for developing countries, and to ensure that matters of concern to developing countries continue to be heard globally.

Prime Minister Browne also highlighted the work of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), which

he served as Chairman. He described the MVI as an important tool for development, which takes into account vulnerability and its link to development. He further stated that the MVI should serve to compliment the (Gross National Income) GNI, as both metrics can provide developing countries with greater access to concessional funding to advance development.

## Prime Minister Browne calls for national elections and the return of law and order in Haiti

Prime Minister Gaston Browne calls for elections to be held in Haiti, in order for the establishment of a national government chosen by the people of Haiti.

PM Browne made the call in remarks at the 48th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM in Barbados.

The Prime Minister stated that the embattled CARICOM Member State would require political stability and legitimacy, though the election of Haitian leadership to strengthen the governance institutions and to restore law and order. He informed the meeting that political stability would be a pathway that leads to law and order.

The Prime Minister also suggested that the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) should receive further security support in the interim from the USA, Canada and the EU to combat the threat and instability posed by the gangs.

## National Trade Council spearheads discussion on Consumer Protection Bill, 2025



Ambassador Clarence Pilgrim



Orrin Steele, Director of the Prices and Consumers Affairs Division



Members of the National Trade Council

Members of the National Trade Council, in collaboration with one of its constituent members, the Prices and Consumer Affairs Division, held discussions on Thursday on the Consumer Protection Bill, 2025.

The consultation was jointly chaired by Chairman of the NTC, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Ambassador Clarence Pilgrim, and head of the Prices and Consumers Affairs Division, Orrin Steele.

In welcome remarks, Ambassador Pilgrim told attendees that their presence reflected a shared commit-

ment to ensuring that the Consumer Protection Bill, 2025 is not only comprehensive but also aligned with the principles of fairness, transparency, and accountability in the marketplace.

“As we undertake this public consultation, we recognize that consumer protection is a fundamental pillar of sustainable development. It is directly linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG

12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Ensuring consumers have access to clear information, fair pricing, and effective dispute resolution mechanisms contributes to economic stability, enhances market confidence, and empowers individuals to make informed choices,” he explained.

Additionally, he noted that their efforts align with the principles outlined in the CARICOM Civil Society Charter, which emphasizes participatory governance, economic justice, and consumer rights as essential components of regional integration and development.

“As a CARICOM member state, Antigua and Barbuda remains committed to fostering an economic environment where businesses thrive while consumer interests are safeguarded. The provisions within this Bill, such as the right to authorize services, the right to cancel reservations, price disclosure, and the elimination of unfair trading practices, all contribute to creating a fair and competitive market—one that benefits both consumers and businesses,” he emphasised.

Ambassador Pilgrim noted that through this consultation, the NTC aims to gather meaningful input from all stakeholders, including consumers, businesses, service providers, and advocacy groups, to refine the Bill and ensure it effectively addresses the evolving needs of the society. “This dialogue is a crucial step in strengthening consumer protections, building public trust in economic institutions, and reinforcing our national and regional commitments to sustainable economic development,” he remarked.



# Local News



## SLBMC names Dr. Asha Robins as Consultant General Surgeon

**Dr. Asha Robins**  
General Surgeon

"Surgery is more than a profession to me, it is a commitment to precision, compassion, and excellence. I am honored to contribute to the advancement of surgical care at SLBMC and to serve the people of Antigua and Barbuda with the highest standards of patient care. Thank you for your continued support."

*Dr. Robins is currently seeing patients by referral. For more information call: 484-2727*

Facebook Instagram Twitter @slbmedical

her colleagues and patients. We are excited to see Dr. Robins continue to grow in her new role, and we look forward to the valuable contributions she will make as a Consultant at SLBMC," the statement added. SLBMC is publicly offering congratulations to Dr. Robins for what it described as 'this well-deserved achievement'.

"We are proud to have her as part of our team and look forward to the continued positive impact she will have on the care we provide," it concluded.

released a flyer with the names and positions of its Departmental Nurse Managers.

"This team is dedicated to advancing the highest standards of patient care, fostering professional development, and supporting the continued growth and success of our nursing department. "Together, they bring a wealth of experience and passion to their roles and are instrumental in shaping the future of nursing at SLBMC. We are confident that their leadership will have a lasting impact on the care we provide," a SLBMC social media post stated.

The Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre has announced the promotion of Dr. Asha Robins to the post of Consultant General Surgeon at the nation's main healthcare facility.

professionalism, and compassionate approach to patient care have earned her the respect and admiration of both

In a statement, SLBMC noted that Dr. Robins, who previously served as a Senior Registrar at SLBMC, has consistently demonstrated exceptional clinical expertise, leadership, and an unwavering commitment to providing the highest quality care for its patients.

"As a member of the surgical team, Dr. Robins has contributed significantly to the surgical department and the hospital at large. Her skills,

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<p><b>Bernadine Hillhouse</b> ICU/ Paediatrics Units Bernadine.Hillhouse@msjmc.gov.ag t: 484-2764</p>	<p><b>Ann-Marie Brown Isaac</b> OPC/ Maternity Unit AnnMarie.Browne-Isaac@msjmc.gov.ag t: 484-2795</p>	<p><b>Emelda Benjamin</b> Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Emelda.Benjamin@msjmc.gov.ag t: 484-2725</p>
<p><b>Judy St. John- Edwards</b> Medical Unit Judy.StJohnEdwards@msjmc.gov.ag t: 484- 2748</p>	<p><b>Andrea Best</b> Dialysis Unit Andrea.Burns-Best@msjmc.gov.ag t: 484-2716</p>	<p><b>Anne Marie Bridgewater</b> Emergency Unit AnneMarie.Bridgewater@msjmc.gov.ag t: 484-2719</p>

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## Date set for the official launch of Carnival, 2025

Minister of Creative Industries, Daryll S. Matthew, and the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission, are inviting the public to the Official Launch of Antigua Carnival 2025.

Both the Minister and the Festivals Commission want the public to attend the event as they get ready to unveil the exciting plans for this year's grand festival.

**Date:** Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025

**Venue:** Weatherill's Estate

**Time:** 5:30 PM

**Dress Code:** Festive Chic

Following the record-breaking success of last year's celebrations, Antigua Carnival 2025 aims to surpass all expectations. It promises a Carnival filled with vibes showcasing our vibrant culture, pulsating music, and unmatched energy.

*"Antigua Carnival 2024 shattered records in music production, attendance, visitor arrivals where we saw significant increases of airlifts, social media engagement, masqueraders on the road, and overall economic impact,"* said **The Honourable Daryll S. Matthew**. *"This year, we are committed*

*to elevating your Carnival experience even further, positioning Antigua Carnival as the most sought-after Carnival in the Caribbean."*

**Ambassador Elizabeth Makhoul, Chair of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission,** reaffirmed the Commission's readiness for another successful Carnival season: *"The Festivals Commission has already begun*

*engaging key stakeholders to ensure that Antigua Carnival 2025 is bigger and better. We are implementing exciting changes and major improvements that will enhance the overall product and experience for revelers, visitors, and supporters alike."* Ambassador Makhoul added, *"The Commission is also extending an invitation to Corporate Antigua to join as partners in showcasing*

*our rich culture, diverse people, epic shows, and infectious music to the world."*

**Antigua Carnival 2025 – "ItZ A ViBe" That Everybody Will Want to Be A Part Of!**

For more information, follow Instagram @antiguafestivalsofficial, Facebook @Antiguacarnival social media or contact the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission



Antigua Barbuda FESTIVALS COMMISSION

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LIAT (2020) LTD is pleased to announce the commencement of scheduled flights to Barbuda, effective 7th of April.

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Recognizing the importance of seamless transportation within the twin-island nation, LIAT20 remains dedicated to facilitating efficient and dependable air travel. The introduction of these flights will not only improve mobility for residents and visitors but also support economic activities, tourism, and essential services between the islands.

The service will operate on Mondays,



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Depart Barbuda 16:35

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Airport Ticket office or via our CX Centre on +12687135428. Follow us on social media for exciting news and updates LIAT (2020) LTD remains committed to serving the people of Antigua and Barbuda with a safe, reliable and competitive flight services.

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on or before February 27th 2025. Only suitable applications will be acknowledged.





# Local News



## Consulate General New York hosts Immigration Forum for Antiguan and Barbuda diaspora

As part of its program to reach out to the diaspora, the Consulate General of Antigua and Barbuda in New York is spearheading an initiative to inform and educate Antiguan and Barbudans about their rights and responsibilities in light of the current thrust by the United States government to enforce its immigration laws.

A special forum has been organized where experts in the area of immigration law and citizenship regulations will be sharing information intended to help Antiguan and Barbudans navigate the prevailing circumstances and understand the implications of the new regulations.

The discussion will take place on Wednesday 26th February at 7:30 pm with the collaborative support of the Antigua and Barbuda Associations United (ABAU) and CUNY Citizenship Now.

Persons can register or send their questions in advance by going to <https://tinyurl.com/DiasporaExchange> or by joining the forum directly at the Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83010027823?pwd=E-6basDcYWQXduui646kzb-WFMQ0wgjz.1>

Leading off the discussion will be David Satnarine, who is Special Counsel for Immigrant Affairs at the King's County (Brooklyn) District Attorney's Office. Mr. Satnarine is responsible for managing immigrant justice initiatives, implementing the District Attorney's innovative collateral

consequence plea policy and providing counsel to hundreds of attorneys regarding immigration law and policy.

Two Antiguan and Barbudans, Monique Francis and Ralph Bowen, knowledgeable about immigration law and the existing related processes in the United States have also agreed to

share their knowledge with the diaspora.

Francis is the Interim Executive Director of CUNY Citizenship Now, which is the United States' largest university-based legal assistance program that provides free immigration law services.

Bowen is a well-respected and experienced attorney of Bowen, Kendall and Associates LLP, with offices in New York and Antigua and Barbuda. Bowen has a proven track record of providing guidance and support to individuals navigating the complexities of the American immigration system.

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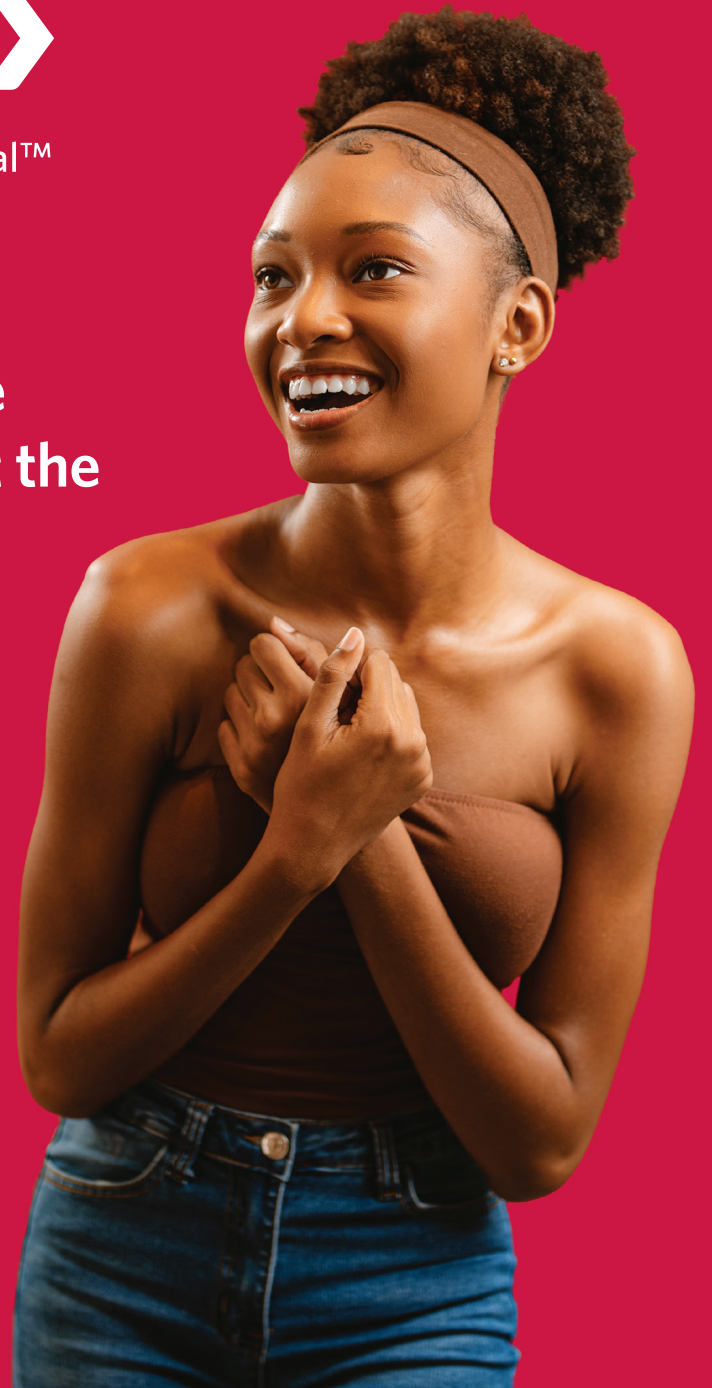
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# Local Art Studio Helping Young Artists Find Their Voice



Written by M. Williams

Quay Studio, a visual arts group based in the historic Redcliffe Quay, is helping young artists find their voice. This week, members of the collective visited local schools to share their artistic styles and encourage students to express themselves through visual arts.

Many Caribbean parents believe careers in law, medicine, or accounting are the best choices, which can make it hard for young people to follow their artistic dreams. Because of this, few local artists make it to the global stage. Quay Studios wants to change this by mentoring young artists and giving them the support they need to succeed in creative careers.

Quay Studio artists showed their work during school

visits and engaged students in hands-on activities to spark their creativity. These sessions are part of a larger effort during Heritage Month (Black History Month) to show that art is a valuable and exciting career path. Artists Gilly Gobinet and Makō Fine Art also participated in school visits. Ms. Gobinet worked with primary school students at St. Nicholas, while Makō engaged with Christ the King High School students.

In addition, schools have organized field trips to Quay Studio. This week, Pares Secondary and All Saints High School held their field trips at the studio in Red Cliff Quay, allowing students to experience the creative space firsthand.

With the advent of Art

Week, led by the Ministry of Tourism's Charles Fernandez and organized by Maria Blackman, Antigua is entering a new era of artistic evolution. This initiative highlights the country's commitment to nurturing visual artists and celebrating their contributions to culture and national identity.

Makō Fine Art, a member of Quay Studio, said, "Like a calypsonian who narrates history through song, artists capture moments in time, reflecting the growth and evolution of society. An artist's work preserves history and cultural identity, making them key storytellers of a nation's creative growth". By sharing our artist journey, we hope to show parents and the community that art is an important part of

our culture and economy." Makō stated that artists are the voice of the nation.

Heather Doram, CGM, a member of the Quay Studio, encourages institutions to invest in homegrown talent, ensuring that local art remains a proud part of the national identity. To ensure that local artistry remains rooted in Antigua and Barbuda, Heather urges businesses and institutions to invest in homegrown talent rather than relying solely on imported pieces. The art studio collective envisions a future where Caribbean art is appreciated and integrated into everyday spaces, from hotels and government offices to banks and cultural institutions.

With many artworks from Quay Studio being purchased by international patrons, it is crucial to preserve and promote the country's visual heritage within its own borders, ensuring future generations can experience and be inspired by the artistic excellence of their homeland. Artists at Quay Studio hope local art will be preserved in a National Museum of Fine Art. For more information about the Quay Studio Collective, contact us at 268.780.7618 or [quaystudiosanu@gmail.com](mailto:quaystudiosanu@gmail.com)



# Local News

## Asabi Charles wins in a nail-biter in St. John's City East



Asabi Charles is the new chairperson of the ABLP St. John's City East constituency branch following branch elections Thursday night.

In the closest contest of the three held over the past weeks, Charles edged

out Levaugh Lewis by a margin of 68 to 61 votes. For Vice chairman, Ashdel Davis secured 83 votes to Claude Francis' 41 votes.

The secretary spot went to Secretary Khadijah Joseph with 68 votes compared with Laurie Marsh

56, the Treasurer is Kiesha Liverpool who bettered Latoya Auguste 79 to 47 votes. Jacqui Browne is the new Women's Development Officer, winning 77 votes to Latoya Simon's 48 votes. The Youth Development Officer is Kia Edwards with 77 votes versus Shemeka

Spencer with 49 votes.

The management team members are; Anaju Barnes, 73 votes, Angela Nibbs, 72 votes, Rohan Antonio, 67 votes, Andronette Marshall, 67 votes with Jackie Carter and Janine Lovell with 64 votes each.



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# Commentary

## Why the U.S. Should Strengthen Trade Ties with the Caribbean



By Sir Ronald Sanders

A rules-based international trading system has long been a foundation of global commerce, providing stability, fostering investment, and ensuring fair competition. Though imperfect, it has helped to underpin economic growth worldwide, benefiting major economic powers particularly, but with some benefits to smaller states as well.

One of its key advantages has been predictability - a crucial factor in business planning, trade expansion, and dispute resolution. This system, particularly through the World Trade Organization (WTO), has historically provided a negotiated framework for resolving disputes rather than resorting to unilateral action that could lead to retaliation, economic instability, and geopolitical friction.

It is against this backdrop that the United States International Trade Commission (USITC) is now reviewing the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA) - a

trade programme that has been a cornerstone of U.S.-Caribbean relations since its enactment in 1984. Given the economic ties between the U.S. and the Caribbean, and the region's strategic importance, this review comes at a pivotal moment for shaping future trade relations.

### A Strong and Reliable Trade Partnership

Despite global trade deficits, the U.S. consistently enjoys a trade surplus with Caribbean nations. In 2023, the U.S. trade surplus in goods with the 14 independent CARICOM nations collectively was \$7.4 billion; in 2024, it stood at \$5.8 billion. The Caribbean has proven to be a loyal and valuable market for U.S. goods.

The U.S. surplus in trade with little Antigua and Barbuda alone was \$960.3 million in 2023 and \$550 million in 2024. These figures reflect an economic reality - CARICOM nations are not competitors to U.S. industries; they are consumers of U.S. products, from agriculture and technology to financial services and tourism-related industries.

The recent reduction in the overall U.S. surplus with CARICOM is largely due to its essential importation of oil and gas from Guyana. In 2024, Guyana's trade surplus with the U.S. rose to \$4 billion from \$1.9 billion in 2023—a reflection of the U.S.'s need for secure and reliable energy sources.

### The Risks of Disrupting a Stable Economic Relationship

Any weakening of CBERA's trade benefits would not only harm Ca-

ibbean economies but would also negatively impact the U.S. itself. A decline in economic activity in the region would lead to: reduced demand for U.S. goods and services, affecting revenues for American businesses; increased economic instability, raising the risk of irregular migration to the U.S; and a greater foothold for drug trafficking and organized crime, which directly threatens U.S. security.

History has shown that economic downturns in the Caribbean translate into security and migration challenges for the U.S. The best way to prevent these risks is not to weaken trade ties, but to strengthen them in a mutually beneficial manner.

### A Modernized Approach: Expanding CBERA to Include Services

The Caribbean economy has evolved significantly over the past few decades - services now account for more than 75% of employment and 66% of total output. The U.S. is already a dominant provider of services in finance, healthcare, technology, education, and tourism-related industries.

However, CBERA currently does not include trade in services - a gap that, if addressed, would benefit both U.S. businesses and Caribbean economies. In 2024 alone, U.S. exports of services increased by \$81.2 billion to \$1,107.8 billion, highlighting the strength and growth of this sector. Including services under CBERA would allow U.S. firms to expand their market share in the Caribbean, particularly in finan-

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cial services, digital industries, and tourism.

The Caribbean, in turn, would gain greater access to the U.S. market, ensuring more stable trade relations and predictable arrangements, such as in correspondent banking services, which are vital to financial stability in the region.

### The Unresolved WTO Dispute: A Test for Rules-Based Trade

During my testimony before the USITC, I raised the case of Antigua and Barbuda's longstanding WTO dispute with the U.S. Despite strictly adhering to WTO rules since 1995, Antigua and Barbuda has yet to see a resolution to the 2004 WTO ruling, which awarded the country compensation for losses in trade in services. As Ambassador to the WTO at the time, I led the case.

The WTO authorized a compensation mechanism allowing Antigua to sell U.S. intellectual property rights without paying the fees until the U.S. settled the matter. However, Antigua and Barbuda has refrained from doing so, choosing instead to pursue a good-faith settlement, not least because a criterion for benefiting from CBERA is the non-exploitation of U.S. intellectual property.

This unresolved issue - where a small nation rightfully won its case at the highest trade dispute body - remains a blemish on U.S. global trade leadership, and I urged the USITC to recommend that the matter should be addressed as part of its findings on the future of CBERA.

### A Clear Opportunity for U.S. Policymakers

The U.S. and the Caribbean have long shared a close economic and

strategic relationship. At a time of shifting global trade dynamics, CBERA is not just about economic policy; it is about reinforcing U.S. leadership, strengthening regional security, and maintaining economic stability with a group of its closest neighbours.

The choice before U.S. policymakers is clear: continue to strengthen trade ties with a region that is already closely linked to U.S. economic and security interests, or risk losing influence to external actors seeking greater engagement with the Caribbean. CARICOM nations do not see trade relations as a choice between one partner or another. The region has remained faithful to its trading partners, particularly the U.S., from which it purchases nearly 70% of its imports, including food and essential goods.

### Looking Ahead: The Case for Expanding CBERA

As the USITC reviews the impact of CBERA, the case for its continuation and expansion is strong. The economic data and strategic considerations point to a clear conclusion: continue the terms of trade in goods under CBERA; expand CBERA to include trade in services, aligning with the changed Caribbean economy and opening new opportunities for U.S. businesses; and reinforce the U.S.-Caribbean partnership, ensuring economic growth, regional stability, and security for both sides.

A stronger, more resilient Caribbean benefits not only the region but also the U.S. The time to act is now.

*(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the US and the OAS. The views expressed are entirely his own. Responses and previous commentaries: [www.sirronaldsanders.com](http://www.sirronaldsanders.com))*



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# IN MEMORY - COLIN 'BONE' CUMBERBATCH

(April 21, 1944 – January 31, 2025)

The Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Commission (ABRSC) mourns the death of its founding member Colin Cumberbatch – Jah Bone, Ras B, Boney Wonder – or simply 'Bone'. This shock follows three years after the loss of its other Rastafari member, King Franki. The Commission exchanges organizational condolences with the Rastafari Theocracy of Ras Freeman and expresses heartfelt sympathy to his bereaved family – his surviving sisters June and Debbie – and his children and grandchildren.

Colin's activism in the politics of liberation for African peoples is at least six decades old. His early years in Washington DC spent around the campus of Howard University and the Federal City College – exposed him to Black Power political thought, cultural pride and activism – those Pan Africanist ideas that forever influenced his approach to life – those that shaped his engagement with a world that maintains its determination to keep African peoples in the back of the bus. He eventually folded many of his ideas in the acceptance and practice of the Rastafarian faith.

There are few among us as culturally grounded as Colin was. He was a champion cyclist before he left his beloved Guyana for relocation here in Antigua – where he became an outstanding right winger with the Jets football team, a graceful swimmer and spearfish diver and an accomplished domino and bridge player. His knowledge of sports was astounding – international soccer, American football, basketball and of course, cricket where he found his niche as one of the foremost photojournalists covering the West Indies cricket team during its heyday.

Interestingly he did not play much cricket himself but he was a regular member of the Son-uva-Beach Fort James posse. His off-spin bowling – with a hint or hope of turn – brought joy to many batsmen. The less said about his batting and fielding, the better. Bone knew the world. He has seen most of it – from the crowded Mum-

bai in India, its castles to its polluted Yamuna river – to the vineyards of Durban, South Africa and the craft markets of Zimbabwe – to the jazz and soul concert halls, block and basement parties and record and book stores of



COLIN 'BONE' CUMBERBATCH

the USA – to the tea-serving reception rooms of the Lords cricket ground in the United Kingdom – and to the Asian capitals of Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In every nook and cranny of our Caribbean nations – he trod – with lasting memories of the mas' camps and steel band yards and calypso tents and competitions in Trinidad and Tobago and Antigua and Barbuda, to the Rastafari groundings and temples of Jamaica and Guyana and here at home, to the beach picnics and river cookouts in the smaller islands – to every cricket ground this region boasts.

He leaves us with an amazing record. His photography always edged deeper than the simple capture of images – which he did amazingly well. But through his camera lens he also sought and recorded the vicissitudes of life – joy and accomplishment, sometime pain and failure – always giving dignity to his subjects.

His library contains rare books by Black authors – his collection of music that of the most eclectic – calypso, soca, reggae and its precursors and offshoots, steelband, jazz, soul/rhythm

and blues, and various continental African genres. He did not only collect – he knew the forms, the main proponents, the history of their development, their importance to African and African descendants persons. He collected art and shared with ABRSC on many occasions for exhibition, his vast collection of African sculptures and other artifacts. But Colin's contrarian thinking – his refusal to accept the world as it is and the socio-cultural and economic compliance it demanded – thrust him into memorable debates/arguments with many of his best friends – those in Washington DC – and here with colleagues Anthony Mamba Liverpool, Dorbrene O'Marde and the deceased King Franki and Clarvis Joseph – among others.

Yes, he was contrarian to the core. He was ever ready for a debate and he never accepted defeat – with anyone who did not agree that Sir Vivi was the greatest batsman the world has known or will know, that Andy Roberts was by far a better bowler than Glenn McGrath, that Nancy Wilson was a better singer than Dionne Warwick, that Stalin must be rated among the best calypsonians, that there is no better steelband than Desperadoes – and before his Rasta days – that Cavalier was preferable to White Label. Bone had both a phenomenal memory and an amazing comfort with himself, maintaining his views even in the teeth of challenging contemporary and statistical evidence. His contributions to the work of the Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Commission and the regional Caribbean Pan African Network – headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago are legendary. He is remembered in both organizations for his engaging reasoning – a unique mix of academic and grassroot thinking – and his consistent demand for racial justice and African self-determination. He leaves us knowing that there is still much work to be done for the call 'Reparations Now' to be realized.

**Dorbrene E. O'Marde**  
 Chairperson, ABRSC / February 16<sup>th</sup>  
 2025

## St. John's Rural North Health Fair a Resounding Success

**ST. JOHN'S Anti-gua...20th February 2025.....**The St. John's Rural North Constituency Health Fair was a tremendous success, drawing scores of residents from across the community who took full advantage of a wide range of free health services. Held last Saturday, the event provided essential screenings, consultations, and vaccinations, reinforcing the community's commitment to prioritizing health and wellness.

Residents had access to general health check-ups, eye exams, doctor consultations, and vaccinations, ensuring comprehensive healthcare support. Medical students, administrators, and faculty from the American University of Antigua (AUA) played a crucial role in conducting screenings, while community nurses from the Ministry of Health administered key vaccinations, including HPV, BT, and flu shots among others.

Doctors Cox and Gordon were on-site, offering consultations and medical assessments, while the HIV Secretariat provided free HIV testing, educational resources, and protective supplies. The Antigua and Barbuda Planned Parenthood Association facilitated cholesterol and blood sugar testing, alongside guidance on sexual health, preventive care, and family planning.

A major partner in the initiative, the Medical Bene-



fits Scheme (MBS), offered nutritional and mental health information, patient registration, and general wellness information. A standout feature of the fair was the diabetic foot care services where seniors were treated to specialized foot health treatments.

St. John's Rural North Branch Chairman, Mr. Peter Abraham also made a donation of a children's wheelchair on behalf of his son, Peter Abraham Jr to the Cedar Grove Community Clinic during the community Health fair.

Member of Parliament for St. John's Rural North, the Hon. H. Charles Fernandez, lauded the success of the health fair and expressed his delight at the strong turnout, particularly among young people and young adults.

*"It is clear that our residents are prioritizing their health and engaging in community-based initiatives. I, too, participated—getting screened and tested while interacting with our dedicated healthcare pro-*

*essionals who generously volunteered their time and expertise. The Cedar Grove Community Clinic remains a pillar of healthcare in our community, and I will continue to support its growth and development."* – Fer-

nandez stated.

MP Fernandez also extended his gratitude to the AUA students and faculty, Doctors Cox and Gordon, and the dedicated nursing team—including Nurses Gloade, Quallis, Nathaniel, Georges, and CHA Stevens—for their invaluable contributions.

The success of this year's St. John's Rural North Health Fair underscores the importance of accessible healthcare and community-driven wellness initiatives, reinforcing the constituency's commitment to a healthier and more informed population.

Form RLNC13

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA  
THE REGISTERED LAND ACT CAP 374

Section 13(a)(3)  
of the Act

REGISTRATION SECTION	BLOCK	PARCEL
Gambles	61 1793C	188

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO RE-CREATE A LOST OR MISPLACED LAND REGISTER**

TAKE NOTICE that an Application was filed on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021 by Sharon Simmons, Registrar of Lands of High Street, St. John's, Antigua on behalf of Eric M. Knight, the Applicant herein for a new land register to be re-created in the name of Eric M. Knight in respect of the parcel of land, more particularly described in the Schedule hereto, the original Land Register having been lost or misplaced.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that if you object to the granting of the application you must within two (2) months of the second publication of this notice in the Gazette and a newspaper lodge an objection in the form prescribed setting out the grounds of your objection.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that if you fail to make any objection to the said application, the Registrar of Lands may proceed to re-create a new Land Register in the name of Eric M. Knight without further notice.

The said Application may be inspected by any interested party at the Land Registry from Monday to Thursday between the hours of 8:30 am – 3:30 pm and Friday between the hours of 8:30 am and 2:00 pm.

**DESCRIPTION OF LAND**

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land situated in the Gambles Registration Section in Antigua and Barbuda and butted and bounded as follows:-

On the North by Parcel 203 owned by Jo-Ann Merchant and Dominique Primus

On the South by Parcel 192 owned by The Government of Antigua and Barbuda

On the East by Parcel 189 owned by Carla Thomas

On the West by Parcel 187 owned by Dennis Hunte and Denise Hunte

Dated the 18<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021

Registrar of Lands



# Feature



# CLIMATE CONSCIOUS



RHYME AND RESOLVE: CLIMATE CALLS

Good Humans  
268 Inc

What if waste was not our foe,  
But a chance to build, to grow?  
What if trash held hidden worth,  
A greener world, a second birth?

Landfills smolder, skies turn gray,

Would generate \$15,778,402 alone.  
A sum so vast, so grand, so wise,  
To keep our land, our ocean, our skies.

And what of those who serve and feed,  
Whose work fuels every daily need?

Would bring in \$10,950,000, they say.  
Medium firms at \$2.50 apiece,  
Would add \$9,125,000 at least.  
And large-scale giants, paying three,  
Would give \$16,425,000 to see  
A landfill clean, a nation new,

With skies so clear and waters blue.

Total? \$36.5 million strong,  
A force for good, we can't go wrong.

Dancing feet, bright party lights,



A fiery warning—change the way.  
Each piece of waste we cast aside,  
Shapes the earth, the sea, the tide.

Yet hope is more than whispered dreams,  
It thrives in action, fuels our schemes.  
A future bright, clean, and grand,  
If each one lends a helping hand.

20,772 in jobs, they stand,  
What if they too lent a hand?

With waste training, a minor toll,  
Just \$4 per year—a worthy goal.  
That's \$83,088 we'd earn,  
Ensuring waste gets due concern.



Did you know? We're 28,819 strong,  
Households where waste belongs.  
A simple act, a small, small fee,  
Could change our fate—what could it be?

Just \$1.50 per day from each home,

From cafés quaint to stores so wide,  
Commerce shapes the countryside.  
40,000 businesses here reside,  
What if they helped turn the tide?

Small businesses—\$2 per day,

**01**  
PET/PETE

**02**  
HDPE

**03**  
PVC

**04**  
LDPE

**05**  
PP

**06**  
PS

**07**  
OTHER

**PLASTIC RECYCLING SYMBOLS**



Music, joy-filled, lively nights.  
But waste remains when fun is done,  
A silent weight beneath the sun.

What if each ticket bore a fee,  
A single dollar, light and free?  
With events each weekend, crowds so tall,  
We'd raise \$104,000 in all.

And larger fêtes, grand in scale,  
Carnival sails, no room to fail.  
Another \$204,000 earned,  
For cleaner grounds where waste is turned.

Beyond the shores, from far and near,  
Visitors come to find joy here.  
Each footprint left upon our sand,  
Could shape the fate of this fair land.

If just \$1 per visitor stayed,  
We'd see \$1,154,236 paid.  
Cruise ships, resorts, island tours,  
Supporting waste solutions, ensuring cures.

The Grand Total—A Nation's Hope  
So pause and ask, consider this,  
A plan for change, too great to miss.

Households: \$15,778,402.50  
Food Industry Training: \$83,088  
Eco-Businesses: \$36,500,000  
Events: \$308,000  
Tourism: \$1,154,236  
Total: \$53,823,726.50



Could this be the change we need?  
Would you contribute, plant the seed?  
Would you give a dollar, a single cent,  
To build a future, wise and spent?

The Cost of Inaction  
But what if we let the fire burn,  
Refused to learn, refused to turn?  
What happens when the waste piles high,  
And toxins fill the open sky?

What will we leave for years ahead?  
A landfill wasteland, filled with dread?  
Or will we rise, a people bold,  
With futures bright, with hands to hold?

The World Bank warns—by 2050,  
Global waste grows seventy percent—  
Will we stand still, indifferent?  
Or act as change's firm ascent?

Ban Ki-moon once wisely said,

Will you help? Will you see?  
A cleaner land, for you and me.

Answer to last week's Question

Are all plastics recyclable?

Not all plastics are recyclable; only certain types marked with specific recycling symbols can be.

RECYCLING CODES FOR PLASTIC						
PETE or PET	HDPE or PE-HD	PVC or V	LDPE or PE-LD	PP	PS	0 or N/A
Polyethylene Terephthalate	High-Density Polyethylene	Polyvinyl Chloride	Low-Density Polyethylene	Polypropylene	Polystyrene or Styrofoam	Other
soda bottles, water bottles, polyester film, jars, fibers for clothing	detergent containers, plastic bottles, piping for water and sewer, snowboards, boats	window frames, plumbing products, electrical cable insulation, clothing, medical tubing	shopping bags, plastic bags, clear food containers, disposable packaging	laboratory equipment, automotive parts, medical devices, food containers	CD and DVD cases, packing peanuts, single-use disposable cutlery, trays	baby feeding bottles, car parts, water cooler bottles, sippy cups


That justice, growth, and hope are bred,  
When people work with hearts aligned,  
To heal the world for humankind.


So let's begin, let's make it right,  
Let's start today—let's spark the light.

A dollar's power, a simple start,  
A movement driven, heart by heart.

This week's Question  
Are biodegradable and compostable plastics recyclable?

Think you know the answer? Check back next week to see if you're a recycling pro!





## THE PDV HOUR

MONDAYS  
11AM - 12NOON



# Regional News

## Dom Rep officials cram thousands of inmates into overcrowded prisons



They're known as "frog men," inmates who are forced to sleep on prison floors across the Dominican Republic, often next to overflowing toilets or holes in the ground that serve as one.

Thousands of them are crammed into the country's severely overcrowded prisons, some operating at seven times their capacity. A majority languish there without ever having been charged with a crime, and activists warn they face inhuman conditions and a lack of medical care. Despite promises to improve the system, critics say the Dominican Republic continues to push for and allow pretrial detentions in nearly all criminal cases where no charges have been filed and has made few changes as problems within prisons keep mounting.

"Prisons have become no man's land," said Rodolfo Valentín Santos, director of the Dominican Republic's

National Public Defense Office.

Over 60% of the country's roughly 26,000 inmates are being held under preventive detention, without any charges, according to the National Public Defense Office. Proponents argue the measure aims to protect society and allows authorities time to collect evidence in a case.

But some detainees have spent up to 20 years in prison without ever being found guilty of a crime, Valentín said.

He noted that the country's Constitution and penal code dictate that preventive detention is an "exceptional" measure. There are six other measures that don't involve prison time, including bail, but Valentín said they are rarely used.

On a recent afternoon, Darwin Lugo and Yason Guzmán walked out of La Victoria National Penitentiary, in the northeast corner of the sprawling capital, Santo Domingo.

The prison was built for a maximum of 2,100 inmates but holds more than 7,000 of them, with more than 3,300 under pretrial detention, according to the National Public Defense Office.

It is the country's oldest and most populated prison. "You have to watch out for your life," said Lugo, who with Guzmán visited several friends held there, some under pretrial detention. "There are a lot of them who are not doing well," Guzmán said of inmates there. "There's extreme poverty."

They said their friends, who have spent more than five years incarcerated there, are well-connected and only occasionally request money or ask that their cell phone's SIM card be recharged.

Last year, at least 11 inmates died at La Victoria following a short circuit in a cell that sparked a fire and an explosion. It was one of the country's deadliest prison fires since 2005, when at least 134 inmates were killed in the eastern town of Higüey after rival gangs set their bedding ablaze.

After last year's fire at La Victoria, Dominican President Luis Abinader appointed former prisons director Roberto Santana as head of a commission tasked with overhauling and improving the coun-

try's more than 40 prisons. "We must admit, gentlemen, that we have a situation in all of the country's prisons," Abinader said when he announced the appointment last March. He also announced that money recovered from corruption cases would help fund construction of new prisons. Santana has long called for the closure of La Victoria and the 15 de Azua prison, located in the country's western region. The commission he leads is working on those and other monumental tasks, free from outside interference, he said.

"We don't take orders from politicians or anyone else," said Santana, who previously trained staff for the new prisons built in the early 2000s.

Santana, who once served as president of the Federation of Dominican Students in the 1970s, was arrested multiple times under President Joaquín Balaguer, known for having political opponents and dissidents jailed and sometimes killed.

Santana knows first-hand the conditions of La Victoria — he spent two years in solitary confinement there. In the early 2000s, the Dominican Republic began building 21 new prisons to improve conditions. They were staffed by trained personnel, not police and

*con't on pg 19*

## Mom strangled in home invasion



Police are at the scene of a deadly home invasion in St Mary's, Moruga where a 64-year-old retired roti shop

owner is the country's latest murder victim.

Durpatee Chance was killed in her home on Wednesday

night.

Her elderly husband was beaten by the intruders but survived.

The elderly couple was found by one of their sons when he returned from work on Thursday morning.

It is suspected that the elderly woman was strangled with an electrical cord which was also used to bound hers and her husband's hands and feet. (Trinidad Express)

*con't from pg 18*

soldiers, which oversee the country's other 19 prisons. But conditions in the new prisons have deteriorated, according to the Dominican Republic's National Commission of Human Rights.

"The Dominican Republic's prison system is on the brink of collapse," the commission said in its 2023 report, the latest one available.

In prisons across the country, overcrowding is rampant. Cells lack bathrooms, natural light and ventilation, leading to worsening health conditions. Some 5,000 inmates are ill with conditions ranging from heart problems to cancer to HIV, but they receive only the most basic medication, if that, and some prisons have no medical staff, according to Valentín, whose

office issues a yearly in-depth report on the conditions of all prisons.

In its 2023 report, the latest year available, his office called for the closure of prisons including one in the north coastal city of Nagua.

"The level of overcrowding... makes it impossible to achieve true rehabilitation for the inmates since they have been forgotten by the state," the report read. "In the conditions they are in, it is obvious that they are treated as objects and not as human beings endowed with rights."

Another prison was so overcrowded that the government held inmates outdoors in trucks with metal roofs that broiled under the sun, sparking lawsuits, Valentín said.

A spokesperson for Col.

Roberto Hernández Basilio, director of prisons, did not respond to requests for an interview. Hernández has previously said his office is taking measures to improve conditions.

Meanwhile, Dominican Attorney General Miriam Germán Brito has repeatedly spoken out against pretrial detention but noted that the decision lies in the hands of judges. A spokesperson for Germán said she is not granting media interviews.

Both Santana and Valentín said they believe government corruption is one reason the country has dragged its feet in overhauling the system, accusing soldiers and police who run prisons of benefiting from illegal activities. Public corruption also prompted authorities to halt construction of a

much-touted prison in recent years that was expected to ease overcrowding. Even as that half-built prison wastes away, Santana said he expects that 25 new prisons capable of holding more than 20,000 inmates will be built by 2028.

While those are expected to help ease overcrowding, concerns remain. Activists note that inmates are not freed even when a judge has legally released them. The National Commission of Human Rights noted that roughly 2,700 inmates are still in prison because their paperwork is paralyzed in backlogged courts. Meanwhile, hundreds of others remain incarcerated despite being officially freed because they owe the government money and are unable to pay fines ordered by a judge. (Loop Caribbean)



# Regional News

## Ex-cop to seek bail ahead of retrial for 2008 murder of teen girl

The ex-policeman who is to be retried for the 2008 murder of a 14-year-old schoolgirl is scheduled to return to the Home Circuit Court for a bail application on March 20.

A bail hearing for Rushon Hamilton was fixed for Wednesday in the Home Circuit Court, but the matter failed to proceed and was postponed because of Justice Vinette Graham's non-receipt of the bundle with the lawyers' submission.

Hamilton, who was dapperly dressed in grey pants and a vest, was remanded. Attorney-at-law John Clark is representing the defendant.

Hamilton was found guilty in 2012 of the murder of Jhaneel Goulbourne and was sentenced to life in prison with a stipulation that he serve 35 years before being considered for parole. However, his sentence and conviction were overturned in September 2023 by the Court of Appeal, which ordered a retrial.

The allegations are that the teenager was abducted from her home in Harbour View, St Andrew, by armed men on October 24, 2008, and taken to sea on a boat. It is further alleged that Hamilton shot the young girl and threw her overboard. Her body was never recovered.

The schoolgirl went missing after she reported Hamilton to the police and he was charged with carnal abuse.

The child had told officers at the Centre for the Investigation of Sexual Offences and Child Abuse that Hamilton had carnally abused

her in the barracks room of the Elletson Road Police Station.

Two of the ex-constable's cellmates, as well as other prosecution witnesses, had testified that Hamilton had confessed to the murder.

One of the witnesses, Lennox Hinds, testified that Hamilton had confessed to him that he killed the young girl, after taking her out to sea where he shot her and threw her body overboard. The witness also testified that Hamilton had told him that he had been "99.9 per cent sure that her body could not be found", when he was told that the girl's body was found.

The appeals court, in quashing the conviction, said the trial judge made several errors in dealing with the evidence given against Hamilton by persons in custody.

Justice Frank Williams, who had written the decision,

said then that, "the reason for the quashing of the conviction has been brought about by the learned trial judge's unfortunate omission, in an otherwise fair and balanced summation, to direct the jury in keeping with the principles set out in Pringle and Benedetto.

"It is apparent that, in the trial, the need for caution first arose on the Crown's case. In our view, that need was further accentuated with the testimony of Brooks, whose evidence supported the defence advanced by the applicant, of a plot arrived at in an attempt to 'frame' him."

The Court of Appeal judges also said that summation did not show that any 'special attention' was given to the risks associated with cell confessions, and that the trial judge failed even to identify the things the witnesses testified were said by the applicant as "cell

confessions".

One of the inmates, Devon Brooks, testified at the trial, which was presided over by now-retired Justice Lloyd Hibbert, that he learnt of an alleged plot against Hamilton involving inmates Hinds and Bentley, both of whom were used by the prosecution.

The witness also testified that, while they were in custody with Hamilton, he confessed that, in 2008, he shot Goulbourne and dumped her body at sea.

However, Hamilton denied the allegation in his unsworn statement.

He further maintained his innocence during the appeal, claiming he had no reason to kill the teenager, that the prosecution witnesses were connected, and that the case against him was all a part of a conspiracy to frame him. (Jamaica Gleaner)



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## Spain's ex-football chief Luis Rubiales found guilty of sexual assault



A Spanish court has found former football chief Luis Rubiales guilty of sexual assault for kissing football player Jenni Hermoso without her consent after the 2023 Women's World Cup Final.

Rubiales, who was acquitted of coercion, was given a fine of 10,000 euros (\$10,455) on Thursday by the Audiencia Nacional court. He was ordered not to go within a 200-metre (660-foot) radius of Hermoso and banned from communicating with her for one year.

The incident cast a pall over Spain's victory in the 2023 Women's World Cup and set off a debate about sexism faced by female athletes. The 47-year-old Rubiales resigned in September 2023 amid widespread outrage.

While Hermoso has stated that the kiss was not consensual and told the court that she felt "disrespected" by the act, Rubiales has

maintained that it was. He told the court on Tuesday that he remained "absolutely sure" that the kiss was consensual.

Prosecutors had sought jail time for Rubiales, composed of one year for assault and 18 months for coercion, alleging that Rubiales and several prominent Spanish football officials had attempted to coerce Hermoso into saying that the kiss was consensual and downplay the incident. The court declined to sentence Rubiales to prison time and acquitted him and the three co-defendants of coercion.


Judge Jose Manuel Fernandez-Prieto said that he believed Hermoso's testimony that she had not consented to the kiss. He ruled that the sexual assault, "while always reproachable" was of minor intensity as there was no violence or intimidation.

"The Judge understands that, in view of the magni-

tude of the assault, a kiss, that it is a sporadic act of the accused, and that he

does not require special rehabilitation for the crime, the pecuniary penalty must be chosen, which is less serious than the custodial sentence," the verdict said. The 34-year-old Hermoso, the all-time top scorer for the Spanish women's team, told the court earlier this month that the unsolicited kiss and the commotion that followed had "stained one of the happiest days of my life", while her teammates testified that the incident left her exhausted, crying and overwhelmed.


"As a woman, I felt disrespected," Hermoso said at the trial. (Al Jazeera English)



ABLP ST JOHN'S RURAL WEST

## MEET AND GREET

BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



14

MARCH

Eldeana R. Martin Recreational  
Community Park  
Golden Grove New Ext.

6-9pm

Sen. Michael Joseph

ABLP CARETAKER- ST. JOHN'S RURAL WEST

Refreshments will be provided

## Pope Francis' health improves slightly after pneumonia diagnosis

Pope Francis is continuing his recovery from pneumonia, eating breakfast out of bed on Thursday morning after a sixth peaceful night at the hospital, the Vatican said. Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni issued a new update after confirming late Wednesday that new blood tests showed a "slight improvement" in some inflammation indices for the 88-year-old pontiff, who had an acute case of pneumonia in 2023 and is prone to respiratory infections in winter.

Francis was visited Wednesday by Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, his first known VIP visitor. She reported after their 20-minute visit that Francis was in good spirits and had "joked around as always."

Francis was admitted to Rome's Gemelli hospital February 14 after a bout of bronchitis worsened.

Doctors on Tuesday diagnosed pneumonia in both lungs, on top of a polymicrobial infection in his respiratory tract, meaning a combination of bacteria, viral and other organisms.

He is taking a combination of antibiotics and cortisone for what doc-

tors also diagnosed as asthmatic bronchitis.

in such a fragile, elderly patient makes him partic-

ularly prone to complications given the difficulty in being able to effectively expel fluid from his lungs.

While his heart is strong, Francis isn't a particularly healthy 88-year-old.

He isn't physically active, uses a wheelchair because of bad knees, had part of one lung removed as a young man, and has admitted to being a not-terribly-cooperative patient in the past. (*Loop Caribbean*)



Doctors say pneumonia

ularly prone to complications given the difficulty



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## Bodies of youngest Hamas hostages among those returned to Israel

Hamas released the bodies of four Israeli hostages Thursday, parading four black caskets on a stage against a backdrop of propaganda slogans and behind white missiles spattered with red paint bearing the phrase “they were killed by USA bombs.”

In what is likely to be one of the defining images of the war in the Gaza Strip, the four caskets sat on a raised platform in front of smiling illustrations of three members of the Bibas family, who became a face of the victims of the Palestinian militant group’s Oct. 7, 2023, terrorist attack on Israel, and 84-year-old Oded Lifshitz.

Among the bodies believed to be handed over by Hamas were those of Kfir and Ariel Bibas, the two youngest captives seized in the attack that triggered Israel’s military campaign in the Gaza Strip.

Israel has said that the bodies, the first to be returned under the current ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, will need to undergo forensic testing before authorities can confirm their identities. Lifshitz’s said Thursday that his body had been identified.

Each casket also carried a small photograph of one of the four hostages.

The body of the Bibas children’s mother, Shiri, was also handed over, along with that of Lifshitz, according to the Hostages and Missing Families Forum, which represents the families of those still in Hamas captivity.

The handover took place in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, where large crowds gathered and armed Hamas militants in black and camouflage uniforms patrolled the area. The caskets were displayed in front of a large banner that showed a caricature replicating antisemitic tropes of Is-

raeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with vampiric teeth and blood running down his face.

Netanyahu reacted to the release of the deceased hostages in a post on X later Thursday, saying that “we bow our heads for the heavy loss of our four hostages.”

“We are all in pain, a pain that is mixed with rage,” he said, adding that he planned to return the remaining hostages, “destroy the murderers and eliminate Hamas.”

After representatives from Hamas and the Red Cross signed paperwork on a table with a camouflage cover and two Palestinian flags, the caskets were carried into white Red Cross vehicles that then drove them away to be transferred to the Israel Defense Forces and Israel Security Agency.

The children’s father, Yarden Bibas, 35, was released Feb. 1 under the first phase of the ceasefire deal. He had been held in a different part of Gaza from his wife and children, according to hostages who were with him in captivity and have since been freed.

While all other child hostages were released in exchange for Palestinian prisoners during a one-week ceasefire in November 2023, the Bibas family never emerged from Gaza.

On one of the final days of the brief pause in fighting, Hamas released a statement claiming that Shiri Bibas and the children had been killed in an Israeli airstrike, although Israel’s military said the claim could not be confirmed before later acknowledging its fears for the family.

The Hamas leader in Gaza, Khalil al-Hayya, announced Tuesday that the bodies of Shiri Bibas and the two children would be among those returned this week.

He also announced that four of the remaining living captives would be released Saturday, in addition to two others who have been held in the Gaza Strip for about a decade.

The Israeli prime minister’s office confirmed it had reached an agreement on the releases during negotiations held in Cairo last week, but refrained from naming any of the hostages.

Israel had long braced to learn the fate of Kfir Bibas, who was just shy of 9 months old when he was abducted along with his parents and brother, Ariel, who was 4 at the time, from their kibbutz, Nir Oz.

In late 2023, Hamas said that Shiri Bibas and the children had been killed by Israeli bombardments. Israel has yet to confirm their deaths.

On Tuesday, the Bibas family said it was “in turmoil” over the Hamas leader’s announcement of the return of Shiri Bibas and the children.

“Until we receive definitive confirmation, our journey is not over,” the family said in a statement.

The Hostage and Missing Families Forum also named the six living hostages slated for release Saturday: Eliya Cohen, Omer Shem Tov, Omer Wenkert, Tal Shoham, Hisham Al-Sayed and Avera Mengistu.

“While we feel profound relief at their homecoming, we are devastated by the news that the remains of four of our loved ones will be returned this Thursday,” it said in a statement Tuesday.

Cohen, 27, Shem Tov, 22, and Wenkert, 23, were abducted from the Nova music festival, where an estimated 364 people were killed. Sho-

## Apple unveils iPhone 16e with AI features, price increase

Apple has released a sleeker and more expensive version of its lowest priced iPhone in an attempt to widen the audience for a bundle of artificial intelligence technology that the company has been hoping will revive demand for its most profitable product lineup.

The iPhone 16e unveiled Wednesday is the fourth-generation of a model that's sold at a dramatically lower price than the iPhone's standard and premium models. The previous bargain-bin models were called the iPhone SE, with the last version coming out in 2022.

Like the higher-priced iPhone 16 lineup unveiled last September, the iPhone 16e includes the souped-up computer chip needed to process an array of AI features that automatically summarize text, audio and create on-the-fly emojis while smartening up the device's virtual assistant, Siri. It will also have a more powerful battery and camera. All those upgrades will translate into a higher starting price for an iPhone 16e at \$600, a 40% increase from \$430 for the last iPhone SE. But iPhone 16e will be more affordable than the cheapest standard iPhone 16 at \$800.

The new phone will be available in stores February 28 but can be pre-ordered beginning Friday. "We're so excited for iPhone 16e

to complete the lineup as a powerful, more affordable option to bring the iPhone experience to even more people," said Kaiann Drance, an Apple vice president in charge



of promoting a device lineup that accounts for more than half of the company's revenue.

But Apple is also trying to balance its desire to offer a more affordable iPhone that will lure more people into its sphere of product against its self interest in maximizing its profits from selling higher price products, according to Forrester Research analyst Dipanjan Chatterjee. "The problem with a lower-end product in a luxury portfolio is that you want it to be good but not so good as to cannibalize the crown jewels," Chatterjee said.

Although Apple has been hyping its foray into AI since last June, the complete set of features still haven't been released in the US and the

technology still isn't even available in some parts of the world.

The delays in making the iPhone's AI — dubbed "Apple Intelligence" — more widely available through free software updates dinged the Cupertino, California, company during the past holiday when sales of the device dipped slightly from their 2023 levels.

Apple has primarily been losing the ground in China, where it hasn't yet specified when the iPhone's AI technology will be available. But the company recently struck an AI partnership with Alibaba in China that could pave the way for the technology coming to iPhones in that country this spring.

Besides being able to handle AI for the first time, the iPhone 16e has a different look from previous SE models. It boasts a 6.1-inch display screen, slightly larger than the 4.7-inch display on SE model and no longer has a home screen button like the SE had. The new iPhone 16e will rely include a facial recognition option for unlocking the device, just like the higher priced models do.

Apple's shares edged higher Wednesday to close at \$244.87, below the stock's peak of roughly \$260 reached in late December. (Loop Caribbean)

### con't from pg 24

ham, 40, was taken from the community of kibbutz Beeri, according to the group.

Civilians Al-Sayed and Mengistu have been separately held in Gaza for about a decade after they were kidnapped while crossing the border in 2015 and 2014, respectively.

About 1,200 people were killed and

251 were captured in the Oct. 7 terror attack, according to Israeli officials. Israel's ensuing military offensive in Gaza has killed more than 48,000 Palestinians, according to the local Hamas-run Health Ministry, and forcibly displaced most of its 2.3 million population.

Saturday's handover, if successful, will mean that four hostages, all presumed dead, are still left in Gaza from

the group of 33 scheduled for release under the first phase of the ceasefire deal.

Negotiations over the second stage of the ceasefire deal, originally slated to begin Feb. 4, will work to secure the release of the remaining 64 hostages and oversee the administration of post-war Gaza. Talks are expected to get underway in the coming days. (NBC News)



# Sports News

## Wins for Fearless Crew and Old Road Daggers in Division 2 league



Ramco Pharmacy Fearless Crew and Old Road Daggers notched up wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Wednesday evening.

The Fearless Crew claimed their third win in four matches with a 74-47 drubbing of Christos United in the first game of a Division 2 double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Takeem Martin produced a game-high 19 points with 19 rebounds to lead the Fearless Crew to their victory.

In support, Rafiki Harris sank 16 points and claimed eight rebounds; Joel Christian had 13 points and six rebounds; Joshua Morrison contributed 12 points, five

rebounds, and five steals; and Romel Diggs scored 10 points and snatched nine rebounds for the Fearless Crew.

Dwayne Samuel produced 18 points, eight rebounds, and five steals, and Neville Chambers sank 14 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for Christos United, who lost for the third time in as many games.

After losing their first two games, Curtain Bluff Old Road Daggers claimed their third consecutive win with a hard-fought 70-65 victory against Spanish Heat 2 in the second game of Wednesday's double-header.

Kedar Clarke produced 17 points, five rebounds, and five steals; Devea Aaron converted 16 points and claimed seven

rebounds; Kelvin Simon sank 13 points and grabbed 14 rebounds; and Craig Thomas scored 10 points and snatched 15 rebounds for the Old Road Daggers.

Jesus Emmanuel sank 18 points and grabbed 12 rebounds; Carlos Suarez produced 15 points, five assists, and five steals; Wester Baptiste had 12 points, six rebounds, and five assists; and Erwin Rodriguez scored 12 points and claimed eight rebounds for Spanish Heat 2, who suffered their second loss in four games.

Basketball action will continue with a Division 1 double-header at the JSC Sports Complex on Saturday evening (tomorrow).

Lava Smoke Shop Warriors will take on Total Imports EMC's Potters Steelers at 6:45 pm, and defending champions EZ Fit Flyers will face All Saints Slam at 8:30 pm.

In Sunday's Division 1 double-header, Kennedy's Club Ottos Full Throttle will meet Da Project at 6:45 pm, and Northside Stingerz will clash with Spanish Heat at 8:30 pm.



Antigua Masonry Products Ltd. is seeking a suitable and qualified person for the following position: **MAINTENANCE ASSISTANT.**

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Interested persons should send their application to [hr@amp.company](mailto:hr@amp.company) no later than **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2025**. Only suitable applications will be acknowledged.

## Willikies Super Stars A team leads three-hand domino contest



The Willikies Super Stars A team currently holds a slender lead over its B team in the opening three-hand competition of the 2025 Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association (ABNDA) domestic season.

Both teams are occupying the top two spots in the round-robin three-hand competition that is being contested by 19 teams at the ABNDA's headquarters in Lower Ottos.

The Willikies Super Stars A team is leading the competition with 14.5 points from six matches, while its B team is in second place with 14 points from five encounters.

Narrowly trailing the two front-runners with 13 points apiece are the A team of the Bolans

Revellers and Legacy Thunder. However, the A team of the Bolans Revellers has played six matches, one more than Legacy Thunder.

Occupying fifth place are the Parham Strikers with 12.5 from six matches, while Highly Favoured is in sixth place with 12 points from six matches.

Next are the Ramplers with 11.5 points from six matches, Double Six Ice with 11 points from five matches, and Double Six Diamonds and De Unstoppables each with 10.5 point from five encounters.

Following are Eagle Eye International, Fire Brigade, and Full Clip with 10 points apiece from five matches.

The Rising Star and the B team of the Bolans Revellers are cur-

rently occupying the cellar with seven points each.

The Willikies Super Stars are currently leading the opening four-hand competition of the 2025 domestic season that is being contested by six clubs.

The Willikies Super Stars have won four of five matches thus far to top the standings with eight points.

Bolans Revellers and Dominatrix have each won three of their five matches to occupy joint second place with six points apiece.

S.K. Eagles and the Ramplers each have four points after winning two of their five matches.

Double Six is currently in the cellar with two points after winning only one of their five matches.



## Kashyap continues to impress in table tennis on international stage



At just 15 years old, Antigua and Barbuda's rising table tennis star Stuti Kashyap continues to punch above her weight, proving once again that she is a force to be reckoned with on the international circuit.

Competing at the WTT Youth Contender Doha and making her debut at the WTT Feeder Doha, Qatar, in the senior women's category, Kashyap delivered yet another remarkable performance against world-class competition.

For the first time in her career, Stuti competed in the WTT Feeder series

in the women's category, where she faced experienced senior players and more than held her own.

In the Round of 64, Kashyap pulled off a 3-1 victory against Qatar's 30-year-old Aia Mohamed, who is ranked 546th in the world.

However, Kashyap lost 3-1 to the second-seeded Wang Xiaotong of China in the Round of 32. Kashyap put up a good challenge against Wang Xiaotong, who is ranked 50th in the world.

Her impressive showing at her first senior WTT event demonstrates that she

is already competing at a world-class level and will only continue to rise as she gains more experience.

Kashyap also reached the quarter-finals in the Under-17 Girls Division and got to the Round of 16 in the Under-19 Girls category in Doha.

Following her performance in Doha, Kashyap now holds career-best rankings.

She is now the top player in the Under-17 Girls Division and number six in the Under-19 Girls category in the Americas of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF)

Rankings.

In the ITTF World Rankings, Kashyap is now 49th in the Under-17 Girls section and 92nd in the Under-19 Girls category.

With her eyes set on the Junior Pan American Games in August 2025, Kashyap remains committed to representing Antigua and Barbuda on the international stage.

She continues to prove herself against older, more seasoned players, showing that her skill, determination, and work ethic are pushing her toward even greater heights.

## Wins for AGHS in Schools' Netball Competition



MINISTRY OF SPORTS

### Schools Netball Competition

The Antigua Girls High School (AGHS) recorded multiple wins in the Ministry of Sports, Joma Caribbean, Cool and Smooth Schools' Netball Competition on Wednesday.

The Antigua Girls High School second team (AGHS-2) romped to an emphatic 27-5 victory against Clare Hall Secondary in the Under-16 Secondary Division at the YMCA Sports Complex.

In the same category, the Antigua Girls High School first team (AGHS-1) pulled off an 8-1 victory against Sir Novelle Richards Academy, and Christ the King High School prevailed 11-7 against Ottos Comprehensive School.

The Antigua State College notched up a 9-2 victory against Irene B. Williams Secondary in the Under-18 Division.

Meanwhile, Jennings Secondary enjoyed success in the Ministry of Sports JOMA Caribbean Inter-School Volleyball League on Monday.

Jennings Secondary School prevailed 15-13, 15-12 against Antigua

Girls High School in the Development League at

the YMCA Sports Complex.

But the Antigua Girls High School first team (AGHS-1) recorded a 25-14, 25-15 victory against Sir Novelle Richards

Academy in the female division, while Ottos Comprehensive School secured a 25-18, 25-13 victory against Clare Hall Secondary in the male division.



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# Sports

FRIDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2025

**POINT EXPRESS**  
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA  
TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

## Golden Grove moves into top-two in Second Division

Golden Grove FC moved into the top two places in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League on Wednesday.

of the standings with five points after losing for the 10th time in 13 matches.

It also allows Golden Grove to leapfrog Sea View

31 points from 15 matches, while Guydadli FC is sixth with 24 points from 13 matches.

The Young Lions occu-

They are Zamaal Greene and Jahvier Joseph of Belmont FC, Tyler Anthony of Golden Grove FC, and Akeem Weekes of National Parks English Harbour.

Junior Benjamin of Ottos Rangers, who are leading the competition, is currently the top goal scorer in the First Division League with 12 goals from 10 matches.

Shalon Knight of Swetes FC is second with 11 goals from eight matches, while Darius Hector of the Freeman's Village Scorpions is third with nine goals from 13 encounters.

Raheem Deterville of Special Security Services and Bitar Pizza All Saints United, who are leading the competition, is currently the top goal scorer in the Premier Division with 19 goals from 16 matches.

Joshua Ferdinand, who started the season playing for Aston Villa Lions before transferring to Old Road in January, is second with 14 goals from 15 matches.

D'Andre Bishop of All Saints United and Keon Greene of Potters Tigers are tied in third place with 12 goals apiece. Bishop has played 16 matches, two more than Greene.



Players of the Golden Grove FC team

Golden Grove advanced into second place in the 17-team standings by recording their 12th win in 15 matches with a 2-0 victory against Glanvilles FC at the Golden Grove playing field.

Following a goalless first half, Golden Grove secured victory with two second-half goals, which were scored by Tyler Anthony in the 60th minute and Stephen Hughes in the 79th minute.

The result ensured that Glanvilles FC will remain second from the bottom

Farm into second place by advancing to 36 points from 15 matches.

It means Golden Grove FC moves within a point of the Cedar Grove Blue Jays, who are leading the Second Division with 40 points from 15 matches.

Sea View Farm FC now drop down to third place with 34 points from 15 matches. National Parks English Harbour are fourth with 32 points from 14 matches.

Closely following in fifth place is Belmont FC with

py seventh place on goal difference with 19 points from 13 encounters, while Earthquake FC is in eighth place with 19 points from 14 matches.

Meanwhile, Stephen Hughes of Golden Grove FC is currently the leading goal scorer in the Second Division with a total of 21 goals from 13 matches.

Rhezal Gomes of Sea View Farm FC is in second place with 17 goals from 14 matches, while four players are tied in third place with 16 goals each.