

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

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IT'S A VIBE – ANTIGUA'S CARNIVAL 25 LAUNCHED.

The Caribbean's Greatest Summer Festival – Antigua's Carnival has officially launched with its 2025 theme: "It's A Vibe". The nation's largest cultural event kicked off with a high-energy celebration of culture, music, and mas at Weatherills Estate, which was transformed into a carnival-like atmosphere, where stakeholders, sponsors, and patrons gathered to share in the excitement of Carnival 25.

Ambassador Elizabeth Makhoul, Chair of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission, paid tribute to the dedicated team of planners, creatives, and volunteers who invest their hearts into every production. "I want to commend and congratulate the Carnival Sub-Committees for their first-class execution year



after year. To each committee member, artist, designer, performer, and volunteer, we salute you! Your dedication makes Antigua Carnival the spectacle and vibe that it is today," stated Ambassador Makhoul.

According to officials, Antigua Carnival 2024 witnessed unprecedented

growth in music production and attendance. There were significant increases in visitor arrivals, airlift capacity, hotels, and Airbnb occupancy. This led to a record-breaking number of masqueraders participating from both local and international communities, resulting in a tremendous

economic impact for local businesses and stakeholders.

The Hon. Daryll Matthew, Minister Responsible for Creative Industries, emphasized the importance and impact of Carnival during his address. "Carnival is more than just another festival; it's the heartbeat of our culture, the fuel for our creative industries, and a major economic driver. It unites us as a people and showcases Antigua and Barbuda to the world through our music, mas, and revelry."

Antigua Carnival 2025 will take place from July 25th to August 5th. The festival promises a curated and all-inclusive lineup that caters to every Carnival lover—whether you're interested in music, pageantry, culture, or revelry, It's A Vibe!



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Antigua Barbuda
FESTIVALS
COMMISSION

ANTIGUA CARNIVAL

It's A Vibe

JUL 25 2025
AUG 05 2025

Antigua Carnival @antiguafestivalsofficial Antigua Carnival info.nfo@ab.gov.ag 268 727 9201

Rawdon Turner takes his oath in the House of Representatives

The newest member of the House of Representatives, Rawdon Turner, took his seat in the House of Representatives for the first time on Thursday when he was administered the Oath as a Member of Parliament.

Following his overwhelming elections victory on January 14, the St. Peter representative was appointed to the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation and he became a member of the Cabinet.

Speaker of the House, Osbert Frederick, when he welcomed MP Turner to the House noted that neither he nor MP Turner had ever considered the thought that coming out of the 2023 general elections either of them would have been members of the House, yet two years later, one was Speaker and the other, a duly elected member of the House.

Speaker Frederick turned to scripture to help to explain this; “the Most High God rules in the Kingdom



Minister of Social and Urban Transformation Rawdon Turner

of men and giveth to whomsoever he will’, adding that it is not by might nor power that both or any other person is a member of the House, but that it is God’s will. He then turned to the Book of Esther to recall that she was asked by Morde-

cai to intercede with the King on behalf of her enslaved people in Babylon. Like Esther, he urged MP Turner to always stand up for his people, and not to be afraid to represent their interests to the best of his ability. “Put God first, your people

second and the country third,” the Speaker urged.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne also joined in welcoming MP Turner, who he noted achieved a higher margin of victory than any other member of the House with his 75 percent of the votes cast. “All of us are committed to serving our constituents and it is important for you to understand that the role in which you are serving the people is the most rewarding thing that any human being can do; a life of service, and I encourage you embrace serving the people who put their faith, trust and confidence in you,” he remarked.

For his part, MP Turner thanked God, his constituents and his family for their support, noting that he always considered himself as one raised by the village of Parham and he gave him commitment to continue to serve them with all his energies now and in the future.

Efforts are afoot to have the baking industry align with international standards

The working group set up to recommend to government policy guidelines for the baking sector has established a number of goals that it wishes to accomplish, including the registration of all bakers and bakeries in the country.

The working group is chaired by Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Ambassador Clarence E. Pilgrim, who also identified the creation of an association or grouping of bakers in the country as also being critical for its work.

“The Ministry of Trade, under the mandate of the National Trade Council, has established this working group to ensure that our local bakery industry thrives within a structured and fair trading environment. Our mission is to uphold best practices, improve competitiveness, and protect consumers while ensuring that our industry aligns with regional and international standards,” he explained.

According to Ambassador Pilgrim the working group’s task is to review and analyze existing standards and regulations, assess current practices within the bakery sector, identify areas of improvement and gaps within the draft policy, research and collect relevant data to ensure the policy is both effective and informed by best practices, and provide a forum for stakeholder consultation on the development and implementation of the policy. “Through these efforts, we aim to create a clear and actionable policy that promotes sustainability, fair trade, and consumer protection within the baking industry,” he added.

At a meeting at the Villa Polyclinic on Wednesday, co-chair of the working group, Trade Policy Analyst,

Nadia James, provided an overview of the objectives of the working group in its efforts to create a Na-



Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Ambassador Clarence E. Pilgrim

tional Baking Policy for Antigua and Barbuda.

“The purpose of the National Bakery Policy working group is to develop a comprehensive policy framework considering and analyzing the current mechanism, existing regulatory

frameworks and provide stakeholder perspectives to address regulatory, health sustainability and economic aspects of the baking sector, promoting fair trading environment and consumer protection,” she emphasised.

James said the working group will provide recommendations to the National Trade Council to achieve the trade-related goals, standards and initiatives for the sustainable growth of the Baking Sector.

Chief Health Inspector, Daryl Spencer, who is also a member of the working group, disclosed that the Central Board of Health is currently developing a set of training modules specifically for the baking sector.

He said there’s need or the specialized training that caters to the specific needs of the baking community and his department will be rolling out those soon.

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Princess Margaret School will celebrate its 70th anniversary in April

One of the nation's oldest secondary education institutions, the Princess Margaret School, wants help from the government to carry out much needed upgrades as it celebrates its 70th anniversary in April.

Members of the PMS Alumni Association, together with the Principal, Dr. Colin Greene, visited the Cabinet on Wednesday to make a direct appeal to the top executive body in the country.

They reported several important facts; the school was founded 70 years ago on April 26 1955 and was formerly opened by the late Princess Margaret, a member of the British Royal Family. Secondly, PMS Antigua is one of four schools worldwide that carry the name Princess Margaret School. One is located in Canada, one in London and the other in Barbados. The association said there are no plans to rename the school. The PMS is well known for its prowess in sports and CXC regional exams.

The association wants the government to assist with several of its short

and medium term goals among which is the



for the school. Chief

need to give the school a

facelift for the anniversary celebrations. This would include repainting of the buildings in a single colour

The other areas of concern are refurbishment of the buildings, the industrial training center, the playing field, and to fence it properly. The cost is likely to exceed a half-million dollars; no specific dates and timelines have been proposed for the commencement of these projects.

The medium to long-term plans include upgrading the assembly hall, built to accommodate 250 students maximum; today, the student body is now made up of 955 youth; to turn the field into a multipurpose sporting area used by other schools and community groups as well as the provision of permanent parking for staff.

The Cabinet is said to have promised to do all that it can to support the effort, with the guaranteed support of the Chairman of Cabinet, Prime Minister Gaston Browne, and the Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph, both of whom are PMS alumni.



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PARTY MONARCH

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18TH JULY 2025

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DCA warns about illegal vending along the Sir Sydney Walling Highway



The Development Control Authority says vending is strictly prohibited along the section of Sir Sydney Wall-

ing Highway near Neverland Amusement Park, the new Tranquility Park Public Cemetery and the ABFA

Technical Training Centre. In a public notice, the DCA says vendors must imme-

diately cease operating in these areas and says its officials will be actively monitoring the area to enforce this restriction.

The DCA says the restrictions are necessary because these locations have been deemed highly dangerous due to frequent vehicular accidents, posing a serious risk to both vendors and motorists.

It says there has been an uptick in unauthorized vending continues, particularly on weekends, despite multiple warnings and notices.

The DCA is asking vendors seeking a safe and regulated space from which to operate to contact the Lands Division.

Ministry of Health official attains Doctorate degree

Principal Assistant Secretary at the Ministry of Health, Desrie Marisa Southwell, has successfully completed her studies leading to a Doctor of Business Administration - Business Management degree in February 2025.

Dr. Desrie Southwell also successfully obtained a Master of Business Administration, majoring in Business Management, in 2024. Notably, she achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA in both programs at Atlantic International University, Honolulu, Hawaii.



Dr. Desrie Marisa Southwell
Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn

Joseph, along with the management and staff, extend heartfelt congratulations to Dr Desrie Southwell of her remarkable academic achievements and praised her unwavering dedication, perseverance, and commitment to excellence serve as an inspiration to all. "We commend her outstanding accomplishments and wish her continued success in her professional and personal endeavors. Once again, congratulations, Dr. Desrie Marisa Southwell" a ministry statement offered.

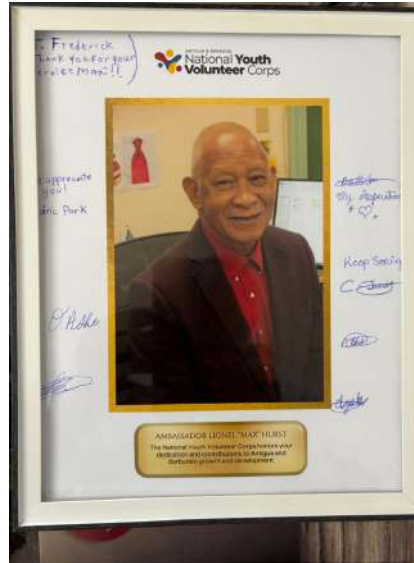
Local News

National Youth Volunteer Corps pays courtesy call on Ambassador Lionel Hurst

The executive of the National Youth Volunteer Corps on Thursday paid a courtesy call on Ambassador Lionel Max Hurst, a noted historian, author and commentator on national affairs in Antigua and Barbuda.

President of the Volunteer Corps, Jahmaal Frederick explained that his group decided to honour Ambassador Hurst for his contributions to the recording of Antigua and Barbuda's history through his several publications.

He said this activity forms part of the Volunteer Corps' observation of Black Histo-



ry Month (February) under the theme: Bridging the generation: A black history tribute honouring Ambassador Lionel Max Hurst for



his contributions and years of service to Antigua and Barbuda.

As a token of appreciation,

Ambassador Hurst signed a copy of one of his books and presented it to the group.



DAILY PROGRAMMING




EARLY VIBRATIONS 6AM-10AM MON. - FRI.
WITH GREMSTA

THE RUSH HOUR SHOW 5PM-7PM MON. - FRI.
WITH ROGER LAKE 6AM-9AM SATURDAYS

TOUCHLINE 7PM-9PM MON. - THURS.
WITH EPILUS

BAD COMPANY 2PM-6PM THURS. 12PM-4PM SATURDAYS
LIVE FROM THE V.I. & 1PM-5PM ON SUNDAYS

REGGAE INSPIRATION 9PM-12AM MON. THURS. SUNDAY
WITH SELECTOR KEEGAN

JAH WADADLI 7PM-9PM FRIDAYS
WITH DJ JAH WADADLI



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Commentary

The OAS Needs a Leader, Not a Battleground



By Sir Ronald Sanders

The campaign for the position of Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) has been tainted by misinformation and political distortion, particularly on social media. A misleading narrative has emerged, falsely framing the election as a geopolitical battle between the United States and China for control of the Organization.

This portrayal is entirely detached from reality and distracts from the fundamental issue at hand: the selection of the most capable candidate to lead the OAS Secretariat.

The two official candidates are Rubén Ramírez, the Foreign Minister of Paraguay, and Albert Ramdin, the Foreign Minister of Suriname. Ramírez has openly associated himself with the United States, implying its support for his candidacy, although the US government has endorsed no candidate and made no statement concerning its preference.

Social media campaigns have reinforced the perception, of an ideo-

logical battle, highlighting Paraguay's lack of diplomatic ties with China. Conversely, the same sources claim that Ramdin, who has the unified support of all 14 Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states in the OAS, is aligned with China and would serve as its proxy within the Organization. This assertion is absurd and ignores the fundamental structure and system by which the OAS is governed.

Adding further complexity to the race, Arnaldo André, the Foreign Minister of Costa Rica, has entered the contest as an unofficial candidate. André has recently published a manifesto in Spanish, outlining his vision for the Organization.

The government of Costa Rica has the right to propose André's candidacy up to the day of the election on March 10, but he is unlikely to garner much support. He offered himself as a candidate without campaigning among the member states or subjecting himself to questioning from the OAS members and civil society – a process in which both Ramírez and Ramdin engaged. His chances were also compromised by an outrageous slur from his President, who falsely claimed that Venezuela's President had 'bought the votes' of CARICOM countries at the OAS.

In any event, the OAS is a multilateral institution in which the United States, as a full member state, exercises direct influence in decision-making processes. China,

by contrast, is an Observer state, attending only open public meetings and having no vote or decision-making power. The suggestion that the OAS could be "taken over" by China through the election of a Secretary General is not only false but also demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the Organization's structure and system of governance.

There appears to be a misconception that the OAS' Secretary General has independent policy-making authority. In reality, the Secretary General is an administrator, executing the mandates set by the General Assembly and the Permanent Council. The role is one of implementation, not unilateral decision-making. No Secretary General can lawfully act or speak on behalf of the Organization without the express mandate of member states.

The upcoming election on March 10 is not about geopolitical rivalries; it is about selecting a Secretary General who can effectively execute the will of the membership, strengthen the Organization, and enhance its productivity.

However, administrative experience alone will not be enough. The next Secretary General must navigate one of the most severe financial crises in the Organization's history. This decision comes at a precarious moment for the OAS, which has suffered from chronic

con't on pg 11

con't from pg 10

underfunding. For years, the Organization has relied on “specific” funds from non-member states such as Spain and members of the European Union, alongside contributions from the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Without these funds, crucial programs in security, strengthening democracy, human rights protection, counter-terrorism, anti-narcotics efforts, and transnational crime prevention would have collapsed long ago.

The financial crisis has been exacerbated by the recent decision of the U.S. government to suspend “specific” funding as part of a broader review of its support for international organizations. This review, expected to conclude by April 30, leaves uncertainty over the current work of the OAS - 215 members of the workforce and 67 programs are directly affected, with many projects halted.

Compounding this issue, three months ago, when the current Budget of the OAS was adopted, many member states had refused to increase their assessed contributions, opting instead for further budget cuts and asset sales, further weakening the Organization’s ability to function effectively.

Given this dire reality, the next Secretary General must possess more than diplomatic credentials; he (there is no female candidate) must have a firm grasp of the Organization’s operational needs, financial constraints, and institutional challenges. He must also be prepared to lead with resilience, innovation, and a clear vision for revitalizing the OAS at a time of

diminishing resources.

CARICOM has carefully assessed the candidates and concluded that Albert Ramdin is the best-suited choice. His decade of experience as Assistant Secretary General of the OAS uniquely positions him above all other contenders. He possesses an intimate understanding of the Organization’s inner workings, its challenges, and the responsibilities of the role. His candidacy represents the kind of leadership the OAS urgently requires; one focused on institutional renewal, not political manoeuvring.

At its core, this election is a test of the OAS’s commitment to its own integrity and purpose. Will member states choose a Secretary General based on competence, experience, and a proven track record

of administrative leadership? Or will they allow external narratives and geopolitical fearmongering to cloud their judgment? The answer will shape not only the future of the OAS but also its credibility as the principal multilateral body of the Americas.

The stakes are too high for anything less than a leader chosen for his merit, vision, and ability to enhance the OAS’s relevance to each of its member states – and all of them. The future of the Organization depends on it.

(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.sir-ronaldsanders.com)



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Message to the people of Barbuda



By Bonnietha John

Fellow Barbudans, this serves as a formal announcement that I, Bonnietha John, am a candidate in the March 26 Council elections where five councilors will be selected to serve on the Council as prescribed by law.

I am one of the candidates on the ticket of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party seeking to be elected to the Council. We cannot do that without your help; by you casting your votes for us and here's why. Speaking on behalf of myself and the other candidates on our ticket, we are committed to see our beloved Barbuda improve in every aspect of human development; social, economic and the overall quality of life. As the candidates representing the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, the organization most responsible for the growth and development that are taking place in the country, as Barbudans, our aim is to

move our country forward and improve our living situation with both islands moving hand-in-hand. Despite the devastation of Hurricane Irma almost eight years ago, Barbuda remains a beautiful island with much potential. Sadly, we note that since the hurricane, some areas of our island are still in a distasteful state, and this is getting close to eight years.

Our cause is about development; we are also about preserving our environment and not just to wax poetically about the flora and fauna, but to include as well our lived environment. For example, we are concerned about the current state of the landfill where our garbage is disposed. It is distasteful, and we must bear in mind its proximity to the Barbuda International Airport. During its operation a wide range of pollutants are often released into the atmosphere and this ought to be a concern for us as residents of the island as well as for our visitors using the airport.

My commitment is to expand access to affordable healthcare services for all residents, improving the education system for our children whilst opening a trade center for persons who are interested in technical learning and sustainable development all the while protecting our environment and its beau-

ty. Whilst we are doing this, we intend to simultaneously provide jobs and business opportunities to our people.

The "tiredness" of our island reflects the feelings of all of us. As the Barbuda branch of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, our goal is to move both our islands forward, together. The opposing side has demonstrated its inability to govern the affairs of the island. The devastation caused by Hurricane Irma has placed unprecedented stress on our residents and the island itself, while the current Council members

spend their time fighting, cursing, and damaging the island's image without offering proper solutions. Barbuda is my home, and it is where I want to live. Our healthcare system requires better leadership, our landfill needs improved management, our road infrastructure demands significant upgrades, and the island itself needs additional resources. Thank you and thanks in advance for your vote, your confidence. God Bless our island, God Bless Antigua and Barbuda.



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ABLP CARETAKER- ST. JOHN'S RURAL WEST

Refreshments will be provided

Commentary

PAGE 13

AND THE NOSE CONTINUES TO GROW



*Sergio Martinez Gonzalez.
Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba
in Antigua and Barbuda .*

The current US Secretary of State, “Pinocchio” - sorry, several children have rightly warned me that Pinocchio at the end of the children’s story learns his lesson and manages to become a good boy. This is not the case with Mr. Marco Rubio, who has no limits in showing his obsessive hatred towards Cuba and its noble people. Once again he resorts to unsustainable lies and slander, this time to try to affect one of the programs with the greatest human and solidarity content carried out by the Cuban Revolution: the medical collaboration program. For this purpose, the Secretary of State announced new measures aimed at punishing with the suspension of entry visas to the US, any person or government official from Cuba or third countries who in one way or another are linked to or have approved these collaboration programs.

Attempts to try to prevent Cuba from carrying out its solidarity vocation are not new. Since the arrival of the first Trump Administration, efforts and actions to try to affect Cuba’s medi-

cal cooperation agreements with third countries in every possible way have intensified to levels never seen before. At that stage, Marco Rubio, in his capacity as senator, along with other defenders of the policy of total economic asphyxiation against the Cuban people, played a relevant role in getting the US Government to classify the medical cooperation programs as human trafficking and slave labor, and thus include Cuba in one of its many spurious lists, in this case, the one referring to human trafficking. Let us remember how in 2020, in the midst of the complex health situation imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic on our countries, the then national security advisor for Latin America, Claver-Carone (recently appointed by President Trump as special envoy for the region), exerted pressure and threats of all kinds on the then government of Panama, to try to prevent Cuban doctors from traveling to that country to help Panamanian brothers face the terrible Pandemic.

Despite being a small island developing state, Cuba has always been determined to continue its traditional vocation of providing solidarity to the neediest peoples, without conditions and with absolute respect for the sovereignty and self-determination of each nation. For more than 6 decades, around 605,698 Cuban health workers have collaborated in 165 countries in all latitudes and continents of the world. We remember the well-known and beautiful “Operation Miracle”, which restored vision and with it useful life to people in 35 countries in America and Africa: more than three million human beings who saw the light again with this program”; the participation of 265 Cuban professionals in the fight against the Ebola epidemic in West

Africa as an example of the bravery of our army of white coats who did not hesitate to lend their support to save lives in that sister country on the African continent. With the scourge of the COVID pandemic, 58 brigades of doctors, nurses and health technicians belonging to the Henry Reeve contingent provided their solidarity support to more than 42 countries.

Today, Cuba has collaboration agreements in the area of public health with 57 countries, the vast majority of which are countries in the so-called South, where some 22,400 collaborators work, 54% of them women. Could it be that the Secretary of State, in his schizophrenic anti-Cuban obsession, intends to apply sanctions against governments in almost a quarter of the planet, including some considered allies of the United States? How is it possible to have such cruelty, threatening governments of developing countries with draconian punitive measures, to force them to accept Washington’s designs at the expense of affecting the sacred right to health of their people? For Marco Rubio, it does not matter that his measures could deprive millions of human beings around the world of basic health services that Cuban collaborators provide today.

The United States and its current Secretary of State may continue to apply their genocidal economic warfare measures to try to deprive the Cuban people of the most basic goods and services and significantly affect their standard of living. But they will never be able to deprive them of the humanistic feelings and values formed during these six decades of Revolution. Mr. Secretary of State, learn once and for all that solidarity can never be blocked.

Photo Story





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**ANTIGUA
CARNIVAL 2025**

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

PRE-EVENTS

THURS FEB 27	CARNIVAL LAUNCH
SUN JULY 13	AUNTY CLAUDETTE'S KIDDIES FETE CARNIVAL CITY
THURS JULY 17	CALYPSO MONARCH SEMI-FINALS CARNIVAL CITY
FRI JULY 18	PARTY MONARCH SEMI-FINALS CARNIVAL CITY
SAT JULY 19	WITNESS YA FITNESS INDEPENDENCE AVENUE
	MR AND MISS TEENAGE PAGEANT CARNIVAL CITY

SUN JULY 20	QUEEN OF CARNIVAL CARNIVAL CITY
MON JULY 21	INVASION BAND CLASH CARNIVAL CITY
TUES JULY 22	JUNIOR CALYPSO MONARCH CARNIVAL CITY
WED JULY 23	JUNIOR PARTY MONARCH CARNIVAL CITY

OFFICIAL CARNIVAL EVENTS

FRI JULY 25	FACE OFF CARNIVAL CITY
SAT JULY 26	T-SHIRT MAS ST. JOHN'S
SUN JULY 27	GOOD MORNING D'INCLUSIVE COOLIDGE CRICKET GROUND
	JUNIOR CARNIVAL COMPETITIONS PARADE, PRINCE AND PRINCESS ST. JOHN'S/CARNIVAL CITY
MON JULY 28	JAYCEES QUEEN SHOW CARNIVAL CITY
TUES JULY 29	KARI SOCA INTERNATIONAL SOCA MONARCH CARNIVAL CITY
WED JULY 30	BURNING FLAMES 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION CARNIVAL CITY
	DRINK TILL YA WEAK BOAT CRUISE
THURS JULY 31	MELTING POT CARNIVAL CITY
	WATCH NIGHT ARG / BOTANICAL GARDENS

FRI AUG 1	CALYPSO MONARCH CARNIVAL CITY
SAT AUG 2	RISE SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS CRICKET STADIUM
	CARNIVAL DREAMZ HODGES BAY
	PANORAMA CARNIVAL CITY
SUN AUG 3	D BREAKFAST FETE SPLASH ANTIGUA
	PARTY MONARCH CARNIVAL CITY
MON AUG 4	J'OUVERT ST. JOHN'S
	MONDAY MAS PARADE ST. JOHN'S
TUES AUG 5	PARADE OF BANDS CARNIVAL CITY
	LAST LAP ST. JOHN'S



Itz A ViBe

Regional News



Two men in critical condition after shooting incident in Dominica

Two young men are in critical condition following a shooting in Dominica.

The Major Crime Unit, alongside local police, has launched an investigation

into the incident, which occurred around 8:45 p.m. on Tuesday in Popo, Campbell.

Both men sustained serious gunshot wounds to their up-

per torsos and are currently receiving urgent medical care at the Dominica China Friendship Hospital (DCFH).

The police investigation is

ongoing as authorities work to determine the circumstances surrounding the shooting. (Loop Caribbean)

Pastor charged with molesting, sexually assaulting boy

A 61-year-old pastor has appeared in court for sexual offences against a boy who was member of his congregation.

The pastor, who was the leader of a church in Santa Flora, was charged with two offences of sexual touching and two offences of sexual penetration.

The victim reported that the alleged offences occurred at the pastor's

home during the period January to December in 2023.

The case was investigated by members of the Special Victims Department and Child Protection Unit, and supervised by Insp Starr Jacob, W/Sgt Andrews and Cpl Karmody.

The charges were laid by WPC Alexander on February 20 and the accused appeared in court before Master Bethelmy on Monday.

The court heard that the accused was previously charged for fraud offences in 2019 and has reporting conditions at the Santa Flora Police Station.

The accused was granted bail in sum of \$120,000 with a surety and instructed not communicate with the victim directly or indirectly.

The matters were postponed to March 24. (*Trinidad Express*)

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Cora Richardson-Hodge elected as first female Premiere of Anguilla



Lawyer and legislature Cora Richardson-Hodge will be sworn in Thursday as the first female premier of Anguilla.

Her swearing is scheduled for 3:00pm local time.

Richardson-Hodge's Anguilla United Front romped to a convincing victory winning eight of the 11 seats following Wednesday's general elections.

Outgoing Premier Dr Ellis Webster, increased his margin in District 1, but most of the candidates of his Anguilla Progressive Movement lost grounds.

The AUF won four of the seven district seats, and all four of the islandwide

contests.

In Anguilla voters have five votes – one for their district candidates, and four others, which is tal-

lied from all the districts.

The AUF made a clean sweep of the four at large seats, with the biggest winner of the night being Kyle Hodge.

It will be the second term for Hodge, who had won as a rookie five years ago with the APM. But he left the government mid-term in a protest against its tax policies.

Hodge appeared to ride on a cross-party appeal to be the night's biggest winners. He crossed the threshold of over 4,000 island wide votes – meaning a third of everyone who voted cast a ballot for him.

This sets him up to be a major player in the new administration.

Now Former Education Minister DeeAnn Kentish Rogers, who created history the last time by defeating a sitting Premier, lost her seat to an AUF newcomer Cordel Richardson.

Kentish-Rogers, hailed as a rising local political star, was the target of one of the most intense campaigns.

Also losing their seats were Quincia Gumbs Marie and Kenneth Hodge – both members of the outgoing cabinet.

Colleagues Haydn Hughes, the now former Tourism Minister and Merrick Richardson were the two other APM candidates to have retained their seats. (*Loop Caribbean*)

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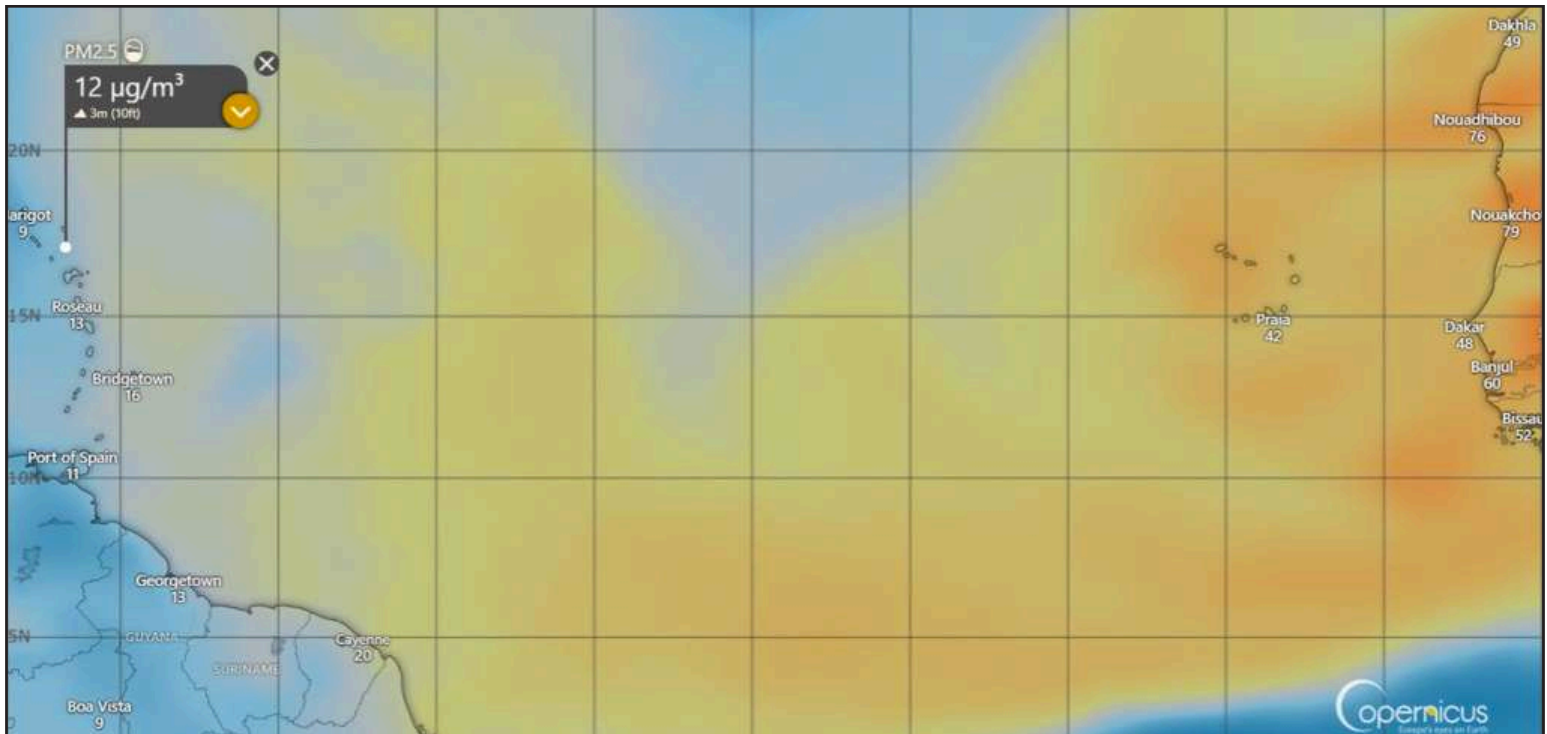


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MARCH 10TH - MARCH 15TH



Second Saharan dust surge heading to Caribbean islands



A new wave of Saharan dust is making its way across the Atlantic toward the Caribbean, with meteorological services across some islands issuing advisories about reduced air quality.

Antiguan meteorologist Dale Destin warns that “the Saharan dust season, which officially began in mid-February, is now bringing the second notable surge of the year to Antigua and Barbuda.”

The dust cloud is expected to arrive in Antigua this afternoon, “reducing air quality to moderate levels due to elevated concentrations of partic-

ulate matter,” according to Destin.

Effects are likely to continue for several days. The air quality is expected to remain reduced “through at least early next week with a break on Saturday. While the health risk remains low for most people, those who are unusually sensitive—such as individuals with asthma and other respiratory conditions—should take precautions and stay informed with the latest air quality updates,” Destin said.

Meanwhile, neighbouring islands are preparing for similar conditions. The Grenada Meteor-

ological Service reports they are monitoring the same dust plume as it makes its way across the Atlantic from North Africa.

“Dust concentrations are anticipated to range from moderate to potentially dense at times,” the Grenada Met service said in their advisory, which takes effect tomorrow and may extend into early next week.

Destin explained that while Saharan dust is present year-round, its impact is most noticeable from mid-February to mid-November, with dust concentrations typically peaking in June.

The Caribbean normally experiences dust events every three to five days during this period.

According to data from Météo-France, the most severe dust event in recent history occurred in June 2020, when air quality deteriorated to “very unhealthy” levels—the worst recorded in at least 50 years.

Experts note that early 2025 has already seen higher-than-normal dust concentrations, though long-term seasonal forecasting of Saharan dust activity remains limited to a few days in advance. (*Loop Caribbean*)



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Sudan facing 'the abyss' as mass starvation looms, UN warns

More than 600,000 people in Sudan are “on the brink of starvation” as famine stalks the war-torn country, the United Nations has warned.

UN human rights chief Volker Turk said on Thursday that famine had taken hold in five areas across the country, including Zamzam refugee camp in North Darfur, where the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) and medical charity Doctors Without Borders (known by its French initials, MSF) were forced to suspend operations amid

escalating violence earlier this week.

Addressing the UN Human Rights Council, Turk said Sudan was “looking into the abyss”, warning that famine could hit five more areas in the next three months, with a further 17 considered at risk in what he described as the “world's largest humanitarian catastrophe”.

“Sudan is a powder keg, on the verge of a further explosion into chaos, and at increasing risk of atrocity crimes and mass deaths from famine,” he said,

urging immediate action to “end the war, deliver emergency aid, and get agriculture back on its feet”.

MSF suspended operations in and around Zamzam, where half a million people have sought refuge, on Monday, with WFP following suit on Wednesday as fighting intensified between the military and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group.

WFP had been feeding approximately 300,000 of Zamzam's residents, but had only reached about 60,000 people this month

amid intensified shelling, with one attack destroying the camp's central open market.

Edem Wosornu, the UN humanitarian operations director, told the UN Security Council on Wednesday that satellite imagery showed heavy weapons were used in and around Zamzam in recent weeks.

Zamzam camp is located 12 kilometres (6.5 miles) south of el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, which the RSF has been trying to take for months. (*Al Jazeera English*)

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Philippine authorities arrest more than 400 people in suspected cybercrime hub

More than 400 people, half of them from China, were arrested by Philippine authorities in a raid on a suspected online gambling and scam hub in a busy commercial district in the capital, officials said Thursday.

The 401 detained included 207 Chinese and 132 Vietnamese nationals who were arrested in a condo building in Pasay city on Wednesday night. They were suspected by Philippine authorities of involvement in illegal online gaming operations, along with cryptocurrency, romance and investment scams, according to a government report.

Other arrested suspects were from South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar and Madagascar, according to the report.

The scale of the arrests indicated how such lucrative online ventures have continued to thrive despite an order by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to law enforcers to shut them down by the end of last year.

Although a large number of online gambling outfits is believed to have relocated to other countries, including Cambodia and Myanmar, due to an ongoing crackdown in the Philippines, an unspecified number has remained in the country and ventured into an array of Internet-based scams.

There have been widespread speculation that Philippine law enforcement and regulatory officials have allowed illegal online gambling outfits to operate in the



country in the past in exchange for huge bribes.

The latest raid “stemmed from a report from a concerned citizen who has been noticing the large number of foreign nationals in the said building,” the government report said.

Officials said 52 Filipinos who served as housekeeping staff and were not involved in the alleged offences were also taken from the online hub, which was shut by the Pasay city government for operating without a business permit.

Authorities seized computers, bundles of SIM cards and other electronic equipment allegedly being used by the suspects to target customers outside the Philippines, officials said.

In the past, arrested suspects who played key roles in such online fraud were charged by Philippine

authorities for human trafficking and cybercrimes. Other suspects, who were deemed to have been illegally recruited or tricked into working for such outfits, were deported en masse to their countries.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said in a 2023 report that criminal gangs have forced hundreds of thousands of people in Southeast Asia into participating in unlawful online scam operations, including false romantic ploys, bogus investment pitches and illegal gambling schemes.

Such scams have become a major issue in Asia, with many of the workers trapped in virtual slavery and forced to participate in scams targeting people over the internet, including many in China, where gambling is prohibited. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

Trump plans tariffs on Mexico and Canada for Tuesday, while doubling existing 10% tariffs on China



President Donald Trump plans to impose tariffs on Canada and Mexico starting Tuesday, in addition to doubling the 10% universal tariff charged on imports from China.

In a Truth Social post Thursday, Trump said illicit drugs such as fentanyl are being smuggled into the United States at “unacceptable levels” and that import taxes would force other countries to crack down on the trafficking.

“We cannot allow this scourge to continue to harm the USA, and therefore, until it stops, or is seriously limited, the proposed TARIFFS scheduled to go into effect on MARCH FOURTH will, indeed, go into effect, as scheduled,” the Republican president wrote.

“China will likewise be charged an additional 10% Tariff on that date.”

The prospect of escalating tariffs has already thrown the global economy into turmoil, with consumers expressing fears about inflation worsening and the auto sector possibly suffering if America's two largest trading partners in Canada and Mexico are hit with taxes. But Trump has also at times engaged in aggressive posturing only to give last-minute reprieves, previously agreeing to a 30-day suspension of the Canada and Mexico tariffs that were initially supposed to start in February.

Trump intends to put 25% tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada, with a lower 10% tax on Canadian energy products such as oil

and electricity. The move, ostensibly about drug trafficking and immigration, led Mexico and Canada to respond by emphasizing their existing efforts to address these issues. Canada created a fentanyl czar, and Mexico sent 10,000 members of its National Guard to its border with the United States.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said Thursday that she hoped to speak with Trump after the Cabinet-level meetings occurring in Washington this week. Mexico's Foreign Affairs Secretary Juan Ramón de la Fuente was scheduled to meet with Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday afternoon.

Trump, “as you know, has his way of communicating,” Sheinbaum said. But she said that her government

would stay “cool-headed” and optimistic about an agreement coming together to avoid the tariffs.

"I hope we are able to reach an agreement and on March 4 we can announce something else," she said.

She said Mexico's security chiefs were discussing intelligence sharing with their American counterparts that would allow for important arrests in the US. On the economic front, she said Mexico's goal is to protect the free trade pact that was negotiated during the first Trump administration between Mexico and the United States. That 2020 deal, which included Canada, was an update of the North American Free Trade Agreement from 1994.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his country has invested more than 1 billion Canadian dollars to improve border security, adding that his government's ministers and officials are also in Washington this week.

“There is no emergency for the United States at the border with Canada when it comes to fentanyl, and that is exactly what we are demonstrating at this time,” Trudeau said in Montreal. “If the United States goes ahead and imposes tariffs, we already shared the details of our plan. We have \$30 billion worth of US products that will be subject to tariffs. And \$125 billion of tariffs that will be applied three weeks later. But we don’t want to be in that position.” (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

GNFC's Youth Football League gets new sponsorship



The Generation Next Football Club (GNFC) has announced new sponsors of its Youth Football League.

The youth league, now in its eighth year, kicked off earlier this month and was previously sponsored by Kenneth A. Gomez and Sons in conjunction with Netherlands Insurance.

The executive of the GNFC recently announced ACB Caribbean as title/platinum sponsors and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda's Citizens by Investment Unit (CIU) as silver sponsors of its youth football league.

According to a media release by GNFC, the competition will now

be called the ACB Caribbean Youth Football League.

The release states, "The executive of the newly named ACB Caribbean Youth Football League* is delighted to welcome ACB Caribbean as the Title/Platinum Sponsor for the league. This partnership reflects a shared commitment to youth development, community engagement, and the continued growth of football in Antigua and Barbuda.

"ACB Caribbean's generous sponsorship plays a crucial role in providing young footballers with the opportunity to develop their skills, showcase their talent, and pursue their pas-

sion for the game. Their investment will enhance the league's operations, create more meaningful experiences for players and fans, and contribute to the overall success of youth football in our communities.

"We are honoured to have ACB Caribbean as the title sponsor of our league. Their dedication to youth and sports development is truly commendable, and we are excited about the positive impact this partnership will have on our young footballers.

"Through this collaboration, the league aims to inspire the next generation of football stars, foster teamwork and sportsmanship, and

strengthen the role of football as a unifying force in our islands. The Executive of the ACB Caribbean Youth Football League extends its sincere gratitude to ACB Caribbean for their invaluable support and looks forward to an exciting and successful season ahead."

The 2025 ACB Caribbean Youth Football League kicks off with matches in the under-7, under-9, under-11, and under-13 divisions at St. Anthony's Secondary School in Langfords on Saturday, February 15.

Matches will continue in the various divisions at the same venue on Saturday, March 1, starting at 9 am.

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 fourth win in five matches with an 84-46

drubbing of Da Project in the second game of a Division 2 double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Takeem Martin shot a game-high 29 points and grabbed 19 rebounds to lead the Fearless Crew to their victory. In support, Joshua Morrison converted 16 points and snatched

13 rebounds; Raji Thomas produced 12 points, six rebounds, and five steals; and Joel Christian scored 10 points for the Fearless Crew.

Beniah Mack converted 13 points and claimed eight rebounds for Da Project 2, who suffered their fifth loss in as many games.

After losing their first two games, Curtain Bluff Old Road Daggers claimed their fourth consecutive win with a narrow 76-73 victory against EZ Fit Flyers 2 in the opening game of Wednesday's double-header.

Devea Aaron converted 18 points and claimed eight rebounds; Kelvin Simon sank 13 points and snatched nine rebounds; Braulio Estrada produced 11 points, seven assists, and five rebounds; and Kedar Clarke


scored 11 points for the Old Road Daggers.


Amare Browne shot a game-high 33 points and claimed seven rebounds, and Rashaun Harry sank 18 points and grabbed 14 rebounds for the EZ Fit Flyers, who lost for the third time in five encounters.

Basketball action will continue with another Division 2 double-header at the JSC Sports Complex on Saturday evening (tomorrow).

Michael Joseph Phoenix will take on EZ Fit Flyers 2 at 6:45 pm, and Fearless Crew will clash with Spanish Heat 2 at 8:30 pm.

In Sunday's Division 1 double-header, Northside Stingerz will meet Da Project at 6:45 pm, and defending champions EZ Fit Flyers will face All Saints Slam at 8:30 pm.





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Sports News



MINISTRY OF SPORTS

Schools Netball Competition

More success for AGHS in Schools' Netball Competition

The Antigua Girls High School (AGHS) continued its successful campaign in the latest round of matches in the Ministry of Sports, Joma Caribbean, Cool and Smooth Schools' Netball Competition on Wednesday.

The Antigua Girls High School first team (AGHS-1) romped to a 15-6 victory against Clare Hall Secondary School in the Under-16 Secondary Division at the YMCA Sports Complex.

The Antigua Girls High

School second team (AGHS-2) also pulled off a 29-2 drubbing of Jennings Secondary in the same category.

In the same division, Irene B. Williams Secondary secured a 15-3 victory against Princess Margaret School, and Ottos Comprehensive School pulled off a 15-6 victory against Pares Secondary.

In the Under-18 Division, Irene B. Williams Secondary notched up a

15-4 victory against Ottos Comprehensive School, and Antigua State College prevailed 13-7 against Christ the King High School.

Meanwhile, action continued in the Ministry of Sports JOMA Caribbean Inter-School Volleyball League at the YMCA Sports Complex on Wednesday.

There were wins for Christ the King High School and Jennings Secondary in the female development league.

Christ the King High School beat Princess Margaret School 15-10, 15-6, while Jennings Secondary prevailed 15-10, 15-10 against the Antigua Girls High School.

Defending champions Island Academy claimed a 25-22, 25-9 victory over Sir Novelle Richards Academy in the male division of the Inter-School Volleyball League.

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Sporting calendar heats up with cycling and rugby events this weekend

Action on the Antigua sporting calendar will continue with the staging of cycling and rugby events this weekend.

The Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation (ABCF) will begin its 2025 domestic season on Sunday.

The new cycling season will open with the annual Jenel Warner Race, which will commence at 9 am.

The cyclists will complete a lap from the Pan Am Base in Coolidge to Willikies and back.

Registration opens at 7:45 am on Sunday. The registration fee for members of the ABCF is EC\$20, while non-members will pay EC\$50.

Meanwhile, the Old Harboursians Rugby Football Club will continue its Touch Rugby Series this weekend.

The second match day of the seven-a-side rugby competition will take place at Marsh Village Sports Pitch in Falmouth Harbour on Saturday, starting at 2 pm.

Registration is EC\$20 per player, and food and drinks will be on sale at Saturday's event.

Member of the Old Harboursians Rugby Football Club, Andy Koato, said the Touch Rugby Series is to bring awareness to the sport and get more young Antiguanians involved in rugby

sevens.

Koato says the series is an expansion to a pilot rugby programme, which he established at the Antigua Grammar School last year.

"Usually, we would have one tournament per year. But since I started up a high school programme at Anti-

gua Grammar School, we needed to give the children more experience, so we came up with doing a rugby series throughout the whole year," Koato said.

"This is allowing us to expose more youngsters to the sport of rugby. We got it going at Antigua Grammar, and we have some more

pilot schools that we are targeting."

The first match day of the Antigua Touch Rugby Series was held on January 25, and the third event will be held on March 29.

Rugby match-day events will also be held on April 26 and May 31



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Sports News

Leewards lose second game in regional Women's Super50 Cup



Leeward Islands new ball bowler Kimberly Anthony, centre, celebrates after bowling T&T's Djenaba Joseph during their second-round match in the CG United Super50 Cup at the Conaree Sports Club in St Kitts on Wednesday, February 26, 2025. (CWI Media)

The Leeward Islands lost for the second time in as many games, slumping to a four-wicket defeat to Trinidad and Tobago in their keenly contested second-round encounter in the CG United Women's Super50 Cup at Conaree Sports Club in St. Kitts on Wednesday.

Veteran players Britney Cooper (72), Anisa Mohammed (32), and Lee-Ann Kirby (41 not out) played pivotal roles that guided Trinidad and Tobago to victory at 190 for six with 15 balls to spare, as they successfully chased down Leeward Islands' total of 188.

Cooper's 107-ball knock featured seven boundaries, while Mohammed's patient 96-ball 32 included three fours.

Earlier in the match, Mohammed also took

three for 26, combining effectively with Amrita Ramtahal (4-27) to restrict Leeward Islands, despite a commanding 76 from Reniece Boyce.

Opting to bat first, Leeward Islands made a decent start but lost openers Qiana Joseph (9) and Melicia Clarke (11) with only 36 runs on the board.

Divya Saxena (32) then partnered with Boyce in a crucial 60-run stand for the third wicket before Saxena was caught by Cooper off Steffie Soogrim.

Boyce, who played a commanding 84-ball knock with four boundaries and four sixes, found another solid partner in Shawnisha Hector, who contributed a quick 35 off 30 balls, including three fours and two sixes.

Their 64-run fourth-wick-

et stand pushed Leeward Islands towards a competitive total. However, once Hector was dismissed by Samara Ramnath with the score at 160 for four, the innings quickly unraveled.

The lower order crumbled under sustained pressure from Ramtahal and Mohammed, as Leeward Islands lost their last six wickets for just 28 runs, falling short of the 200-run mark.

Trinidad and Tobago's reply got off to a disastrous start as they lost both openers, Djenaba Joseph (3) and Shunelle Sawh (6), with just 10 runs on the board.

However, Cooper and Mohammed steadied the innings with a crucial 89-run third-wicket partnership, as they patiently navigated the bowling attack.

When Mohammed was dismissed in the 33rd over, Leeward Islands struck again to remove captain Karishma Ramharack (7), leaving Trinidad and Tobago at 111 for four.

Still, Cooper, unfazed, continued to accumulate runs and added another 44 alongside Kirby before falling just short of the target.

Despite a late scare with the dismissal of Soogrim (2), Kirby remained composed and finished with an unbeaten in a knock that three boundaries and three sixes, to seal the victory. Jahzara Claxton captured two for 29.

In the other second-round matches, Barbados made it two wins in a row with a 56-run victory over the Windward Islands at Warner Park, and Guyana claimed their first win in two matches with an eight-wicket victory against defending champions Jamaica at St. Paul's Sports Complex.

The regional women's limited overs competition will resume with the third round of matches on Friday (today).

The Leeward Islands will meet Guyana at Warner Park, Jamaica will face Barbados at Conaree, and Trinidad and Tobago will clash with the Windward Islands at St. Paul's.

English Harbour up to third in Second Division League



National Parks English Harbour football team. (File photo)

National Parks English Harbour advanced to third place when the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League resumed on Wednesday.

English Harbour strengthened their position in the top four after being awarded a 3-0 victory by default over West Ham, who failed to show up for their encounter at the English Harbour playing field.

Their 11th win in 15 matches allows English Harbour to overtake Sea View Farm, moving from fourth to third place by advancing to 35 points from 15 matches.

The result allows former leaders Sea View Farm to drop from third to fourth place on goal difference with 34 points from 15 matches.

West Ham FC will remain in 13th place on 10 points after suffering their ninth defeat in 13 matches.

Belmont FC won their last match in the round-robin competition to consolidate their fifth-place position on goal difference.

Belmont FC notched up their 11th win in 16 matches by snatching a 1-0 victory against Real Blizzard FC at the Tryum playing field. Malique Edwards scored the only goal in the match

in the 33rd minute.

Belmont FC also finished the match with 10 men after Dennis Martino received a red card and was expelled in the second minute of added time.

The result allows Belmont FC to advance to 34 points, the same as Sea View Farm FC, which has a game in hand.

Real Blizzard will remain in 11th place on 18 points after suffering their seventh defeat in 15 matches.

Four players scored twice as Blackburn Palace jumped from ninth to eighth place after recording their seventh win in 13 matches with a 9-1 drubbing of TAMO FC

at the PMS playing field.

Diondre Harrigan scored in the fifth and 71st minutes, and Shamoy Spencer had conversions in the 19th and 63rd minutes. Jahmari George scored in the 40th and 75th minutes, and Jameal Lawrence had conversions in the 57th and 64th minutes.

Mario Lewis scored the other goal for Blackburn Palace by converting a penalty kick in the 66th minute.

Kevin Paul scored the only goal in the 23rd minute for TAMO FC, who completed their quota of 16 round-robin matches.

TAMO FC will remain in 14th place with eight points after suffering their 12th loss in 16 matches. Blackburn Palace will advance to 21 points from 13 matches.

Earthquake FC and Wings FC played to a goalless draw in their Second Division encounter at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

The result allows Earthquake FC to drop from eighth to ninth place by advancing 20 points after securing their second draw in 15 encounters.

The CPTSA Wings remain in 10th place by advancing to 19 points after recording their fourth draw in 14 matches.