

The Cabinet ponders the possible impact of US trade policies on the local economy

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Two local farmers who won top prizes at recent agricultural competition in St.Croix were invited to Cabinet on Wednesday. Prime Minister Gaston Browne (centre) and Agriculture Minister Anthony Smith Jnr (right) congratulated the two winners

Local News

The Cabinet ponders the possible impact of US trade policies on the local economy

The new trade policies that have been implemented or threatened by the new US Administration and which are causing havoc to trade relations worldwide, have reached the attention of the Antigua and Barbuda Cabinet

Government sources say the Cabinet on Wednesday held a discussion on the impact of US policy on trade, economic performance and prices of goods in Antigua and Barbuda that are purchased through US distributors in Miami and elsewhere.

“There was consensus among the Cabinet members that a recession in the United State is likely coming, and that tariff wars never result in any victors. Nevertheless, the Cabinet believes that Antigua and Barbuda can take some defensive actions to include scaling-up farming; growing and utilizing more local products; and, looking to other markets where goods cost less than in the traditional market,” the sources stated.

The Cabinet also examined another shift in US policy, with the recent statements from Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, calling the Cuban Medical Brigade service as a form of ‘human trafficking’.

According to the sources the Cabinet also examined the possibility of restruc-



turing payments to the Cuban Medical Brigade since the United States is claiming that the current system amounts to ‘human trafficking’.

“The Government of Antigua and Barbuda strongly denies that it is engaged in any such unlawful activity; 66 other countries, utilizing the Cuban Medical Brigade to supplement their national, medical, healthcare services, also deny their engagement in any unlawful activity. Geo-politics is evidently having an impact on policy formulation within the region and globally, the Cabinet concluded,” the sources revealed.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet held a discussion on the lawsuit entered in a US Federal Court in Puerto Rico, seeking to determine the uses to which the purchase amount of the mega yacht Alfa Nero was put. The Cabinet noted the de-

light with which a segment of the political community celebrates the maligning of the leaders of Antigua

and Barbuda, joining in suggesting that the sale proceeds of the Alfa Nero were diverted from the Public Treasury.

“The records are clear as submitted to the High Court of Antigua and Barbuda in affidavits that are public. The absence of national pride and the willingness to make false accusations against public officials, in order to score political points, are all very evident in the false reporting which the political party operatives enjoy,” the sources observed.



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Discussions are underway on a possible ferry service for the northern Leeward Islands

Active discussions are taking place on the feasibility of a green-powered ferry service that will link Guadeloupe to Antigua

the team met with key stakeholders, including the Port Authority and the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Trade to discuss



and Barbuda and other neighbouring islands.

To this end, a team from Guadeloupe held discussions on Wednesday here in St. John's to assess the feasibility of a green-energy-powered ferry service under the EU-funded INTERREG Caribbean KARULINK project. Led by Guadeloupe's private transport company STEPS, the initiative aims to connect Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and St Kitts to Guadeloupe with an eco-friendly ferry network by 2027.

Facilitated by the Antigua and Barbuda Chamber of Commerce,

logistics. On Thursday, they will identify suitable harbours for the pilot phase in 2026. Chamber Director Martin Cave supports the project, highlighting its potential to boost regional trade and align with international maritime regulations.

Support also comes from Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Ambassador Clarence Pilgrim, who noted that despite Antigua and Barbuda's strategic geographical location, connectivity remains a challenge. "For example, Guadeloupe lies approximately 100 kilometers away, St. Kitts about 80 kilometers, and

Dominica roughly 170 kilometers. Strengthening maritime links across these relatively short distances can significantly enhance trade, tourism, and economic co-operation. By improving transport infrastructure and services, we can reduce travel time, lower costs for businesses and consumers, and create a seamless flow of people and goods within our region," he observed.

This initiative, he noted, presents an opportunity to boost the economy by improving the movement of goods, facilitating business partnerships, and increasing visitor arrivals.

Antigua and Barbuda is the first stop, with the team set to visit Dominica on Friday and St Kitts next week. If the project proves viable and profitable, national governments will decide how to sustain the service long-term.

The broader vision of the KARULINK project is to develop a comprehensive strategy for opening new maritime routes using environmentally friendly solutions. The ferry network will leverage smaller ports around Guadeloupe to facilitate seamless and sustainable inter-island travel.



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Director of Pharmaceutical Services Represents Antigua and Barbuda at Regional Regulatory Meeting

Director of Pharmaceutical Services within the Ministry of Health, Alfred Athill, is currently representing Antigua and Barbuda at the Strengthening National and Supranational Regulatory Systems in the Caribbean Meeting, taking place in Miami from March 12-13, 2025.

The event, hosted by the Caribbean Regulatory System (CRS) in collaboration with the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), brings together representatives from member states to discuss strategies for enhancing regulatory frameworks across the region.



This high-level meeting focuses on strengthening national regulatory systems, enhancing regional partnerships, and advancing access to health technologies. Key discussions include increas-

ing regulatory maturity to support local production capacities for essential health technologies, advancing national regulatory systems through supranational collaborations and regional

partnerships and sharing best practices and lessons learned from global and regional models to inspire effective regulatory mechanisms in the Caribbean.

Athill's participation underscores Antigua and Barbuda's commitment to improving pharmaceutical regulations, ensuring the availability of high-quality health technologies, and fostering collaboration for a more robust regional healthcare system.

The Ministry of Health remains dedicated to strengthening regulatory frameworks that enhance public health, patient safety, and access to essential medicines for the people of Antigua and Barbuda.



Calvin Ayre Foundation funds life-saving medical airlifts from Antigua and Barbuda

The Calvin Ayre Foundation (CAF) continues to be a beacon of hope for Antigua and Barbuda patients for whom they have fully funded medical airlift to access specialized healthcare not available locally.

The latest beneficiary of this generosity is Nastassia Connikie-Hall, a critically ill leukemia patient, who was airlifted from Antigua to Colombia for urgent specialized treatment. The charitable effort reflects the Foundation's ongoing commitment to supporting individuals facing significant medical challenges and underscores the importance of global access to life-saving healthcare.

In a heartening act of compassion, Nastassia Connikie-Hall, who has been battling chronic leukemia for some time, urgently required advanced medical care unavailable in her home country. The Calvin Ayre Foundation stepped in to ensure that Nastassia would receive the life-saving treatment she needs.

“Assisting individuals in need is part of the mission of the CAF, and when we learned about Nastassia’s condition, we knew we had to act



quickly. Our priority is ensuring that she gets the best possible care to continue her fight against leukemia,” said Jamilla Kirwan, Manager of the Calvin Ayre Foundation. ”

The airlift took place on March 10th and was facilitated by onboard medical professionals to ensure Nastassia’s comfort and safety throughout the journey. Once in Colombia, she will undergo a series of specialized treatments aimed at improving her health and prognosis.

“I want to express sincerest gratitude to the Cal-

vin Ayre Foundation for their generous financial support in this challenging time” said Nastassia Connikie-Hall. “Calvin Ayre Foundation has not only provided air ambulance services but has also provided accommodations in Colombia... for this, we the family of Nastassia are very grateful. You have left an indelible mark on our hearts,” a family spokesman said.

Nastassia also shared remarks of gratitude to the Medical Benefits Scheme, anonymous donors and others who have contributed to the

over USD\$200,000 costs related to her treatments.

Last month, CAF also fully funded the emergency air ambulance evacuation of Gracelyn Roberts to Trinidad for urgent specialized treatment. Roberts, who experienced sudden and severe headaches and vision loss in one eye, sought medical attention and subsequently learnt of the seriousness of her condition. Following an evaluation, Dr. Osborne advised that she required immediate overseas treatment and surgery. With limited time to act, her family reached out to the Calvin Ayre Foundation, which promptly approved and facilitated the emergency airlift.

Her daughter, Laura Goodwin, expressed gratitude that they were able to secure the funds needed to airlift her for surgery. Ms. Roberts has since undergone surgery and is recovering.

The Calvin Ayre Foundation continues to be a beacon of hope for those facing medical crises, offering financial and logistical support for patients in need of critical care and treatment beyond their local resources.

Sandals Grande Antigua celebrates a year of hospitality excellence

Sandals Grande Antigua Resort and Spa recently awarded sixteen outstanding team members for their stellar achievements in 2024 at their Annual Prestige Awards. Held under the theme “Golden Sands of Time – A celebration of Hospitality Excellence”, this year’s awards ceremony placed focus on the rich history and legacy of the Sandals brand since its arrival in Antigua thirty-three years ago.

With sixteen highly coveted award categories team members from across the resort’s departments walked away with monetary prizes, electronic appliances, gadgets and complimentary stays at Sandals and Beaches resorts.

The highly sought-after Diamond Team Member of the Year Award went to Karen Grenado Wong from the butler elite department, while Jordain Pemberton from entertainment snagged the Platinum Team Member of the Year title. The loyalty and travel department was crowned Department of the Year (A-Team Award), and Latoya Silvera, purchasing manager, earned the title of Manager of the Year (MVP Award).

Other notable winners included Red Lane Spa’s Kayan Clayton (Founder’s Circle Award), kitchen’s Andre Scott (Supervisor of the Year), weddings and romance Luana Johnson (People’s Choice Award), housekeeping’s Kem Browne (General Manager’s Award), engineering and maintenance Richardo Hughes (Hotel Manager’s Award), and Dion Blair (Heart of the House Award).



Brenton Bristol of the landscaping department was recognized as the Sandals Earth Guardian with Sandy Ramsaran from loyalty and travel receiving the Circle of Joy award. From the restaurant department Shanique Keddo was named Legendary Team Member of the Year while Kellyn Benjamin was

celebrated as the Mover and Shaker (Most Improved).

Dillon Brown from the loyalty and travel department was named Money Maker of the Year while Dave Anthony of the general stores department copped the Standing Ovation Award. Additionally,

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Tamika Hatchett from the restaurant department was honored with the Sandals Foundation Sentinel (Community Spirit Award) and Zora Roberts from Island Routes

was acknowledged as the Island Routes Ambassador of the Year.

Reflecting on her win as the team member of the year for 2024, Karen said, "I just want to take a moment to express my deepest

gratitude for each and every one of you. Your love, support and kindness mean the world to me, and I am truly blessed to have such incredible people in my life. To my family, thank you for always being my foundation, your unwavering support, guidance, and unconditional love have shaped me into the person I am today. I am beyond grateful for the memories we've created and the bond we share."

General Manager David Latchimy lauded the team's achievements, stating, "like golden sands of time, our resort has matured, consistently delivering exceptional guest experiences, fostering growth and making significant investments in our community." He emphasized the resort's resilience in facing challenges and its commitment to providing the best possible work experience for its team members.



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Local News



A couple who recently visited the twin-island tourist destination is showing a police constable in the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda with much praise for his exemplary work.

The visitors, who were vacationing on the island, experienced the unfortunate

incident of having their iPhone-15 stolen from them.

A complaint was filed at the Criminal Investigations Department, and Constable Cedric Nelson who was on duty carried out investigations into the matter.

The accused was later arrested and charged and taken before the court, where he pleaded guilty and was fined \$500 forthwith.

In a letter to the Commissioner of Police, Constable Nelson was praised for his exemplary performance and dedication to duty. It says, "His exemplary performance and commitment to duty truly went above and

beyond what one might typically expect. From the moment the matter was reported, Constable Nelson demonstrated remarkable skills. He kept us informed throughout the entire process, providing timely updates which alleviated most of our concerns."

They said what was most impressive, is his relentless determination to track the device. "He utilized various resources and methods to gather information, and he was consistent and thorough. We were particularly impressed by his willingness to engage communities and leverage connections

to locate our phone." They further commented, "His professionalism, integrity, and tenacity are commendable traits and invaluable assets to his department."

Acting Commissioner of Police, Everton Jeffers expressed pride in Constable Nelson's commitment, noting that his actions reinforce the trust and confidence the public places in the Police.

The Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda is committed to maintaining law and order and providing the best quality service to its citizenry and visitors.



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	

A new magistrate has been appointed to serve in the legal services

A new Magistrate has been appointed to serve in the Antigua and Barbuda judicial system.

According to government sources the appointee, Magistrate Andrew Morrison-Mighty from Canada. Morri-

son-Mighty's appointment took effect from March 1st 2025. He has been appointed to replace the late Magistrate Conliff Clarke who passed away in February.

The sources say he brings great expe-

rience to the job, and is highly regarded by the Judicial and Legal Services Commission, and others. The Cabinet wishes him well in his new assignment.

Trio charged with larceny of agricultural products

The Magistrate's Court is hearing a case where a trio is charged with larceny in connection with the theft of agricultural products from a farm in the Lightfoot West area.

Charged are; Jermaine Julian and Dawn Berry of Lightfoot West and Brionne Simon of Freetown. They are charged with the larceny of 99

coconuts valued at \$495.00, 26 finger rose valued at \$130.00, 7 sugar canes valued at \$35.00, 40 custard apple valued at \$80.00, guavas valued at \$30.00, papayas valued at \$46.00, and green papayas valued at \$15.00. The overall cost of the products is placed at \$831.00.

According to the police report the products were being grown on lands

belonging to Maynard Strann of Lightfoot West. The incident happened on Sunday this week.

Senior Magistrate Ngaio Emanuel who is hearing the case has adjourned the matter until May 26. The defendants have been granted bail and are to re-appear in court when the case resumes.

Police probe discovery of decomposing body

The police are continuing investigations into the discovery of a decomposed body of a man at Swetes.

It was reported that around 5:00 pm on Monday, a resident of Swetes discovered the motionless body of

a male lying on the ground near a man's residence and reported it to the All Saints Police Station.

The police visited the scene and found the deceased fully clothed on the ground among grass. Officers

from the Serious Crimes Unit and Forensics Unit also visited the scene and carried out investigations. The body was pronounced dead at 8:29 pm. The police are not ruling out foul play until a full investigation is completed.

Meantime, police are asking anyone with information surrounding this incident to contact the All Saints Police Station at 460-1000, or the Criminal Investigations Department at 462-3913.



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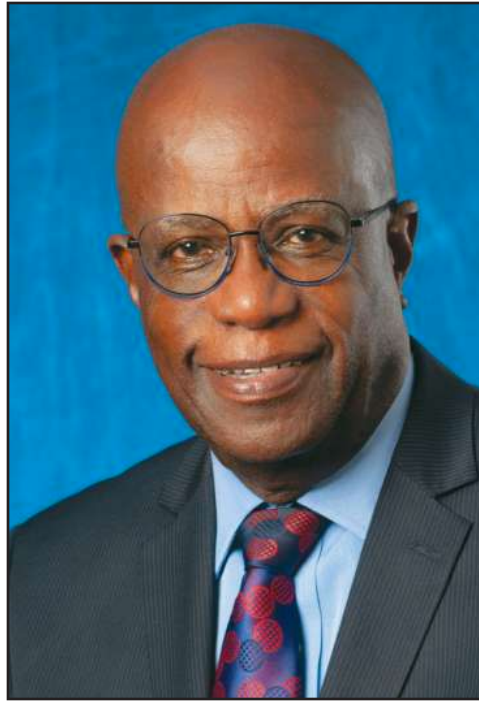
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Condor To Antoine's Defence: A Battle for the Integrity of the ECCB

The turmoil surrounding the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) and its Governor, Timothy Antoine, has escalated into an institutional crisis. What began as scrutiny over the construction of an official residence has evolved into a concerted effort to discredit Antoine's leadership and, by extension, the integrity of the ECCB itself. Now, voices of reason are emerging to contest the political narrative, calling for an end to what appears to be an orchestrated attack on a man who has served with distinction.

Among them is Sam Condor, the former Deputy Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis, who has dismissed the controversy as little more than a "storm in a teacup." Condor views the unfolding drama as an attempt to fabricate a scandal where none exists. He emphasises a crucial fact that is often overlooked in public debate: the project was approved not solely by Antoine, but by the ECCB's highest governing body—the Monetary Council. If there was any objection to the project, the Council had every opportunity to intervene. St Vincent and the Grenadines' Finance Minister, Camillo Gonsalves, was present, fully aware of all the details. Yet, no objections were raised at the time. So why now?

That question has become central to this debate. Why has Antoine been portrayed as the villain in a narrative where he was merely executing the directives of the Monetary Council? Condor's stance is clear: this is not about governance—it concerns politics. The attack on Antoine appears to form part of a larger strategy to undermine the credibility of the



Julian Rogers is following developments from his Caribbean home in Belize. Write to him at mycaribbean@gmail.com.

ECCB and, perhaps, to facilitate political interference in the Bank's future leadership.

If the campaign against Antoine were genuinely about transparency, why have confidential ECCB documents been leaked to the public? Why has the project management firm, Williams Architectural Services, become embroiled in the controversy, its internal reports unveiled in a bid to discredit not only Antoine but everyone involved in the project? The disclosure of sensitive financial documents raises significant concerns regarding the motivations behind this campaign. It is not merely Antoine's credibility at stake, but the very foundation of institutional governance in the Eastern Caribbean.

Beyond politics, the stakes in this crisis are exceedingly high. The

ECCB has long been a cornerstone of economic stability in the region, ensuring that the Eastern Caribbean dollar remains robust and is pegged at a stable rate of 2.7 EC dollars to one US dollar. Under Antoine's leadership, the bank has introduced financial innovations and transitioned from foreign banking to regional banking ownership, pioneering digital currency with DCash. The ECCB is not merely a bank; it is a custodian of the region's economic future. If its independence is compromised, the consequences will be significant—weakening investor confidence, increasing borrowing costs for governments, and undermining the region's financial credibility on the global stage.

Condor's intervention serves as a reminder of the importance of institutions. The Monetary Council has a duty to remain resolute against political grandstanding and to uphold the integrity of the ECCB. The attempt to discredit Antoine is not merely an attack on an individual; it is an assault on the very credibility of the institution that safeguards the financial stability of the Eastern Caribbean.

As this controversy progresses, the region confronts a choice. Will it protect its institutions, ensuring that central banking remains free from political interference?

Or will it allow political ambition to erode one of its most vital financial pillars? The decisions made now will shape the future of the ECCB, not only for this generation but for many to come.

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6:30AM TO 9AM**



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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Where is the Commonwealth?



By: Angelica O'Donoghue,
Member, Antigua and Barbuda
Reparations Support Commission
(ABRSC)

Another year passes, and once again, we ceremoniously join in Commonwealth Day celebrations, standing side by side with our fellow member states. But as we do so, one must ask: *what exactly is common about the wealth of the Commonwealth?* The vast economic and social disparities between the architects of the Commonwealth and the majority of its member states are glaringly unjust.

The inequities within the Commonwealth are undeniable—vast differences in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and the ability to respond to external economic shocks. Even debt burdens reveal the stark contrast: developing Commonwealth nations bear disproportionate **debt-to-GDP ratios**, while their former colonial rulers maintain economic dominance. If we are to speak of commonality, then surely it should not be found in systemic disadvantage. Out of the **56 Commonwealth countries**, only **7 are considered developed**, while the remaining **49 are developing nations**. The United Nations classifies **44 countries globally as Least Developed Countries**

(LDCs), and **10 of those are within the Commonwealth**. This should force us to confront an uncomfortable reality: What is so “common” about this wealth? What tangible benefits have truly been derived from this prestigious designation?

What **is** common, however, are the deeply entrenched legacies of colonialism, particularly in the Caribbean. What **is** common are the towering monuments to the enslavers, the persistence of their language, their religion, their laws, and their institutions—all reminders of historical subjugation. What **is** common is the enduring social, economic, and environmental degradation that defines the lives of many former colonies. The **Center for Reparation Research (CRR)** references the **2001 Durban Declaration and Program of Action**, which acknowledged the worst legacies of colonialism: *“poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion, economic disparities, instability, and insecurity that affect many people in different parts of the world, particularly in developing countries.”*

If 49 out of 56 Commonwealth countries are developing nations, is that the common denominator of the Commonwealth? A history of being systematically underdeveloped?

Club Membership.

Membership in the Commonwealth has long required adherence to a set of so-called democratic principles. Countries must demonstrate **good governance, rule of law, free elections, and human rights**. A failure to uphold these principles can result in **suspension or expulsion**. Yet, while former colonies must abide by these conditions to remain within the club of their former colonizers, **those same colonizers refuse to uphold the fundamental principles of justice when it comes to reparations for slavery**.

As recently as 2024, Downing Street dismissed the issue of slavery reparations, stating it was **“not on the agenda”** ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Samoa. It was only after global backlash that UK Prime Minister

Keir Starmer was forced to engage in discussions on reparations, as Commonwealth leaders declared that *“the time has come.”*

So again, what is so common about the Commonwealth, when the very artery that connects this realm was built on slavery and exploitation, yet the call to repair that severed artery—through reparations—is met with dismissal and delay?

Reparations: The Real Commonality. Reparations, in its simplest form, means **to amend a wrong or injury committed**. It is rooted in repair—**restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, and the guarantee of non-repetition**. In **international law**, it is an accepted principle that nations, institutions, or individuals responsible for crimes must take action to **repair the damage they have done**.

International law has **recognized that chattel slavery, which was the foundation of the Commonwealth, was and is a crime against humanity**. It was a **gross violation of human rights**. And yet, despite the requirement that **Commonwealth members must uphold human rights**, there remains no **justice for this historical crime**.

Let us not think that the call for reparations is recent. It is not born of modern diplomacy or academic debate. **Reparations began the moment conquest and colonization began**. It was present in **indigenous wars of resistance**, in **African rebellions against enslavement**, in every act of defiance against oppression. The demand for justice has never ceased - it has simply evolved, moving from uprisings and revolutions to **formal requests, petitions, policy papers, and international advocacy**.

A Call to the Commonwealth.

We must recognize the truth: **The most common call within the Commonwealth is for reparations**. A **full and formal apology**. The recognition that the damage inflicted upon generations of people across the Global South must be repaired.

As members of this so-called **Common-Wealth**, it is our duty to make that call **louder and more unrelenting** than ever before. **Reparations Now.**

**TUES - FRIDAY
11AM - 2PM**

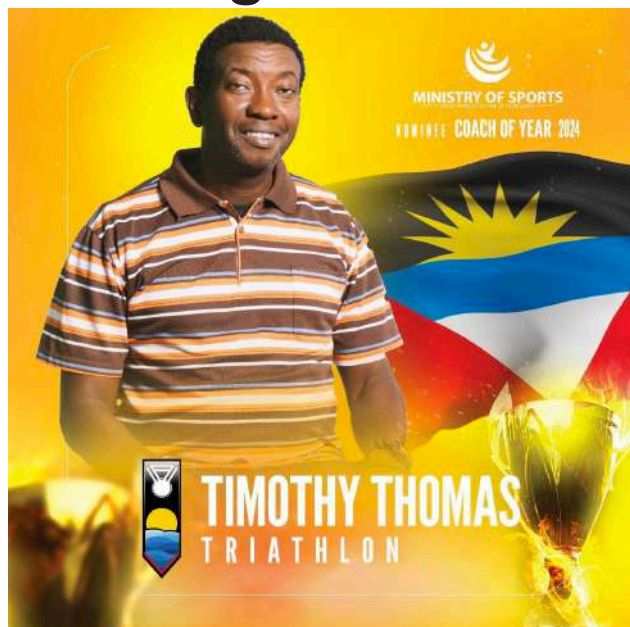


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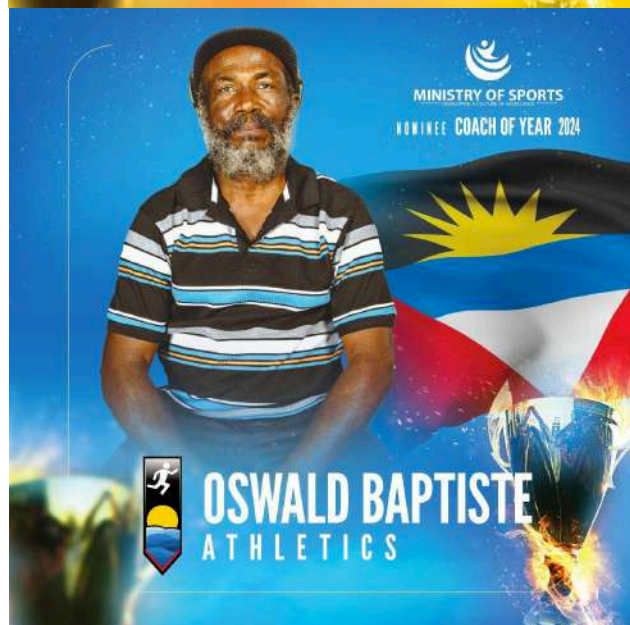
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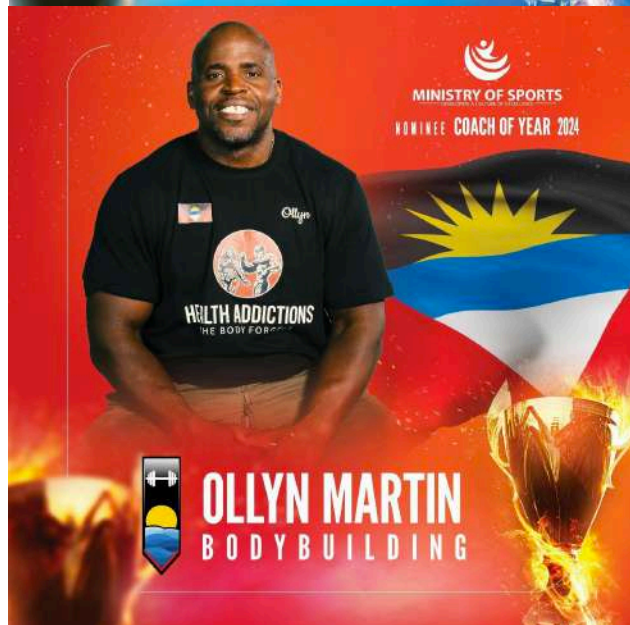
Antigua Barbuda Coach of the Year 2024



Timothy Thomas has been involved in triathlon for over 20 years, both as an athlete and now as a coach and mechanic. In 2024, he coached his son, an Elite athlete, to multiple victories in cycling, swimming, and running, including winning the National Cadet Cycling Championship and the Rhorman Cadet Championship. Timothy also guided his son to a 6th place finish at the John T. Memorial Race in Anguilla and a 25th place finish in the Aquathlon at the CARIFTA Triathlon in Barbados. In addition to coaching, Timothy continues to participate in events, securing 1st place in the 13-15 Age Group at the AUA Rohrman Triathlon in Antigua.



Oswald Baptiste has dedicated over 20 years to coaching at Roots Athletics Club, mentoring national and regional medalists, including Lynda Blackette and Kalique St. Jean. In 2024, he coached Tyra Fenton, a 13-year-old sprinter, to significant achievements, including a Carifta Games bronze and regional sprinting dominance. Tyra ranked 22nd globally in the 200m and 64th in the 400m for U18 athletes. Baptiste's leadership extends to local events, such as the Kids Athletics Day and ABAA Grassroots Development Meet. His contributions and success in developing top athletes make him a strong candidate for Sports Coach of the Year 2024.

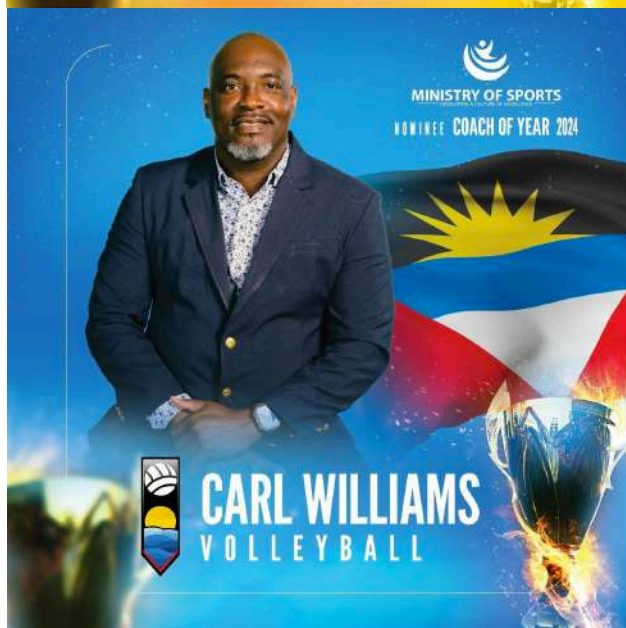


Ollyn Martin has demonstrated exceptional dedication to bodybuilding and fitness as a coach for over 17 years. In 2024, he coached athletes who excelled at the 57th National Bodybuilding Championship, and his guidance helped two athletes earn Elite Pro cards. As coach for the Wadadli Training Institute, he also assisted the Antigua Barbuda Volleyball Association with performance analysis through his company, Health Addictions. Ollyn's commitment to the sport is evident in his ongoing pro bono support of the Antigua Barbuda Amateur Bodybuilding & Weightlifting Federation. His passion and accomplishments make him an ideal candidate for Coach of the Year 2024.

Antigua Barbuda Coach of the Year 2024



Schyan Jeffers Assistant Senior Men's Coach for the Antigua and Barbuda National Football Team and Head Coach of All Saints United FC led his team to win the 2023/2024 Antigua Premier League. With a focus on player development and tactical brilliance, Schyan has fostered growth and success both on and off the field. He is currently completing his A License and holds Concacaf/ABFA B and C licenses. As founder of the Fundamental Football Academy, Schyan is dedicated to shaping young players' futures, making him a deserving candidate for Coach of the Year for his outstanding contributions to football.



Carl Williams is an exceptional candidate for the 2024 Sports Coach/Official of the Year award. As the Head Coach of the Antigua & Barbuda Senior Male National Volleyball Team, he led the team to victory at the Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Championship, winning the title for the second consecutive year. Under his guidance, the team earned six out of twelve available awards, including MVP and Best Server. Mr. Williams, with his extensive experience since 1995, has continuously shown a passion for the sport, mentoring athletes and coaches alike. His dedication to developing the next generation of players and his commitment to success make him a deserving nominee.

Nelson Molino Fojo has 36 years of competitive coaching experience. Coach Molino has been the driving force behind the success of the Wadadli Aquatic Racers Swim Club, consistently producing top national swimmers who excel in regional and international competitions. His swimmers have achieved remarkable results, including 2 gold and 1 silver at Carifta, 15 medals at the PanAm Aquatics Championships, and 19 golds at the OECS Championships, setting new national and regional records. His expertise, commitment, and passion for the sport make him an invaluable asset to the swimming community and a deserving nominee for this prestigious honor.

St. Clair Williams is a transformative coach and leader in Antigua and Barbuda's cycling community. As President of the Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation, he guided Tahje Browne to an unbeaten domestic season in 2024, along with impressive regional results. Mr. Williams' dedication to continuous learning, demonstrated through his UCI Level 2 coaching certification, ensures his athletes benefit from advanced techniques. Beyond coaching, he has provided critical resources like bikes and e-trainers, creating a nurturing environment for young cyclists. His unwavering commitment to athlete development and the sport's growth makes him a standout nominee for Coach of the Year 2024.

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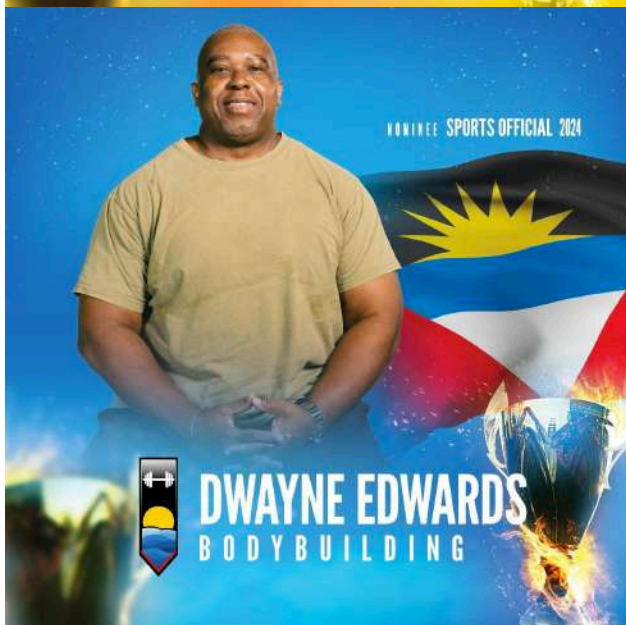
George Hughes had an outstanding year in 2024, leading Flyers Basketball Club to both Division One League and Play-off Championships and guiding the Division Two team to a commendable 4th place finish. His leadership earned him the Elijah Armstrong Coach of the Year award from the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association (ABBA). Beyond team achievements, Hughes played a pivotal role in securing professional basketball contracts for Alexis Jackson, who is now playing in Europe and Asia. His commitment to safe sports, athlete education, and mental health makes him a deserving nominee for Coach of the Year 2024.

Pernel Watley is an exemplary nominee for Coach of the Year due to his remarkable contributions to cricket in Antigua and Barbuda. In 2024, he successfully guided the Leeward Islands U19 Women's team to second place in the Cricket West Indies U19 Women's T20 Tournament. He also coached Freetown Primary to 1st place in the Primary School Competition and Pares Secondary to 2nd in the U19 Secondary School Competition. Additionally, Coach Watley led a historic UK tour for the Under-19 team and coached the CWI Select XI, demonstrating exceptional leadership and mentorship for future cricket stars.

Antigua Barbuda Sports Official 2024



T. Jamille Nelson has dedicated 32 years to athletics in Antigua and Barbuda, starting as a youth athlete in 1992 and progressing through the ranks as a junior and senior national athlete with multiple records at the youth and junior levels. Now a coach, administrator, and official, he has significantly contributed to the sport's growth. He modernized the ABAA's registration process, ensuring athletes' performances were officially certified and recognized internationally. As the highest-ranked Technical Official locally, he has served on the Jury of Appeal for major events and represented Antigua and Barbuda internationally. Nelson also serves as Coaching Coordinator for Special Olympics Antigua Barbuda.



Dwayne Edwards exemplifies exceptional commitment to bodybuilding and fitness in Antigua and Barbuda. With 27 years as a local judge and numerous international accreditations, including IFBB Elite Pro Certified Judge and Intercontinental Certified Judge, he has elevated judging standards both locally and regionally. In 2024, Dwayne served as Head Judge for the ABABWF National Championships and was re-elected Treasurer, ensuring fiscal transparency. He also contributed to international judging panels for events like the Miami Grand Prix and led seminars that resulted in multiple gold medals and two athletes achieving Pro Card eligibility. Dwayne's leadership fosters excellence in the sport.

Antigua Barbuda Sports Official 2024



Ken Pennyfeather is a FIFA International Referee who excelled in 2024, earning the Antigua and Barbuda Football Referee of the Year award. He officiated critical local matches and high-profile international events, including FIFA World Cup Qualifiers, the Concacaf Nations League, and the CFU Club Shield. Known for his professionalism, dedication, and exceptional work ethic, Ken mentors young referees, focusing on fitness, discipline, and mastery of the Laws of the Game. His leadership, unwavering commitment, and outstanding officiating have elevated Antigua and Barbuda's presence in regional and international football while inspiring and developing future officials within the sport.



Michael Hamilton started playing volleyball in 2007 as part of the Antigua Grammar School's inter-school league and quickly fell in love with the sport. Over his 17 years of involvement, he has been a member of the junior and senior national teams, coached the junior national men's team, and refereed both local and regional games. In 2024, he served as assistant coach for the EVA Senior Men Tournament. Since 2016, he has been an indoor referee. His dedication led him to pursue beach volleyball officiating, and in January 2024, he became an International Beach Referee Candidate after completing the Beach Volleyball Continental Course in Puerto Rico.

Alvin Jarvis has over two decades of experience officiating basketball games both in Antigua and Barbuda and regionally. A key figure in the local basketball referee association, Alvin officiated in over 200 of the 400 scheduled games in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association Division One and Two leagues. He also contributed by hosting several training sessions and recruitment drives. When not officiating, Alvin shares his knowledge with players on the sidelines and in the stands. In January 2024, he was named Referee of the Year at the Antigua Barbuda Basketball Awards. The Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association proudly nominates Alvin Jarvis for his outstanding contributions.

Melissa Lawrie began her umpiring career in 2019 and became fully qualified in December 2023. In 2024, she officiated in the local 2-day and 40-over competitions, earning a spot as an on-field umpire in a semi-final and 3rd-place match. She also officiated at the CG United Women's Super50 Cup and T20 Blaze Regional Tournament as a 4th umpire, participated in the All Stars Match at the Antigua Recreation Grounds, and umpired a West Indies Senior Women's practice match. In November 2024, Melissa made history as the first female from Antigua and Barbuda and the Leeward Islands to be appointed to the West Indies Female Umpire Panel.

Regional News



TCI: Public advised not to touch debris from SpaceX Starship mishap



Members of the public are being strongly advised to refrain from touching any suspected debris from SpaceX's Starship Flight #8, which was lost over the sea near the Bahamas on Thursday, March 6, 2025.

The Turks and Caicos Islands Government (TCIG) issued this warning as authorities continue to moni-

tor the situation.

"We continue to advise members of the public to refrain from touching any suspected debris," the National Security Secretariat stated in their press release.

The government is urging anyone who encounters potential spacecraft fragments to report them immediately. Those who believe they

have found debris should email nationalsecurity@gov.tc with the subject line 'Space X Launch #8,' including the location, time of sighting, and photographs taken without touching the materials.

The incident occurred when the spacecraft was lost shortly before reaching its maximum altitude during its launch from Boca Chica, Texas. Due to the high altitude, the event was visible across a wide area, including parts of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

According to the TCIG, they have been in communication with the US Federal Aviation Administration, which "coordinated with TCI and other regional air

navigation service providers in real-time after the breakup of the vehicle and safely managed air traffic during the event."

While the mishap caused temporary flight disruptions throughout the region, normal operations have since resumed. Officials confirm there are currently no reports of injuries, property damage, or debris on land.

The TCIG statement noted that authorities understand "there are currently no further scheduled launches from the Boca Chica launch site" and that they continue to work with the UK Government to engage with US authorities on reducing risks from any future launches. (*Loop Caribbean*)

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Veteran reggae singer Cocoa Tea has died



Veteran singer Cocoa Tea has died. His death was confirmed by his daughter Rashaine Scott in an interview with Loop News.

“Yes, he passed away this morning after 4 AM at a hospital in Florida,” Scott told Loop News.

Scott is the eldest child of the respected singer. She recalls the best advice that he ever gave her.

“He used to go into the Bible and read us the Ten Commandments and he always said God made Adam and Eve. He also encouraged us to be independent, get an education and to better our lives. I’m sorry I didn’t get to see him before he passed away,” Scott disclosed.

She recalls her father as being a private and proud individual.

“He was a fighter, and he fought till the end. He was a strong-willed person, always thinking of the best and he was also private.”

Born Calvin Scott on September 3, 1959, Cocoa Tea rose to fame in the mid-1980s. Among his string of hits are “She Loves Me Now”, “I Lost My Sonia”, “Sweet Sweet Cocoa Tea”, “Israel’s King”, “Rikers Island”, “Holy Mount Zion” (featured on the Kette Drum riddim in 1995), “Weh Di Drugs” and “Zeeks”. His last monster #1 hit was 1993’s

“Good Life”.

From 2003 to 2009, Cocoa Tea promoted the annual Dancehall Jam Jam concert. He formed his label Roaring Lion Records in 2000.

Cocoa Tea had been hospitalized for several months. It’s alleged that he died from a cardiac arrest. (*Loop Caribbean*)



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Regional News

“RAGS” wins of Dominica’s first Bouyon Road March title

The collaborative track “RAGS” has been named the winner of Dominica’s first-ever Bouyon Road March Award.

The winning song, performed by Dominicans Gael “Trilla G” Jno. Baptiste and Sheldon “Shelly” Alfred alongside St Vincent’s Gamal “Skinny Fabulous” Doyle, secured the top spot with 108 votes in the popular on-line poll conducted from March 5-7.

“RAGS” emerged victorious in a field of 56 entries from prominent artists including Asa Bantan, Khalion, Gwada G, and Ebony Empress. Signal Band secured both second and third positions with “Bye Bye Bye” (62 votes) and “My Band” (29 votes) respectively.

The award, conceptualized by Dominican businessmen Emile Depooter and Robert Tonge, was created to recognize the growing influence of Bouyon music both locally and internationally. Traditionally, the Road March title goes to the most-played Calypso on the road.

“We were just citizens who thought there should be such an award because of the mileage Bouyon music has made, especially in the past year,” says Depooter. “I am currently in Antigua, and Bouyon is everywhere – in taxis, on the radio, in restaurants, and at events. The impact is visible, and the artists behind the genre need to be recognized and rewarded.”

The winning track features production credits from multiple Caribbean territories. According to Trilla G, the creative process involved studios across the region: “A Plus played a Bouyon beat with the ‘Never Enough’ sample, we changed the lyrics and recorded a first draft since November 2024. Then, International Stephen linked me with Skinny Fabulous who recorded his part at Black Shadow Studios in Miami. I did some additional vocals at 47 Studios in Trinidad



and just before the release in February 2025, we got Shelly on the track and he recorded at Signal Band Studio here in Dominica.”

Following his win, Trilla G expressed gratitude on social media: “This victory is not just mine – it belongs to Shelly, our Vincy brother Skinny Fabulous, and every single reveler who jumped, waved, and screamed their hearts out when this song dropped! A-Plus out of the Virgin Islands and Dernz, this win is YOURS too – you both helped craft this masterpiece, and the people have rewarded it with love. To the organizers of this award, THANK YOU for recognizing the energy, passion, and unity that music brings to Carnival.”

Shelly, a former Junior Calypso Monarch and lead vocalist for Signal Band, described the achievement as “historic.”

Skinny Fabulous, who previously collaborated with Dominican artist Krishna “Dada” Lawrence, shared: “Winning the Road March in Dominica has been an incredible honor and a truly humbling experience. Dominica and St. Vincent share that unique small-island energy: vibrant, resilient, and full of life. I was incredibly excited to be a part of this project, not

just as an artiste, but as a Caribbean national celebrating our culture and unity. This victory is for all of us, and I can’t wait to bring even more music and positive vibes to the people of Dominica, St. Vincent and beyond. Big love to everyone who supported this journey.”

While the traditional Calypso Road March title was awarded to Narrin “Trendsetter” Murphy for “Dee Pee Pee (DPP),” the creation of a separate Bouyon category reflects the genre’s expanding influence in the Caribbean carnival scene.

Depooter, who has previously managed popular Bouyon bands including WCK and Triple K, noted the importance of such recognition for international promotion: “These promoters are always asking us who is the Road March winner in Dominica. They want to see which song and which artist is the most popular. There is a certain weight behind your name that comes with such a title.”

He expressed hope that the competition would be “organized more scientifically or professionally next year” and potentially adopted by an official entity. (*Loop Caribbean*)



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Pakistan rescues 190 hostages from hijacked train amid fighting to free dozens more

Pakistani forces have freed 190 passengers from a train that was hijacked by separatist militants, security officials said Wednesday, as fighting continued to free dozens more hostages held by militants in explosive-filled vests.

More than 400 people, including 214 soldiers and other security personnel, were on the Jaffar Express on Tuesday as it traveled from Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's restive south-western Balochistan province, to the northern city of Peshawar.

As it entered a tunnel in a remote, mountainous district of Balochistan, the railway track was blown up by militants who then opened fire on the train, killing 11 people in Pakistan's first such hijacking.

Armed with rockets, grenades and guns, the assailants then began taking passengers hostage. Security officials said the militants separated law enforcement personnel from the others before taking them into the mountains in small groups.

Militants said Tuesday that they were still holding 214 people hostage, according to Reuters.

The rescue operation is being conducted extremely cautiously, the officials said, as the hostages are surrounded by militants wearing explosive-laden vests.

"They are using these hostages as human shields," a senior security official, who declined to be identified be-



cause he was not authorized to speak to the news media, told NBC News.

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), an armed ethnic group that has waged a yearslong insurgency against the Pakistani government, claimed responsibility for the attack. The group said it was seeking the release of Baloch political prisoners, activists and others within 48 hours, threatening to execute hostages if the government did not comply.

Security officials said 30 militants had been killed so far in the operation to free the remaining hostages, whose exact number is unclear.

The BLA said that none of its fighters had been killed and claimed the hostages had not been freed but that it had "released all the women, children, sick and Baloch civilians."

The 11 people killed in the initial attack included the train driver and eight paramilitary troopers, security officials said. Thirty-seven others were injured, including two Pakistan army officers who were airlifted to a military hospital for

treatment.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned what he called the "cowardly attack."

"Targeting innocent passengers during the peaceful and blessed month of Ramadan clearly reflects that these terrorists have no connection with Islam, Pakistan or Balochistan," he said. "The fight against terrorism will continue until this menace is completely eradicated from the country."

The nine-coach train remains stuck in the tunnel, with the area cordoned off by security forces.

"We have beefed up security in Bolan in view of the situation," said Rana Muhammad Dilawar, head of the District Police Office.

Security officials said 80 hostages who were released Tuesday night, including 43 men, 26 women and 11 children, had reached safety at a railway station in the Mach district of Balochistan, Pakistan's largest, least populated and least developed province.

They said the hostages had to walk for several hours during the night before boarding a cargo train be-

cause the railway track had been damaged by militants.

The BLA seeks independence for Balochistan, a resource-rich province that borders Afghanistan and Iran, and its ethnic Baloch minority.

"The main reasons why the conflict continues after decades is because the establishment is antidemocratic, U.S.-supported activities in neighboring Afghanistan have fueled instability, and terrorism in Pakistan is rampant," said Rizwan Ullah Kobab, chair of the department of history at Government College University in Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Militant violence has surged in Balochistan since U.S.-led forces withdrew from Afghanistan in 2021, allowing the Taliban to return to power. Pakistan and Afghanistan have accused each other of supporting antigovernment insurgencies in each other's countries.

The BLA carries out frequent attacks against Pakistani security forces but has also attacked civilians, including Chinese nationals working on infrastructure projects.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Wednesday that Beijing strongly condemned the train attack and "will continue to support Pakistan in its counter-terrorism efforts."

Mushtaq Yusufzai reported from Peshawar, and Jennifer Jett and Mithil Aggarwal from Hong Kong. (NBC News)

Philippine ex-leader Duterte flown to The Hague to face charges of crimes against humanity



Philippine police arrested former President Rodrigo Duterte in Manila on Tuesday and sent him by plane to the Netherlands to face charges of crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court, President Ferdinand Marcos said.

The global court in The Hague had ordered Duterte's arrest through Interpol after accusing him of crimes against humanity over deadly anti-drug crackdowns he oversaw while in office, Marcos said in a late-night news conference. Duterte had been arrested at the Manila international airport Tuesday morning when he arrived with his family from Hong Kong.

Walking slowly with a cane, the 79-year-old former president turned briefly to a small group of aides and supporters, who wept and bid him goodbye, before an escort helped him into the plane.

His daughter, Vice President Sara Duterte, said she sought entry to the

airbase where her father was held but was refused. She criticized the Marcos administration for surrendering her father to a foreign court which currently has no jurisdiction to the Philippines.

Marcos said Duterte's arrest was "proper and correct" and not an act of political persecution, since the Philippines is a member of Interpol.

Among the most feared leaders in Asia while in power, Duterte became the first ex-leader from the region to be arrested by the global court.

Clad in a dark jacket, an irate Duterte protested his arrest after arrival in Manila and asked authorities the legal basis of his detention. His lawyers immediately asked the Supreme Court to block any attempt to transport him out of the Philippines.

"Show to me now the legal basis for my being here," Duterte asked authorities in remarks captured on video by his daughter, Veronica Duterte, who posted the footage on social media.

"You have to answer now for the deprivation of liberty."

The surprise arrest sparked a commotion at the airport, where Duterte's lawyers and aides protested that they, along with a doctor, were prevented from coming close to him after he was taken into police custody. "This is a violation of his constitutional right," Sen. Bong Go, a close Duterte ally, told reporters.

The ICC has been investigating mass killings in crackdowns overseen by Duterte when he served as mayor of the southern Philippine city of Davao and later as president. Estimates of the death toll of the crackdown during Duterte's presidential term vary, from the more than 6,000 that the national police have reported up to 30,000 claimed by human rights groups.

The ICC arrest warrant, seen by The Associated Press, said "there are reasonable grounds to believe that" the attack on victims "was both widespread and systematic: the attack took place over a period of several years and thousands people appear to have been killed."

Duterte's arrest was necessary "to ensure his appearance before the court," the March 7 warrant said. "Mindful of the resultant risk of interference with the investigations and the security of witnesses and victims, the chamber is satisfied that the arrest of Mr. Duterte is necessary."

In a brief statement after the plane had taken off, the ICC confirmed that one of its pre-trial chambers had issued an arrest warrant for Duterte on charges of "murder as a crime against humanity allegedly committed in the Philippines between November 1, 2011, and March 16, 2019." (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

L.A. officials issue evacuation warnings for wildfire-affected areas ahead of heavy rain

The Los Angeles Fire Department issued evacuation warnings on Tuesday for residents living in the areas of the city savaged by recent wildfires ahead of heavy rain and mud-

LAFD's map.

"Those living near recent brush fires should be aware of the extreme danger possible from debris flows," a spokes-

er sloped or low-lying areas can quickly fill with fast-moving water and debris, creating a life-threatening danger."

Sierra Madre Fire Chief Brent Bartlett, whose department battled the Eaton Fire, told NBC Los Angeles that "if a mudflow occurs, public safety and public works personnel will not be able to enter an active debris flow zone."

"This means that if you stay behind, you may be trapped for days before emergency crews can reach you," Bartlett added.

The LAFD urged residents in the affected areas to sign up for emergency alerts, listen to the local media and to create an

emergency household plan to designate "what each person will do in the event of a flood, mudslide or serious storm damage."

The department also encouraged residents to restock food, water, medication, flashlight, battery-powered radio, rain gear, first aid and sanitation supplies.

The warnings will remain in place until Thursday evening.

The city's Palisades and Eaton fires, fed by the Santa Ana winds that had hurricane-force speeds, killed at least 29 people. The fires were both declared fully contained on Jan. 31, more than three weeks after they began. (NBC News)

slides expected later this week.

The warnings were issued for areas affected by the Palisades and Eaton fires, which collectively burned through roughly 40,000 acres of land and scorched more than 15,000 buildings in January, according to an interactive map issued by the LAFD.

Officials said that two upcoming storms in Southern California make those areas "especially susceptible to heavy rain" and "high mudslide and debris flow risk." Some areas affected by the Palisades Fire are of particular concern for mudslides, according to

person for the LAFD said in a statement.

"When rainstorms impact the Los Angeles area, storm drains, canyons, arroyos and oth-



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Sports News

Daggers stay second in ABBA's Division 2 league



Old Road Daggers claimed their sixth win of the season to consolidate their second place position in the Second Division of the 2025 Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) domestic season on Tuesday evening.

The Daggers notched up their sixth win in eight games with a 64-57 victory against Ramco Pharmacy Fearless Crew in the second game of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Their latest win means the Old Road Daggers continue to trail leaders Cutie's Ovals Ojays, who are perched at the top of the standings with eight wins in as many games.

Jesus Lopez sank 18 points; Kedar Clarke produced 15 points, nine rebounds, and five steals; Tyndale Telemaque converted 10 points and claimed seven rebounds; Kelvin Simon scored eight points and grabbed 15 rebounds; and Devea Aaron had 14 rebounds, seven points, six assists, and five steals for the Old Road Daggers.

Takeem Martin produced 21 points, 19 rebounds, and six steals; Rafiki Harris scored 13 points; Joshua Morrison converted nine points and snatched six rebounds; and Joel Christian had eight points, seven assists, and five steals for the Fearless Crew, who lost for the fourth time in

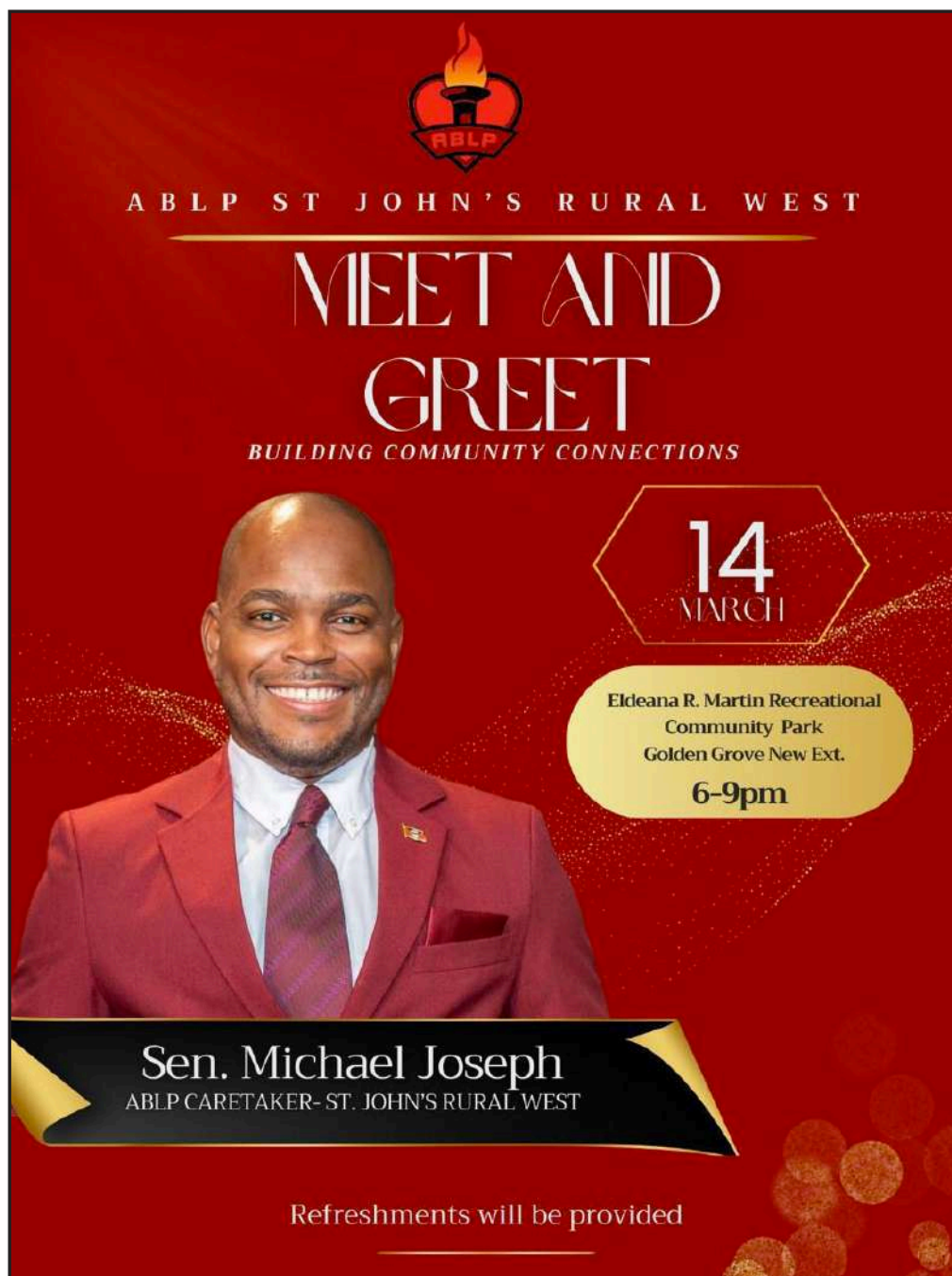
eight games.

Spanish Heat 2 jumped from sixth to third place by recording their fifth win in seven encounters with a 77-66 victory over the EZ Fit Flyers 2 in the opening game on Tuesday.

Jesus Emmanuel produced 22 points and six steals; Maicol Reyes sank 18 points and grabbed eight rebounds; Charlie Daniel had 14 points, 15 rebounds, and five steals; Wester Baptiste converted 11 points and claimed six rebounds; and Er-

win Rodriguez chipped in with eight points, 12 rebounds, and seven assists for Spanish Heat 2.

Amare Browne scored 15 points; Tyrese White scored 14 points and snatched six rebounds; Piper Hansel produced nine points and six assists; Harry Rashaun converted eight points and claimed 11 rebounds; and Sha-vaun Francis chipped in with seven points and 10 rebounds for the EZ Fit Flyers, who lost for the fourth time in eight games.



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Jennings and AGS make winning start in schools' cricket competition



Matthew Miller



Tanez Francis

Jennings Secondary and Antigua Grammar School (AGS) got off to winning starts in the Ministry of Sports Schools' Cricket Championship on Tuesday.

Both teams recorded commanding wins during the opening round of matches in the Under-19 30-Over Competition.

Antigua Grammar School beat Sir Novelle Richards Academy by eight wickets at the Factory Grounds.

Sir Novelle Richards Academy batted first and made 109 for five off 18 overs. Shaun Balgobin hit 29 not out, opener Cheldon Charles cracked 21, Nathalje Mannix scored 16, and Brian Balgo-

bin got 15.

Isiah Harris captured three for 12, while Matthew Miller and Rolando Fields each picked up one for 16.

Antigua Grammar School coasted to victory at 111 for two in 12.1 overs. Matthew Miller hammered 62 not out off 27 balls, smashing four sixes and six fours.

Opener Hosea Roberts struck 29 off 27 balls, including four boundaries. Brian Balgobin claimed one wicket for seven runs, and Raffique Mohabir captured one for 14.

Jennings Secondary trounced Ottos Comprehensive School by 88 runs at the Rising Sun playing field.

Jennings Secondary batted first and made 194 for two off 18 overs. Tanez Francis struck 83, J'Quan Athanaze hit 38, and Estan Hill scored 19 not out. Akez Francis picked up two for 43.

In reply, Ottos Comprehensive School was dismissed for 106 in 14.1 overs. Knight scored 23, and Bowers made 19.

Athanaze snapped up four for 36, Francis grabbed three for 21, and Dale Johashen took three for 36.

The schools' cricket competition continued on Wednesday with four opening round matches in the Under-15 30-Over Championship.

Aguilleira relishes transition from player to coach



The West Indies reached the pinnacle of the women's game in 2016 by capturing the World T20 title in India, and one of the architects of that success was Merissa Aguiliera, right, participates in a Cricket West Indies Coaching Seminar in St. Kitts earlier this month. (WICB Media)

nacle of the women's game in 2016 by capturing the World T20 title in India, and one of the architects of that success was Merissa Aguiliera.

Aguilleira represented the West Indies for 11 years after making her debut in 2008, but while her on-the-field stint is over, the former captain has no intention of halting her contributions.

She quickly transitioned to a coaching role and recently guided Trinidad & Tobago Red Force Divas to their first CG United Super50 Cup since 2017, with a comfortable seven-wicket win over Barbados in the final in St. Kitts.

Aguilleira, who has always been part of the "think tank" of her country's team at regional championships, is now responsible for driving the direction of the squad and formulating strategies to combat their opponents.

It's a new role, but while she coaching was never her initial intention.

"I have always looked at myself as someone who enjoys the administrative side of things and also mentorship. I am, however, enjoying it and have upskilled myself with a Level Two coaching certificate. Now, coaching is something I enjoy doing," Aguiliera said.

The chance to impact the lives of young players is fueling a newfound passion for the former wicketkeeper batter, who was the manager of the Women's Under-19 team at the World Cup in Malaysia.

"Being able to interact with the players from different cultures and different backgrounds and having them learn the sport gives me great satisfaction to know that I can use my international experience to impart knowledge on a new generation of players," Aguiliera shared.

While there is a sense of excitement, adjusting from playing to coaching still has subtle challenges for Aguiliera.

"One of my biggest challenges when I first started coaching was seeing things on the field and not being able to do anything about them," she revealed.

"I have always been that person who is involved in strategic planning and technical aspects, and it was really devastating to just sit on the outside and not be able to give my support," Aguiliera added.

The 39-year-old was the only female head coach in the just-concluded regional women's tournament, and she wants to be an agent of change in that regard regionally.

"Women understand that there are barriers, but it doesn't take away what we have and what we have to offer," she highlighted.

"Don't be afraid; don't allow fear to overcome whatever you want, and I really want to see more women involved in coaching across the region to underline that we are here to make a difference," Aguiliera noted.

In moments of self-doubt, Aguiliera reiterates the importance of belief and perseverance.

"What I tend to do is focus on the things that I can control, the areas I can control, and the opportunities that I have and make the best use of them," she stated.

"Once you start to think about the things you have no control over and the things that are not present, you lose track of what you really want to accomplish," Aguiliera ended.

West Indies advance to International Masters T20 Semi-Finals

Lendl Simmons smashed a blistering century, and Ravi Rampaul produced a devastating five-wicket haul as the West Indies Masters secured a 29-run victory over South Africa Masters to book their place in the semi-finals of the International Masters T20 League in India on Tuesday.

Simmons, displaying vintage form, powered his side to a commanding total of 200 for five off their allotted 20 overs at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in Raipur.

His explosive 108 off 59 balls, which included nine fours and 13 sixes, was the backbone of the innings after early wickets put the Windies on the back foot.

Batting first after South



Lendl Simmons

Africa Masters opted to field, West Indies lost Dwayne Smith (5) in the opening over and William Perkins (5) soon after, but Simmons took control, stitching together a crucial partnership with Brian Lara (29 off 34).

Simmons' onslaught saw him reach his century in

just 55 balls before falling to Makhaya Ntini in the 18th over. Chadwick Walton provided late fireworks with an unbeaten 38 off 12 balls, ensuring a daunting target for the Proteas.

Defending 200, West Indies Masters' bowlers, led by Rampaul's 5 for 26, dismantled South Africa's

chase despite a few promising starts.

The Proteas began well with Richard Levi hammering 44 off 16 balls, but left-arm spinner Sulieman Benn (1/20) removed him early, while Rampaul sent Hashim Amla (3) and captain Jacques Kallis (45 off 36) back to halt their momentum.

Jacques Rudolph (39) tried to revive the innings, but once he fell to Simmons' bowling, the required rate spiralled out of control.

Rampaul struck again in quick succession, dismissing Dane Vilas (0), Farhaan Behardien (1), and Ryan McLaren (12) to complete his five-wicket haul, restricting South Africa to 171 for eight.

con't from pg 30
match officials.

Antoine, who is also a member of the CFU and CONCACAF Referee Committees and Head of Refereeing Antigua and Barbuda, said the inaugural course was necessary "to celebrate the hard work of women match officials in the region, past, present, and emerging."

ABFA Acting President Gwendolyn Salmon, also a member of the CFU Executive Committee, said she had no reservations about hosting the course as she recognized the significant



Match officials with their certificates of completion at the end of the course impact it would have on the participants.

Salmon commended the match officials for their dedication and for repre-

sending their member associations and the Caribbean well whenever they are appointed to games.

She told the participants

that she looks forward to seeing their continued ascendancy on the regional and global stage.

The course instructors were Antoine, a FIFA Referee Fitness Instructor; FIFA Technical Instructor Dianne Ferreira-James; Refereeing Technical Appointments Coordinator CONCACAF Carolina Bribones; CONCACAF Technical Instructor Ishan Philip; Instructor/Admin Victor Stewart; and Santos.

Dave Meikle, a CFU Referee Committee member, provided virtual and invaluable admin support.

Caribbean women match official course meets and exceeds the mark



Match officials with international appointments pose with their Excellence Exemplified Awards. Fourth from right, is Antigua and Barbuda's Kelesha Antoine. (Photos courtesy of the CFU)

Hopeful, energized, grateful, motivated, and inspired were just some of the sentiments expressed on Sunday evening by the participants as 26 match officials from across the Caribbean completed an inaugural course strictly for women in Antigua and Barbuda over the weekend.

The Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) hosted the three-day initiative, which FIFA, CONCACAF, CFU, and UN Women MCO-Caribbean supported.

The capacity-building course provided high-level training and was pitched primarily at match officials on the FIFA list. In addition to the customary topics, the course explored the evolution of Caribbean women

match officials and celebrated their progress.

Seven emerging referees from the host country, Antigua and Barbuda, were also invited, exemplifying the CFU's commitment to developing new talent.

The seven emerging referees are Nyana Matthew, Portia Davis, Cariesa Corbett, Kemoya Jacob, Kacian Edwards, Shenella Deane, Shernell Burton, and Courtney Browne. They were joined by fellow Antiguan FIFA Match Official Nikeisha Gage at the workshop.

Days one and three were comprised of intense fitness and technical sessions. Day two, International Women's Day, focused on interactive enrichment sessions.

The sessions included a

panel discussion with Jassett Kerr-Wilson, Stephanie Dale Yee Sing, and Mijensa Rensch, moderated by attorney Gail Christian.

Trailblazing astronaut and personal coach Keisha Schahaff led a wellness session; history-making rower Kevinia Francis, a black belt karateka; and Purple Dragon Karate Club Sensei Jahmooza Francis delivered a lesson on self-defense.

The group explored social media and branding with Yorie Taylor; equity and equality with planning and coordination specialist with UN Women MCO-Caribbean, Akilah Dorris; and professionalism with Carlene Spencer.

Victor Stewart explored the evolution of the Carib-

bean woman match official. Stewart recognized match officials from yesteryear and the current crop, and the match officials received his presentation with respect bordering reverence for the Caribbean pioneers.

A highlight of the day was the presentation of Excellence Exemplified Awards to match officials with international appointments.

The awardees were Mijensa Rensch (Suriname), Melissa Nicholas (Trinidad and Tobago), Stephanie Dale Yee Sing (Jamaica), Jassett Kerr-Wilson (Jamaica), Vimarest Diaz (Dominican Republic), Dianne Ferreira-James (Guyana), and Kelesha Antoine (Antigua and Barbuda).

There were also awards for Odette Hamilton (Jamaica), Ivett Santiago (Cuba), Crystal Sobers (Trinidad and Tobago), and Carissa Douglas (Trinidad and Tobago), who were unavoidably absent.

FIFA Regional Development Officer Javier Santos noted FIFA's commitment to women. He told the match officials that opportunities exist and reiterated support for each CFU member association and the

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