

“The Alfa Nero is a ‘red herring’ for the UPP,” says FA Minister Chet Greene



MP for St. John's City South, Sir Steadroy Benjamin, (second from right) sits with Elaine James (on his left) and the officials involved in the presentation of a new home to the SJCS resident

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“The Alfa Nero is a ‘red herring’ for the UPP and there’s nothing new in this approach,” says FA Minister Chet Greene



Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P. Chet Greene

Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P. Chet Greene has described the issues surrounding the sale of the Alfa Nero superyacht and the controversy surrounding the disbursement of the sale proceeds as ‘a red herring’ (or diversion) being used by the opposition UPP and that the country ‘has seen this script before’.

Speaking on the *Browne and Browne* show on Saturday, Minister Greene said despite the recent utterances of the UPP regarding the sale of the Alfa Nero, the party had agreed with the government on the principle of selling the vessel because of the concerns, then, regarding the potential harm it posed to the entire yachting sector.

“While the government wanted to sell the vessel and to use the proceeds for the benefit of the country, the UPP suggested instead to sell the vessel and to send the money to Ukraine,” Greene, who is also chairman of the governing, ABLP recalled.

This he explained, is a clear indication that they did not oppose the sale. The difference was, what would the proceeds be used for; the benefit of Antigua and Barbuda or for Ukraine.

According to the Foreign Affairs Minister...everything regarding the sale of the yacht was done in accordance with legal advice and with the involvement

of the US Government. Notably, he said the Biden Administration provided guidance on how the government should proceed with the sale. He added that while all relevant information related to the sale has been made public and widely circulated, the UPP is seeking to use the issue as a gateway to a possible return to office.

“What we are seeing is the UPP hitting the ultimate button, and we have been here before. I want to say to those who may have forgotten and to those who may not have been aware of what happened in the past; this is their modus operandi. Sir Lester Bird was demonized! He was sighted as having relations with a minor and the people listened; unsuspecting people believed. Just like Alfa Nero, they said it often enough that people start to say ‘it has to be true’. So they repeat it every day

ad nauseam,” he stated.

He recalled that the efforts to ‘tarnish the reputation’ of the then ABLP Political Leader, Sir Lester, was central to the UPP’s campaign to win political power in 2004. Now, he added, without much hope of winning another election anytime soon, the party has latched on to the Alfa Nero story hoping to ride the crest to victory by demonizing current Prime Minister and ABLP Leader, Gaston Browne, this time around.

“It’s not about the truth anymore, it’s about ripping the country down; besmirching the leader’s image and character; that is the mission that they are on right now,” he declared as he disclosed insights into the strategies of the UPP he gleaned from inside sources.



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UNDP and EDP combine to deliver financial packages to SME's and youth-owned businesses

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Prime Minister's Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) have partnered to empower the heartbeat of the nation's economy: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Through an essential initiative under the Joint Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Multi-Partner Trust Fund, the collaboration seeks to close critical financial gaps and champion the voices of women and youth entrepreneurs in traditionally underserved communities. In a critical step toward reshaping the economic landscape of Antigua and Barbuda

Titled "*Optimizing Innovative Finance for Underserved Groups to Build Resilience and Accelerate the Achievement of the SDGs*," the project addresses one of the most pressing challenges MSMEs face—limited access to capital. This issue is particularly acute for Small Island Developing States like Antigua and Barbuda, where systemic barriers continue to block wom-



en and youth from securing the funding needed to start, sustain, or grow their businesses.

In interactive focus groups, EDP and UNDP invited key stakeholders, aspiring entrepreneurs, and policy leaders to unite in dialogue and action.

Earlier this month, participants gathered at the Trade Winds Hotel under the theme: "*Reducing the Risks Associated with Financing MSMEs*." The event spotlighted strategic pathways to reduce risks and unlock new financial models that include and uplift marginalized voices.

Subsequently, the movement continued at the John E. St. Luce Conference Center, where the

focus shifted to "*Empowering MSMEs: Fostering Growth for Women and Youth*." The EDP proudly served as a Partnering Host and Expert Panelist, offering critical insight and inspiration from years of championing innovation and entrepreneurship across the twin-island state.

"This initiative is not just a policy discussion—it's a promise," said EDP Board Director Caleb Gardiner. "A promise to ensure no entrepreneur is left behind because of gender, age, geography, or economic circumstance. Our partnership with UNDP proves that transformation becomes inevitable when we combine vision with action."

The movement extended to Barbuda, where

the UNDP and EDP met with the Barbuda Council to explore localized financial empowerment strategies. Community consultations were held with existing entrepreneurs and ambitious young women eager to launch their ventures, ensuring the project reflects lived realities and real needs on the ground.

This multi-agency effort—supported by the UNDP, UN Women Caribbean, and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)—underscores a collective commitment to gender equality, inclusive economic growth, and technological innovation, all aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Local News



SJCS MP extends helping hand to constituent in need



The Member of Parliament for the St. John's City South constituency, Sir Steadroy Benjamin, has extended a helping hand to a constituent deemed to be in dire need of proper housing. Based on the recommendations of his constituency branch executive, Sir Steadroy was able to galvanise the support of the government agencies working in tandem with the HAPI programme under the stewardship of the administrator, Inspector Veldon Raggette, to provide a fully furnished new 3-bedroom house with all the amenities to the recipient, Ellaine James of Prince Klass Street. The house which was delivered with groceries. It also

came with a 45-inch smart television donated by King's Casino. The house is valued at \$175,000.00. "Even though we don't share the same views on most issues, Elliane's challenges were recognized by me and based on the encouragement from the executive, this 'servant of the people' decided to extend a helping hand to her. I wish to extend my deep appreciation to Inspector Raggette, Head of the Social Transformation Programme, Mary Baltimore, the principles of King's Casino, and the inmates of HM Prison for their assistance in this matter," Sir Steadroy declared.

James' granddaughter spoke at the event and expressed her family's sincere thanks and appreciation to MP Sir Steadroy for his love, care and compassion and for his generosity of spirit in coming to the assistance of her grandmother. "Thank you Sir Steadroy Benjamin for your love and the compassion that you have demonstrated for our dear grandmother," she stated. The presentation of the house and its contents was widely supported by members of the constituency who turned out in large numbers to witness the event.

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Local News



ABDF officer and her brother are making another appearance in court today to face drug charges

The female attorney attached to the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force and her brother, an officer in the Immigration Department are to re-appear in court today to face drug charges.

Both are charged with the

possession of marijuana after the police conducted a raid of their home on Saturday.

They appeared in court on Monday, but the matter was adjourned until Tuesday because the prosecution in-

dicated that it needed more time to prepare its case.

Acting Chief Magistrate Dexter Wason granted them both no-cash bail in the amount of \$10,000.00 bond and one surety each.

During a search of their home, the police discovered 2.3 grams of marijuana and charged both siblings for the illegal possession of the drug.

Man pleads guilty to gun related charges... sentencing set for today

Old Runway resident, Ed Archibald, who pleaded guilty to charges of possession of an illegal firearm and ammunition, is going back to court on Tuesday when he will be sentenced for the crime.

Archibald was intercepted on Satur-

day by a police unit that was patrolling the St. John's area. The officers found Archibald armed with a Ruger .380 handgun along with six rounds of matching ammunition.

When he appeared in District B of the Magistrate's Court on Monday, Ar-

chibald decided to pled guilty to the charges. He had earlier told the police that he was in possession of the firearm and ammunition because he was on his way to the police station to surrender them as part of the just announced government gun amnesty.

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

ABTA inks partnership with WinAir Airlines



Regional Airline Winair And The Antigua And Barbuda Tourism Authority Have Announced A Strategic Partnership. Photo: Winair

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority has announced a new partnership with intra-regional carrier, WinAir Airlines which has been in effect for more than a month.

This collaboration signifies a joint commitment to significantly enhance the promotion of Antigua and Barbuda as a Caribbean destination and to highlight Winair's vital regional connectivity to the islands.

Winair currently provides direct services from Antigua to Sint Maarten, Tortola, St Kitts and Dominica, with a total of 17 weekly flights. Through its base in Sint Maarten, Winair conveniently connects Antigua with many more destinations in the Caribbean, US and Europe, thanks to its interline and codeshare partnership. Recognizing this crucial role of seamless travel in showcasing the exceptional experiences of Antigua and Barbuda, both organizations will work synergistically to effectively engage target audiences across the Caribbean.

"Winair is happy to start this partnership with the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority," stated Hans van de Velde, CEO of Winair. "We firmly

believe that by uniting our strengths, we can significantly elevate the profile of both the airline and the desti-

nation Antigua and Barbuda within the Caribbean market. This collaboration underscores our dedication to providing convenient and reliable air travel options that facilitate regional tourism and connect communities."

Charmaine Spencer, Director of Tourism Caribbean & Latin America for the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, commented, "We are delighted to join forces with Winair in our mission to further establish Antigua and Barbuda as the premier choice for Caribbean travelers. This strategic alliance will enable us to develop impactful and engaging marketing initiatives that showcase the unique allure of our islands and inspire more visitors to experience our unparalleled hospitality and attractions."



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Halo Foundation commits to assisting ABHS participate in London flower show

The Halo Foundation is making a financial donation to the Antigua and Barbuda Horticultural Society (ABHS) as the organisation prepares to make its debut at the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) Chelsea Flower Show in May 2025.

In a statement, the Foundation said this partnership is aimed at recognising and uplifting local organisations under the patronage of the Governor General that attempt to contribute to the nation's development.

Set to take place from May 20-24, 2025 at the Royal Hospital Chelsea grounds in London, the RHS Chelsea Flower Show is internationally revered as a premier event in horticulture, showcasing cutting-edge garden design and the latest landscaping trends. The participation of the ABHS marks a historic milestone for Antigua and Barbuda, bringing the island's rich horticultur-



L-R: Mr. Cuthbert Forbes, PRO, The Halo Foundation; Mrs. Barbara Japal, President, ABHS; H.E. Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General

al heritage to a global audience.

"In an expression of commitment, the Halo Foundation has contributed five thousand dollars towards the various expenses associated with participation in the event. This financial

support underscores Halo's dedication to promoting Caribbean excellence in various areas, including culture and the arts," the statement said.

Following a thorough review of the ABHS's proposed landscape exhibition

entitled "Antigua and Barbuda – A Glimpse into the Past," Governor-General Sir Rodney Williams emphasised the importance of Caribbean exhibitors in enhancing cultural representation at international events and creating valuable media exposure for Antigua and Barbuda.

Established in 1956, the Antigua and Barbuda Horticultural Society serves as a vital resource for education and information on horticulture and agriculture, benefiting both residents and visitors alike.

The Halo Foundation, celebrating a decade of impactful service to the people of Antigua and Barbuda, has launched its "Ten Months of Giving" campaign. This initiative seeks to honour and support organisations under its patronage that have made significant contributions to the community from March through December 2025.



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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Integrated Health Outreach (IHO) to launch two new initiatives

Integrated Health Outreach (IHO) has announced plans to launch two new initiatives for interested members of the local community.

“We are organising two initiatives for the benefit of members of communities in the Nelson’s Dockyard National Park (NDNP) protected area and communities buffering the NDNP area as far as Jennings and Liberta,” IHO said in a media statement.

It disclosed that the first initiative is a series of short courses on eco-tourism. The second initiative is beekeeper training. These initiatives are part of a broader ongoing project that aims at

building resilience to climate change in the NDNP through an approach called ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA).

“The goal is to restore ecosystems while also helping people to adopt more sustainable livelihoods in the face of climate change. The project is funded by the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) and is implemented by IHO in partnership with the National Parks Authority (NPA),” it revealed.

IHO explained that this initiative aims to reach residents from communities in the Nelson’s Dockyard National Park or surrounding communities that buffer the

NDNP area. These communities include Barthers, Blake’s, Boggy Peak Area, Cades Bay, Cherry Hill, Christian Valley, Cobbs Cross, Crabbe Hill, Doigs, English Harbour, Falmouth, Fishers, Jennings, John Hughes, Liberta, Old Road, Patterson, Piccadilly, Sawcolts, Spring Hill, Swetes, Table Hill Gordon, Tyrells, and Wallings Reserve,” the statement noted.

Interested persons may register by using the links below.

- Th eco tourism short courses: <https://qrco.de/bftnut>
- The Beekeeper training: <https://qrco.de/bftovn>

BEEKEEPER TRAINING

For residents in the Nelson’s Dockyard National Park area and the surrounding communities as far as Jennings & Liberta

REGISTRATION CLOSES APR 24, 2025

What You’ll Learn:

- The essentials of hive management
- Techniques for honey production
- Understanding bee behavior & health
- Sustainable practices to support bee populations

Facilitated by Integrated Health Outreach as part of a climate resilience project funded by the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund.

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2025

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- ✓ Waste Management
- ✓ Sustainable Tourism
- ✓ Tourism and the Environment
- ✓ Business Applications for Green Growth
- ✓ Culture Connections: Local Roots

3 hours/wk Interactive Virtual Sessions

These courses aim to provide both residential and commercial members of the NDNP and surrounding communities, with the knowledge and skills necessary to address climate change challenges and enhance the resilience of coastal ecosystems to support their livelihoods.

CERTIFICATE UPON COMPLETION

MORE INFORMATION VISIT: www.ihoab.com

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Antigua and Barbuda Participates in the Fourth Session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent at the United Nations

The Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Commission (ABRSC) is currently participating in the Fourth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent (PFPAD), taking place from April 14–17 under the theme: *“Africa and People of African Descent: United for Reparatory Justice in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.”*

Leading the delegation is Chair of the ABRSC Ambassador Dorbrene O'Marde, and joining him is Commissioner Angelica O'Donoghue. As part of their engagement, the representatives paid a courtesy visit to Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Walton Webson. The delegation later joined Ambassador Webson for the Forum's official opening at the United Nations General Assembly.

The session opened with the appointment of Ambassador Martin Kimani, former Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, and who was just in Antigua and Barbuda for the Diplomatic Encounter, as the new Chair of the Forum. Antigua and Barbuda is currently Chair of the Caricom Caucus of Permanent Representatives of the United Nations and therefore was responsible for delivering a statement on behalf of the regional grouping. The statement was delivered by Ambassador O'Marde, during which he expressed appreciation for the leadership of outgoing Chair Dr. June Soomer and welcomed Ambassador Kimani to the post.

In the statement, CARICOM reaffirmed its commitment to advancing the cause of reparatory justice and praised the Permanent Forum for its continued advocacy to improve the lives of people of African descent. It welcomed the recent proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly of the Second International Decade for People of African Descent, noting that it offers a vital opportunity to deepen the global pursuit of justice and redress.

“Lest we forget the dark periods in our history and the racial injustices that befell those before us, the fight against racism and racial discrimination is far from over,” the statement read. “CARICOM will continue to advocate for reparatory justice guided by the CARICOM Ten-Point Plan. The theme of this year's session is timely and important, as it reinforces the need to center justice and accountability in a technologically advancing world.”

The session is expected to address a range of critical topics, including the global reparatory justice agenda, the human rights of women and girls of African descent, the application of rights-based policymaking to combat systemic racism, and the creation of inclusive and ethical artificial intelligence systems that safeguard the rights and dignity of people of African descent.

Ambassador O'Marde and Ms. O'Donoghue will also participate in several thematic sessions, including those focused on reparatory justice and institutional accountability, apology and repair, and the evolving dialogue between descendants of the enslaved and the enslavers.

Antigua and Barbuda's participation underscores its steadfast dedication to the global reparatory justice movement and to building a more equitable future for people of African descent everywhere.

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PRESS RELEASE

The Caribbean Melting Pot Set to Ignite Antigua Carnival 2025 with Soca Legends, Vibes & Long Bay Lager

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Tuesday, April 15, 2025, St. John's, Antigua..... One of the most highly anticipated events of Antigua Carnival 2025, The Caribbean Melting Pot, is set to turn up the heat with an epic night of nonstop music and pure vibes. Powered by Long Bay Lager, this electrifying showcase will take over Carnival City on Thursday, July 31st, at 8 PM, promising an unforgettable fusion of Caribbean music.

With an explosive first wave of performers already announced, the stage is set for something legendary as Antigua's very own Soca Diva Claudette "CP" Peters celebrates 25 years in music with her band Disturbance. The incomparable Tian "The Winter Man" Winter brings his signature energy with Iconic, alongside Dominica's powerhouse band Triple Kay, and the long-awaited return of Soca King of the World, Trinidad's very own Machel Montano, live with his full band.

Early Bird Tickets are ON SALE NOW via the TickeTing App:

- General Admission: EC \$100
- House of Vibes All-Inclusive: EC \$350.

Early bird prices end on June 15th at 11:59 PM.

The House of Vibes all-inclusive experience is a uniquely branded upper-level experience with pure VIBES topped with premium top-shelf liquor, delectable local and regional cuisine, elevated front-stage views, luxurious ambience, and a curated crowd that brings nothing but good energy and nonstop VIBES.

Ambassador Elizabeth Makhoul, Chairperson of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission, expressed her enthusiasm: *"I am elated to officially welcome Long Bay Lager as a Silver Sponsor of Antigua Carnival 2025 and the Title Sponsor of The Caribbean Melting Pot. This partnership is more than just sponsorship. It's a synergy. Long Bay Lager is proudly brewed in Antigua and perfectly resonates with the essence of this event: vibrant, refreshing, and made for the people. This collaboration will elevate both brands and deliver a carnival experience like no other."*

With even more artist announcements on the way, The Long Bay Lager Caribbean Melting Pot is preparing to be THE summer event.

Don't just witness the vibes. Be the Vibe.

The Long Bay Lager Caribbean Melting Pot | July 31st | Carnival City | ITZ A VIBE!

ANTIGUA BARBUDA FESTIVALS COMMISSION

CAF: Outdated infrastructure contributing to water loss in Barbados & Eastern Caribbean



A new study by the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) has revealed critical gaps in water access, infrastructure, and efficiency across Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

The findings were presented during a High-Level Technical Workshop on Water and Sanitation in Bridgetown on April 8–9.

The workshop, titled *Water and Sanitation in the Caribbean: Working Together to Overcome Challenges and Chart a More Resilient and Sustainable Sector*, focused on knowledge sharing, climate resilience, and the need for scalable, innovative financing mechanisms to support sustainable water and sanitation services.

Among the key findings of the report, are:

Several Caribbean nations suffer from significant water scarcity, while others face absolute water scarcity, signalling a critical need for alternative water sources.

Despite water shortages, the study found that many countries are losing nearly half of their available water

due to outdated infrastructure and inefficiencies.

Sewerage infrastructure remains underdeveloped across the region, with an average coverage of just 11 per cent. Many countries lack proper wastewater treatment, with untreated sewage being discharged into the sea.

The study highlights stormwater drainage as a growing regional concern due to the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. It proposes that traditional grey infrastructure needs to be supplemented with green and nature-based solutions to prevent further damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and livelihoods. CAF's Regional Diagnostic Study emphasised the need for policy reforms, technological advancements, and critical financial investments to ensure the region's ability to access water for its various needs. The study recommends solutions such as desalination, rainwater harvesting, wastewater reuse, and automated water management systems are prioritised.

Dr Stacy Richards-Kennedy, CAF's Regional Manager for the Caribbean and Country Representative in Barbados said the bank is committed to supporting the Caribbean with flexible and agile solutions to addressing its water and sanitation challenges.

"At CAF, we understand the widespread impact of these challenges across the society and the ripple effects across businesses and the economy. To us, issues such as water security, are not abstract technical issues, they are personal – they affect the ability of individuals to meet their basic needs and live life with dignity. Tackling water scarcity requires that we come together and act with a sense of urgency. CAF is about providing innovative solutions, working always in an agile and flexible manner to help the region meet its development priorities," she stated.

Senator Dr Shantal Munro-Knight, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office of Barbados, underscored the financing challenge in water security in the region, and the need for innovative financing models to address this.

She thanked CAF for its ability to respond to the specific needs of shareholder countries.

She said: "We need good partners to be able to meet that financing challenge. To address the challenges, we face with water insecurity, we need partners that offer

tailored solutions. We need partners that allow us to imbue a sense of ownership in terms of forging the solutions that are going to be necessary. We need partners that offer simple ways and modalities of allowing us to work together.

"CAF has been a partner for us across many sectors—water, infrastructure, and trade. But one of the things we value in our relationship with CAF is their ability to immediately respond to our needs, not what they believe they want, but respond to exactly what it is that we have asked for."

Franz Rojas, Director of Water and Sanitation, CAF, said there was an urgent need for increased investments to strengthen capacities and bold solutions to combat water scarcity and climate change.

"CAF brings decades of experience supporting countries across Latin America and the Caribbean in building sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient systems. This initial diagnostic is just the beginning as we plan to deepen this analysis. Aligned with CAF's Water Security Strategy and our recent commitment at the UN Water Conference in New York to provide financing of up to USD 4 billion, we are truly committed to collaborating closely with the Caribbean to build water security," Rojas said.

The complete study will be published on CAF's website. (*Loop Caribbean*)

Driver who allegedly used car to fatally injure a man during dispute charged with murder

A 27-year-old truck driver and sales representative has been charged with a murder committed in 2021 during a dispute.

He is Joel Needham of Golden Grove district, St Catherine.

He's accused of the murder of 22-year-old Joel Walker, a farmer of Golden Grove district.

The Guy's Hill police say, about 1:30 p.m. on September 25, 2021, an argu-



ment occurred between Walker and one of Needham's relatives in their

community.

Needham reportedly intervened in the dispute and used his Toyota Probox motor car to hit Walker, inflicting severe injuries.

Walker was taken to hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Following an investigation, Needham was apprehended and charged.

His court date is being finalised. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

Montague: Holness won't call election until party fully ready

Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) Chairman Robert Montague on Sunday urged party workers to ramp up their mobilisation efforts, arguing that Prime Minister and leader Dr Andrew Holness will not call an election until the party's internal groundwork is complete.

Speaking at a constituency conference in St Catherine East Central, Montague said that as the party prepares for the polls, more work needs to be done.

"Labourites as we prepare for the third term, a whole heap a people a run up on down and we want to say keep calm because your party is slowly getting ready," he said.

"We cannot be ready until every PD [polling division] is ready until every cluster is ready, so we want every worker to make sure that dem complete them canvass," he added.



Montague emphasised the need for full mobilisation.

"We want every worker to make sure they have indoor and outdoor agents, runners and supervisors for every PD," he stated.

Urging party workers to take ownership of their responsibilities, he added, "Andrew Holness cannot be ready for an election until every PD is ready, so if you know your

PD is not ready make sure to go out ah morning with you other workers and get your PD ready."

Montague also disclosed that the party is still assessing candidates.

"We are putting candidates in place, we now have only four seats left to settle and therefore, in the meantime, everybody has work to do," he said.

He further revealed that a manifesto committee has been formed, and praised Senator Sherine Golding's suggestion for a women's health test under the National Health Fund.

"I will sit with the committee and lend his support to the idea," Montague said. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

CARICOM condemns threats by armed gangs in Haiti, urges global support

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has expressed deep alarm over escalating instability in Haiti, following reports that a coalition of criminal gangs is threatening to overthrow the country's transitional government and seize power by force.

In a strongly worded statement, CARICOM Heads of Government said such developments are “completely unacceptable.”

“The Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) are deeply concerned by recent reports that a coalition of criminal gangs is threatening to seize power and compel a change in the governance arrangements in Haiti at this time. This is completely unacceptable,” the statement read.

That process, agreed upon by Haitian stakeholders, is meant to restore constitutional order and prepare the country for democratic elections by February 7, 2026.

“CARICOM strongly condemns any attempt to replace the transitional arrangements by force and violence. These arrangements were put in place by Haitian stakeholders to pave the way for free and fair elections by February 07, 2026, and to return Haiti to constitutional authority,” the statement read further.

The regional body also warned that further violence will only deepen Haiti's worsening humanitarian crisis.

According to figures cited in the release from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), over one million Haitians are currently internally displaced, including nearly 60,000 within the past month alone.

“Moreover, any further organized violence will only exacerbate the existing humanitarian crisis. The International Organization on Migration (IOM) reported that in mid-January of this year there were 1,041,000 internally displaced Haitians, some of whom are already risking their lives in attempt-



ing to leave by any means necessary. Over the last month alone, close to 60,000 Haitians have been displaced. Increased violence will simply hurt those who are least capable of protecting themselves. This too is completely unacceptable.”

In response to the growing threat,

CARICOM confirmed it has been in direct consultations with Haitian authorities and international partners to urgently enhance security support.

CARICOM also acknowledged and commended the ongoing efforts of the Haitian National Police and the Multi-national Security Support (MSS) mission led by Kenya.

As Haiti teeters on the edge of greater chaos, the regional body is appealing to the broader international community, including the United Nations and the Organization of American States, to step in with tangible support.

CARICOM concluded by reaffirming its commitment to closely monitor developments in Haiti as the situation continues to unfold. (*Loop Caribbean*)



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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Meta faces historic antitrust trial that could force it to break off Instagram, WhatsApp

Meta Platforms Inc. faces a historic antitrust trial beginning Monday that could force the tech giant to break off Instagram and WhatsApp, startups it bought more than a decade ago that have since grown into social media powerhouses.

The looming antitrust trial will be the first big test of President Donald Trump's Federal Trade Commission's ability to challenge Big Tech.

The lawsuit was filed against Meta — then called Facebook — in 2020, during Trump's first term.

It claims the company bought Instagram and WhatsApp to squash competition and establish an illegal monopoly in the social media market.

Meta, the FTC argues, has maintained a monopoly by pursuing CEO Mark Zuckerberg's strategy, "expressed in 2008: 'It is better to buy than compete.' True to that maxim, Facebook has systematically tracked potential rivals and acquired companies that it viewed as serious competitive threats."

Facebook also enacted policies designed to make it difficult for smaller rivals to enter the market and "neutralise perceived competitive threats," the



FTC says in its complaint, just as the world shifted its attention to mobile devices from desktop computers.

"Unable to maintain its monopoly by fairly competing, the company's executives addressed the existential threat by buying up new innovators that were succeeding where Facebook failed," the FTC says.

Facebook bought Instagram — then a scrappy photo-sharing app with no ads and a small cult following — in 2012.

The \$1 billion cash and stock purchase price was eye-popping at the time, though the deal's value fell to \$750 million after Facebook's stock price dipped following its initial public offering in May 2012.

Instagram was the first company Facebook bought and kept running as a separate app.

Up until then, Facebook was known for smaller "acqui-hires" — a type of popular Silicon Valley deal in which a company purchases a startup as a way to hire its talented workers, then shuts the acquired company down. Two years later, it did it again with the messaging app WhatsApp, which it purchased for \$22 billion.

WhatsApp and Instagram helped Facebook move its business from desktop computers to mobile devices, and to remain popular with younger generations as rivals like Snapchat (which it also tried, but failed, to buy) and TikTok emerged. However, the FTC has a narrow definition of Meta's competitive market, excluding companies like TikTok, YouTube and Apple's messaging service from being considered rivals to Instagram and WhatsApp.

"The FTC already has the difficult task, whether it's looking at 10 years ago or five years ago or today, of trying to define what is the market we're talking about in a sufficiently narrow way that it can show Meta has a ton of power in that market," said Paul Swanson, an antitrust attorney for the law firm Holland & Hart. "And I do think that challenge has gotten harder as the years have gone by and we see more and more potential competitors in social media spaces."

Meta, meanwhile, says the FTC's lawsuit "defies reality."

"The evidence at trial will show what every 17-year-old in the world knows: Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp compete with Chinese-owned TikTok, YouTube, X, iMessage and many others. More than 10 years after the FTC reviewed and cleared our acquisitions, the Commission's action in this case sends the message that no deal is ever truly final. Regulators should be supporting American innovation, rather than seeking to break up a great American company and further advantaging China on critical issues like AI," the company said in a statement. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

No survivors reported after plane with 6 aboard crashes in New York

No survivors were reported after a private plane crashed while it was preparing for a second landing attempt in New York's Columbia County on Saturday, officials said.

Six people traveling to Columbia County Airport in Ghent en route to a planned holiday celebration with family were on board, federal officials said at a news conference Sunday.

Family friend John Santoro said a statement to The Associated Press that his adult son, recent MIT graduate James Santoro, died in the crash.

Santoro's statement identified the others on board: Karena Groff, a former MIT soccer player named the 2022 NCAA woman of the year; her father, Dr. Michael Groff, a neuroscientist; her mother, Dr. Joy Saini, a urogynecologist; her brother, Jared Groff, a 2022 graduate of Swarthmore College who worked as a paralegal; Alexia Couyutas Duarte, Jared Groff's partner, who also graduated from Swarthmore and planned to attend Harvard Law School; and James Santoro, Karena Groff's boyfriend.

All six were pulled from the plane and none were hospitalized, Todd Inman, member of the National Transportation Safety Board, said at Sunday's news conference.

"The aircraft was compressed, buckled and embedded into the terrain," Inman said. "The aircraft was, in fact, crashed at a high rate of descent into the ground."

The plane, a Mitsubishi MU-2B with an experienced pilot at the controls, crashed into a field near Copake at about 12:15 p.m. Saturday, according to NTSB and Federal Aviation Administration officials. The aircraft was about 10 miles south of its destination, Columbia County Airport.

The plane was flying out of Westchester County Airport in West Harrison, just north of New York City and about 100 miles south of Ghent, NTSB officials said.

The pilot had abandoned a landing attempt and was preparing a second try when the plane hit the ground at a high speed, Inman said.

"The pilot reported a missed approach," Albert Nixon, the NTSB investigator in charge of the crash probe, said at the news conference. The Columbia County Airport air traffic control tower tried to contact him four times to no avail, he said. The radio contact started with an attempt to inform the pilot of a low-altitude warning, Nixon said.

The pilot remained silent, he said. "There was no distress call" before impact, Nixon said.

The pilot was flying by instrument, not visually, and there was snow on the ground, NTSB officials said. The conditions included overcast skies and a temperature of 35 degrees, according to National Weather Service data.

Investigators have reviewed video of the crash, Inman said. It wasn't clear where exactly the video was recorded, and he indicated it was unlikely it would be released publicly.

The Mitsubishi MU-2B is a twin-turboprop aircraft with a pressurized cabin, like commercial jets, Inman said, which would allow it to fly higher and farther than many noncommercial planes.

He said the aircraft changed hands last year and at the time got "a very upgraded avionics package."

The plane was registered to an entity called Dynamic Spine Solutions LLC, based in Weston, Massachusetts, according to FAA tail number registration information. Dr. Michael Groff is listed in state incorporation records as the entity's sole agent and contact.

The Columbia County Sheriff's Office did not immediately respond to a request for confirmation of deaths or the identities of those on board. (NBC News)




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Islamabad seeks answers after eight Pakistanis shot dead in Iran

Pakistan has urged Iran to conduct a “comprehensive investigation” after eight Pakistani migrant workers were killed over the weekend in Iran’s Sistan-Baluchestan province, which shares a border with Pakistan’s south-western Balochistan province.

The attack took place on Saturday in Mehrestan county, located roughly 230km (142 miles) from the Pakistan border, where unidentified assailants attacked a workshop.

According to Iranian media reports, all eight workers – who belonged to various areas of Pakistan’s Punjab province and were working as mechanics – were tied up and shot dead.

The Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA), a lesser-known Baloch group seeking independence from Pakistan, has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Iran and Pakistan were both quick to condemn the attack, with the Iranian ambassador to Pakistan, Reza Amiri Moghadam, saying “terrorism is a



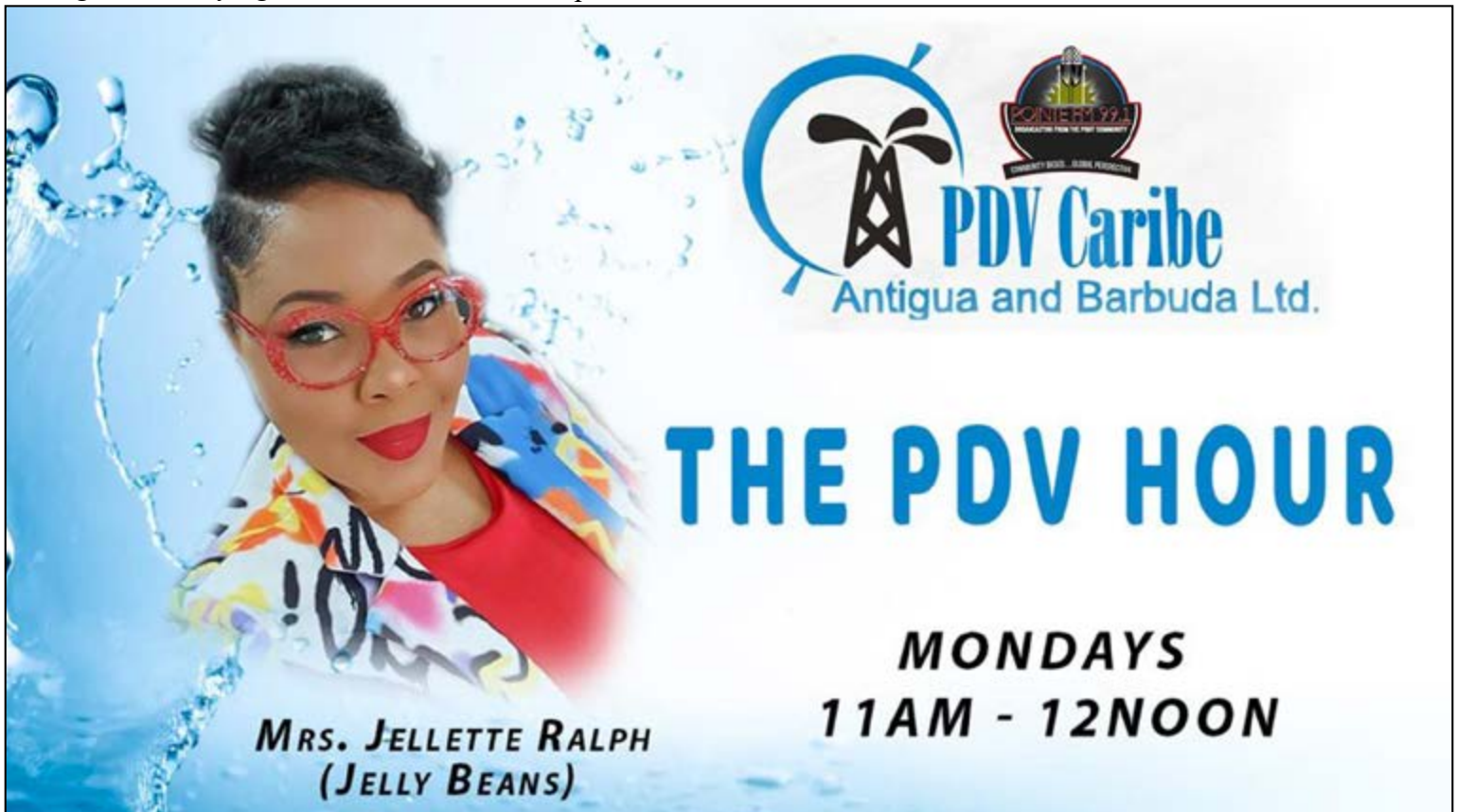
common threat throughout the region”.

The Pakistani envoy to Tehran, Mudassir Tipu, confirmed in a statement on X that the two countries were coordinating efforts to investigate the incident.

Earlier, Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs had sought a joint response against the attackers. “Pakistan strongly condemns the inhumane and cowardly killing of its nationals in Iran. We hope for the Iranian side’s full co-

operation in investigating the matter and in the timely repatriation of victims’ remains,” it said in a statement on Sunday.

Yet experts say the deadly attack only underscored the tense security landscape along their shared border — where the two countries traded missile fire last year, accusing each other of harbouring deadly armed groups. (*Al Jazeera English*)



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Teen charged with killing parents also planned to assassinate Trump, FBI says

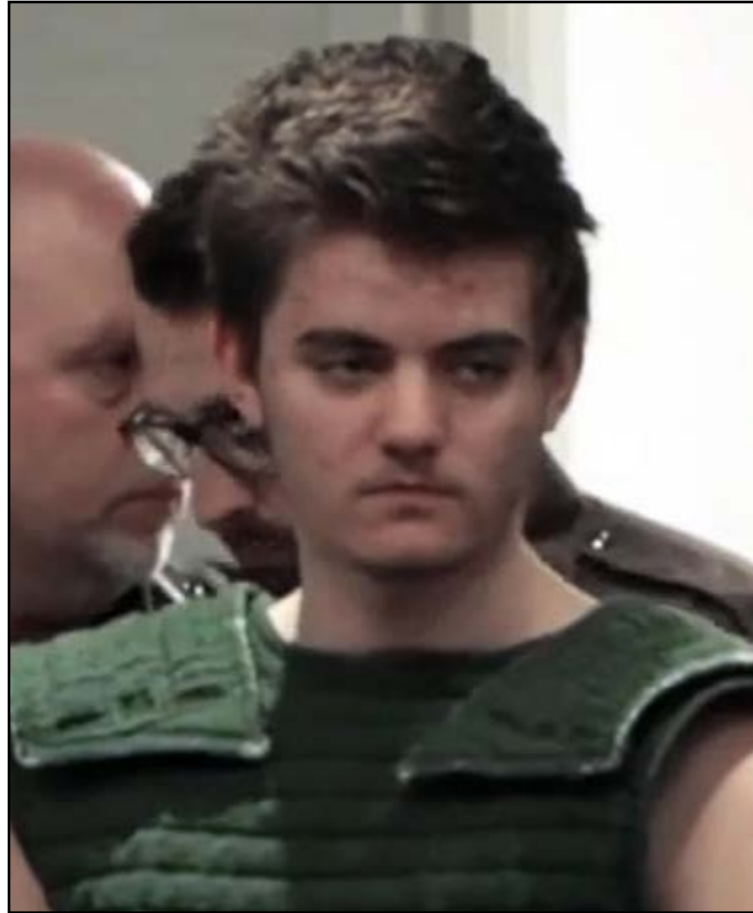
A 17-year-old Wisconsin teen charged with killing his parents is also accused of plotting to assassinate President Donald Trump, according to an unsealed affidavit from the FBI.

Last month, Nikita Casap, of Waukesha, was charged with killing his mother, 35-year-old Tatiana Casap, and his stepfather, 51-year-old Donald Mayer, and accused of living with their corpses for two weeks. Officials are saying he was also conspiring to kill the president.

The FBI accused Casap of conspiracy, attempting to assassinate the president and attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction.

According to the FBI, officials found what they called a “manifesto” while searching for a device that belonged to Casap. The document called for the president’s assassination in order to instigate a race war and sow chaos.

Casap also disclosed his plans to others on TikTok and Telegram, and identified himself as a follower of



Order of the Nine Angles, which the FBI describes as a neo-Nazi cult that “advocates for the use of violence and terrorism to overthrow governments and destroy modern civilization.”

According to the FBI, Casap allegedly partially paid for “a drone with a dropping mechanism” to inflict harm by descending “an explosive, Molotov

cocktail, or very strong topical poison” on a target.

“The killing of his parents appeared to be an effort to obtain the financial means and autonomy necessary to carrying out his plan,” the affidavit read.

Casap was arrested on Feb. 28 after running a stop sign while driving his stepfather’s Volkswagen Atlas in WaKeeney, Kan-

sas, 800 miles away from his Wisconsin home. The car contained his stepfather’s Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum, the victims’ driver’s licenses and spent shell casings, according to a complaint.

The 17-year-old was originally charged with operating a motor vehicle without the owner’s consent and theft of movable property, before eventually being hit with two counts of first-degree homicide, two counts of hiding a corpse, theft of property over \$10,000 and two counts of misappropriating ID to obtain money, according to Waukesha officials. According to the FBI, Casap had shared his plans to kill his parents with a classmate.

The teen appeared in court on March 27, where it was revealed that his mother had been found in a hallway covered with blankets and a towel, while his stepfather was found in a first-floor office covered in a pile of clothing.

Casap’s attorneys did not immediately respond to a request for comment. (NBC News)



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Antigua & Barbuda T20 Premier League 2025

strength such that there would be an overall improvement of the competitive standard

of each team.

“The Antigua & Barbuda Falcons will have the option to attach one of its players to

each team for the Semi-Finals and Finals.”

Former West Indies Test and/or One-Day International players: Ridley Jacobs (All Saints),

Winston Benjamin (Pigotts), Kenneth Benjamin (Liberta), Sylvester Joseph (Jennings), Kerry

Jeremy (New Winthropes) and Austin Richards Jr (Empire) will serve as mentors to the

clubs.

A nine-member Steering Committee chaired by Dale Lawrence and comprises Kenneth

Benjamin, Kennesia Cabral, Bakesha Francis-James, Gija George, Wayne Hewlett, Ian

Tittle, Eldora Sylvester and Glen Miller has organised the T20 Premier League.

The organizational structure includes a Cricket Committee headed by Kenneth Benjamin

with members Earl Waldron, Wayne Hewlette, Dale Lawrence, Hugh Gore, as well as Kenny

Lewis and Dave Gustave invited on behalf of the ABCA.

A Finance Committee also forms part of the ABCCA and is made up of Gija George,

chairman, with members Kennesia Cabral, Bakesha Francis-James, Eldora Sylvester, and

Radley Baptiste of the ABCA who has been invited.

The Coordinator is Don Charles, noted Antiguan and International Finance Executive and

former banker and concert promoter.

Look out for the Antigua & Barbuda T20 Premier League 2025.



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA T20 PREMIER LEAGUE

T20 PLAYERS DRAFT LIST 2025

BOLANS BLASTERS

- Taiem Tonge
- Richie Thomas
- Orlando Peters
- Shemar Wallace

RISING SUN SPARTANS

- Kerry Mentor
- Melvin Charles
- Junior Henry
- Andre Edwards

RISING SUN SPARTANS

- Teron Payne
- James Cornelius
- Theriquie Mason
- Anthony Martin

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Antigua & Barbuda T20 Cricket Clubs Alliance and Antigua & Barbuda Falcons Presents Antigua & Barbuda T20 Premier League 2025 New and exciting T20 competition hits Antigua & Barbuda!

Six of the country's top clubs selected from the recently concluded ABCA 2-day competition will compete in the inaugural and explosive Antigua & Barbuda T20 Premier League 2025 from April 27-May 11 at the historic and iconic Sir Vivian Richards Stadium (SVRS), North Sound. The Antigua & Barbuda Cricket Clubs Alliance (ABCCA), with support from the country's Caribbean Premier League franchise, the Antigua & Barbuda Falcons – which was established in 2024 – is organising the new national T20 competition. The Antigua & Barbuda T20 Premier League is sanctioned by the Antigua & Barbuda Cricket Association (ABCA) and is expected to receive the full support from the Ministry of Sports. The ABCCA states: "Our goal is not only to stage



an excellent tournament but to use it as a stepping stone to prepare at least five of our players to make the Antigua & Barbuda Falcons team within the next five years." PIC Liberta Blackhawks, All Saints Pythons, Empire Nations, Jennings Tigers, New Winthropes Lions and

Pigotts Crushers will clash for coveted honours. However, Bethesda, Bolans and Rising Sun who didn't make the cut this year will participate in the warm-up matches which will be staged on two separate Saturdays – April 12 & 19 respectively – at various community fields.

The tournament proper bowls-off at the SVRS on Sunday 27 April with 15 round robin matches with two games nightly until Tuesday 6 May followed by the Semi-Finals on Saturday 10 May and climaxes with the Grand Finale on Sunday 11 May.

The ABCCA adds: "Each of the six teams playing the tournament can select up to two players from a pool of 12 players placed in a draft pool by each of the three teams who

are members of the Antigua & Barbuda Cricket Clubs Alliance that didn't qualify for the tournament.

"Each team in the Draft is to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of its player needs and to select the best players who can add value to their playing XI or bench