

Antigua and Barbuda stands with Venezuela

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Sir Rodney Williams took the salute during the traditional march-pass, a time-honoured gesture that acknowledged the discipline, pride, and unity demonstrated by the members of the Boy's Brigade.

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Antigua and Barbuda continues to stand in solidarity with the Government of Venezuela



Prime Minister Gaston Browne said Antigua and Barbuda will not turn its back on Venezuela despite pressures from the United States for countries in the region to do so.

Speaking Friday evening at a ceremony held aboard the visiting Venezuelan Naval academy training vessel, *Ambassador Without Borders*, PM Browne recalled that Venezuela helped to stabilize the country's economy during the 2008-11 global financial crisis with credits of over \$500 million through the PetroCaribe Initiative.

"This act literally stabilized the country's economy which was one of the worst hit by the global crisis. This evening, on behalf of the people of Antigua and Barbuda, I wish to extend our sincerest gratitude to the people of Venezuela for their assistance. Evidently, there are some political challenges as a result of the new policies of the Trump Administration. However, we continue to advocate for



stability within the region and for the US to reconsider its policies that will destabilize the region," he noted.

PM Browne identified the US policy of wanting to punish countries

that benefit from Venezuelan oil as one such potentially harmful policy. This policy, the prime minister explained, is 'deleterious' to the growth and development of the

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countries of the region and that Antigua and Barbuda will continue to advocate for changes.

“We are fully aware of the geo-political challenges that Venezuela faces, however, the government and people of Venezuela must be assured that Antigua and Barbuda continues to be a very liable partner and will continue to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Venezuela. We will not be persuaded by the rhetoric or the mis-information and dis-information that are being used to demonise the duly elected Venezuelan government. We will continue to work with Venezuela, Cuba and other like-minded countries to ensure that our hemisphere remains a ‘Zone of Peace’,” he declared.

He described the visit of the vessel as ‘the embodiment’ of the peaceful culture of the government of Venezuela.

Meanwhile, Venezuelan Ambassador Carmen Velasquez stated that in a world as convulsed as things are currently, especially in inter-



national relations, the dialogue and the diplomacy of peace are the only weapons her country and her government possesses.

“As everyone knows, Venezuela is

a victim of sanctions and measures that only seek to harm our people, including our migrants. In the face of this, with our heads held high and with the dignity of a fighting, hardworking and honest people, who love their country, we will continue forward and overcome obstacles to preserve our achievements. In this regard, President Nicolás Maduro has activated the Productive Independence Plan,” she revealed.

The *Ambassador Without Borders* vessel has hosted many Antigua and Barbuda officials and ordinary people during its visit to St. John’s which ends on Monday. Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams was among those who visited the vessel during its goodwill tour.



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Response from the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA) on Accommodation Levy Compliance



Chief of Staff Lionel Max Hurs

During the weekly Cabinet Press Briefing, Chief of Staff Lionel Max Hurs highlighted a presentation made by representatives of the Ministry of Finance regarding the payment of the Accommodation Levy and the under-reporting of hotels. The Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA) acknowledges these concerns and remains committed to ensuring compliance among its members. However, we emphasize the necessity of extending this compliance effort beyond traditional hotels to include the rapidly growing Villa and Guesthouse market, commonly associated with platforms such as Airbnb.

The ABHTA strongly encourages the growth of the Villa and Guesthouse market and recognizes it as a valuable and viable segment that expands the range of accommodation

options available to visitors. This growth enhances the destination's appeal by catering to diverse traveler preferences while complementing the existing hotel sector.

In the last quarter of 2024, the ABHTA actively engaged with key government stakeholders—including Minister of Tourism, Charles "Max" Fernandez and the Inland Revenue Department—to highlight the need for standardized taxation across all accommodation providers.

The significant growth in visitor arrivals has been accompanied by a notable shift in guest preferences, with a 14% decline in hotel stays and an 11% increase in stays at Villas and Guesthouses when comparing January–December 2024 (the island's strongest tourism year) to the same period in 2019 (the second strongest year

for stayover arrivals).

As the Government advances its compliance efforts, the ABHTA welcomes an audit of its members but strongly advocates for the extension of this initiative across the entire accommodation sector. A standardized and enforced taxation framework will prevent revenue

leakage, ensuring that the Government fully benefits from the sector's overall growth.

We remain eager to collaborate with all relevant authorities to support a fair and comprehensive approach to taxation, ultimately strengthening the tourism industry and national economy.



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The Commonwealth

High-level Commonwealth Secretariat team visits Antigua and Barbuda

As Antigua and Barbuda prepares to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) next year, planning for the event is beginning to take shape with the visit of a high-level team from the Commonwealth Secretariat to St. John's this week.

Several meetings have been planned over the next few days with the committees responsible for planning of the several events that are associated with CHOGM.

These include the planning for a women's forum, a youth forum and people's forum. Additionally, the team will also pay a site vis-

it to the conference room at the American University of Antigua, the main site for the meeting.

The team will also visit the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus to speak with Principal, Prof. C Justin Robinson and his team regarding their involvement in the CHOGM.

Other issues of concern for the visiting team will include security as it is expected to many of the 56 heads of state of the Commonwealth will be visiting Antigua and Barbuda during the period, including King Charles, the head of the Commonwealth.



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Governor General participates in annual Boy's Brigade Thanksgiving Service



Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General and Patron of the Boy's Brigade of Antigua and Barbuda, was warmly welcomed by the leadership and members of the organization at their Annual Service of Thanksgiving, held on Sunday, April 6, 2025, at the Freetown Methodist Church.

The service, led by Reverend Ramona Dinard alongside the executive team of the Brigade, brought together young members, community leaders, and supporters in a celebration of the Brigade's ongoing growth and dedicated service to youth development.

In his remarks, Sir Rodney Williams commended the Boy's Brigade for its long-standing role in shaping the character and values of the nation's young men through Christian teachings, discipline, and community engagement. He highlighted the Brigade's consistent contributions to national events, particularly its active participation in Commonwealth Day celebrations over the years.



The Governor General also shared that, along with Lady Williams, he had the pleasure of meeting with members of the Brigade earlier in March. He further noted that in January, Reverend Joseph Nicholas, President of the Antigua and Barbuda chapter, introduced a visiting senior official from the international Boy's Brigade community, a moment that underscored the chapter's growing recognition on the

global stage.

Encouraging the young men to remain committed to their mission, Sir Rodney offered words of inspiration from 1 Corinthians 15:58: *"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain."*

The service concluded on a high note with prayers for continued success and blessings on the work of the Boy's Brigade and all who support its mission.

To mark the end of the celebration, Sir Rodney took the salute during the traditional march-past, a time-honoured gesture that acknowledged the discipline, pride, and unity demonstrated by the members of the Brigade.

Kanneh-Masons, ABYSO give 'a wonderful evening of music' special performances



The internationally-renowned Kanneh-Masons musical family and members of the Antigua and Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra (ABYSO) thrilled the audience at a special performance at the Mill Reef Club on Saturday night.

Dubbed 'An Evening of Music', the concert featured all seven siblings of the Kanneh-Masons family performing several classical music pieces together, or duets and even solos displaying their mastery of their several instruments, violin, piano and cello.

Guests including the Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Williams and the Antigua and Barbuda UK High Commissioner, Karen-Mae Hill along with members of the Miff Reef Club and other invited guests enjoyed a lovely evening enjoying the musical renditions, all of which were performed at a particularly high standard.

Also performing were members of the ABYSO who performed four contemporary musical pieces which demonstrated their growth as musicians. All in all, it was a wonderful evening for all.

HC Hill said the performance at Mill Reef Club is one way of showing appreciation to members of the Club who have been major sponsors of the Kanneh-Masons musical tours to Antigua and Barbuda for the seven years that they have been performing in the country. "The Mill Reef Club, along with Jumby Bay, have been with us since 2017 and this concert that we do here every year is about saying thanks to them and to show how their investments have been used, to show the growth of the young people as well as to expose our young people to performing before mix audiences and to know that their place in the world is not defined by geography or race, but that they are children of the universe," she remarked.

The performance comes one week ahead of the annual must-see event, *Playing to Inspire Seven*, which takes place at the St. John's Pentecostal Church's House of Restoration on Saturday April 12 and which will feature a number of guest performances.

Local News



Rotary Club launches Colours 2025 – Colours of the Wild, Wild West!



Sherri-Ann Brazier,



Dr Sharon Cordner,

The Rotary Club of Antigua and Barbuda has formally launched its main fundraiser, the annual Carnival fete, Colours under the theme for 2025, *Colours of the Wild, Wild West*.

The launch took place on Friday at the Trade Winds Hotel where members of the Club along with representatives of the sponsors and the media were welcomed by President, Sherri-Ann Brazier, who said that the several charitable undertakings of the club each year are funded largely from the proceeds from the Colours fete.

Noting that this year will be the 16th instalment of Colours, Brazier identified 16 reasons why the Antigua and Barbuda public should support the event.

“We continue our Meals on Wheels project which has



Samoya Kirby

been running since 1985 and every month we provide food packages to well-needed families in the community; we continue our wheelchair programme where we help people to be mobile and

provide dignity to countless individuals; this year we became painters and helped paint the common areas of the Fiennes Institute, we brought Christmas cheer to those warded at ClareVue

Hospital and the Fiennes Institute and we continue to raise awareness regarding polio,” she stated in outlining some of the charitable work the Club undertakes each year.

Dr. Sharon Cordner, head of the Colours Planning Committee, said there are plans to transform the Coolidge Cricket Grounds in keeping with the theme of *Colours of the Wild, Wild West* and she is inviting patrons to come to enjoy a number of surprises this year. Soca artist, Tian Wynter will again be the headline act for the event with Premier Beverages as one of the main sponsors.

This year Colours fete, *Colours of the Wild, Wild West* will be staged at the CCG on July 19. Early bird tickets are already available.



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Top tier multi-sports facility is coming to Potters

The Potters community celebrated the official groundbreaking of the highly anticipated restoration of the Potters Sports Field — a transformative project set to redefine community sports, physical and mental health education, and wellness in Antigua and Barbuda. The restored sports field will benefit the entire Potters community as well as students from the Harrison Centre Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Studies, the Sir Novelle Richards Academy, and the Potters Primary School.

The restoration is guided by a thoughtful concept design prepared by architect Jessie Gilpin, working in collaboration with United Kingdom-based architectural firm Atomik Architects, who contributed technical and design support to bring the vision to life. The upgraded facility will include:

- *refurbished basketball, netball, and volleyball courts*
- *a cricket and football field with a pavilion*
- *a new baseball diamond, which will serve as home to the Antigua Little League Programme*
- *a children's play area with cushioned flooring and modern equipment*
- *a walking track encircling the field for fitness and leisure*
- *floodlights, toilets, changing rooms, concession stands, and general parking.*

The Minister for Education, Sports, Daryll Matthew, delivered remarks, underscoring the Government's commitment to youth development and community building. He stated:



“This project is not only about creating a sports facility. It’s about creating a hub of opportunity — for sport, for culture, for economic activity, and for dreams to be born and pursued.”

The Harrison Foundation, chaired by Sir David Harrison, is the largest donor to date of the project. Sir Da-

vid, a citizen of Antigua and Barbuda, remarked: “The Harrison Foundation is honoured to work with the Ministries of Sports and Foreign Affairs and the community of Potters, to redevelop this space. Initiatives such as these contribute to social cohesion as a meeting place for people

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of all ages and incentivizes physical and mental wellness. I look forward to seeing the project completed and for villagers, students and the wider Island to make full use of a transformed facility”.

Remarks were also delivered by Ambassador, Sir Aziz Hadeed, a former resident of the village of Potters and chair of the Hadeed Group of Companies. Sir Aziz has committed financial support for this project. The project is led and championed by Antigua and Barbuda's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Karen-Mae Hill, a proud native of Potters along with a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from the sporting disciplines currently played on the field, community representatives and technicians. The High Commissioner has been instrumental in organising and mobilising support for the initiative, bringing together public and private partners to invest in the village's future.

Among the distinguished guests in attendance were Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda and Lady Williams and

Ambassador Clarence Pilgrim, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the ceremony, students from the Potters Primary School performed the national anthem, while

musical tributes came from Da Vybey Steel Orchestra, Flora Haywood and reigning Calypso Monarch King Destroyer, all of whom are from the village of Potters. Leaders from local sports clubs including Defante Sting-ers Netball, Potters Sports Club, Potters Uprising Cricket Club and the Little League Baseball Programme delivered moving words of thanks and support.

The project concept was unveiled by students from the Sir Novelle Richards Academy. Lawrence Mason served as Master of Ceremonies and the prayer of dedication was delivered by Reverend Denise Smith-Lewis. Potters is one of Antigua and Barbuda's largest communities. Restoring the sports field promises recreation and revitalization — boosting community morale, health, and local enterprise.


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GLOBALIZATION DIDN'T FAIL AMERICA — WASHINGTON DID



by Professor C. Justin Robinson.

Few topics ignite more partisan heat than globalization. For decades, Leaders in the United States (U.S.) have blamed it for shuttered factories, lost jobs, and stagnant wages. From Ross Perot's "giant sucking sound" in the 1990s to Donald Trump's "America First" tariffs, the political narrative has been straightforward: globalization hurt the United States. But like most convenient stories, this one is only half true.

Yes, globalization disrupted American manufacturing. It forced painful adjustments in factory towns and exposed weaknesses in social safety nets. However, it also provided America with cheaper goods, sparked innova-

tion, and helped the U.S. maintain its global economic leadership. The uncomfortable truth is this: globalization was not the problem. The failure to manage it was.

The Numbers Do Not Lie — The U.S. Is Wealthier

Let's start with the facts. Since the 1970s, U.S. per capita income has more than doubled—from \$26,000 in 1970 to over \$65,000 in 2023. Real GDP grew steadily, even after accounting for slower growth post-2000. And despite fears of a global "race to the bottom," the U.S. unemployment rate fell from over 6% in the 1990s to around 3.6% today. That is not what national decline looks like.

Critics often point to the

disappearance of manufacturing jobs—about five million lost since 2000. But this does not tell the whole story. Manufacturing output **increased** during the same period, thanks to advancements in automation, robotics, and efficiency improvements. Meanwhile, the economy added millions of jobs in technology, healthcare, and the service sector. Globalization did not kill jobs. It changed them.

Where It Went Wrong: Inequality and Inaction

So why does it feel like something went wrong? Because it did—just not in the way populists claim. While globalization expanded the economic pie, it did not slice it evenly. The top 1% have seen their incomes soar by over 200% since 1980. The bottom 50%? A modest 40% gain. Median wages remained flat for years, especially in communities without access to higher education or technology jobs. The result was a tale of two Americas: coastal cities booming with opportunity, while rural towns and industrial centres faded into economic uncertainty. This was not inevitable. Countries like Germany invested in retraining and built support systems to help workers

transition. The U.S. did not.

Washington failed to plan for the future. It pushed for free trade agreements without mitigating the impact. It dismantled unions, underfunded job training, and ignored the warning signs from Main Street. Globalization was not the villain. Neglect was!

The Tariff Trap: Fighting Yesterday's War

President Trump's tariffs in his first term were sold as a way to "bring jobs back home." In reality, they made steel more expensive, disrupted supply chains, and hurt small businesses. His successor, President Biden, retained many of those tariffs—despite minimal reshoring and rising costs for American consumers. Trade wars may win votes, but they rarely win economic battles.

And even where jobs have returned, automation has taken over. The factories coming back need far fewer workers than the ones that left. Meanwhile, reducing immigration has created labour shortages in agriculture, logistics, and technology—sectors where American competitiveness depends on a robust and diverse workforce.

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Where We Go From Here

Globalization is not going away. Instead, it presents an opportunity for us to shape it in a way that benefits more people. The potential is there, we just need to seize it.

That means:

- ▣ **Investing in people**, not just industries. Job retraining, apprenticeships, and community colleges need actual funding and leadership.
- ▣ **Strengthening the safety net**, including portable benefits, wage

insurance, and mobility support for displaced workers.

- ▣ It is time to negotiate smarter trade deals that protect labour rights, the environment, and fair competition. This will ensure that our international trade is not just beneficial for the economy, but also for the people and the planet.
- ▣ It is crucial that we Tell the truth, even when it is complicated. The world has changed, and protectionism will not bring back the past. By understanding and accepting this, we can move for-

ward with informed decisions and actions.

The Real Reckoning


Globalization did not hollow out America. It revealed what was already hollow. The failure was not in trading with the world—it was in not preparing people for it. As we look to the future, we must stop chasing the ghosts of a pre-globalized past and start building a fairer, forward-looking economy. One that includes the factory worker, the tech coder, and everyone in between. Because the real test of a nation is not whether it can insulate

itself from change—but whether it can rise with it.

Prof. C. Justin Robinson, a Vincentian and UWI graduate, holds a BSc in Management Studies, MSc in Finance and Econometrics, and PhD in Finance. With over 20 years at UWI, he has served in various leadership roles, including Dean and Pro Vice Chancellor, Board for Undergraduate Studies. A Professor of Corporate Finance with extensive research publications, he is actively involved in regional financial institutions and is currently the Principal of The UWI



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The American Age Is Over

Emergency Triad: The United States commits imperial suicide.



by JONATHAN V. LAST

The Bulwark
APR 3, 2025

1. Canada

Fittingly, it was the Canadian prime minister, Mark Carney, who declared the official time of death.

“The global economy is fundamentally different today than it was yesterday. The system of global trade anchored on the United States, that Canada has relied on since the end of the Second World War—a system that, while not perfect, has helped to deliver prosperity for our country for decades—is over.

Our old relationship of steadily deepening integration with the United States is over.

The eighty-year period when the United States embraced the mantle of global economic leadership—when it forged alliances

rooted in trust and mutual respect, and championed the free and open exchange of good and services—is over.

While this is a tragedy, it is also the new reality.”

And just like that, the age of American empire, the great Pax Americana, ended.

We cannot overstate what has just happened. It took just 71 days for Donald Trump to wreck the American economy, mortally wound NATO, and destroy the American-led world order.

He did this with the enthusiastic support of the entire Republican party and conservative movement.

He did it with the support of a plurality of American voters.

He did not hide his intentions. He campaigned on them. He made them the

central thrust of his election. He told Americans that he would betray our allies and give up our leadership position in the world.

There are only three possible explanations as to why Americans voted for this man:

they wanted what he promised; they didn’t believe what he promised; or they didn’t understand what he promised.

Pick whichever rationale you want, because it doesn’t matter. Whatever the reason was, it exposed half of the electorate—the 77 million people who voted for Trump—as either fundamentally unserious, decadent, or weak.

And no empire can survive the degeneration of its people.

2. No Going Back Understand this: There is no going back.

If, tomorrow, Donald Trump revoked his entire regime of tariffs, it would not matter. It might temporarily delay some economic pain, but the rest of the world now understands that it must move forward without America.

If, tomorrow, Donald Trump abandoned his quest to annex Greenland and committed himself to the defense of Ukraine and the perpetuation of NATO, it

would not matter. The free world now understands that its long-term security plans must be made with the understanding that America is a potential adversary, not an ally.

This realization may be painful for Americans. But we should know that the rest of the world understands us more clearly than we understand ourselves.

Vladimir Putin bet his life that American voters would be weak and decadent enough to return Donald Trump to the presidency. He was right.

Europeans are moving ahead with their own security plans because they realize, as a French minister put it, “We cannot leave the security of Europe in the hands of voters in Wisconsin every four years.” He was right.

The Canadian prime minister declared the age of American leadership over. He was right.

Instead of arguing with this reality, or denying it, we should face it.

It’s bad enough being a failing empire. Let’s not also be a delusional failing empire. Let’s at least have some dignity about our situation.

The world will move on without us.

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Economically this means that international trade will reorganize without the United States as the central hub. Relationships will be forged without concern as to our preferences. The dollar may well be displaced as the world's reserve currency. American innovation will depart for other shores as the best and brightest choose to make their lives in countries where the rule of law is solid, secret police do not disappear people from the streets, and the government does not discourage research and make economic war on universities.

There's a reason why countries like Belarus and El Salvador aren't tech hubs.

All of this will mean slower growth at home and declining economic mobility. The pie will shrink and people will become more desperate to hold on to their slices.

If you want a small preview, look at what has happened to the British economy since Brexit.

The drag we experience will be much greater, because we had much further to fall.

In the security space, Europe will organize apart from us. The Europeans will create a separate nuclear umbrella and will likely include Canada, Japan, and Australia in their alliance. The "free world" as we have understood it for the entirety of our lifetimes will no longer include America.

As a result, America will either drift, or find itself becoming more closely allied with the world's authoritarians. We may become closer with Putin's Russia or Xi's China. We may find that we need them—Russia as a counterweight to democratic Europe and China as a source of cheap manufacturing to relieve some of the price pressure on American consumers.

The end of the American era doesn't mean everything will become chaos overnight. We aren't going to wake up tomorrow to the sound of the blaring war rig horn from Mad Max. We are still a rich country, with momentum carrying us forward. But in ways that will soon be perceptible and eventually be undeniable, things will get worse. And facts about America and the world that we have tak-

en for granted since the end of the Second World War will no longer hold true.

3. Idiots

On the day that Trump's tariffs collapsed America's position in the world, Secretary of State Marco Rubio went to Brussels to demand that NATO allies increase defense spending to 5 percent of their budgets.

But here is how utterly stupid and unserious our government is:

Europe IS going to rearm. And they are going to do so by building up their internal defense industries so that they do not have to rely on America, which is in the process of threatening military action against a NATO member.

And the American response to this has been to cry foul. U.S. officials have told European allies they want them to keep buying American-made arms, amid recent moves by the European Union to limit U.S. manufacturers' participation in weapons tenders, five sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The messages delivered by Washington in recent weeks come as the EU takes steps

to boost Europe's weapons industry, while potentially limiting purchases of certain types of U.S. arms.

Our government thinks it can simultaneously: demand that Europe re-arm; threaten our European allies with territorial annexation; and demand that Europe buy American weapons.

We have a deeply stupid government—from our economically illiterate president to our craven and foolish secretary of state, from the freelancing billionaire dilettante who is gutting American soft power to the vaccine-denying health secretary who is firing as much talent as he can. From the senior economics advisor who thinks comic books are good investments, to the senators who voted to confirm this cabinet of hacks, to the representatives who stumble over themselves justifying each new inane MAGA pronouncement.

But also, we have the government we deserve.

The American age is over. And it ended because the American people were no longer worthy of it.



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Regional News



Clarendon bus driver charged for alleged abduction, sexual assault of teen passenger

The police in Clarendon have arrested and charged a 56-year-old Longville Park bus driver for allegedly taking a teen girl who was a passenger against her will and sexually assaulting her inside his vehicle.

Leroy Powell, otherwise called 'Jimmy', was on Friday charged with abduction of a child under 16 and grievous sexual assault.

His court date is being finalised.

According to reports from the May Pen police, about 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 02, the teen entered a coaster bus that was operated by Powell.

Powell reportedly dropped off the other passengers and then allegedly assaulted the teen inside of the bus.

He then reportedly left the girl near her home.



The teenager informed a family member of the incident and a report was later made to the police.

On Friday, April 4, Powell was arrested.

He was questioned and subsequently charged. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

DAILY PROGRAMMING

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WITH ROGER LAKE 6AM-9AM SATURDAYS

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REGGAE INSPIRATION 9PM-12AM MON. THURS. SUNDAY
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Sint Maarten: Health ministry warns of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

The Sint Maarten Ministry of Public Health is calling on residents to take preventive measures against Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD), which is particularly affecting children in the community.

The Collective Prevention Services (CPS), a department within the ministry, has issued an alert following the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO) recent epidemiological warning about the disease.

HFMD is described as "a common, but very contagious viral illness that usually affects infants and children who are five years of age or younger." The ministry notes that it can sometimes occur in adults as

well, and currently "there is no vaccine to protect against the viruses that causes hand, foot, and mouth disease."

The disease presents with several symptoms including "fever, sore throat, mouth sores, and a skin rash commonly on the hands and feet." The ministry warns that "sometimes the rash can develop into painful blisters" with most children experiencing "mild symptoms for seven to 10 days."

According to CPS, HFMD "is spread from person to person through nose and throat secretions (such as saliva, sputum, or nasal mucus), blister fluid, or stool of infected persons." They advise that "when handling secretions, it is advisable



to apply the necessary preventive measures such as wearing gloves and washing your hands once done."

The ministry recommends that "people with symptoms should consult their house doctor and take necessary preventive measures to mitigate an increase in the number of cases."

For daycare centres and pre-schools, CPS suggests preventative measures such as "wiping down surfaces" and ensuring that "all toys and surfaces are wiped down after playtime, washed and disinfected." Additionally, "day care centres should use disposable gloves and have protocols in place to sanitize

hands and changing areas from one child to the next."

The ministry specifically requests that "parents/guardians who have a child exhibiting any symptoms of HFMD, and who have an appointment with the Baby Wellness Clinic are hereby requested to call and reschedule their child's appointment" by calling the provided contact numbers.

The release also clarifies that "HFMD is not the same as foot and mouth disease, which affects cattle, sheep, and pigs. The two infections are unrelated, and you cannot catch hand, foot, and mouth disease from animals." (*Loop Caribbean*)



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Regional News



CARICOM wants urgent talks with United States at the highest level



Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Chair, Prime Minister Mia Mottley says there is a need to “urgently” re-engage the United States directly as the region comes to grips with the impact of the global crises and in particular Washington’s new trade regime.

In a lengthy statement released here, Mottley, who is also the Barbados Prime Minister said that the engagement with the United States must be “at the highest possible level,” adding “there is an obvious truth which has to be confronted by both sides.

“That truth is that these small and microstates of the Caribbean do not, in any way or in any sector, enjoy a greater degree of financial benefit in the balance of trade than does the

United States.

“In fact, it is because of our small size, our great vulnerability, our limited manufacturing capacity, our inability to distort trade in any way, that successive United States administrations, included, and most recently, the Reagan administration in the early 1980s went to great lengths to assist us in promoting our abilities to sell in the United States under the Caribbean Basin Initiative.”

Caribbean countries have this week been sizing up the magnitude of the sweeping tariffs announced by United States President Donald Trump on their respective economies.

Trump on Wednesday announced far-reaching new tariffs on nearly all

its trading partners ranging from a 34 percent tax on imports from China and 20 percent on the European Union, among others, in a move economists and other traders say is designed to dismantle much of the architecture of the global economy and trigger broader trade wars.

In the case of the Caribbean, Trump announced a 10 percent tariff on most regional countries, while in the case of Guyana, the tariff is as high as 38 percent.

Trump said that the tariffs were designed to boost domestic manufacturing, used aggressive rhetoric to describe a global trade system that the United States helped to build after World War II, saying “Our country has been looted, pillaged, raped and plundered” by other nations.

Mottley said that while the Caribbean will have to “see how these tariffs will impact” the existing trade relationship with Washington “that spirit of cooperation largely enabled security, social stability, and economic growth on America’s third border in the Caribbean, or as we have agreed as recently in our meeting with Secretary of State Rubio, what is now our collective neighbourhood”.

She urged Caribbean countries not to “fight among each other for political gain,” reminding them, “United, we stand and divided, we fall.”

“We must not rely solely on one or two markets. We need to be able to sell our Caribbean goods to a wider, more stable global market,”

Mottley said in dealing with the new US policy, the region must redouble its efforts to invest in Caribbean agricultural production and light manufacturing.

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“The 25 by 2025 initiative, ably led by President Ali, seems too modest a target now, given all that we are confronting. We must grow our own and produce our own as much as possible. We can all make the decision to buy healthy foods at the market instead of processed foods at the supermarket.”

In her statement, Mottley called on the Caribbean to build ties with Africa, Central and Latin America, “and renew those ties with some of our older partners around the world, in the United Kingdom and Europe, and in Canada.”

“We must not rely solely on one or two markets. We need to be able to sell our Caribbean goods to a wider, more stable global market,” she said, adding that in every global political and economic crisis, there is always an opportunity.

“If we come together, put any divisions aside, support our small businesses and small producers, we will come out of this stronger.

“To our hoteliers, our supermarkets and our people, my message is the same. Buy local and buy regional. I repeat, buy local and buy regional. The products are better, fresher and more competitive in many instances. If we work together and strengthen our own, we can ride through this crisis. We may have to confront issues of logistics and movement of goods, but we can do that too.

“To the United States, I say this simply. We are not your enemy. We are your friends. So many people in the Caribbean region have brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, grandmothers, grandfathers, sons and daughters, God children living up in Miami or Queens or Brooklyn or New Jersey, Connecticut, Virginia, wherever. We welcome your people to our shores and give them the holidays, and for many of them, the experiences of a lifetime.”

Mottley said she had a simple message for President Trump and that is “our economies are not doing your economy any harm in any way.

“They are too small to have any negative or distorted impact on your country. So, I ask you to consider your decades-long friendship between your country and ours. And look to the Caribbean, recognizing that the family ties, yes, are strong. Let us talk, I hope, and let us work together to keep prices down for all of our people.”

Mottley said that while there is trouble in the Caribbean waters, “the responsibility each and every day for much of what we do and what much of what we grow must be ours, if we take care of each other, if we support each other, if we uplift each other, and if we tap into the strength and innovation of our common Caribbean spirit, we will see this through.”

She said that the world is in crisis, and these are among the most challenging of times for the Caribbean region since independence.

“Indeed, it is the most difficult period our world has faced since the end of World War II, 80 years ago. Our planet faces a climate catastrophe that worsens every year. We have a cost-of-living crisis that has been bedevilling us since the disruption of supply chains when the COVID-19 Pandemic triggered the shutdown of the majority of countries.”

Mottley said misinformation, disinformation and manipulation are relevant and that the mental health crisis is causing hopelessness among many young people, and regrettably, crime and fear of crime are on the rise.

“We’re fighting wars in the Holy Land, in Europe and in Africa. Countries are distrustful of countries and neighbours are distrustful of neighbours. The international order, the international system, my friends, is in great danger of collapse, and now we are on the precipice of a global trade war.

“Our Caribbean economies are largely reliant on imports. Just go to the supermarket or visit the mall or the hardware shop or the electronic store, and you will see that most of the things there are not produced in this region.”

She said many of those commodities are either purchased directly from the United States or passed through the North American country on their way to the Caribbean region.

“That, my friends, is a legacy of our colonial dependence. Together with colleague Heads of State and Heads of Government, we have been working to diversify ourselves away from this dependence.

Mottley said that the region must continue to work to become more self-sufficient, adding that “this trade war and the possibility of a one million US dollar to \$1.5 million levy on all Chinese made ships entering US harbours will mean higher prices for the entire population of the region.”

Mottley said she is suggesting that the region takes steps to sustain the tourism industry as likely worsening conditions and “many of our source markets will have negative impacts on people’s ability to travel.

“We call on our regional private sector and the tourism sector to come together and to work with governments to collaborate for an immediate tourism strategy to ensure that we maintain market share numbers as a region.

“My friends, I pray that I’m wrong, and I’m praying that cooler heads prevail across the world, and leaders come together in a new sense of cooperation, to look after the poor and the vulnerable people of this world, and to leave space for the middle classes to chart their lives, to allow businesses to be able to get on with what they do and to trade,” Mottley said. (*Loop Caribbean*)

Pope makes his first public appearance since leaving hospital

Pope Francis made his first public appearance since being discharged from the hospital two weeks ago, entering St. Peter's Square at the Vatican in a wheelchair as part of a Jubilee Mass for the Sick.

The pontiff, 88, passed through a jubilant crowd before giving his blessing as the celebrant, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, offered a final blessing as well.

"Have a good Sunday everyone," said Pope Francis. "Thank you so much."

The Vatican released a text prepared by Francis shortly after Mass finished on Sunday, praying for "for doctors, nurses and health workers, who are not always helped to work in adequate conditions and are sometimes even victims of aggression."

"Their mission is not easy and must be supported and respected," read the statement.

For the remainder of the text, the pope addressed some of the world's conflicts as he has done in previous addresses.

He prayed for peace in Gaza, where "people are reduced to living in unimaginable conditions, without shelter, without food, without clean water," as well as "tormented Ukraine."

"Let us pray for peace throughout the Middle East; in Sudan and South Sudan;



in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; in Myanmar, hard hit by the earthquake; and in Haiti, where violence rages, and two religious sisters were killed a few days ago," read the text.

The pope had been out of public view since March 23, when he gave a short greeting and blessing from his balcony at Rome's Gemelli hospital, after more than five weeks of treatment for pneumonia in both lungs, the most serious health crisis of his 12-year tenure. According to his doctors, the pope's life was in danger twice during this period.

After Francis' brief appearance in March, the head of his medical team said he would require a further two months of rest once he returns to the Vatican, and his doctors said it would take "a lot of time" for his aging body to fully heal.

The pope's doctors added that his life had been in danger on two occasions.

Throughout his illness, the Vatican maintained that Pope Francis continued to fulfill his duties, despite staying out of the public eye.

Notably, he missed the Catholic Church's jubilee celebration, a significant tradition held every 50 years for the remission of sins, known as the Holy Year.

But during his hospitalization, Francis continued his practice of near-nightly calls to the Catholic parish in Gaza, as Israel's war against Hamas rages on in the Middle East.

Despite his ongoing health struggles, there has been no indication from the Vatican that the pope intends to resign. (NBC News)



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British lawmakers denied entry to Israel and deported

Two lawmakers from the United Kingdom's ruling Labour party have been denied entry to Israel and deported.

Yuan Yang and Abtisam Mohamed were rejected because they were suspected of plans to "document the activities of security forces and spread anti-Israel hatred," according to a statement from the Israeli immigration ministry cited by Sky News, NBC's international broadcasting partner.

The pair had flown into Israel's Ben Gurion airport from London's Luton Airport on Saturday.

According to Sky News, the statement said the lawmakers said they were visiting Israel "as part of an official parliamentary delegation," which the Israeli ministry countered as "false."

Mohamed and Yang released a joint statement Sunday saying they were

"astounded" to be denied entry into Israel.

"It is vital that parliamentarians are able to witness, firsthand, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory," they said, adding that their trip had been organized with U.K. charities.

"We are two, out of scores of MPs, who have spoken out in Parliament in recent months on the Israel-Palestine conflict and the importance of complying with international humanitarian law," the statement said.

In January, Mohamed said in U.K. parliament that "ethnic cleansing is taking place" in Gaza, and called on the British government to deem any future Israeli settlements in the enclave "illegal."

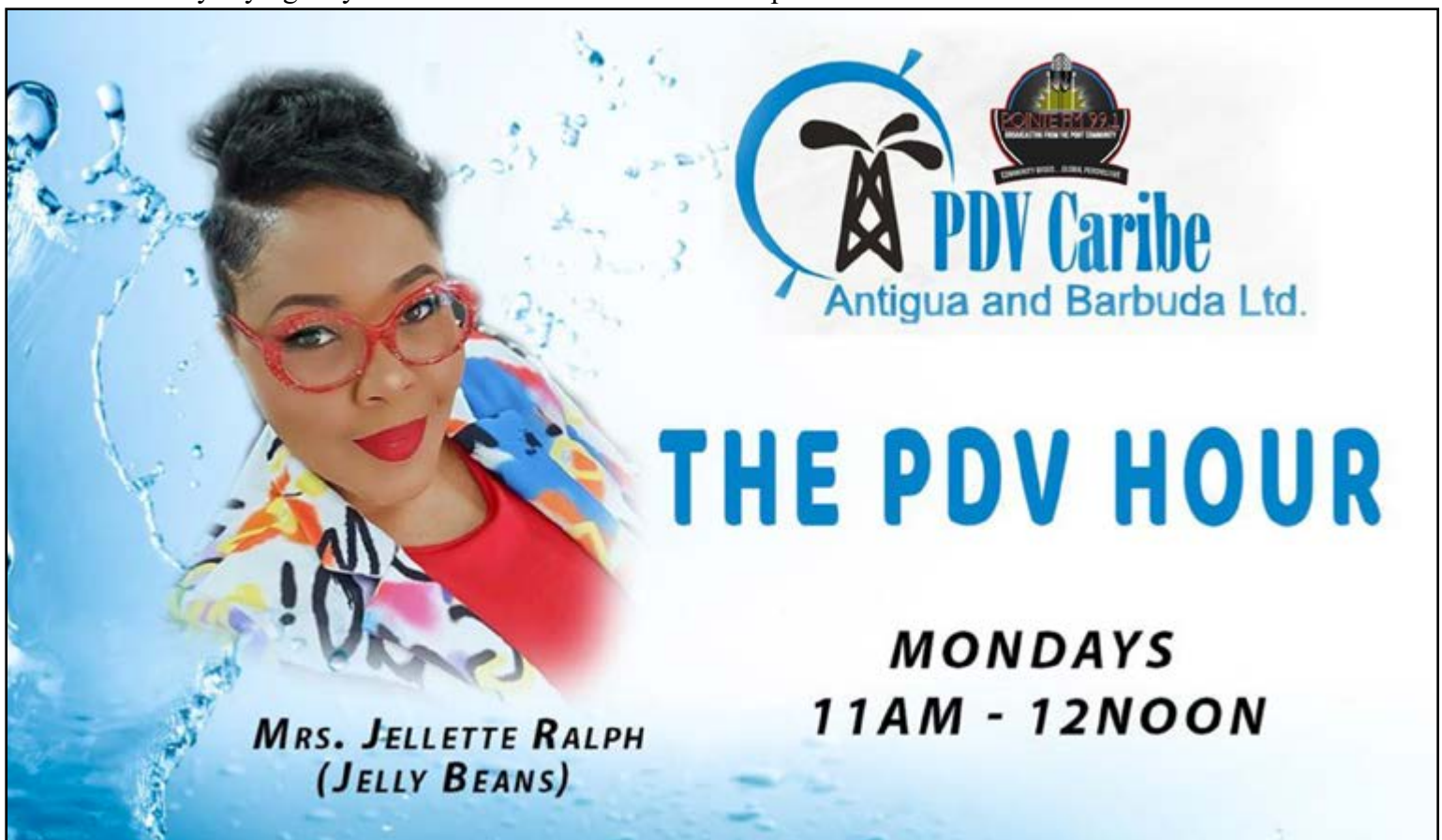
Israel has repeatedly denied allegations of ethnic cleansing in Gaza. The international community largely considers Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories occupied since the

Arab-Israeli war in 1967 to be illegal, and United Nations chief António Guterres has repeatedly warned against ethnic cleansing in Gaza.

In a statement issued late on Saturday, British Foreign Secretary David Lammy reiterated that the MPs were part of a parliamentary delegation, and called their treatment "unacceptable, counterproductive, and deeply concerning."

"I have made clear to my counterparts in the Israeli government that this is no way to treat British Parliamentarians, and we have been in contact with both MPs tonight to offer our support," he said.

Lammy added that "the UK government's focus remains securing a return to the ceasefire and negotiations to stop the bloodshed, free the hostages and end the conflict in Gaza." (NBC News)



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US revokes all visas held by South Sudanese passport holders



Secretary of State Marco Rubio says Washington is revoking all visas held by South Sudanese passport holders, accusing the African nation's government of not accepting the repatriation of its nationals and "taking advantage of the United States".

"Every country must accept the return of its citizens in a timely manner when another country, including the United States, seeks to remove them," Rubio said in a statement on Saturday. "South Sudan's transitional government has failed to fully respect this principle."

Rubio added the US would also "prevent further issuance to prevent entry into the United States by South Sudanese passport holders".

It was the first such measure singling out all passport holders from a

particular country since President Donald Trump returned to the White House on January 20, having campaigned on an anti-immigration platform.

South Sudanese nationals had been granted "temporary protected status" (TPS) by the administration of Trump's predecessor Joe Biden, with the designation set to expire on May 3 this year.

The US grants TPS, which shields people against deportation, to foreign citizens who cannot safely return home because of war, natural disasters or other "extraordinary" conditions.

Washington "will be prepared to review these actions when South Sudan is in full cooperation", Rubio said.

Recent violence between government troops and

armed opposition groups has escalated tensions in South Sudan. Some observers fear a renewal of the civil war that killed 400,000 people between 2013 and 2018.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres last week urged regional and international leaders to prevent South Sudan from falling "over the abyss" into another civil war.

Guterres warned that the world's newest and one of its poorest countries is

facing "a security emergency" with intensifying clashes and a "political upheaval".

Rising tensions between President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar culminated in the latter's arrest last month. His party said the arrest collapsed a power-sharing 2018 peace deal that ended years of fighting.

The UN reported clashes between forces loyal to Kiir and Machar outside the capital, Juba. (*Al Jazeera English*)



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ABNOC to host Sports Leadership workshop



Antigua and Barbuda NOC AC
Workshop

Saturday, April 12, 2025
Time: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Location: Heritage Hotel Conference Room

Day 1: Workshop Title:
"Empowering Voices: Building Futures: Leadership for Change-
Strengthening Athletes' and Federation Leadership"

Sunday, April 13, 2025
Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Location: Heritage Hotel Conference Room

Day 2: Workshop Title:
Building the Future: Formation of the
Antigua and Barbuda Athletes' Commission

Scan Code to Register




The Antigua and Barbuda National Olympic Committee (ABNOC) will host a two-day Sports Leadership and Capacity-Building Workshop on Saturday, April 12, and Sunday, April 13, 2025.

This workshop is designed to strengthen national sports organizations' leadership, governance, and strategic capacity. It offers an engaging platform for sports administrators to build practical skills,

collaborate across disciplines, and explore new approaches to sports development, athlete engagement, and organizational effectiveness.

Participants will:

- **Develop key leadership and management skills tailored for sports administrators.**
- **Strengthen internal governance and decision-making within your**

federation.

- *Explore modern strategies for athlete development and stakeholder engagement.*
- *Access practical tools for securing sponsorship, funding, and long-term program sustainability.*
- *Collaborate with peers and experts to enhance your federation's impact and resilience.*
- *Align with international standards in sports governance and planning.*

The ABNOC is encouraging federations to nominate two (2) representatives, including a member of their executive and/or technical team, to take full advantage of this capacity-building opportunity.

Workshop Details:

- **Day 1: Administrative Capacity Building 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM**
- **Day 2: Athlete's Commission and National Federations 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM**
- **Venue: Heritage Hotel Conference Centre**

Register here: (Registration Link 2025)
Pre-workshop task: Please complete this free DISC personality assessment:
<https://discpersonalitytesting.com/free-disc-test>

This workshop reflects ABNOC's commitment to nurturing a stronger, more connected, and professionally equipped sport system across Antigua and Barbuda.

Ekua Richards honoured by Potters Netball Club



Members of the Potters Netball Club attended the Sunday morning worship service at the Potters Zion Moravian Church in an effort to publicly honour the contributions of former netball player, coach and administrator, Ekua Richards.

“The Potters Netball Club proudly recognizes and honours Ms. Ekua Gloria Richards for her outstanding contributions spanning over 40 years. Ekua has been an unwavering pillar of strength and inspiration, shaping and molding many of us into national players, international umpires, and national coaches. Her dedication to our development extends beyond the netball court, as she has also taken on the role of an educator, not only guiding members of the club but also positively impacting the



wider community,” the citation reads.

Accordingly, it added, beyond her commitment to the Potters Netball Club, Ekua has served as an executive member of the Antigua and Barbuda Netball Association. She has played a pivotal role in educating mem-

bers about the importance of club structure, governance, and teamwork, ensuring that the club remains a well-organized and progressive entity.

In addition to honoring Ekua, the club also extend its deepest appreciation to the following individuals who have provided it with steadfast support throughout the years:

- **Mr. Wycliffe Benny Davis** – *A dedicated supporter whose overwhelming assistance has been invaluable to our growth and success.*
- **Mr. Ulric Matthew** – *Our longstanding sponsor who has outfitted us with champion uniforms over the years, ensuring we always take the court with*

con't on pg 27

Five young cricketers to participate Antigua Exchange Programme



The Antigua Exchange Programme is an exciting cricket initiative that aims to provide emerging cricketers from Antigua and Barbuda with the opportunity to develop their skills by playing club-level cricket in the United Kingdom.

Established in 2017 by Keith Williams of the Keyworth Cricket Club in Nottingham, along with the support of UK High Commissioner, Karen-Mae Hill, Minister of Sports, Daryll Matthew, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the program focuses on enhancing the exposure and experience of young players.

The AEP runs for a four-month period during the English summer. Players from Antigua and Barbuda

are selected to participate and are placed at various cricket clubs across the UK. Some of the clubs involved include Crouch End CC, Harrow St. Mary's CC, Finchley CC (London-based), as well as clubs in the Midlands like Grantham CC, Bingham CC, and Keyworth CC.

There have also been opportunities for players to play at Eastbourne CC. The program is designed to provide emerging cricketers with the chance to improve their skills in competitive environments, experience different playing conditions, and learn from diverse coaching styles and strategies.

So far, 21 male players and 2 female players from

Antigua and Barbuda have benefited from the programme. Notably, Essan Warner, one of the first participants, now serves as the AEP Ambassador. He helps in the selection process and the preparation of players, particularly in adapting to English cricket conditions. The participating clubs provide several forms of support to the players, including:

- *Accommodation*
- *Meals*
- *Stipends (to cover basic expenses)*

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda takes care of the travel expenses for players to and from the UK. The High Commission ensures that the players are well looked after during

their stay, arranging their transportation from the airport to the clubs and overseeing their overall wellbeing.

The program is also beneficial for players from the UK. Two players from Keyworth CC have had the opportunity to spend three weeks in Antigua, playing cricket with local clubs, which adds an international dimension to the exchange.

For the past few years, numerous students have been take part in an exchange program in the United Kingdom. This year, five promising young cricketers, Ozan Williams, Jared Jno Baptiste, Michael Greaves, Xaveek Toppin and Malique Walsh have been selected to join the program from April to September.


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The Harrow School – Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Scholarship



The Minister for Education, Sports, Daryll Matthew with Two young cricketers, Dante Odlum Antigua Grammar School and Ondre Peters Princess Margaret school

The Harrow School – Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Scholarship is a prestigious opportunity for young cricketers from Antigua and Barbuda to further their academic and athletic careers at one of the UK's most esteemed institutions.

Harrow School, founded in 1572 by John Lyon under a royal charter

from Queen Elizabeth I, is located on expansive grounds in London, covering 324 acres. The school boasts world-class facilities, including six conservation areas, a golf course, a park, and a working farm. It is one of the most prestigious schools in the UK, with school fees of £20,528 per term.

In 2023, the Antigua and Barbuda Under-19 cricket team stayed at Harrow School during their tour of the UK. After the visit, the school expressed interest in developing a long-term partnership with Antigua and Barbuda, creating an opportunity for young cricketers from the Caribbean to benefit from the institution's top-tier educational and athletic environment.

The scholarship program provides two cricketers (aged 13-14) from Antigua and Barbuda the chance to receive a term scholarship at Harrow School. The scholarship includes:

Full academic attendance at Harrow, where students study a range of subjects such as Math, English Language and Literature, Physics, Design Technology and Engineering, Biology, Sports Science, History, Spanish, and Theology and Philosophy.

The selected scholars also participate in exams as part of their academic curriculum.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda covers the travel expenses for the boys to reach Harrow, while the High Commission arranged for their transportation to the school and provided accommodation during the half-term period.

This scholarship not only provides young cricketers with an elite academic experience but also offers them a platform to develop their cricketing skills in one of the UK's top sports environments, furthering their opportunities both in education and professional cricket.

Two young cricketers, Dante Odlum Antigua Grammar School and Ondre Peters Princess Margaret school underwent interviews and were selected to embark on a seven-week scholarship at Harrow School from April to June. Additionally, both cricketers will dedicate time to academic pursuits during their scholarship period in the UK.

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champion uniforms over the years, ensuring we always take the court with pride and professionalism.

- *Ms. Joycelyn Thomas – A committed supporter who has consistently been present at games and fundraising events, always cheering us on.*

- *Ms. Rita Martin – A steadfast supporter who has stood by the club through*

thick and thin, providing encouragement and assistance whenever needed.

- *Walcott Lewis – for his invaluable contribution in constructing the netball poles without this contribution we would not have been awarded any championship.*

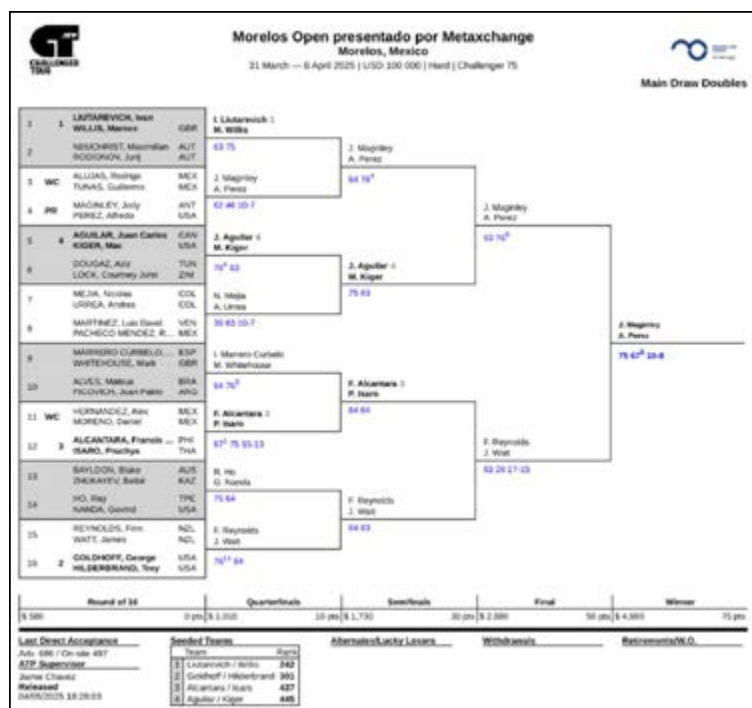
- *Mr. Yuhanna Ping Daawuud – Our trusted bus driver who has played a*

crucial role in transporting our local and visiting teams to and from

tournaments, ensuring smooth logistics for our competitions.

The Potters Netball Club says it is deeply grateful for the invaluable contributions of these individuals. "Their unwavering support has not only strengthened our club but has also fostered a culture of excellence, dedication, and community spirit. As we honour them, we also reaffirm our commitment to upholding the legacy of hard work, mentorship, and passion for the sport that they have helped to instill in us," the citation noted.

MONDAY 7TH APRIL 2025



Following the victory, Jody's live (current) ranking is now around 260 in the world which makes him the highest ranked doubles player

mer government minister John Maginley, who also played professional tennis and represented Antigua and Barbuda in the Davis Cup tennis championships.

Editor: Everton Barnes. Published by Pointville Communications, Lower North Street, St. John's, Antigua (268) 562-4989 Editorials and Reporting: evertonbarnes55@gmail.com; advertising: Sales@pointville.ag.