

# PM Browne is determined to bring changes, efficiency to the public service

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Pictured in St. Peter's Basilica following the celebration are (left to right): Mr. Brent Scotland, Joan Lady Shoul, Sir David Shoul, Sandra Lady Williams, and Sir Rodney Williams

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# Local News



## PM Browne is determined to bring changes, efficiency to the public service

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has delved deeper into the persistent inefficiencies and accountability issues plaguing Antigua and Barbuda's public sector following his statements on the issue in the House of Representatives on Thursday.

Speaking on the Browne and Browne show on Pointe FM last Saturday, PM Browne shared a vivid example of bureaucratic obstruction, where a senior public servant obstructed the signing of documents critical to importing aggregates from a long-standing, trusted quarry source. Despite the absence of any legitimate sanitary or phytosanitary concern, the individual refused to process the documentation—even after direct appeals from the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary, Hon. Clement Antonio.

“This stonewalling led to the Cabinet temporarily suspending its meeting to intervene. Eventually, a Cabinet decision was made to authorize the Minister to sign in place of the official, but even then, the official refused to release the documents. It was not until 4:30



**Prime Minister Gaston Browne speaking on the Browne and Browne show**

p.m.—the end of the workday—that the very same documents were signed,” the prime minister recalled. He emphasized that this behavior was not an isolated incident and that the same individual had repeatedly frustrated both government and private citizens in the past.

“Despite frequent contemplation of disciplinary action, the administration had exercised restraint to avoid perceptions of political victimization,” the nation's leader revealed.

However, the Prime Minister made it unequivocally clear that this tolerance

had reached its limit. Any further incidents of obstruction from that public servant would result in immediate removal.

The prime minister is not one known to walk away from a challenge nor to seek solutions whenever he encounters a problem such as the current inertia within the public service. Recognizing a systemic problem within the public sector, Prime Minister Browne announced a collaborative initiative with Professor Justin Robinson of the University of the West Indies FIC (UWI) to design a governance-focused training program. This day-release program,

aimed particularly at senior public servants, is intended to address the entrenched inefficiencies by exposing participants to principles of effective governance. The government has also invited Harvard University to collaborate on this initiative to further strengthen the program's credibility and impact.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that many public servants possess advanced academic qualifications—such as master's and doctoral degrees—but lack experience in high-functioning, efficient work environments. As a result, these individuals often default to outdated and ineffective practices that have become cultural norms within the public sector.

To address this gap, the government is seeking international training opportunities. Recently, two dozen employees from the Ministry of Public Works were sent to China for specialized training, with similar opportunities being sought in India, the United States, and the European Union.

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## PM wants solutions to the problems plaguing the management of the water distribution systems

The prime minister has set his eyes on bringing solutions to the chronic problems of inefficiencies that have been plaguing the management of the water distribution system in the country.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne used the Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) as a case study as he discussed the inefficient public sector during last Saturday's *Browne and Browne* show on Pointe FM radio.

Prime Minister Browne criticized the chronic inefficiencies in water management and service delivery. He cited cases of burst pipes leaking water for weeks in one of the world's most water-scarce nations. Despite having significantly increased the country's water production capacity from 3 million to over 10 million gallons per day since taking office, the system remains plagued by poor management and lack of accountability.

To remedy this, the Prime Minister has called for practical training placements in countries like Malta, which rely heavily on reverse osmosis water production and maintain efficient systems despite similar geographic challenges. APUA staff would be paid to temporarily work in such advanced facilities, gaining firsthand experience in effective operations and maintenance practices.

The government has already invested close to \$200 million in water infrastructure and plans to increase daily production to 15 million gallons by the end of the year. But Prime Minister Browne was clear: without holding public sector managers accountable, even the most advanced infrastructure investments will fail to yield the desired results.

Acknowledging the limitations of



the public sector in consistently delivering efficient water services, the administration has begun partnering with private firms. A recent example includes a collaboration with an American company operating a

one-million-gallon-per-day plant at Ffry's, with another two-million-gallon facility being installed at Barnacle Point.

Prime Minister Browne candidly admitted that his comments might provoke backlash from partisan actors within APUA. He noted a troubling trend where some public servants, motivated by political affiliations, may intentionally undermine government's operations—what he referred to as the “weaponizing” of essential services like water in the lead-up to elections. While he welcomed open discussion and rebuttal, he emphasized that constructive criticism should be met with an effort to improve, rather than hostility.



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## Political ambitions should never come before the national good...PM Browne



**Prime Minister Gaston Browne**

Prime Minister Gaston Browne continued his critique of the recent industrial action by the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers (ABUT), labeling it as disproportionate and politically tinged. He emphasized that by the time the union intensified its protest, payments to teachers had already commenced. According to Browne, only a few remaining cheques were left to be issued, and a more cooperative approach would have been appropriate.

He stressed that the government had never resisted making payments and that both Cabinet and the Ministry of Education were aligned in pushing for resolution. However, he accused the

union president of persistently using confrontational language in official correspondence.

“Rather than requesting expedited action to avoid disruption,” Browne said, “the union’s communications often threatened protest, portraying the government as uncooperative—even when efforts were actively being made to meet their demands.”

The Prime Minister further cast doubt on the union president’s neutrality, pointing to his past political aspirations within the United Progressive Party (UPP). PM Browne asserted that the president had a personal vendetta after being overlooked in favour of Jamale Pringle for candidacy in All Saints East and St. Luke. He suggested the union head continues to pursue a political agenda under the guise of union advocacy.

“We don’t want a confrontation with you, sir,” Browne declared, making it clear that his administration is not at odds with teachers as a whole. He issued a firm warning, however: no group—political or not—will be permitted to destabilize the country.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister also

addressed a broader cultural problem: the politicization of the public service. He warned that partisan sabotage not only harms the current administration but sets a precedent that could destabilize future governments. Drawing from his own experience as an opposition activist, he emphasized that he had never encouraged public servants to take disruptive action against the government of the day.

He pointed to specific instances where political operatives within the public sector actively sought to embarrass the government without the knowledge of senior officials or ministers. One recent case involved remarks at a nursing graduation ceremony, where it was revealed that two newly graduated nurses had gone unpaid for six months. Prime Minister Browne clarified that neither he nor the Minister of Health had been informed of the situation. Had they known, he insisted, the matter would have been resolved immediately.

PM Browne was speaking on Saturday’s **Browne and Browne** show on Pointe FM radio.





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## Groundwork Begins for New High-Speed Fiber Optic Cable in Antigua and Barbuda

Antigua and Barbuda is set to play an important role in the CELIA (Caribbean ELite Alliance) Submarine Cable System, a major regional initiative aimed at strengthening digital connectivity across the Caribbean.

As part of the project's early phase, representatives from Alcatel Submarine Networks (ASN) and EGS (Asia) Ltd. are currently in Antigua and Barbuda conducting a critical marine survey at Morris Bay, Old Road. This survey focuses on the portion of the CELIA cable system that will pass through the country's territorial waters, connecting Antigua and several neighbouring islands to Boca Raton, Florida.

The purpose of the marine survey is to map the ocean floor and identify the most secure and efficient route for laying the submarine cable. The data collected will guide the cable's design, installation, and long-term maintenance. All survey work is being carried out in accordance with international and industry best practices.

The CELIA system is being developed as a high-speed, high-capacity fiber optic network that will significantly improve digital connectivity across the region. For Antigua and Barbuda, this means faster



internet, more reliable service, and greater resilience in its communications infrastructure. It will also

support its digital economy, help bridge the digital divide, and strengthen our position in the growing global information economy.

APUA is a key partner in this initiative, working alongside Setar (Aruba), Telxius (Puerto Rico and USA), and Orange (France/Martinique). The consortium is also committed to collaborating with local NGOs and authorities to protect the environment and promote the well-being of communities throughout the project.

The CELIA cable system, including the landing point in Antigua and Barbuda, is expected to be fully operational by late 2027.





## Antigua and Barbuda Delegation Attends Solemn Inauguration of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda, Sir Rodney Williams, and Sandra, Lady Williams joined dignitaries from around the world in Vatican City for the official inauguration of the Pontificate of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV over the weekend.

The inauguration ceremony took place under radiant skies in Saint Peter's Square, where thousands of guests gathered for the majestic Solemn Mass. In a display of reverent grandeur, the Pope celebrated the Mass facing the altar with the assembled diplomatic delegations positioned behind him. At one poignant moment, thunder rolled through the sky, marking the occasion amidst the warmth and brightness of a summer day in Rome.

The Antiguan and Barbudan delegation was among the first, following those of Nepal, the United States and Argentina, to be presented to His Holiness. Sir Rodney and Lady Williams were warmly received by Pope Leo XIV, to whom they presented a symbolic gift on behalf of the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda. The gift was accompanied by official compliments extended from the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda.

Sir Rodney commended Pope Leo XIV on his compassion and commitment to the poor and vulnerable, values that resonate deeply with the people of Antigua and Barbuda and mirror the pastoral focus of his predecessor, Pope Francis.

Accompanying were Antigua and Barbuda's Non-Resident Ambassador to the Holy See, Sir David Shoul, Joan Lady Shoul and Political and



***Pictured in St. Peter's Basilica following the celebration are (left to right): Mr. Brent Scotland, Joan Lady Shoul, Sir David Shoul, Sandra Lady Williams, and Sir Rodney Williams***



Counselor Officer at Antigua and Barbuda's High Commission to the United Kingdom, Brent Scotland.

Sir Rodney and his delegation expressed their profound appreciation

for the invitation to witness such a momentous occasion in the life of the Catholic Church and extended warm congratulations to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV on behalf of the people and Government of Antigua and Barbuda.



## Governor General's Deputy Urges Passage of New Mental Health Care Bill by Independence 2025



**Governor General's Deputy of Antigua and Barbuda, Sir Clare Roberts**



The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Liberta hosted the launch of its new Mental Health Ministry on Saturday, May 17, 2025, under the theme “An Ounce of Prevention”. Governor General’s Deputy of Antigua and Barbuda, Sir Clare Roberts, delivered remarks on behalf of the Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams.

In his address, Sir Clare praised the congregation for launching a ministry rooted in compassion and service to the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of the com-

munity. He emphasized the critical need for preventive action in addressing mental health challenges, particularly through faith-based and community-led initiatives.

A highlight of the remarks was Sir Clare’s call for the urgent passage of a new Mental Health Care Bill, which he was commissioned by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to draft. The Bill aims to replace the outdated Mental Treatment Act (Cap. 274) of 1957 and modernize the legal and institutional

framework governing mental health services in Antigua and Barbuda.

“This Bill seeks to modernize our approach to mental health care and services, ensuring that the rights and

dignity of persons with mental illness are not only respected but protected,” Sir Clare stated.

Key provisions of the pro-

**con’t on page 9**





## From page 8

posed legislation include:

- Clear criteria for determining mental illness and assessing a person's capacity to make treatment decisions;
- Safeguards for dignity, pri-

vacy, and the right to information;

- Prohibitions on discrimination, exploitation, and abuse;
- Protocols for emergency care, seclusion, restraint, and support for persons

found wandering the streets.

Sir Clare urged the Government to prioritize the Bill by initiating public consultation and working towards its passage before Independence Day, November 1, 2025.

“What a gift to the nation that would be,” he declared.

Sir Clare concluded his remarks by expressing full support on behalf of and extended best wishes for the success of the Ministry.



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## Good Humans 268 Boosts Island Recycling Efforts with Bin Handover at Turtle Bay

Antigua and Barbuda's journey toward environmental sustainability took another major step forward on Thursday with the handover of 44 household recycling bins by local non-profit Good Humans 268 Inc. to residents of the Turtle Bay and Deep Bay communities.

The event, part of the growing Student Community Service Recycling Project, aims to transform national attitudes toward waste management, starting at the household level and expanding into businesses and events. The lightweight, collapsible bins may be modest in appearance, but they carry significant potential in the fight to reduce landfill waste and protect Antigua and Barbuda's fragile ecosystem.

"We are here today to hand over 44 fabric bins to the Turtle Bay and Deep Bay Homeowners Association as part of our national recycling project," said Joshuanette Francis, founding member of Good Humans 268 Inc. "This is just the beginning. We're working to create what we call eco-communities, where everyone—homes, businesses, and events—plays a part in protecting our environment."

Residents will deposit their recyclables—mainly plastic bottles and aluminum cans—into the bins at home, then transfer the contents to central heavy-duty collection bins at the communities' designated "trash house." From there, Good Humans 268 Inc. manages collection and partners with the Antigua Waste Recycling Corporation to ensure the items are properly processed and shipped off-island for recycling.

Louisa Tubbs, a member of the Turtle Bay and Deep Bay Property Owners Association Committee, expressed gratitude for the initiative. "We are really happy to have this opportunity to offer recycling to our members. Anything that keeps waste out of the landfill is a win for our community and our



country," she said.

This bin handover marks one of several planned community rollouts, with Good Humans 268 Inc. calling on other neighborhoods to join the cause. The larger goal is to foster a culture of environmental responsibility, reduce landfill fires, and inspire youth and adults alike to be proactive stewards of the environment.

As Francis noted, "This movement is growing because people care. It's not just about bins—it's about changing how we live."

With Turtle Bay and Deep Bay now on board, Antigua and Barbuda's "green revolution" continues to build momentum—one household at a time.

## NOTICE

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 Magistrate's Court  
 High Street  
 St. John's  
 Antigua

TO: COMMISSIONER OF POLICE  
 Police Headquarters  
 American Road  
 St. John's  
 Antigua

### NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A TAVERN LICENCE FOR BUSINESS REGISTERED AS THE SHAWARMA STATION

I, Fadi Shahda, DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE, that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the Liquor Licence Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, High Street, St. John's Antigua on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2025 next ensuing for a Tavern license in respect of premises known as "The Shawarma Station" situated Sea View Farm, in the Parish of St. Paul's, Antigua pursuant to Section 11 (5) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act Cap 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda, Revised Edition 1992.

Dated the 15th day of May, 2025

.....  
 Fadi Shahda  
 268-77-7607



## Antigua and Barbuda Diabetes Association Elects a New Executive for 2025-2027 Term

The Antigua and Barbuda Diabetes Association (ABDA) has elected a new Executive Committee to serve for the 2025–2027 term under the Association's core pillars of "Prevention, Care and Support".

Leading the new team is President Charity Dublin, Vice President Dr. Monica Osborne-Stevens, Secretary Evangeline Allen, Assistant Secretary Soma Gordon, Treasurer Wema Peters, and Assistant Treasurer Andicia Tuitt. The communications portfolio is held by Public Relations Officer Marina Claxton-Browne and Assistant PRO Sharifa Peters. Emelda Benjamin and Devorah Simmons will serve as Floor Members.

The election took place at the association's recent annual general meeting. During the meeting, the association also adopted a revised constitution, aligning its operations more closely with those of similar region-



L-R - Floor Member-Devorah Simmons, Assistant Secretary-Soma Gordon, PRO-Marina Claxton-Browne, Assistant Treasurer-Andicia Tuitt, Assistant PRO-Sharifa Peters, Floor Member - Emelda Benjamin, President-Charity Dublin, Treasurer-Wema Peters, Secretary-Evangeline Allen  
 Absent- Vice President-Dr. Monica Osborne-Stevens

al and international organizations.


In her Presidential Report, outgoing President Juanita James gave a comprehensive account of her tenure, highlighting key initiatives such as the ongoing Diabetic Foot Program and the Students' Health Expo held at the National Public Library. She also noted a significant visit from Professor Peter Schwarz, then Presi-


dent-Elect and now President of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF).

James expressed sincere gratitude to ABDA's partners, donors, and sponsors—including the Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Sir Lester Bird Medical Center, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Antigua and Barbuda, Department of the Environment,


Antigua & Barbuda Association of Nutritionist & Dietitians, Rotary Club of Antigua, Lions, Pears Foundation, Healthy Caribbean Coalition (and Healthy Caribbean Youth), International Diabetes Federation, Pan American Health Organization, and various individual supporters both locally and abroad for their continued contributions.


The incoming President and members of the Association offered high commendations to James for her dedicated service. The incoming President and Executive Committee thanked the Association for the vote of confidence placed in them. They pledged to work with members to improve the lives and wellbeing of those living with diabetes while also aiming to delay or prevent the development of diabetes and its related complications.





Hi I'm Piper





And I'm Dewey

**Water works wonders.**

*Every drop counts, preserve it!*



# Charity has no age limit



Last Saturday's lunch at the National Soup Kitchen on Lower All Saints Road was more than just a meal as it provided a demonstra-



tion of a powerful act of love from a little girl with a big heart, seven-year old, Ariana Ford.

Ariana chose to celebrate her birthday in the most inspiring way: by sponsoring a hot meal for those in need at the soup kitchen. With the help of her amazing aunts, she handed out food, shared smiles, and reminded us all what true generosity looks like.

While most kids dream of pres-



ents, Ariana dreamed of giving as she turned her special day into a blessing for others.

Ariana proved that you're never too young to make a difference and her kindness didn't just fill stomachs—it filled souls with hope.

The National Soup Kitchen is urging the nation to take a lesson from this tiny hero, noting that the world changes when the society chooses compassion over comfort. "Every act of love, no matter how small, creates ripples of change," it noted.

## Three people are expected in court this week to answer larceny charges

Three individuals who the police arrested over the weekend and charged for suspicion of Larceny are expected in court this week, perhaps as early as today (Monday). Two of the three face an additional charge for the unlawful possession of cannabis.

According to police re-

ports, around 5:40 a.m. on Saturday, 17 May, officers attached to the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and Task Force executed a search warrant at the residence in Martin's Village and seized three (3) air-conditioning units and a quantity of plant-like material resembling the con-

trolled drug cannabis.

Two men were arrested on suspicion of larceny and unlawful possession of cannabis and taken to the St. John's Police Station along with the seized items and a motor vehicle.

In a separate incident, a Lightfoot resident was ar-

rested and taken into custody for questioning in connection with allegations of larceny. A vehicle was also seized in the process and taken to the police headquarters for investigation purposes.

The police are continuing their investigations into the incidents.



## Retired Inspector Trevor Young Presents His Book to Officer Bearing His Former Badge Number

Trevor Young, a retired inspector of police in Antigua and Barbuda and now an accomplished author, recently had a meaningful encounter with Police Constable No. 342 Durand — the officer now bearing the same badge number assigned to Mr. Young when he first joined the force in 1987.

During their meeting, Mr. Young presented Constable Durand with a copy of his book, “Integrity Comes with a Price.” He encouraged the young officer to serve the nation with authenticity, uphold the values of the force, and pay close attention to the lessons and experiences shared within the book’s chapters. Above all, he urged Constable Durand to always walk with integ-



riety.

Constable Durand expressed his gratitude and excitement at meeting Mr.

Young, calling it an inspiring and memorable moment in his career.



## DAILY PROGRAMMING




|                           |                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>EARLY VIBRATIONS</b>   | 6AM-10AM MON. - FRI.              |
| WITH GREMSTA              |                                   |
| <b>THE RUSH HOUR SHOW</b> | 5PM-7PM MON. - FRI.               |
| WITH ROGER LAKE           | 6AM-9AM SATURDAYS                 |
| <b>TOUCHLINE</b>          | 7PM-9PM MON. - THURS.             |
| WITH EPILUS               |                                   |
| <b>BAD COMPANY</b>        | 2PM-6PM THURS. 12PM-4PM SATURDAYS |
| LIVE FROM THE V.I.        | & 1PM-5PM ON SUNDAYS              |
| <b>REGGAE INSPIRATION</b> | 9PM-12AM MON. THURS. SUNDAY       |
| WITH SELECTOR KEEGAN      |                                   |
| <b>JAH WADADLI</b>        | 7PM-9PM FRIDAYS                   |
| WITH DJ JAH WADADLI       |                                   |



## Congratulations to District 81's Division E Director-Elect Tyreke G. Thomas-Horsford: One of Antigua's Pride of Toastmasters

District 81 of Toastmasters International, which spans across the Caribbean, recently concluded its elections for the 2025–2026 leadership term. Among those elected to serve in this new era of distinguished leadership is none other than Tyreke G. Thomas-Horsford, DL5, who now proudly holds the title of Division E Director-Elect. This moment is not just a personal achievement—it is a national point of pride for Antigua and Barbuda.

A dynamic communicator, compassionate leader, and strategic visionary, Thomas-Horsford has consistently exemplified the mission of Toastmasters: to empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders. His election to this significant post reflects not only his own growth but also the strength of the local Toastmasters movement and the impact of young professionals shaping leadership in the region.

### A Journey That Began with a Leap of Faith

Tyreke G. Thomas-Horsford's Toastmasters journey began on June 18, 2022, when he first entered the Toastmasters space through the Antigua Toastmasters Club. Like many who join the organization, he sought to improve his public speaking and leadership skills. However, what he found was far greater: a supportive community, a space to grow, and a platform to serve.

Very early in his Toastmasters experience, it became clear that he was destined to lead. He quickly demonstrated the qualities of initiative, humility, and determination. Soon after, he transitioned to the AUA Toastmasters Club, where his leadership journey took flight.

### Club-Level Leadership: From Membership Chair to President



**Tyreke G. Thomas-Horsford**

At the AUA Toastmasters Club, Thomas-Horsford served first as Vice President Membership, a role critical to the vitality and sustainability of any club. His ability to recruit, engage, and retain members demonstrated his talent for community building. It was under his guidance that the club strengthened its membership base, re-energized its programming, and built stronger internal systems.

Recognizing his commitment and capability, the club elected him as President for the 2023–2024 term. It was under his presidency that AUA Toastmasters achieved Select Distinguished Club Status, a major accomplishment reflecting the club's successful completion of key goals in membership growth, educational awards, and club administration. This achievement is not just a box checked—it is a symbol of excellence and teamwork under purposeful leadership.

Tyreke's presidency was marked by inclusivity, innovative programming, and strategic growth. From themed

meetings to mentorship initiatives and collaboration with other clubs, his term was characterized by creativity and consistent delivery.

### Serving on All Three Levels of Leadership

One of the unique strengths Thomas-Horsford brings to his new role is his experience serving Toastmasters on all three levels: club, area, and district.

At the club level, his work with both Antigua Toastmasters and AUA Toastmasters built a solid foundation in member engagement, education, and administration.

At the area level, he took on leadership roles that required supporting multiple clubs—each with their own cultures and challenges. He assisted in coordinating joint meetings, training sessions, and cross-club initiatives, always with a focus on collaboration and uplifting others.

At the district level, he has been a visible and respected presence in various events and initiatives. His energy and enthusiasm have made him a valued contributor to District 81's broader mission of leadership development across the Caribbean.

### Division E: A Diverse and Powerful Region

As Division E Director-Elect, Thomas-Horsford will oversee Toastmasters clubs across Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Montserrat, St. Kitts & Nevis, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This division is one of the most vibrant and diverse in District 81, with a mixture of longstanding clubs and newer, fast-growing ones. The role of Division Director is pivotal: it involves mentoring Area Directors, supporting clubs in achieving their goals, organizing divisional events, and ensuring alignment with Toastmasters Interna-



tional standards.

Thomas-Horsford's election was met with resounding support, reflecting the trust and admiration he has earned among his peers. His leadership promises to bring a renewed spirit of innovation, inclusion, and impact to Division E.

## Leading with Love, Compassion, and Vision

In his acceptance speech following the election, Tyreke G. Thomas-Horsford said:

"I am here to carry our voice and lead with love and compassion. I will not let you down."

These words are more than a promise—they are a reflection of his leadership philosophy. Throughout his Toastmasters journey, he has demonstrated that empathy and excellence can go hand in hand. Whether encour-

aging a new speaker, mentoring a club officer, or organizing a regional training event, he leads from the heart.

His vision for Division E includes strengthening inter-island collaboration, developing a mentorship pipeline for emerging leaders, and celebrating the unique cultural identities of each club within the division. He aims to create a leadership environment that not only achieves distinguished goals but also cultivates meaningful relationships, cultural pride, and member confidence.

## A National Role Model

Tyreke's ascent within Toastmasters is also a proud moment for Antigua and Barbuda. His election sends a message to young leaders across the nation: your voice matters, your leadership is needed, and your journey begins with a single step. His story serves as a powerful reminder that with dedica-

tion, service, and vision, leadership at the highest levels is within reach.

As he prepares to assume his duties as Division Director, the entire Toastmasters community—both in Antigua and across the Caribbean—watches with excitement. He represents a new generation of regional leaders who are committed not only to personal growth but to community upliftment.

## Conclusion: A Leader on the Rise

Congratulations to Tyreke G. Thomas-Horsford, DL5, the newly elected Division E Director of District 81 Toastmasters. Antigua and Barbuda celebrates this achievement with pride, knowing that one of its own will now help shape the voice, values, and vision of Toastmasters across multiple territories.

With heart, humility, and hope, Tyreke is ready to lead—and the Caribbean Toastmasters family is better for it.



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# Local News



## CLIMATE CONSCIOUS

RHYME AND RESOLVE: CLIMATE CALLS

Good Humans  
268 Inc

### *Waste Quiz Adventure: Test Your Knowledge Treasure!*

Are you ready for a mind-bending mission? A riddle-packed race against waste? Welcome to the Waste Quiz Adventure where treasure isn't gold, but climate knowledge you can hold! Grab your green gear, fasten your eco-cape, and join us on a journey where answers lead to action and rhymes spark resolve!



#### **Round One: Waste Not, Want Not!**

Let's start with a twist in the tale:  
What breaks down slow and fills our land,  
Yet tossed each day by careless hand?  
If you guessed plastic, you're already on track—  
Now tell us, how long 'til it comes back?  
(A: Up to 1,000 years!)

From single-use straws to grocery bags,  
Our habits leave behind some serious drags.  
But if you reduce, reuse, recycle true,  
You're a climate hero through and through!

#### **Round Two: The 3 R's Riddle Run!**

Here's a rhyme to test your might:  
I'm first in line, I shrink the pile,  
Use me less—make Earth smile!  
Who am I? (A: Reduce!)

Then comes Reuse, giving items new life,  
Saving energy, money, and strife.  
Last is Recycle, the process of turning  
Trash into treasure, a planet worth earning.

#### **Round Three: Brainstorm for the Climate!**

Did you know that waste fuels the flames  
Of carbon clouds and climate games?  
Landfills leak methane, a heat-trapping gas,  
Turning yesterday's trash into tomorrow's forecast.  
True or False? Composting can reduce waste and  
greenhouse gases.  
Answer: True! Food scraps belong in the earth, not in a  
bin.  
They're future fertilizer—where life begins again.



#### **Resolve with Rhyme: Climate Calls You to Action**

Now, we're passing the mic, it's your turn to say,  
What green change will you make today?  
Turn off lights when not in use?  
Say no to single-use abuse?  
Plant a tree or take a ride—  
On a bike, not a car, with eco pride?

Every step, no matter how small,  
Answers a powerful climate call.  
So rhyme with resolve, speak it loud,  
"I'll stand for Earth and make her proud!"

#### **Final Round: Test Your Knowledge Treasure!**

This adventure isn't just about getting it right.  
It's about growing greener with every insight.  
Ask your friends, your family too—  
"What does climate change mean to you?"  
Then challenge them to the Waste Quiz Game,  
Make learning fun, never the same.  
Because when we link fun with facts that matter,  
We spark conversations that truly shatter  
Complacency, doubt, and wasteful ways—  
Creating brighter, cleaner, greener days!

#### **Take the Pledge, Be Climate-Wise**

So if you've made it to the end of this rhyme,  
You've earned your badge—it's climate time!  
The treasure you've found is the knowledge you  
wield,  
Now go out and protect the planet we all feel.





## GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs  
 Queen Elizabeth Highway  
 St. John's, ANTIGUA  
 Telephone: (268) 462-1052  
 Fax: (268) 462-2482  
 Email: [foreignaffairs@ab.gov.ag](mailto:foreignaffairs@ab.gov.ag)

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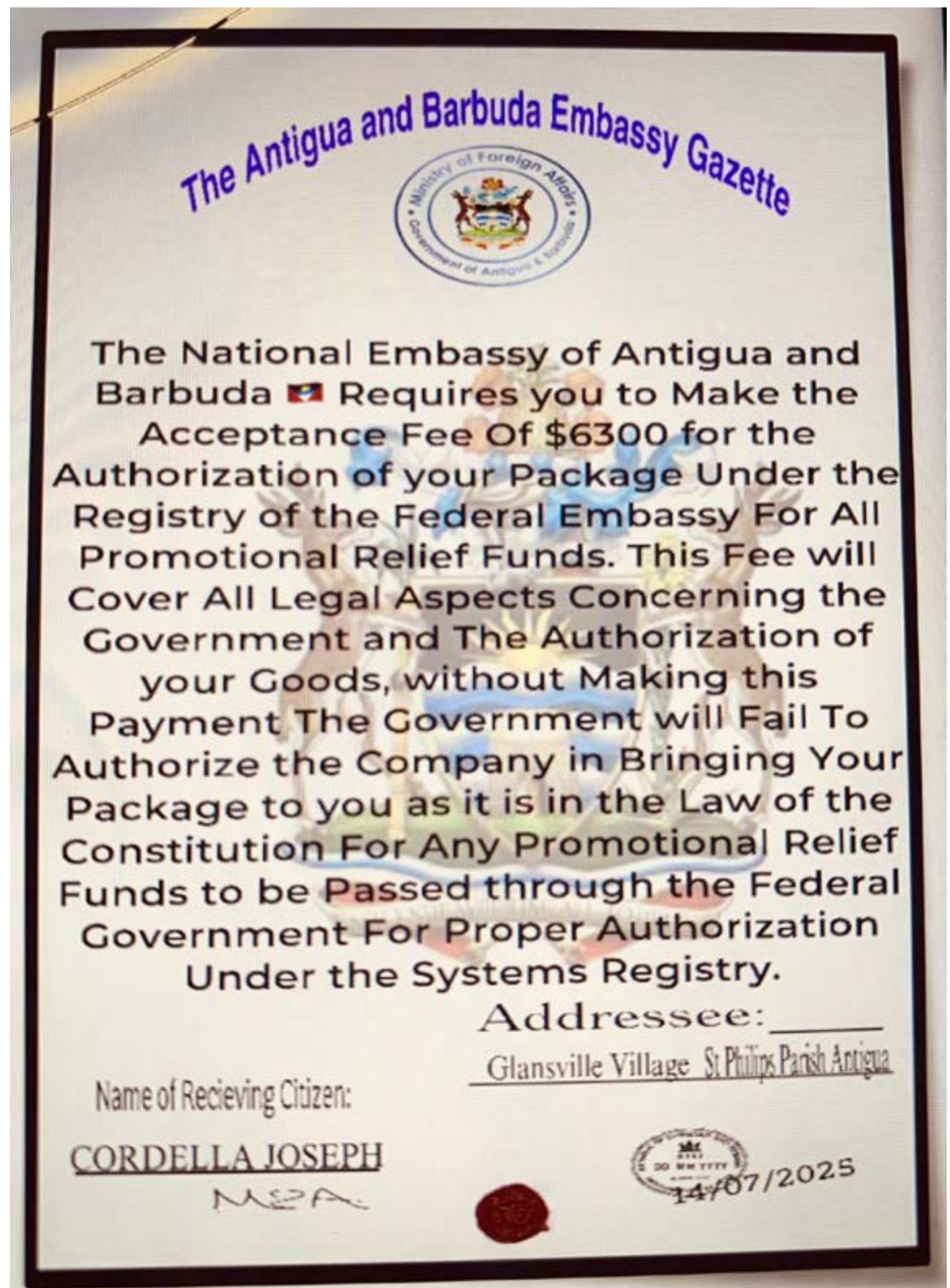
### Public Advisory: False Document Circulating Under the Name "Antigua and Barbuda Embassy Gazette"

16 May 2025- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to advise the public that a document circulating under the title "*Antigua and Barbuda Embassy Gazette*" dated 14 July 2025, which names *Cordella Joseph* as a receiving citizen, is **false** and **not authentic**.

This document **did not originate from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and does not represent any official action or position of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.

We strongly urge the public to **desist from circulating** this false document and to treat it as misinformation. All official information should be verified through legitimate government channels.

The Ministry remains committed to transparency, accountability, and the accurate dissemination of public information. We thank the public for their continued cooperation.





## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR NATIONAL HONOURS IN 2025

Members of the public are invited to submit nominations of suitably qualified persons to be considered by the Honours Committee in 2025 for conferral of one of three societies of honour, which are further divided into grades and described in the National Honours Act as:

- i. The Most Distinguished Order of the Nation
- ii. The Most Illustrious Order of Merit
- iii. The Most Precious Order of Princely Heritage.

**The criteria for selection are presented below:**

1. The candidate being nominated, if an individual, should be 50 years of age or older.
  2. The nominee having met the age requirement in No 1, should also satisfy one or more of the following characteristics:
    - i. Should have demonstrated distinguished service, above and beyond the call of duty in his or her field of employment/career.
    - ii. Should be a model or good citizen with proven character, lifestyle, work ethics and a habit of using his/her own resources to the benefit of others,
    - iii. Should have given meritorious service in the field of heritage and cultural endeavours for consideration to be a member of the Most Precious Order of Princely Heritage, or meritorious service in any other field to be considered for membership of the Most Illustrious Order of Merit or distinguished/outstanding service to the nation in any field to be considered for membership of the Most Distinguished Order of the Nation.
    - ii. Should have demonstrated the ability, over a sustained period, to work in the interest of and to give selflessly to others without a demand for personal or monetary reward.
  3. A nomination may also be submitted for any company, institution, organization or social club which has rendered outstanding contribution to the promotion, development, protection or advancement of the arts, history or cultural heritage or humanitarian endeavours in Antigua and Barbuda. Institutional honours are granted in the Order of the Most Illustrious Order of Merit in the grades of Gold, Silver and Bronze.
4. Regarding the guidelines governing the process of nominations and their consideration, the following should be noted:

a. Previous entries which have been submitted without a positive response may be re-submitted for consideration. Once received, nominations are considered for a period of three (3) consecutive years before being retired. This does not prevent the re-submission of the nomination of said individual after that period has passed.

b. Nominations must be submitted on the form entitled, 'Nomination for a National Honour of Antigua and Barbuda' providing as much detail as possible as to the work, projects or service rendered by the individual.

c. Tangible evidence such as photos, statistics, recommendation letters, videos or other relevant material may be provided with the nomination.

d. Self – nominations will not be considered.

e. All nominations should be addressed to the:

Secretary  
 Honours Committee  
 c/o Government House  
 Independence Drive  
 St. John's, Antigua  
 Antigua and Barbuda

The nominator(s) should provide the following personal information:

- Full Name
- Physical Address
- Email Address
- Telephone No

Please specify the contact information for the key person who should be reached should further information be required.

f. The final date for nominations for consideration for the annual Independence celebrations is the last working day of August by 11 am. Submissions should be delivered to the Office of the Governor General on other days during working hours before 11:00 am, or scanned signed copies may be emailed to [hcabgov@gmail.com](mailto:hcabgov@gmail.com)

g. Nomination forms may be requested via email to [govgenab@gmail.com](mailto:govgenab@gmail.com) or [hcabgov@gmail.com](mailto:hcabgov@gmail.com). Physical copies of the forms may also be collected from Government House from 8am to 11 am on work days.

**Chairman, Honours Committee**

The Office of The Governor General - Antigua and Barbuda



# After the Shutdown: What Public Sector Leaders Must Do Differently



By Garfield Joseph, MBA

## Introduction: Lessons from the 2025 Teachers' Strike

Most recently, Antigua and Barbuda faced a nationwide shutdown of public schools due to a prolonged teachers' strike. The Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers (ABUT) cited years of unpaid allowances and unfulfilled agreements dating back to 2018. Despite prior commitments, delays in communication and other actions led to widespread disruption, affecting students, families, and the nation's reputation.

This crisis was not just about money—it was about leadership, trust, and accountability, and perhaps other motivations as well, as discussed in the public arena. If anything, what this incident reveals is an opportunity to improve the leadership of the public service to prevent such breakdowns in the future. Having worked in the private sector for most of my life and now in the public sector, I wish to share ten simple strategies that public sector leaders must adopt in order to improve service delivery in the public sector.

### 1. Adopt a Commercial-Enterprise Mindset

Public service must be efficient, responsive, and citizen-focused. This means embracing modern manage-

ment practices. In traditional bureaucratic models, the public—the very people we serve—are often placed at the bottom of the organizational pyramid. Decisions flow from the top down, and service delivery can feel impersonal, slow, and rigid. But in a commercial or enterprise mindset, the pyramid is flipped. At the top of the pyramid is the customer—in this case, the citizen. At the bottom are the leaders and managers, whose job is to support the frontline staff who directly serve the public.

This model sends a clear message: “The most important people in the world are the ones we serve.”

### Why This Matters:

It changes priorities. Instead of focusing on internal processes, the focus shifts to outcomes for the public good. It drives responsiveness. When the public is at the top, delays and poor service are no longer acceptable. It builds trust. Citizens feel respected and valued when their needs are prioritized.

### How to Make It Happen:

- Train staff to treat every citizen interaction as a moment of truth.
- Empower frontline workers to solve problems on the spot.
- Use feedback loops to continuously improve service quality.
- Measure success by citizen satisfaction, not just internal metrics.

### Benefits:

Public: Feels heard, respected, and well-served.

Team: Gains purpose and pride in their work.

Employer: Builds a reputation for excellence and earns public trust.

### 2. Learn to Prioritize

Not all tasks are equal. Leaders must focus on what matters most—espe-

cially during crises. Prioritization ensures that critical services are delivered without delay or distraction.

### 3. Take Initiative to Solve Problems

Waiting for instructions is no longer viable. Leaders must act early, identify risks, and resolve issues before they escalate—just as early intervention might have prevented the teachers' strike from reaching a boiling point.

### 4. Keep Management Informed

Silence breeds confusion. Regular, transparent updates to senior leadership ensure timely decisions and coordinated responses—especially when tensions are high.

### 5. Set High Standards and Accountability

Public trust depends on consistent, high-quality service. Leaders must model excellence and hold their teams accountable for results, timelines, and professionalism.

### 6. Take Responsibility When Objectives Are Not Met

Blame-shifting erodes trust. When things go wrong, leaders must own the outcome, communicate openly, and take corrective action. This builds credibility and fosters a culture of learning.

### 7. Build a Strong Support Team

No leader succeeds alone. Identify and empower talent, delegate effectively, and create a team that can deliver—even in your absence.

### 8. Prepare for Handover

Leadership is temporary. Train others to step up. Document processes, mentor successors, and ensure continuity of service—especially during transitions or emergencies.

**Con't on page 21**

## 9. Manage Public Relations During Crises

- Communicate early and often.
- Acknowledge concerns honestly.
- Share the steps being taken to resolve the issue.

Public confidence is fragile. Effective communication can preserve trust, reduce misinformation, and maintain morale.

What worked yesterday may not work tomorrow. Leaders must stay current with new tools, trends, and techniques in governance, communication, and service delivery.

- Attend workshops and leadership training.
- Encourage team learning and cross-training.
- Benchmark against high-performing institutions.

A learning organization adapts faster, performs better, and is more resilient in the face of change.

Strong leaders know their limits. Asking for help—whether for guidance, resources, or expertise—is not a weakness; it's a strength.

No one has all the answers. Complex challenges often require collaboration across departments, ministries, or even sectors. Seeking support early can prevent delays, reduce errors, and lead to better outcomes.

- Build networks of trusted advisors

- Encourage a culture where staff feel safe asking for help.
- Reach out to regional and international partners when needed.

Employer: Access to broader expertise and resources.

Leadership in the public sector is not about having all the answers—it's about creating the conditions for success. That means setting high standards, communicating clearly, learning continuously, and knowing when to ask for help. Therefore, let us move forward with humility, “a can-do better mindset”, with courage, and a shared commitment to serve. The public is counting on us.

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# Regional News

## Anguilla: Airport closed due to flooding from heavy rainfall

The Clayton J Lloyd International Airport (CJLIA) had to temporarily suspend all flight operations due to severe weather conditions over the weekend.

The immediate closure, which took effect on Saturday, comes after heavy rainfall caused significant water accumulation throughout the airport's operational areas.

According to a statement from the airport, the flooding poses safety risks to aircraft, passengers, staff, and critical equipment.

"In the interest of public safety and with a commitment to upholding international aviation standards, the Anguilla Air and Sea Ports Authority has made the difficult but necessary decision to suspend all flight operations until further notice," the statement read.

Airport officials were actively monitoring the situation and anticipated resuming normal operations on May 18, weather conditions permitting.

Travelers were advised to contact their airlines directly for information about specific flights and to stay tuned to local media for updates.

The Clayton J Lloyd International Airport serves as Anguilla's primary gateway for air travelers to and from the island. (*Loop Caribbean*)




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## Armed violence severely hampering the education system in Haiti



The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) says armed violence and escalating insecurity continue to severely impact the education system in several departments of Haiti, particularly in the Centre, Ouest, Artibonite and Nord departments.

“As of late April, more than 1,600 schools have been forced to close, disrupting access to learning for more than 243,000 children – that’s according to our partners working to support education in Haiti,” said Farhan Haq, the Deputy Spokesperson for the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres.

He said this is a 60 percent increase in school closures in just four months, up from 960 schools closed at the start of the year. Most closures are concentrated in the Ouest and Centre departments,

where insecurity, displacement, and the use of schools by gangs and displaced people have intensified.

“More than 80 schools are serving as collective shelters for internally displaced people, while 166 schools have been relocated, often under precarious conditions: Learning spaces often lack basic infrastructure, water, sanitation and essential supplies,” Haq told reporters.

The UN said that children in the French-speaking Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country continue to face serious protection risks, including exploitation, sexual abuse and recruitment by gangs.

“When students see their education interrupted, they become even more vulnerable to these threats. Teachers have been displaced, and many communities face inse-

curity and damaged roads, making access to functioning schools unsafe,” Haq said.

Criminal gangs have been seeking to overthrow the government and despite the presence of a multinational security force led by Kenya, the gangs continue to control the majority of the capital, Port-au-Prince and outlying areas.

Haq said that this year’s Humanitarian Response Plan for Haiti calls for more than US\$61 million to support education in the country.

“Yet despite surging needs, including a sharp increase in school closures and the use of schools as shelters, as we just mentioned, the education response has received less than \$6 million to date.

“Additional support is urgently needed to sustain learning for Haiti’s most vulnerable children and prevent a generational education crisis in the country,” Haq said, adding that immediate priorities include temporary learning spaces, school kits for at least 100,000 children, mental health and psychosocial support for students and teachers, improved access to water and sanitation, and measures to secure school environments. He said that the OCHA continues to coordinate closely with partners working on education in Haiti – as well as national authorities – to ensure that children’s right to learning is preserved, even in crisis. (*Loop Caribbean*)



# Regional News



## Dominican inmate injured in prison fire in St. Maarten calls for urgent medical care



A young Dominican-French man currently detained at Pointe Blanche Prison in St. Maarten is pleading for urgent medical attention after suffering severe burns in a recent fire. The inmate, who identifies as ‘Dimitri’ says he’s from Grand Bay, born of a Dominican mother while his father is French.

Dimitri sustained first and second-degree burns when parts of the prison were set ablaze on May 14, 2025. The incident has drawn sharp criticism from political leaders and exposed deep-rooted issues within the island’s prison system.

In an exclusive interview with Dominica News Online (DNO), Dimitri detailed the terrifying ordeal, describing how he had to fight for his life when the fire broke out.

“I got first and second-degree burns all over my body, and they refused to take me

to the hospital,” he lamented, adding that he has only received bandages and paracetamol for his injuries.

Dimitri has been incarcerated at Pointe Blanche Prison since November 27, 2024, after being detained for extradition to the United States. He claims that the Dutch authorities failed to notify Dominica or the French consulate of his arrest. A close family member, speaking on condition of anonymity, argues that Dimitri’s detention is unjust, as he has no citizenship or ties to St. Maarten.

“We just want fair and just treatment at this point,” the relative stated. “He got severe burns under their watch, and now they refuse him proper medical care. That is ridiculous.” She added, “We just want fair and just treatment at this point. We just feel that we are not getting clear answers, we

are not getting appropriate support and information and we have not received a clear understanding of exactly what this process is, what the situation looks like and now with this happening

we just feel like it is unjust for him to continue being there.”

The crisis has spotlighted troubling conditions at Pointe Blanche Prison, which has long been plagued by overcrowding, unsanitary environments, and inadequate medical resources. A report from SMN News pointed out that poor management of prisoner release policies has further contributed to systemic dysfunction.

With mounting dissatisfaction over Dimitri’s treatment, his supporters are calling on the relevant authorities to intervene and ensure he receives the urgent medical care he needs. (*Dominica News Online*)

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## 3 Caribbean countries eliminate mother to child transmissions of HIV and syphilis

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) says three Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries have eliminated mother to child transmissions of HIV and syphilis.

In its 2024 annual report released here and documenting its work to strengthen health security across the Americas amid infectious disease outbreaks, PAHO said that there had been “notable progress” with the “Disease Elimination Initiative,” and that Belize, Jamaica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.

The report, which also examined the region’s heavy reliance on imported vaccines and pharmaceuticals, and persistent systemic inequities, noted that PAHO’s Regional Revolving Funds facilitated access to 224 million vaccine doses and delivered five million treatments, reinforcing immunization programmes and overall public health capacity.

It said that the Strategy on Epidemic Intelligence (2024–2029), the first of its kind globally, strengthened early warning systems. Meanwhile, digital transformation in the health sector, backed by over US\$900 million in loans from the IDB, reached 20 countries.

“In 2024, we launched powerful initiatives not only to detect and treat disease, but to transform the health systems,” said Dr. Jarbas Bar-



bosa, PAHO Director.

“This is about building resilience so that our health systems don’t just survive the next crisis, they are better prepared to respond.”

The 2024 Annual Report: Advancing Health for Regional Security provides a comprehensive account of these efforts.

It noted that a dengue outbreak reached 13 million cases, nearly triple 2023’s total, with over 7,700 deaths, primarily in Brazil, and limited transmission in U.S. states. Avian influenza (H5N1) recorded 66 human cases in the US and in Canada, and over 1,300 animal outbreaks region-wide, while Oropouche virus spread across 12 countries.

“Throughout the year, PAHO served one billion people across 35 Member States and marked the 100th anniversary of the Pan American Sanitary Code—the first multilateral agreement to coordinate disease control across borders. The Organization also advanced health security through enhanced surveillance, expanded primary health care,

and increased vaccine production,” PAHO said.

The report details how PAHO strengthened health systems through key initiatives, including the Alliance for Primary Health Care in the Americas, a collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and World Bank.

“This initiative is working across 10 countries to expand primary health care (PHC), which can address up to 80 per cent of health needs, enabling more equitable and responsive systems for routine care and emergencies.”

The report highlights efforts to reduce the region’s reliance on imported pharmaceuticals, including support for mRNA vaccine development in Argentina and Brazil, such as a vaccine targeting H5N1 avian influenza.

“Today, Latin America and the Caribbean import six times more pharmaceuticals and 80 times more vaccines than they export,” PAHO said. (*Loop Caribbean*)



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## The FBI is investigating the explosion at a California fertility clinic as an act of terrorism

The person believed responsible for an attack targeting a Southern California fertility clinic Saturday posted rambling online writings before an explosion that investigators are treating as an act of terrorism, according to a law enforcement official.

The suspect, who died in the explosion that tore through the clinic and rattled the upscale California city of Palm Springs, also attempted to record video or stream the attack, said the official, who was not authorized to discuss details of the attack and spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press.

“Make no mistake: This is an intentional act of terrorism,” Akil Davis, the head of the FBI’s Los Angeles field office, told an evening news conference.

Authorities were still working to piece together a motive and build a chronology of events leading up to the attack. Though the FBI did not say how it had determined the explosion was terrorism, the writings left behind, in which the suspect communicated a belief that the world should not be populated, appear to shed light on the person’s state of mind and help explain investigators’ thesis that the attack was targeted and intentional.

Authorities have not released the identity of the person thought to be responsible but believe the individual died in a car explosion.



Davis said investigators weren’t looking for anyone else.

Four others were injured but details of the severity of their injuries weren’t shared.

A burned-out vehicle was seen in the parking lot behind the clinic after the blast, which caved in the building’s roof, sprayed debris across a five-lane road and shattered windows in businesses blocks away. The clinic was closed for the weekend, and the doctor who leads it told the AP its staffers were safe.

The blast gutted the American Reproductive Centers fertility clinic, housed in a single-story building along a five-lane street lined with palm trees.

Dr. Maher Abdallah, who leads the clinic, told the AP in a phone interview that the explosion damaged the practice’s office space, where it conducts consultations with patients. The clinic’s IVF lab and stored embryos are offsite and were not damaged.

“Thank God today happened to be a day that we have no patients,” Abdallah said.

Palm Springs Mayor Pro Tem Naomi Soto called the clinic “a place of hope.”

“This is a building that people go to to start or expand their families,” she said. “We acknowledge their pain and concern across the community for the patients and staff.”

Rhino Williams, 47, said he was chatting with customers at a hotel restaurant he helps manage just over a block away when he heard a huge boom. Everything rattled, Williams said, and he sprinted to the scene to see if anyone needed help.

Williams covered his nose with his shirt as he smelled burning plastic and rubber. He said he saw a building had “blown out” into the street, with bricks and debris scattered everywhere, and he spotted a car’s front axle on fire in the parking lot.

It was the only car in the lot, said Williams, who ran into

the building, calling out and peering behind the counter to see if anyone was inside. He did not hear a response and did not see anyone behind the counter.

Williams then ran around checking on other buildings. Multiple windows of the neighboring liquor store also were blown out. Once he saw authorities arrive, Williams headed back to the hotel, he said.

Steven Michael Chacon was in his car preparing to turn into a hospital across the street from the clinic when felt and heard a massive boom as the building was torn apart, sending a massive plume of black smoke into the air. Not knowing what happened, he exited his car to flee the scene. Glass was all over the ground, and he saw what appeared to be a body part.

“I got out of my car and then people started screaming, there were people bloody, there was glass everywhere,” he said.

Palm Springs, about a two-hour drive east of Los Angeles, is known for upscale resorts, golf courses and a history of celebrity residents.

The Trump administration condemned the attack.

“The Trump administration understands that women and mothers are the heartbeat of America,” Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a statement. “Violence against a fertility clinic is unforgivable.” (*Associated Press*)

## Children among 132 Palestinians killed in Israeli barrage across Gaza



The Israeli military has killed at least 132 Palestinians, including children sleeping in tents, as it unleashed a wave of air raids across the Gaza Strip in the early hours of Sunday.

At least 36 people were killed and more than 100 wounded after Israeli warplanes bombed a tent camp sheltering displaced Palestinians in the al-Mawasi area of Khan Younis in southern Gaza, medical sources told Al Jazeera.

Horrific verified videos from the scene showed many bodies, including some on fire. The dead and wounded were taken to a nearby field hospital and the Nasser Medical Complex.

At least 132 people were killed on Sunday morning, including 42 in the heavily-bombarded northern parts of Gaza, medical sources told Al Jazeera Arabic. Three journalists were also

among the victims.

At least 464 Palestinians have been killed in the past week, as the Israeli military prepares to significantly intensify its ground invasion of the Palestinian territory despite international criticism. At least 53,339 Palestinians have been killed and 121,034 others wounded since the start of the war, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health.

The Israeli military has been systematically targeting hospitals across the enclave and putting them out of commission, including two in the past week.

The Indonesian Hospital in northern Gaza was also rendered nonoperational on Sunday after the Israeli army laid siege to it since dawn. Marwan al-Sultan, the director of the facility, which was the last functioning public hospital in the north, described the situation as "catastrophic" and called on

international organisations to press for medical teams' safety.

Hamas said in a statement early on Sunday that the attacks on displaced Palestinians in Khan Younis marked a "brutal crime" that was a flagrant violation of international laws and norms.

"By granting the terrorist occupation government political and military cover, the United States administration bears direct responsibility for this insane escalation in the targeting of innocent civilians in the Gaza Strip, including children, women, and the elderly," the Palestinian group said.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned Israel's expanding operation in Gaza. "I am alarmed by reported plans by Israel to expand ground operations and more," he said on X on Saturday. (*Al Jazeera English*)



## Pope meets Zelensky after inauguration Mass



Pope Leo XIV has met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky following his inauguration Mass.

Posting on Telegram after the meeting, Zelensky thanked the new Catholic leader for his “support for Ukraine” and “clear voice in defence of a just and lasting peace”.

Addressing thousands in St Peter’s Square, the Pope used his inaugural mass to highlight concerns about the war in Ukraine, also warning against marginalisation of the poor and autocracy.

Zelensky, US Vice President JD Vance and the US Secretary of State Marco Rubio were among dignitaries in attendance.

The pontiff was pictured shaking hands with the Ukrainian leader, who also thanked the Vatican for “its readiness to become a platform for direct negotiations between Ukraine and Rus-

sia.”

Last week, Pope Leo offered the Vatican as a venue for possible peace talks after Russian President Vladimir Putin turned down Zelensky’s offer to meet face-to-face in Turkey for negotiations.

The Pope used his Mass to criticise “hatred, violence, prejudice, the fear of difference, and an economic paradigm that exploits the Earth’s resources and marginalises the poorest”.

He also said he would seek to govern “without ever yielding to the temptation to be an autocrat”.

Thousands of pilgrims stood in reverence as the pope received the symbols of office, blessed the people and issued a strong call for unity.

Before the Mass, there were cheers from the crowd when the pontiff appeared in his

popemobile as it drove around St Peter’s Square and down Via della Conciliazione to the river Tiber and back.

There was a strong sense of excitement in the square. Michelle, from Germany, told the BBC she “came on purpose to see the Pope”.

“I arrived yesterday in the morning and I’m leaving in a few hours, so I don’t have much time. It’s very crazy because there’s so many people. I wanted to see the Pope.”

Many of the tens of thousands attending were Catholics, but tourists also came to be part of the historic occasion.

Joe from Missouri in the United States said: “We’re on vacation, but it’s great timing. We’re here to see the Pope’s inaugural mass. It’s very special. I’m glad we came early.”

He said he was “extra proud” to see the first Pope from the United States. “That was a surprise. He’s gonna be a wonderful Pope. I am not Catholic, but I grew up Catholic, but this is just inspiring no matter what denomination of Christian you are.”

Also in the crowds was Pia, from Chile, a professor of philosophy at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome. She told the BBC she felt there was “a new hope in the church”.

Pia said that among the Pope’s first words when he was elected was “Let the peace be with you”, the words of Jesus. And then he said “don’t be afraid”.

“He knows what the world and the church needs. A church that is preaching hope, preaching peace. I think many people are waiting for that,” she said.

The Pope’s official inauguration followed the Mass, with a pallium garment - a white woolen band - placed on the pope’s shoulders, and fixed in place with three pins to represent the nails on the cross.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of the Philippines then placed on the pope’s finger the Ring of the Fisherman, a symbol of the papacy which bears an image of St Peter.

Pope Leo then took the book of the gospels to bless the people. (*BBC News*)

## 2 dead, more than a dozen injured after Mexican naval training ship strikes Brooklyn Bridge



Two people died and more than a dozen others were injured when a historic Mexican naval training ship struck the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City on Saturday night, Mayor Eric Adams said.

Twenty-one people were injured, a U.S. Coast Guard spokesperson said early Sunday, and were taken to shore via small boat before being transferred to a hospital. Adams had previously said on X that 19 were hurt, two were in critical condition “and 2 more have sadly passed away from their injuries.”

Others were checked out, and divers were probing waters at the scene as a precaution, three police sources with knowledge of the incident said earlier.

Adams said at a news conference Saturday night that the tall ship with 277 people on board suffered a mechanical mishap that caused it to veer into the bridge as it had set sail from Pier 17 en route to sea.

“The pilot lost power of the ship,” he said, adding that two crew members were on a mast and were injured in the collision.

Chief Wilson Arambales of the New York Police Department’s Special Operations Division said the collision happened at about 8:20 p.m.

Inspectors were immediately dispatched to assess the condition of the bridge, the police sources said. New

York City Department of Transportation Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez said the head of bridge division was at the scene, with a preliminary assessment concluding there were no signs of major damage.

Adams said the bridge was open.

Commercial traffic in the area was suspended, and the Coast Guard’s Sector New York established a “safety zone” from the Brooklyn Bridge to the Manhattan Bridge, the Coast Guard spokesperson said.

No one fell into the water, officials said at the news conference. The ship was ultimately headed to Iceland, Arambales said.

Video from the scene showed two masts from the ship, lit up in incandescent colors as night fell, striking the bridge, with people on the mast hanging on.

Another video before the bridge strike showed around 80 people standing across the ship’s masts, seemingly secured via harnesses. The Coast Guard spokesperson said the boat lost all three masts during the crash.

Witnesses interviewed by NBC New York said the boat, which at least one said was no stranger to, Spain, in 1981 and originally called “Celaya.”

“She was later acquired by the Mexican Navy as a training vessel for officers, cadets, petty officers and

sailors,” according to the group. “Cuauhtémoc sailed the world for thirteen years and in 1995 underwent a major refit of the ship and rigging.”

The NYPD said it was investigating the incident. Officials at the news conference said the National Transportation Safety Board would also probe the cause of the collision.

Police asked people to stay away from the area of the bridge and nearby streets. (NBC News)

the East River and local waters, appeared to have a party-like atmosphere with music.

On shore after the collision, paramedics were seen wheeling away some of the injured on stretchers, some wearing neck braces. Onlookers could be heard chanting, “Mexico! Mexico!”

Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, a Mexican ambassador to the U.S., at the news conference identified the ship as ARM Cuauhtémoc, a historic Mexican Navy training vessel.

Though it’s listed as a sailing ambassador for Mexico for next year’s Sail4th 250 celebrations, a spokesperson for the event said in a statement Saturday night that the “Mexican Tall Ship Cuauhtémoc is not one of the ships committed thus far to participate in next year’s Sail4th 250 event.”

The spokesperson continued, “Chris O’Brien, President of Sail4th 250, is deeply saddened by what he’s learning about this evening’s collision and is following the news with the injured sailors in his prayers.”

The city’s Seaport Museum on Pier 17 hosted the ship through Saturday, with public viewing scheduled during its five-day stay.

The New York City-area Sail4th 250 events will celebrate America’s 250th anniversary on July 4, 2026, with what is being billed as the largest-ever flotilla of tall ships from around the world.

The U.K. nonprofit Sail Training International describes the vessel a being built in Bilbao



# Sports News



## Da Project and Navigators level semi-final playoff series



Third seed Da Project and second seed Navigators have levelled their respective Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) best-of-three semi-final playoff series.

After losing the opening game 64-81 to second seed Total Imports EMC's Potters Steelers, Da Project clinched

a 95-82 victory in Game 2 at the JSC Sports Complex to level the Division 1 playoff series at 1-1.

Da Project was led by Bryan "Hollywood" Matthew, who shot a game-high 36 points and claimed nine rebounds, and Terry Dawkins with 18 points, six assists, and five rebounds.

In support, T-Shawn Lewis contributed 13 points, 13 rebounds, and five assists; Nyique Watkins produced 10 points, five rebounds, and five assists; and Donte Trimmingham also scored 10 points for Da Project.

Devorn Benjamin sank 23 points; Raniq Nicholls produced 19 points, eight assists, and six rebounds; Kareem Edwards converted 15 points and claimed six rebounds; Keroi Lee scored 11 points and grabbed 10 rebounds; and Cohen Desouza contributed 10 points and eight rebounds for the Potters Steelers.

After losing the opening game 79-91 to third seed Spanish Heat 2, the Navigators romped to an 85-71 victory in Game 2 at the JSC Sports Complex to level the Division 2 playoff series at 1-1.

Ariel Quallis produced 22 points, 14 rebounds, seven steals, and six assists; Ricky Willock scored 17 points; Ryan Shepherd sank eight points and grabbed 12 rebounds; and Ralph Spooner converted eight points and snatched 10 rebounds for the Navigators.

Charlie Daniel sank 18 points and grabbed 16 rebounds; Wester Baptiste converted 14 points and snatched eight rebounds; Jesus Emmanuel scored 13 points and claimed five rebounds; Erwin Rodriguez produced nine points, 10 rebounds, and seven assists; and Rohland Hamilton chipped in with six points and 17 rebounds for Spanish Heat 2.

## Clare Hall Secondary wins Under-15 school cricket title

Clare Hall Secondary has captured this year's Ministry of Sports Schools' Cricket Under-15 30-Over Championship.

Clare Hall Secondary secured the title by pulling off a seven-wicket victory against Antigua Grammar School in the final at the Antigua Recreation Ground (ARG) on Friday.

The Antigua Grammar School was dismissed for 64 in 11.3 overs. Opener Leonaldo Drearey hit 30 not out off 36 balls, including four boundaries.

However, 26 extras, including 20 wides, were the next best contributor to the team's total, as no other Antigua Grammar School batsman managed to reach double figures during their innings.

Ian Jerimiah grabbed five wickets for seven runs, Kisean Francis captured two for 20, while Charles Abbott

and Jayden Charles each picked up a wicket.

In reply, Clare Hall Secondary achieved victory by racing to 65 for three in 7.3 overs. Opener Jayden Charles slammed 28 off 21 balls, including five fours.

Charles Abbott hit 18 not out off of nine balls, including two fours and a six. There was also a contribution of 14 extras, including 13 wides.

Deshawn Hoyte took one wicket for four runs, Isiah Harris picked up one wicket for seven runs, and Leonaldo Drearey captured one for 35.

Both teams booked their spot in the final by securing victories in the semi-finals last Wednesday. Antigua Grammar School claimed a 10-wicket victory against All Saints Secondary at the Rising Sun playing field.

All Saints Secondary was dismissed

for 44 in 12 overs. In reply, Antigua Grammar School achieved victory by scoring 45 without losing a wicket.

Clare Hall Secondary clinched a four-wicket win against Jennings Secondary at the Clare Hall playing field.

Jennings Secondary was restricted to 70 for eight in 11.2 overs. In reply, Clare Hall Secondary achieved victory at 72 for six in 10.3 overs.

Pares Secondary won this year's Ministry of Sports Schools' Cricket Under-19 30-Over Championship. Pares Secondary crushed Antigua Grammar School by 81 runs in the final.

Pares Secondary made 193 for five off 28 overs and dismissed Antigua Grammar School for 112 in 15.1 overs.

# Sports News

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## Starz 1 tightens grip on second place in women's volleyball league

Starz 1 consolidated their second-place position in the women's Division 1 standings of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Local League on Saturday evening.

Starz 1 came from behind to record their sixth win in eight encounters by clinching a 3-2 victory against Jets in their encounter at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Starz 1 prevailed 19-25, 25-21, 21-25, 27-25, and 15-10 against the Jets, who remain in fourth place after crashing to their sixth loss in nine games.

Theatric Lighting & Stage Effect and JOMA Caribbean Stoneville have advanced to third place in the women's Division 1 standings.

Stoneville claimed their fourth win in eight matches by snatching a 3-2 victory against former champions Paragons in their encounter.

Stoneville took two hours and five minutes to prevail 25-14, 22-25, 25-22, 21-25, and 15-11 against the Paragons women, who slipped to second from the bottom of the standings in the six-team round-robin competition after suffering their fifth defeat in eight games.

Invaders consolidated their fifth-place position in the Men's Division 1 League with a 3-1 victory against Phoenix High Fly-



**Starz 1 women's volleyball team**

erz. Invaders claimed their third win in nine games by

prevailing 25-17, 25-21, 24-26, and 25-23 against the Phoenix High Flyerz in two hours and one minute.

The Phoenix High Flyerz remain winless and in the cellar of the seven-team round-robin competition after suffering their ninth defeat in as many games.

However, Saturday's game between reigning Men's Division 1 champion Theatric Lighting & Stage Effect and JOMA Caribbean Stoneville and Vernon G. Edwards High Flyerz was postponed due to stormy weather conditions.



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# Chase confirmed as new West Indies Test captain



**New West Indies Test captain Roston Chase. (CWI Media)**

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced the appointment of Roston Chase as West Indies Test Captain for the upcoming home series versus Australia in June, with Jomel Warrican named as vice-captain.

The appointments were unanimously approved by the CWI Board of Directors during its meeting held on Friday.

This announcement follows the completion of a groundbreaking, robust and structured process to evaluate and recommend the next captain and vice-captain of the West Indies Test team.

Recognizing the critical role of leadership in shaping team culture, driving performance, and ensuring long-term success, CWI adopted a data-informed, multi-dimensional framework to guide the selection.

This marks a significant evolution in how leadership appointments are made, aimed at strengthening ac-

countability, transparency, and alignment with modern cricketing standards.

The process began with a shortlist of candidates selected based on factors including Test experience, leadership qualities, and captaincy credentials.

The shortlisted players included John Campbell, Tevin Imlach, Joshua Da Silva, Justin Greaves, Roston Chase, and Jomel Warrican.

Shai Hope, the current ODI and T20I captain, respectfully declined consideration to focus on his existing leadership roles.

Each candidate went through a detailed assessment process that included psychometric testing to evaluate leadership style, behavior, and overall suitability for the role, as well as structured interviews focused on tactical approach, communication skills, and team culture.

The interview panel consisted of Head Coach Daren

Sammy, Director of Cricket Miles Bascombe, and Chairman of the Cricket Strategy and Officiating Committee, Enoch Lewis.

The final recommendation was based on a weighted scoring system across six key areas: leadership, respect within the team, cricket knowledge, personal conduct, media and communication skills, and the results of the psychometric evaluation.

The top-ranked candidates were recommended as captain and vice-captain and subsequently approved by the CWI Board. CWI President Dr. Kishore Shallow praised the integrity and innovation of the process.

“This selection process is one of the most comprehensive and forward-thinking we have undertaken. I am deeply impressed by the professionalism, objectivity, and strategic thinking that shaped the final decision. It sets a new benchmark for

leadership appointments in West Indies cricket.”

Head Coach Daren Sammy also expressed his strong support for the new captain.

“I fully endorse this appointment. Our new captain has earned the respect of his peers, understands the responsibility that comes with the role, and has shown the leadership qualities we need to take this team forward. I urge fans across the region to rally behind him—we’re building something special.”

These appointments signal a clear strategic direction for the Test team, reinforcing team culture and positioning the West Indies to compete more effectively on the global stage. CWI also sees this process as a model for future captaincy appointments across all formats.

Chase, 33, has featured in 49 Tests, scoring 2,265 runs at an average of 26.33, with five centuries to his name. His bowling contributions have also been significant, with standout performances such as his 8 for 60 against England in Barbados in January 2019, one of the best innings figures by a West Indian spinner in Test history.

His first outing as captain will be the “WI Home: Full Ah Energy” home series against Australia, with the first match at Kensington Oval in Barbados on June 25, 2025.

## Sammy eyes winning start as West Indies kick off tour in Ireland



### West Indies head coach Darren Sammy

West Indies head coach Darren Sammy is hopeful his team can launch their 2025 international campaign on a winning note as they gear up for the first of three One-Day Internationals (ODI) against Ireland in Dublin.

The series is set to bowl off on May 21 and continues on May 23 and May 25, before the team travels to England for another trio of ODIs and three T20 Internationals.

Fresh off their first training session since arriving in Ireland, Sammy expressed confidence in his squad's energy and focus, despite the five-month break since

their last outing against Bangladesh in December.

"First of all, it's good to be back on the job. We haven't played since December, so it is good to be in Ireland now, having our first practice and seeing the guys eager to go.

"Our mission hasn't changed; everything we've been building since 2023 is toward the 2027 World Cup, so we are still on that quest. There are little steps that we have to take to get there, and this assignment against Ireland is one," Sammy said.

While Ireland may not be among cricket's elite, Sammy knows all too well that their competitiveness—es-

pecially at home—demands respect and proper preparation.

"They are a team that has been very competitive over the years, especially against us. So we are not taking anything for granted in their own conditions, so it's good that we got here early to get acclimatised, and so far, I love what I see in the nets," he noted.

With Sherfane Rutherford and Romario Shepherd remaining in India to fulfil IPL playoff duties, Sammy believes their absence and, by extension, the Ireland series are a valuable chance to test new combinations. Rutherford was one of West Indies' top ODI performers last year.

"Looking at these two tours, it gives us an opportunity to see other players. We'll miss Sherfane; he was one of our ODI players of the year, and his contributions at number five were tremendous, but it gives us an opportunity to see someone else in that position un-

til they come back.

"This squad is packed with all-rounders who bring different skill sets, with players like Matthew Forde, Justin Greaves, and others who can cover that position for Romario Shepherd," the two-time T20 World Cup-winning captain stated.

That said, Sammy made no secret of the team's immediate ambition, which is to win the series and set a positive tone for the rest of the year. In fact, he believes success on this tour and against England will not only boost team morale but also provide key insights into squad depth.

"We're here to win. We have made home our fortress in the Caribbean in the ODI format, so we are looking to get wins overseas as well. This is our first series of 2025, and Ireland, like I said, is very competitive, and they are at home. But we have full confidence that we can come here and win the series against them," he ended.

### con't on pg 34

thorpes Lions qualified for the eliminator by virtue of finishing second and third, respectively, at the end of the preliminary round of matches.

Both teams finished with six points each, but Empire Nation finished second by virtue of beating the Lions when the two teams met in their preliminary round encounter.

The two finalists also shared a cash prize, donated by the Good Morning Jojo Sports Show, which is aired on

Observer Radio. Idea Media, owned and operated by Colin "Tin Tin" James, also donated a cash prize to the player of the final.

Hayden Walsh Jr. of the Blackhawks claimed the Most Valuable Player (MVP) award during the preliminary round. Walsh Jr., who had an average of 34.27, received a gift certificate sponsored by Mount Joy Service Station.

The outstanding performers in the preliminary stage were rewarded with

gift certificates sponsored by Automotive Arts.

Tyrone Williams of Empire Nation claimed the award for the most runs, with a tally of 199 at an average of 52.50. Blackhawks off-spinner Rahkeem Cornwall captured the award for the most wickets with 11 scalps at an average of 8.73.

Blackhawks wicketkeeper Joshua Thomas took the fielding award with a total of seven dismissals.



# Sports

FRIDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2025

## Blackhawks and Lions share Antigua T20 Premier League title

The PIC Liberta Blackhawks and the New Winthorpes Lions have to share the title of the inaugural Antigua and Barbuda T20 Premier League after the final was abandoned due to rain at Ball Beef in Liberta on Saturday.

Despite rainy conditions across the islands since Thursday, the ground staff, led by ex-Windies cricketer Kenneth “Flipper” Benjamin, worked tirelessly to get the final started on time at Ball Beef on Saturday.

However, only eight balls in the Lions’ reply to 138 for six off their 20 overs by the Blackhawks, the match was brought to an end by heavy rains, which continued well into the night.

The Blackhawks, who won the toss and batted, were unable to capitalize on a solid start by openers Kofi James and skipper Rahkeem “Jimbo” Cornwall.

The pair made a brisk start, adding 55 in 4.5 overs before James was dismissed by Ishmael Peters for 23 off 14 balls, including three fours and a six.

Cornwall followed seven balls later, removed by pacer Chad Hampson for a brisk 44 off 22 balls, including five fours and three sixes.

From there, the Blackhawks’ innings never really regained their earlier momentum, as their middle and lower-order batsmen were mostly kept under control by some disciplined bowling from the Lions.

Karima Gore struck 20 off 17 balls, Junior Henry hit 17 not out off 16 balls, Hayden Walsh Jr. made 13 off 23 balls, and Joshua Thomas scored 12 not out off 15 balls.



**Captain of Liberta Blackhawks’ Rahkeem Cornwall, left, and skipper of the New Winthorpes Lions Nino Henry, right, accept the trophy from Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda T20 Premier League Committee Dale Lawrence, center, during the presentation ceremony at Ball Beef in Liberta on Saturday, May 17, 2025. (Photo courtesy of Colin James/Antigua Independent Media)**

Orandel Boston captured two for 15, while Peters, Hampson, Ian Eusebe, and Anthony “Iroots” Martin each picked up a wicket.

Openers Jermaine Otto and Xanden Hobson were unbeaten on five and three, respectively, as the Lions reached eight without losing a wicket in 1.2 overs when the rain came and ended the final match abruptly.

The Blackhawks advanced to the final by virtue of finishing at the top

of the six-team round-robin preliminary round standings with a perfect 10 points after winning all five matches.

The New Winthorpes Lions booked their spot in the final by virtue of winning the single eliminator match by default against Empire Nations, who were unable to field a team due to the unavailability of several players because of work commitments.

Empire Nation and the New Win-

*con’t on pg 33*