

Local officials ecstatic over positive feedback from CHTA Tourism Marketplace

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Multiple meetings took place at CHTA Marketplace leading to what has been described as a very successful conference

Local officials ecstatic over positive feedback from CHTA Tourism Marketplace



Minister Fernandez Presents Token to CHTA President Sanovnik Destang

Local and regional officials are beaming with pride and a sense of accomplishment following Antigua and Barbuda's successful hosting of the 43th edition of Caribbean Tourism Marketplace, from May 19 to 22 at the AUA Conference Centre.

Tourism Minister Charles Fernandez said the reports that he has received all point to a very successful and productive engagement from key participants of the events, the buyers and sellers of Caribbean vacations.

"The vendors are all very happy; the buyers and everyone who have participated have said that it was an exceptional conference and that is something over which we are very proud," he reported.

Minister Fernandez also thanked the American University of Antigua for being 'a very good partner' with the hosting of the event and he also extended much appreciation to the dozens of volunteers who assisted with making the event the success that it turned out to be.

The tourism minister also expressed confidence that having successfully hosted CHTA Tourism Marketplace, that the country is making a bold move in going after the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE) segment of the tourism market.

"If you do it once, people may feel that it may have been luck or a fluke, but having this event where you have over eight hundred delegates you prove that it was not a fluke, that we are in a position to really make it work. It also puts us on the map for other MICE event," he declared.

Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority's Chief Executive Officer, Colin C. James was gushing with pride when he described CHTA Tourism Marketplace.

"There were more than 9-thousand meetings that took place during the several 2025 as 'phenomenal'. days of

Marketplace. Additionally, I was very pleased that we had over 43 media representatives who covered the event. I also received much commendation about *ArriveAntigua.com* which the visitors described as very easy to use," he noted.

James indicated that the ABTA expects to see a jump in tourism arrivals following the conference as studies show that each territory that has hosted the event see increases in arrivals because of the wide exposure which the country receives because of Marketplace.

CHTA President, Sanovnik Destang, said Antigua and Barbuda should be 'proud of itself' for pulling off a successful Tourism Marketplace as one of the smallest destinations to ever do so.

He noted that everything went well from the venue and its layout, to the quality of the meetings all of which went 'very well'.



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Prime Minister Browne Applauds Antigua and Barbuda's Use of Immersive Technology in Global Tourism Promotion



Prime Minister Gaston Browne along side Minister H. Charles Fernandez, Tourism Minister, President CHTA Sanovnik Destang and Winged Whale Media representatives



Prime Minister Gaston Browne experiences VR 360° Paradise" project

ST. Antigua and Barbuda continues to make waves in the global tourism industry, this time with an award-winning, cutting-edge marketing innovation that is positioning the destination at the forefront of immersive technology in travel.

Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne expressed high praise and admiration after experiencing the “Antigua and Barbuda Unveiled: A VR 360° Paradise” project, developed in partnership with Winged Whale Media. The project recently won a prestigious 2025 Telly Award in the category of Immersive & Mixed Reality – Craft: Use of 360 Video. Prime Minister Browne congratulated the creative team and Minister of Tourism, the Hon. Charles Fernandez, describing the technology as “a phenomenal marketing tool that not only showcases the natural beau-

ty and warmth of Antigua and Barbuda, but firmly cements our status as a premier destination through the lens of artificial intelligence and modern technology.” The immersive VR experience, which takes viewers on an awe-inspiring 360-degree journey through Antigua and Barbuda’s landscapes, heritage, and experiences, is the first of its kind in the Caribbean region. It is the result of a forward-thinking partnership between the Antigua and Barbuda Ministry of Tourism and the globally acclaimed Winged Whale Media, recognized internationally for its mastery in immersive storytelling and content creation.

Minister Fernandez, who was instrumental in the collaboration, noted, “Antigua and Barbuda is proud to be the first destination in the region to utilize such an ad-

vanced and immersive marketing tool. This not only speaks to our commitment to innovation in tourism marketing, but also aligns perfectly with Antigua’s growing reputation as a hub for technology and creativity.”

He further highlighted that the launch and success of this initiative comes at a time when Antigua and Barbuda is preparing to host the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus’ Annual Artificial Intelligence Conference next month. “This is a proud moment,” Minister Fernandez added. “The use of immersive technology such as this complements the national conversation on AI and innovation, especially as we explore how technology can revolutionize industries like tourism.”

The Prime Minister also took the opportunity to congratulate Minister Fernandez on the successful

hosting of CHTA Caribbean Travel Marketplace 2025, which brought together hundreds of tourism buyers and sellers from across the globe and highlighted Antigua and Barbuda’s growing influence in regional tourism leadership.

Winged Whale Media, the creative force behind the VR experience, continues to set global standards in immersive and mixed reality content. With an impressive portfolio and multiple international accolades, including Hermes Creative Gold, NYX Awards Gold, and the ECDO Award of Excellence, the company remains a driving force in transforming destination marketing through technology.

For more on the award-winning project, visit:

Telly Awards – Antigua & Barbuda Unveiled
LinkedIn Highlight – Ed Limon

Local News

Dominica Announces Tourism Developments at CHTA Marketplace 2025 in Antigua

The Discover Dominica Authority on Wednesday announced several major developments during a press conference held during the 43rd CHTA Marketplace 2025 in Antigua, reinforcing the Nature Island's commitment to sustainable growth and enhanced visitor access.

Discover Dominica Authority's CEO, Marva Williams, announced Dominica's groundbreaking cable car, the longest detachable cable car in the world at 6.6 kilometers, will officially open in December 2025. The project will connect the Roseau Valley to the iconic Boiling Lake in just 20 minutes, transforming what is currently a six-hour hike into an accessible rainforest experience. It has already generated more than 450 construction jobs and will sustain more than 150 permanent positions.

Additionally, Williams shared positive news regarding increased airlift to the destination. American Airlines will expand its service from Miami starting in August with six flights per week, scale back to two in September, then resume daily service in October, followed by an increase to eight weekly flights in November and December — marking a significant boost in U.S. connectivity to the island.

“Dominica continues to set itself apart in the Caribbean by investing in projects that expand access while preserving what makes the Nature Island so special,” said Williams. “We are redefining what it means to be a sustainable and green destination where nature is respected, where communities lead, where innovation fuels resilience, and where



Discover Dominica Authority's CEO, Marva Williams

every traveler is transformed by the journey.”

Additional destination updates shared during the press conference include:

- A **10-megawatt geothermal plant** is set to become operational by the end of 2025, supplying up to 50% of the country's peak electricity demand — dramatically lowering energy costs and carbon emissions.
- The **US \$201 million Cabrits Marina** will welcome vessels up to 150 feet and feature a marine village with dining, shopping, and cultural experiences — all developed with a strong focus on environmental stewardship.
- **Dominica's international air-**

port is now 40% complete and remains on track for completion in 2027. The 2,850-meter runway and climate-resilient terminal will support direct flights from North America and Europe, vastly expanding the island's visitor capacity.

“With our upcoming cable car, expanded airlift, and progress on renewable energy and infrastructure, we are not just building for today, we are creating a more sustainable, connected, and resilient future for generations to come,” continued Williams.

For more information, visit www.discoverdominica.com or follow [@DiscoverDominica](https://www.instagram.com/DiscoverDominica) on social media.

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Antigua and Barbuda opens an embassy in the United Arab Emirates



Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P. Chet Greene

Antigua and Barbuda marked a significant milestone in its diplomatic history with the official opening of an Embassy in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 21 May 2025. The move represents a commitment by the twin-island state to strengthening bilateral ties with the UAE and expanding the nation's footprint in the Gulf region and beyond.

The official opening ceremony was attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P. Chet Greene, and hosted

by Ambassador Gilbert Boustany, the country's first resident Ambassador to the UAE. The UAE was represented at the by its Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan and Minister of State for International Cooperation, Reem Al Hashimy, along with members of the diplomatic corps, government officials, and special invited guests.

Minister Greene, in delivering the feature address, hailed the opening as a landmark in Antigua and Barbuda's foreign relations agenda. "This is more than a ceremonial inauguration; it is a tangible declaration of our intent to forge lasting, meaningful ties with the United Arab Emirates," he said. He praised the UAE's transformational development and its leadership in areas such as sustainability, innovation, and global diplomacy — which have served as a beacon of inspiration for countries like Antigua and Barbuda.

"It is this spirit of ambition and resilience that we admire and strive to emulate," FA Minister Greene added.

Ambassador Boustany echoed the sentiment, describing the Embassy as a diplomatic bridge and a platform for partnership. Reflecting on over

a decade of relationship-building in the UAE, Ambassador Boustany expressed deep appreciation to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for its enduring friendship and support.

"This Embassy is more than a diplomatic mission. It is a gateway for strategic collaboration, cultural exchange, and shared innovation," said the Ambassador. "We envision a future of joint action — one that delivers real results for our people and advances mutual interests."

The establishment of this Embassy solidifies Antigua and Barbuda's commitment to global engagement and enhances its ability to support its citizens abroad. It is also a strategic step in positioning the country as a key partner in the Global South, connecting the Caribbean with the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

In attendance were senior officials from both governments and key partners in diplomacy, energy, and international trade. Special recognition was given to the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its instrumental role in facilitating the Embassy's launch, as well as to Vici Energy and other private sector supporters who contributed to making the event a success.



Local News

Minister Charles Fernandez Hosts Exclusive Tourism Leaders' Dinner at Jumby Bay



Minister Fernandez and Senator Guibion Ferdinand – Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Tourism, St. Lucia

On the sidelines of the 43rd Caribbean Travel Marketplace (CTM) 2025, Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation and Investment, the Hon. H. Charles Fernandez, hosted an intimate and elegant dinner at the world-renowned Jumby Bay Island. The evening brought together key regional tourism ministers and high-level industry stakeholders in celebration of the destination's successful hosting of the region's most prestigious tourism trade show and to foster deeper regional collaboration.

In attendance were the Ministers of Tourism from Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Anguilla, as well as key figures including the President of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), Mr. Sanovnik Destang; CEO of CHTA, Ms. Vanessa Ledesma; and other distinguished partners and executives across the re-

gional tourism landscape.

Minister Fernandez expressed heartfelt appreciation to his colleagues and industry leaders for their endorsement of Antigua and Barbuda's tourism product and for supporting the destination as host of CTM 2025. He emphasized the importance of deepening regional collaboration and solidarity, particularly as Caribbean nations continue to navigate global challenges and embrace innovation in tourism development.

Guests were treated to a refined evening of cultural elegance, featuring captivating live performances by two young Antiguan musical prodigies: celebrated saxophonist Lael Farrell and award-winning pannist Maurissa Potter. Their performances added a vibrant and uniquely local touch to the occasion, showcasing the depth of Antiguan talent and cultural richness.



Saxaphonist Lael Farell and Pannist Maurissa Potter



Minister Fernandez and Tourism Stakeholders

In a special moment during the evening, Minister Fernandez presented CHTA President Mr. Sanovnik Destang with a handcrafted mahogany boat replica, complete with sails fashioned from the national flag of Antigua and Barbuda, a symbolic token of appreciation from the Ministry of Tourism, celebrating both heritage and partnership.

President Destang, in his response, thanked Minister

Fernandez for the exclusive invitation and expressed admiration for the country's exceptional staging of CTM 2025. He noted that Antigua and Barbuda has set a new benchmark for excellence in regional tourism hosting.

The dinner served not only as a celebration of CTM's success but also as a reaffirmation of Antigua and Barbuda's role as a leader in Caribbean tourism, innovation, and hospitality.



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Minister of Health emphasizes investment in preventative care



Health Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph at CARPHA regional workshops

Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph, reaffirmed the government's commitment to improving preventative healthcare across the Caribbean during two major training initiatives hosted in collaboration with the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) at the Villa Community Centre over the past two weeks.

Speaking at the Training on the Monitoring of Growth and Development of Infants and Young Children in CARPHA Member States, Minister Joseph underscored the importance of early childhood growth monitoring in combating the rising rates of stunting, wasting, and childhood

obesity across the region.

"The health and wellbeing of our youngest citizens are the foundation upon which the future of our Caribbean nations rest," the Minister stated. "Growth monitoring is not a routine task — it is a life-saving, life-shaping practice. With the right training, equipment, and partnerships, we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to grow strong, healthy, and full of promise."

This workshop, which supports the application of the 2006 WHO Child Growth Standards, aims to strengthen the capacity of CARPHA Member States to collect, analyze, and act

on child nutrition data to inform policy and improve health outcomes.

In a related engagement, Minister Joseph delivered the keynote address at the Diabetes Management Training Workshop, emphasizing the urgent need for standardised, evidence-based care for individuals living with diabetes, a leading cause of death and disability in the Caribbean.

"This is not just a training workshop—it is a regional call to action," said the Minister. "Diabetes is largely preventable and manageable with the right tools, and this initiative empowers our healthcare

professionals to deliver consistent, high-quality care."

The workshop introduced the CARPHA Guidelines for the Management of Diabetes in Primary Care and the new Diabetes Nutritional Management Toolkit, both of which are intended to support front-line health workers and standardize care throughout the region.

"These efforts are about saving lives," the Minister noted. "Our Ministry is fully committed to integrating these standards into national health systems and empowering healthcare professionals to act confidently and compassionately."

Both training initiatives are part of a broader strategy to strengthen public health capacities in the Caribbean under a Subsidiary Agreement between CARPHA and PAHO.

Minister Joseph extended his gratitude to CARPHA, PAHO, and all healthcare workers involved, encouraging participants to continue being "agents of change" in their communities.

"We are building a healthier Caribbean together—child by child, patient by patient, and system by system."



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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Dr. Shivon Belle-Jarvis opens up about her personal experiences as an inspiration for other women



Group photo of Let's Talk growth women's business seminar

Medical Director of the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, Dr. Shivon Belle-Jarvis used her own personal life story and the many challenges she faced and how she was able to overcome them, as an inspiration to women in the society.

Dr. Belle-Jarvis was the featured speaker at a special Business Banking Forum – *Let's talk growth: The women's edition*, organized by CIBC Caribbean and held at Sandals Grande Resort on Wednesday. It was the second such event organized by the bank specifically targeting women entrepreneurs in Antigua and Barbuda.

"Today, I am hoping that by sharing my story with you, it would help you to recognize the importance of being vulnerable at some moment in time. I am here willing to open up the book of

my life to you because it is being vulnerable that we are able to; one, help others along and, two, be successful," she remarked.

She traced her life story from coming in the top three in the National Assessment and her parents deciding to have her continue her education at the Adventist School on the premise that as a critical thinker, she would excel wherever she is schooled.

With limited resources but powered by a strong faith in God, Dr. Belle-Jarvis completed her medical studies, including her specialization, a Master Degree in Public Health, and an upcoming graduation from another Master's Programme from the prestigious Harvard University, she has over the past year added entrepreneur to her many accolades.

Dr. Belle-Jarvis also revealed that when she was appointed to the post of Medical Director at SLBMC, she was offered a smaller salary than her predecessor, a male. She explained that she penned a letter to the appropriate authorities drawing to their attention the discrepancies in the salaries and asked that it be adjusted.

She was also often reminded that she had 'a big shoe to fill' to which she would retort, "I wear my own shoes... and if you haven't noticed, my shoes come with heels."

CIBC Caribbean Country Head, Ladesa James William, in her remarks, noted that the event represents more than a conversation - it's a testament of possibility, determination and the bold spirit of women who are building busi-

con't on page 11



Medical Director SLBMC, Dr. Shivon Belle-Jarvis

From page 10

ness and breaking barriers every day. “Women have always been central to the economic development, yet too often, their stories go unheard and their potential underutilized. Today, we shine a spotlight on these success stories, and we recognize the power of women to innovate, to create jobs and



Ambassador Kimberly Percival one of the presenters at the CIBC Women's Business Seminar

to lead businesses with both strength and care,” she added. In her welcome address, Corporate Manager, Julia Joseph, said the seminar is a central part of the bank's outreach to women in business at whatever level or stage in their development. “Whether you're a seasoned business



CIBC Caribbean Country Head, Ladesa James Williams

owner, an emerging entrepreneur or simply here to connect and learn, this is your space - your platform for insight, collaboration and growth,” she stated.

Nicola Barriteau-Quinn performed the role as host of the event.



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Disruption of Plant Protection Services Due to Unfavourable Conditions at Headquarters

The Plant Protection Division wishes to inform the general public that, due to ongoing unfavourable conditions at the headquarters building on Upper Corn Alley, there has been a temporary disruption in plant protection services. These conditions have significantly affected the health and well-being of our staff, and as a result, the Division is taking necessary precautions to ensure their safety.

Despite these unforeseen challenges, the Division remains steadfast in its man-



date to advise on and promote the safe trade of plants and plant products. We continue to explore alternative ways to support our stake-

holders and maintain our commitment to plant health, trade facilitation, and national biosecurity.

The public is further advised that collection of import permits for applications submitted up to Tuesday, May 20, 2025, will be facilitated on Thursday, May 22, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. at the usual location. Stakeholders are encouraged to collect their permits during this time window.

We sincerely thank the public for their patience and understanding as we work to resolve the situation. Further updates will be provided as necessary.



DAILY PROGRAMMING




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

Sandals treats local nurses to spa service

The Red Lane Spa in Sandals Grande Antigua Resort and Spa recently honoured the efforts of healthcare professionals through a unique wellness activity for nurses at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center (SLBMC).

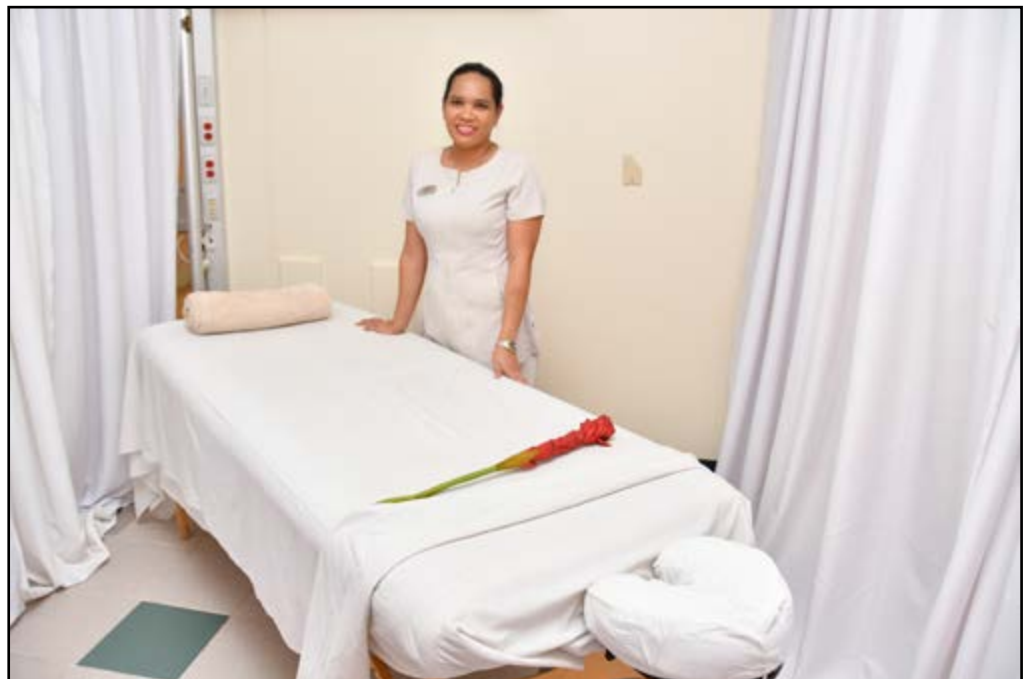
In line with their philosophy of “time, connection, and love,” the spa team, in full support of the resort’s executive management, organized an eight-hour massage event during Nurses Week 2025, which was celebrated under the theme “Our Nurses, Our Future – Caring for Nurses.”

This is the third time that Sandals has hosted this appreciation event, with this year seeing close to 30 nurses enjoying their spa treatments. Each participating nurse received a relaxing massage, which provided a well-deserved moment of rest and recharge.

“As nurses, we bend our backs a lot without even knowing it,” expressed Registered Nurse, Tiffinee Thomas. “So, to be able to experience this massage was a reset for myself and other nurses. Working long shifts and just the mechanical nature of the job itself can at times be a lot, so this was a well-deserved experience for which I am grateful to Sandals.”

First-time attendee Shennel Bailey, a Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit nurse, also felt the same, saying, “the therapist was so welcoming, so informative and put me at ease the entire time. I enjoyed every single moment of the session and will be back next year!”

The wellbeing of our healthcare professionals are of paramount im-



portance. Registered Nurse Jenica Williams emphasized this by stating, “I think it’s very important for nurses to take the time out from their busy schedules, no matter which department you work in, and take care of themselves. Nursing is a job that is very high stress; you have to put aside your own feelings and absorb the feelings of the patient, and if we

are not replenishing the energy that we are expending, we are guaranteed to be left with nothing.”

In addition to the massage sessions, the resort gifted two evening dinner passes for two to Director of Nursing Jacqueline Jno-Baptiste as part of the hospital’s exciting prize package for their annual Nurse’s Week recognition awards.

Local News



Intense search underway for those involved in a stolen vehicle incident

Police are searching for the suspects alleged to be involved in the theft of a motor vehicle that was parked on Wireless Road on Tuesday, May 20.

It was reported that around 2:20 p.m., the driver of a blue Honda Fit Motor car, registration number R5234, parked the said vehicle at the location, apparently leaving the keys in the igni-

tion. Upon returning, the vehicle was discovered missing.

The police conducted an extensive search for the vehicle and later recovered it in the Cassada Gardens area. It was subsequently towed to Police Headquarters for further investigations.

The Police Administration is once

again appealing to motorists to desist from the practice of leaving vehicles unattended and unsecured with keys in the ignition.

Anyone with information that may assist in this investigation is asked to contact the Criminal Investigations Department at 462-3913/14 or call Crimestoppers at 800-TIPS (8477).

New Winthorpe's man arrested for possession of modified flare-gun

Austin Robin of New Winthorpe's is in police custody following his arrest for possession of an illegal firearm and one round of ammunition.

Around 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 20, police officers were conducting routine patrols in the vicinity of the

West Bus Station near the Fisheries Complex when they observed certain suspicious activity.

The suspect was seen carrying bag with a modified flare gun and one (1) 9mm round of ammunition. He was arrested and taken into custody on suspicion of

Possession of a Firearm and Ammunition. Investigations into the matter are ongoing.

The police remain committed to their efforts to rid the streets of illegal weapons and are urging members of the public to continue co-operating with law enforcement to keep communities

safe.

Anyone with information related to this incident or any other illegal activity is encouraged to contact the Criminal Investigations Department at 462-3913 or call Crimestoppers at 800-TIPS (8477).

\$138,000 worth of cannabis seized at the airport

A significant quantity of cannabis valued at approximately \$138,000.00 was seized at the V.C. Bird International Airport.

On Tuesday, officers from the Narcotics Department and Customs officials carried out a joint drug operation at the Airport Cargo Shed, and during the operation, they dis-

covered a cardboard box containing twenty-three (23) vacuum-sealed packages of cannabis. The packages weighed a total of 23 pounds.

The controlled substance was confiscated and transported to Police Headquarters, as further investigations remain ongoing.

Law Enforcement Authorities re-

main committed to strengthening border security and combating the trafficking of illegal drugs into the country. Anyone with information that may assist in this investigation is urged to contact the Narcotics Department at 462-5150 or call Crimestoppers at 800-TIPS (8477).





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Early Bird General

House of Vibes

Showtime

\$100 | \$350 | 8PM



Regional News

Energy ministry pushes for recovery of Pete's remains

Energy Minister Roodal Moonilal says his ministry will continue to engage with Well Services to quicken its response in the recovery of the remains of missing rig worker Pete Phillip.

Speaking to the media yesterday following a tour of The University of the West Indies (UWI) Penal-Debe Campus, Moonilal said the ministry is seeking to bring closure to Phillip's family in the shortest time.

'Minister in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries Ernesto Kesar has met with Well Services and has had discussions concerning their ongoing work in that matter.

'I believe he is in contact as well with the family of Pete Phillip and in the coming days it is my intention to visit as well, but privately. I prefer not to visit with the media and so on,' he said.

He continued: 'And we are working with Well Services to see how they can progress that.

'I got the impression that since December to now, it has been very slow. It was very tardy in some cases and Minister Kesar has met and continues to meet, and we are putting a marker at where that company should be, and their response in a short time to resolve this matter in the interest of the family and their plight.

Two weeks ago, Moonilal had indicated he had



mandated Kesar to urgently convene a meeting with Well Services to recover the remains of Phillip, whose body has remained trapped under a collapsed offshore platform since December

On December 22, 2024, Phillip was one of 75 employees on Well Services Rig 110, when around 3.09 a.m. the rig suffered a partial collapse during drilling activities. His remains are yet to be retrieved, as the company has cited health and safety risks to personnel and a delay in sourcing specialised equipment to undertake salvage efforts.

On various occasions, Phillip's family has called for his employer to recover his

remains so that they can have closure.

Relatives say they continue to have difficulty coping with the situation, and have expressed frustration with the length of time it has taken the company to undertake salvage efforts.

The company had previously stated it had identified the location of Phillip's remains and that efforts were being made to have an international company assist in the recovery.

However, it later added that recovery efforts were delayed due to safety hazards. (Trinidad Express)




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DR authorities seize cocaine hidden in plastic pumpkins at port

Authorities in the Dominican Republic have intercepted 334 packages of what is believed to be cocaine hidden inside plastic replicas of pumpkins at the Multimodal Port Caucedo in Boca Chica.

According to officials, suspicious images were detected in two containers bound for Belgium with a final destination of Madrid, Spain.

In the first container, law enforcement discovered 239 packages, while 95 additional packages were found in the second container. All 334 packages were wrapped in black plastic and hidden inside plastic objects manufactured to resemble pumpkins.

All confiscated packages have been sent under chain of custody to the National Institute of Forensic Sciences (INACIF) to determine the exact type



and weight of the substance. (*Loop Caribbean*)

UN worried over deportation of pregnant Haitian women from DR

The Humanitarian Coordinator in Haiti, Ulrika Richardson, is warning that the deportations of Haitians from the Dominican Republic raise serious humanitarian and human rights concerns, particularly when they affect pregnant women or mothers with very young children.

“It is imperative that commitments to protecting vulnerable populations are upheld. These expulsions raise serious humanitarian and human rights concerns, particularly when they involve pregnant women or mothers with very young children,” said Richardson.

Stéphane Dujarric, the spokesperson for the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, said “our humanitarian colleagues in Haiti are deeply concerned about the growing number of pregnant and breastfeeding women being deported from the Do-

minican Republic to Haiti, which is in violation of international standards”.

He told the daily UN briefing here on Tuesday that “our partners at border crossings say they have assisted approximately 30 pregnant or breastfeeding women each day over the past month”.

Dujarric said figures provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) show that in total, nearly 20,000 people have been deported by land from the Dominican Republic to Haiti last month, a record high.

He said that Richardson is warning that the deportations raise serious humanitarian and human rights concerns, particularly when they affect pregnant women or mothers with very young children.

“She stressed that it is imperative that commitments made to protect vulner-

able people are respected,” Dujarric told reporters.

He said Haiti continues to face a complex humanitarian crisis, amid armed violence that continues to drive both displacement and hunger, with half the population, which is about 5.7 million people, facing acute food insecurity. Meanwhile, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Haiti is expressing “deep concern” over the rising number of pregnant and breastfeeding women being deported from the Dominican Republic to Haiti, in violation of international standards.

“The Humanitarian Country Team in Haiti calls for migration policies that uphold human dignity and urges enhanced regional solidarity to address a crisis that transcends borders and endangers the rights and lives of thousands.” (*Loop Caribbean*)

Regional News

Bahamas: Court jails stepfather for raping and impregnating daughter



Court has sentenced a 37-year-old man to 10 years in jail after he pleaded guilty to repeatedly raping his pre-teen stepdaughter, resulting in her pregnancy.

The court has also ordered that the man be on probation for two years after his release, with a breach of the order resulting in a one-year prison sentence.

The man, who has been in prison since his arrest in June 2024, pleaded guilty to unlawful sexual intercourse with a dependent and indecent assault when he appeared before Senior Justice Cheryl Grant-Thompson.

The court was told that the man began molesting the 12-year-old girl in August 2023 and frightened her into silence by telling her that he would kill her if she told anyone what he did.

On one occasion, the man gave his stepdaughter a vape to smoke, which made her black out. When she regained consciousness, the child realized that her underwear had been removed.

The court was also told that when the man realized that the girl was pregnant, he made her drink castor oil and Guinness, which made her vomit. He told her that he would take her to a doctor whom he trusted.

Before that could happen, the girl's mother confronted her daughter about her weight gain and swollen stomach, resulting in her disclosing that she had been sexually molested by her stepfather, who had threatened to kill her.

The matter was subsequently reported to the police.

As part of the plea agreement, the man received a concurrent sentence of eight years for indecent assault and will receive credit for the 11 months he spent on remand.

Meanwhile, a 23-year-old man was remanded to prison on Tuesday after

being accused of raping a 29-year-old British woman in a vehicle at the Princess Margaret Hospital parking lot on May 6.

The man appeared before Chief Magistrate Roberto Reckley on a rape charge and was not required to enter a plea during his arraignment. He was informed that the matter would be forwarded to the Supreme Court through a voluntary bill of indictment (VBI) that will be served on him on August 14.

The man was advised of his right to apply for bail through the higher court. (*Loop Caribbean*)



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Two top aides to Mexico City mayor shot dead by motorbike killers

Two top aides of Mexico City Mayor Clara Brugada were shot dead after being ambushed by gunmen on a motorbike in a daytime attack in the city center on Tuesday.

The victims were the mayor's private secretary, Ximena Guzmán, and an adviser to Brugada, José Muñoz, according to a statement from the city.

The assassinations have sent shockwaves through Mexico's capital, widely regarded as an oasis of relative security in a country plagued by violence. Political violence has become common in many parts of Mexico, where scores of local political candidates have been assassinated in killings usually linked to drug cartels seeking to exert influence.

Initial reports indicated Guzmán had been driving to work and stopped on a busy avenue in downtown Mexico City to pick up her colleague, an official at the federal prosecutor's office said.

Muñoz was approached by two gunmen on a motorbike who shot and killed him in the street. The attackers then fired at least four shots at Guzmán inside the vehicle, killing her.

Authorities have not yet given a motive for the attack although security experts say it appeared to be a hit carried out by organized crime.

Mexico City's civil security office said that a motorbike had been seized not far from attack, as well as another vehicle in the Iztacalco



neighborhood, while investigators were looking into ballistic and fingerprint evidence from the scene.

"I feel very sad for the loss of Ximena and Pepe (Jose), with whom for many years we shared dreams and struggles," a noticeably distressed Brugada said.

She thanked Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and her cabinet for the support and cooperation they had provided since the attack. Sheinbaum is a former mayor of Mexico City.

"It is a deplorable incident and we are going to give all the support that the mayor may need," Sheinbaum said.

Brugada added that there would be no impunity for those responsible for the killing. She was not in the car when the attack took place, a Mexico City government official told Reuters.

Photos in local media showed a black Audi with four bullet holes in

the front window and a sheet covering what appeared to be one body, while another body was covered with a white sheet on the pavement

Police patrols taped off the area so forensic specialists could examine the scene

"It was a harsh message sent to Clara (Brugada), undoubtedly perpetrated by drug traffickers," said David Saucedo, a public security specialist. Groups affected by drug seizures have previously launched attacks against the capital's authorities, he said.

In 2020 then Mexico City police chief Omar García Harfuch, now the federal security minister, was shot and injured in an assassination attempt that killed two of his bodyguards. That attack was blamed by him on one of the country's most powerful drug groups, the Jalisco New Generation Cartel. (*NBC News*)

Former New York state trooper pleads guilty to faking his own shooting



A former New York state trooper pleaded guilty Wednesday to charges that he shot himself then falsely claimed he was wounded by an unknown gunman on a Long Island highway, prompting a regionwide search.

Thomas Mascia agreed to serve six months in jail, followed by five months of probation and continued mental health treatment as he formally changed his not guilty plea during a court appearance in Nassau County court in Mineola.

He also agreed, as part of his plea deal, to pay \$289,000 in restitution for the overtime costs for officers during the three-day search for a non-existent suspect.

The West Hempstead resident had been charged with official misconduct, tampering with evidence and falsifying documents. He became a trooper in 2019 and resigned after being suspended without pay while state police launched a criminal investigation into the shooting.

Mascia's parents, Dorothy and Thomas, also pleaded guilty Wednesday to firearm charges related to the incident.

Mascia claimed he was shot in the leg on Oct. 30 by a driver parked on the shoulder of the Southern State Parkway, about a mile from his home.

The shooting prompted a massive search as the troop-

er said the suspect, who he claimed was a "dark-skinned" man, fled in a car bearing temporary New Jersey plates heading toward New York City

Instead, prosecutors say, Mascia shot himself in a local park, stashed the gun, drove to the highway and called for backup. They say the ruse was an apparent bid to gain attention and sympathy.

During Wednesday's proceedings, prosecutors asked the former trooper a series of questions confirming the sequence of events.

"You knew this was a lie and chose to do it anyway?" Jared Rosenblatt of the Nassau County district attorney's office asked at the end of the

questions.

"Yes," Mascia replied in a low voice.

The former trooper and his parents didn't respond to reporters as they left the courthouse with their lawyers. They're scheduled to be sentenced Aug. 20.

The family had appeared in court earlier this month to change their pleas, but the judge at the time halted the proceedings after the former trooper said he did not feel well mentally and that he was receiving treatment.

Jeffrey Lichtman, Mascia's lawyer, previously said the former trooper, who resigned in January, has been suffering from "untreated mental health issues" for years. (*NBC News*)

UK court orders singer Chris Brown freed on \$6.7 million bail in assault case



A British judge ordered Grammy-winning singer Chris Brown released on 5 million-pound (US\$6.7 million) bail on Wednesday while facing allegations he beat and seriously injured a music producer with a bottle in a London nightclub in 2023.

The decision by a judge in Southwark Crown Court revives Brown's world tour that was cast in doubt when another judge ordered him held in custody after he was charged last week with causing grievous bodily harm with intent.

Judge Tony Baumgartner said that Brown could continue with this tour, including several stops in the UK, but would have to pay the bail to guarantee his appearance in court.

Brown was initially scheduled to appear in court again on June 13.

If he had been held until then, Brown would have missed at least two dates on his upcoming tour, which starts next month in Europe.

Brown, 36, is accused of launching an unprovoked attack on producer Abe Diaw at the Tape nightclub in the swanky Mayfair neighbourhood in February 2023 while he was on last tour.

Prosecutor Hannah Nicholls said last week in Manchester Magistrates' Court that Brown struck Diaw several times with a bottle and then punched and kicked him in an attack caught on surveillance

camera in front of a club full of people.

American musician Omololu Akinlolu, 38, who performs under the name

"Hoody Baby" and is a friend of Brown, was also charged in the attack.

Neither Brown nor Akinlolu have entered a plea yet. Both men were ordered to appear in court again on June 20.

Brown, who burst onto the music scene as a teen in 2005, won his first Grammy for best R&B album in 2011 for "F.A.M.E." and then earned his second in the same category for "11:11 (Deluxe)" earlier this year.

His hits include songs such as "Run It," "Kiss Kiss" and "Without You."

His tour is due to kick off June 8 in Amsterdam before starting North America shows in July. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)



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Sports News



Flyers and Ovals Ojays take leads in ABBA's playoff finals



The two top seeds, EZ Fit Flyers and Cuties Ovals Ojays, have taken one-nil leads in their respective division finals in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) playoffs on Tuesday evening.

Both teams won the opening game of their respective best-of-five Division 1 and 2 playoff finals during a double-header at the JSC Sports Com-

plex.

Reigning league and defending Division 1 playoff champion, EZ Fit Flyers, notched up an 89-65 victory against second seed Total Imports EMC's Potters Steelers in Game 1 of the finals.

Adonis Humphreys, who sank 23 points and grabbed 15 rebounds, and Kenya Ahcom with 14 points, led the Flyers.

In support, Xavier Meade produced 12 points, 10 rebounds, and five assists; Alexis Jackson converted 11 points and snapped up 17 rebounds; and David Hernandez scored 11 points for the Flyers.

Jayden Andrew sank 22 points, and Cohen Desouza converted 13 points and grabbed 13 rebounds for the Potters Steelers.

The Ovals Ojays, who are also the reigning league champions, soared to a commanding 77-55 victory against second seed Navigators in Game 1 of

their Division 2 playoff finals.

Tajahron Davis shot a game-high 29 points and claimed six steals and five assists; Shaheim Omarde sank 14 points and grabbed 13 rebounds; Tequan Brodie converted 11 points; and Jayleyle Joseph contributed 10 points, 14 rebounds, and six steals for the Ovals Ojays.

Ariel Quallis produced 15 points, seven rebounds, seven assists, and seven steals; Ryan Shepherd scored 14 points and grabbed 15 rebounds; and Ricky Willock contributed nine points, six steals, and five rebounds for the Navigators.

The ABBA division finals will continue with Game 2 at the JSC Sports Complex on Thursday (today).

The Navigators and Cuties Ovals Ojays will clash at 6:45 pm, and the Potters Steelers will tackle the EZ Fit Flyers at 8:30 pm.

Archer out of ODI series with West Indies due to thumb injury

LONDON (AP) — England fast bowler Jofra Archer will miss the upcoming three-match ODI series against the West Indies because of a right thumb injury, the team said on Wednesday.

Archer "will be reassessed by the England medical team over the next fortnight to determine when he may return to action," it said.

Luke Wood has replaced Archer in the squad. The first match of the series is at Edgbaston on May 29.

Since bursting onto the international scene in 2019, Archer has struggled with elbow and back injuries.

However, as well as his commit-



ments in the Indian Premier League with Rajasthan Royals, Archer has featured in nine of England's 11 white-ball matches since the turn of the year.

The Royals elected against recalling the star paceman for the closing stages of the IPL after dropping out of contention to qualify for the knockout stage of the tournament.

Rajasthan Royals' Jofra Archer bowls a delivery during the Indian Premier League cricket match against Gujarat Titans at Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur, India, Monday, April 28, 2025. (AP)

West Indies crash to humbling ODI defeat to Ireland



Ireland's Andy Balbirnie celebrates after reaching his century against the West Indies at Castle Avenue in Dublin, Ireland, on Wednesday, May 21, 2025.

The West Indies began their tour of Ireland in disappointing fashion, crashing to a 124-run defeat in the opening One-Day International (ODI) at Castle Avenue on Wednesday, as Andy Balbirnie's classy century and a four-wicket haul from Barry McCarthy left the visitors reeling.

Chasing a formidable 304 for victory, the Windies were bowled out for 179 in just 34.1 overs, with only Roston Chase (55) and Matthew Forde (38) showing any real resistance in an otherwise lacklustre batting display.

The defeat marks a troubling start to the tour for a side seeking stability and momentum ahead of upcoming qualification events.

Earlier, Ireland posted a commanding 303 for 6 after winning the toss and electing to bat. Skipper Paul Stirling and Balbirnie laid the platform with a fluent 109-run opening stand, with Stirling striking 54 off 64 balls, including six fours and two sixes.

After Stirling fell to Chase in the 23rd over, Balbirnie took control, building key partnerships with Cade Carmichael (16) and Harry Tector, who accelerated the innings with a lively 56 off 51 balls.

Balbirnie's patient and composed 112 off 138 deliveries – laced with nine fours and four sixes – was the backbone of the innings and earned him Player of the Match honours.

Ireland added 54 runs in the final five overs despite a late burst from Matthew Forde, who was the pick of the West Indies bowlers with three for 68, including the wickets of Tector, Loran Tucker (30), and George Dockrell.

Alzarri Joseph chipped in with two for 51, but the rest of the attack struggled to contain the Irish batsmen.

In response, the West Indies suffered a top-order implosion that all but ended the contest within the first 10 overs. Evin Lewis was run out early for two, and a devastating spell from Barry McCarthy saw him remove Brandon King (19), Keacy Carty (6), Amir Jangoo (0), and Matthew Forde, finishing with figures of four for

32 in 7.1 overs.

West Indies captain Shai Hope was bowled by Thomas Mayes for just two, and the visitors slumped to 31 for five inside 10 overs.

A brief counterattack came from Justin Greaves, who blasted a 17-ball 35, including seven boundaries, before falling to Josh Little.

Roston Chase and Forde then added 98 runs for the seventh wicket, the only bright spark in an otherwise bleak innings.

But once Chase fell to Dockrell in the 32nd over, the end came quickly. Dockrell cleaned up the tail to finish with three for 21 from just two overs, including the wickets of Alzarri Joseph and Gudakesh Motie.

CWI, Apex renew long-standing partnership



West Indies batsmen Keacy Carty, left, and Brandon King, right, wearing the team's APEX-branded shirts during a match. (CWI Media)

Cricket West Indies (CWI) and Apex Group Limited have renewed their long-standing partnership ahead of the West Indies men's ODI and T20I series against Ireland and England.

With the tours running from May 21 to June 15, the Apex brand will once again feature prominently on the front of team shirts as they compete in six One Day Internationals and six T20 Internationals across Ireland and England. These two series mark the Caribbean side's return to international competition for the first time since December 2024.

Beyond brand visibility, the partnership also includes exciting fan and employee engagement initiatives. Selected Apex employees will enjoy exclusive access to team training sessions in Dublin and London, offering a behind-the-scenes experience with the

West Indies squad.

In addition, CWI and Apex will collaborate on the development of innovative digital content, spotlighting player performance and unique moments from the tour. This creative partnership aims to deepen fan engagement and amplify the reach of West Indies cricket across digital platforms.

Chris Dehring, CWI's Chief Executive Officer, welcomed the continued alliance, highlighting Apex's enduring commitment to West Indies cricket since the partnership began in 2021.

"Apex has proven to be an outstanding and consistent partner, aligning its global brand with the strength, passion, and legacy of West Indies cricket. Their continued investment reflects confidence in our team and our regional brand. With the Apex logo once again front and centre, we anticipate

significant global visibility and mutual value," said Dehring.

Peter Hughes, Apex Group's Founder and CEO, expressed delight at the continued partnership.

"We're pleased to renew our partnership with the West Indies cricket team, an iconic presence in global sport. This collaboration offers a unique opportunity to connect with diverse audiences internationally and celebrate our shared values of performance and resilience, while also supporting the Caribbean's next generation of talent. We look forward to some exciting matches and supporting the team throughout the upcoming tours," Hughes noted.

Cricket West Indies remains committed to driving the commercial growth of its iconic regional brand and looks forward to expanding its portfolio of international partnerships.

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Sports

THURSDAY 22ND MAY 2025

Antiguan teams return to contest 2024 ECVA U-21 Beach Volleyball Championships



Jassania Joseph (#1) and Jaya Carr (#2) comprised the Antigua and Barbuda's Under-21 women's volleyball team.

Khaliq Joseph (#1) and Miguel Pena-Lugo (#2) comprised the Antigua and Barbuda's Under-21 men's volleyball team. (Photos courtesy of the ABAVA)

The two teams that contested last year's event will return to represent Antigua and Barbuda at the 2025 Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association (ECVA) Under-21 Beach Volleyball Championships in St. Kitts next month.

The female team comprised Jassania Joseph and Jaya Isaac Carr, and the male team consisted of Khaliq Joseph and Miguel Lena Lugo.

The two teams have once again been chosen by the Antigua and Barbuda Volleyball Association (ABVA) to participate in this year's beach competitions, which will once again take place at Marriott Beach in St. Kitts from June 6 to 8.

Both teams will be hoping to improve on their performances at last year's

event. Antigua and Barbuda claimed third place in the men's competition in 2024.

The Antigua duo of Joseph and Pena-Lugo captured bronze after prevailing 2-0 (21-17 and 21-16) against Kibose Hamilton and Zerrick Walcott of Grenada in the playoff for third place.

Joseph and Lugo missed out on a place in the final after losing 2-0 (11-21 and 17-21) in the semi-finals to eventual men's champion Bill Frederick and Mervin Mingo of Dominica.

Antigua and Barbuda's team of Jaya Carr and Jassania Joseph finished fourth in the women's segment at last year's ECVA Under-21 Championships.

Carr and Joseph forfeited their match in the playoff for third place to Bermuda's duo of Isabella Sousa and

Hailey Trott.

The Antiguan female duo missed out on reaching the final after losing in the semi-finals, going under 2-0 (21-18, 21-17) against eventual champion Lavesha Richardson and Deandra Flemming of Anguilla.

This year, St. Kitts will once again welcome the region's top junior beach volleyball talent as it hosts the 2025 ECVA Under-21 Beach Volleyball Championships.

This is the third consecutive year St. Kitts and Nevis has been selected as the host nation for this prestigious tournament. The 2025 high-profile sub-regional beach tournament will bring together several teams from 10 countries, one less than last year. Saba, which con-

tested last year's event, will not return to participate this year.

However, the high level of participation at this year's event highlights the growing importance of beach volleyball across the Eastern Caribbean and ECVA's ongoing efforts to foster youth athletic development.

As the host nation, St. Kitts and Nevis will once again field three male and three female teams, benefiting from the privilege extended to the host country.

Countries set to compete are Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St. Lucia, Grenada, the British Virgin Islands, St. Eustatius, Bermuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Anguilla, and host St. Kitts and Nevis.