

# Government wants to regulate vending at the Woods Centre

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**Vending area at Woods Centre**



## Government wants to regulate vending at the Woods Centre



Minister of Social and Urban Transformation, Rawdon Turner, is inviting vendors who operate their businesses near the Woods Centre to meeting next week to discuss issues re-

garding their operation.

On Tuesday, the Minister paid a in-person visit to the area and handed out a letter of invitation to the vendors urging them to attend the meeting. "What works for

one person may not work for the other, so there needs to be an open discussion on the way forward regarding the vending. I don't want to come and design something or offer any solution

without engaging the vendors. There is room for significant improvement and I want to have that discussion with every person who makes a living here so

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*con't from pg 2*

that we can come to an understanding and find solutions to the situation here because in all honesty, we cannot continue like this," he remarked.

The letter from the minister reads: "You are invited

*to a meeting on Monday, 2nd June 2025, at 10:00 AM in the Conference Room of the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation, located on Friars Hill Road.*

*This meeting has been called to discuss the cur-*



*rent state of the informal vendor area at Woods Pond. As you are aware, the condition of the space has raised concerns from various quarters, including public health, safety, and aesthetics. It is important that we have an open dialogue about these concerns and explore possible next steps together.*

*Your presence and input are highly valued, and we look forward to a constructive and respectful exchange.*

*Thank you for your atten-*

*tion and cooperation."*

Already, several of the vendors have expressed a willingness to work along with the minister in his efforts to uplift the standard of vending in the area noting that they too are concerned about many of the things raised by the minister.

According to Minister Turner there are no firm plans for the area, but he wants to have the input from the vendors so that these can inform whatever decisions are finally agreed upon.



# Nationals to get a chance to own part of the Fort Barrington project



**Tourism Minister Charles Fernandez**

The planned development to turn the Fort Barrington area into a cultural tourist attraction, will see Antigua and Barbuda nationals getting a part of the ownership of the project.

A Jamaican company, Chukka Caribbean Adventures, has received the greenlight from the government to undertake the project with an estimated US\$5 million investment.

Tourism Minister Charles Fernandez has announced that the government has asked that twenty-percent of the ownership must be reserved for local involvement. This is part of the government's drive to encourage local investment in tourism and similar projects.

Fernandez said representatives from



the company were in St. John's last week for discussions with the government and he expects work to commence shortly. He noted that the architects are also here working on the conceptual and other drawings.

The tourism minister underscored the authenticity of the company, noting that they recently took over the management of 'The Caves' in Barbados. "For them (the Barbados government) to sign over the control of The Caves, tells you that this is a serious company," he stated.

He also announced that Chukka Caribbean Adventures have been having discussions with archaeologist, Dr. Reginald Murphy, as the government is keen on having the historic and other features of the area preserved.

Fernandez confirmed that construction is set to begin shortly, with the initial phase expected to open by November or December. He attributed early delays to tidal measurement discrepancies, which have since been resolved.

The US\$5 million project will transform the historic Goat Hill site into an entertainment and adventure park, combining heritage preservation with enhanced access to its beach and nearby caves.

**Chukka Caribbean Adventures**, a leading Jamaican nature-tour operator, has a track record of developing major attractions across the region. The Fort Barrington initiative marks its latest expansion, aiming to boost both tourism and local engagement.



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## GARD Centre launches second phase of hydroponic project at Pares Secondary



The project where the Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development (GARD) Centre is providing funding for neighbouring schools to undertake hydroponic initiatives is now into the

second phase at the Pares Secondary School.

On Tuesday, Executive Director of the GARD Centre, June Jackson, was on hand as students and agricultural sci-

ence teachers at the school officially launched the system where recycled water is being used to produce lettuce.

“This is the second phase of the project that we launched several weeks ago where a donor agency provided the funds to install the systems at the Pares Secondary, Glanville’s Secondary and prisoners involved the rehabilitation programme. Today, we are now going to see the hydroponic unit being put into use with the assistance of Adrian Bowen, the facilitator who conducted the training on how to construct the system from the ground up,” she remarked.

Jackson reminded the students of the importance of monitoring the system





and the need for record-keeping as this is part of the project and one of the requirements of the ministry of agriculture.

Agricultural Science teacher, Andrea Edwards-Browne explained that one of the requirements for inclusion in the project was that the students had to be intimately involved in all phases of the project. “We got our students from third to fifth form together and went off to GARD Centre for training so that we could be part of technology in agriculture, this hydroponic system. We are proud that Pares Secondary is one of the first schools on the island to have a working hydroponic system that has been gifted to us by the GARD Centre and the donor agency, GIF,” she stated.

Principal of the school, Letitia Lawrence, who signed the agreement on behalf of the school when the project was launched earlier, expressed her appreciation to the GARD Centre for the gift of the hydroponics unit. “It is not only going to be a tool, it also symbolizes progress, it’s a symbol of innovation, it’s an avenue through which we see our students being equipped

with vital tools and skills that will enable them to engage in a fast-paced changing world of technology and innovating so we are very grateful to the GARD Centre and to GIF for this



initiative,” she emphasized.

Representative from the Ministry of Agriculture, Carol-Faye George, offered words of encouragement to the students to continue to work along with the agricultural science teachers as the country moves towards achieving food security and food sovereignty.

Project Facilitator, Adrian Bowen said it is important that there are structures in place to accommodate teaching agricultural science in the schools. He said the hydroponic system serves that purpose.



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# ECAB Aspiring Leaders Scholarship Officially Launches

The Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank (ECAB) has officially launched the ECAB Aspiring Leaders Scholarship, during a ceremony held on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Five Islands Campus.

This is a groundbreaking scholarship program, the first of its kind from a private financial institution in Antigua and Barbuda, offering full tuition coverage for the duration of the recipient's three-year undergraduate studies at the UWI Five Islands Campus. The scholarship will also cover ancillary expenses, such as guild and student ID fees, as well as textbook costs for the first year. To further support the recipient's professional development, the awardee will also be afforded an eight (8) week internship at ECAB during the final year of study.

The ECAB Aspiring Leaders Scholarship is open to students pursuing undergraduate degrees within the School of Business & Management and the School of Science, Computing & Artificial Intelligence and is aimed at nurturing the next generation of leaders.

The scholarship will be awarded annually to one outstanding student between the ages of 17 and 25 based on academic excellence, financial need, and personal character. The initiative is a reflection of ECAB's commitment to national development through investment in youth and education.

Speaking at the launch, ECAB Chief Executive Officer, Michael Spencer, emphasized the importance of private sector involvement in nation-building:

"The Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank believes in investing in our future, and we affirm there is no better way to show our commitment to this than through educating our young people"

Professor Justin Robinson, Principal

of the UWI Five Islands Campus, emphasized the importance of the initiative:

"There is a reason why there is a UWI Campus in Antigua. Within the Americas, the Eastern Caribbean ranks at the bottom for higher-level tertiary enrolment. This partnership with ECAB will help to correct this and change the trajectory."

The Minister of Education, Daryll Matthew also supported the scholarship, calling it "life-changing." He said:

"It is fitting that this initiative is called the ECAB Aspiring Leaders Scholarship. Sometimes, we believe that leadership happens by accident, but we need to be intentional in creating opportunities that hone leadership abilities."

For more details about the scholarship, eligibility criteria, and application process, visit [www.ecabank.com](http://www.ecabank.com). Applications should be submitted via email to [scholarship@ecabank.com](mailto:scholarship@ecabank.com). The deadline for submissions is June 30, 2025.

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Dated the 2nd day of May 2025

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# VCBIA's Terminal B to play role in homeporting

The Old Terminal Building at the VC Bird International Airport, now called Terminal B, will play a major role in the country's increased venture into homeporting.

According to the Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez, the government is currently carrying out repair and upgrade work on the terminal as there are plans to re-purpose the facility that has largely been idle to passenger movement since the opening of the new terminal, Terminal A, almost ten years ago.

"They are working feverishly on the Old Terminal because there is where we are going to be moving the passengers who arrive here aboard charters to begin their cruises as part of homeporting. Everything is being put in place to ensure that we are ready for the 2025-26 cruise season which begins in October," he reported.

Minister Fernandez explained that work on the roof is scheduled for completion at the end of this week with the work on renovating the interior slated to commence as soon as the roof is completed.

More than 20-thousand passengers started their cruises here in Antigua and Barbuda after arriving via air charters as part of homeporting for the 2024-25 season and already, the Antigua Cruise Port is predicting that this figure will likely increase for the upcoming season.




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## THE UWI FIVE ISLANDS CAMPUS OECS BUDGET WATCH 2025 “DEBT, DEFICITS, AND DISCIPLINE: WHO’S BALANCING THEIR BUDGETS IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN?”

By Professor C. Justin Robinson

*Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal, UWI Five Islands Campus*

Budgets are moral documents, economists say. They show what governments can afford and what they care about. In 2025, some Eastern Caribbean nations send a clear message: **we will spend now and worry later**. Others are buckling down, with hard choices and tighter belts.

### The Fiscal Straight-A Students

**Antigua and Barbuda** and **Grenada** are at the top of the fiscal class. Antigua recorded a **primary surplus of 3.5% of GDP in 2024** and aims for another in 2025. The overall budget balance for 2025 is a surplus of **1.3%**, a rare feat in the region. Grenada stunned the area in 2024 with a **jaw-dropping 11.3% primary surplus**. In 2025, Hurricane Beryl pushed the government into a rare deficit year. However, the budget still reflects a measured loosening: a **primary deficit of 5.1%** as they rebuild—and then back to surpluses from 2026. **Saint Lucia** is playing it safe—modest deficits, steady primary surpluses, and full compliance with its Fiscal Responsibility Act. In 2025, it projects a **0.5% primary surplus** and keeps its deficit under **3%**.

### The Fiscal Tightrope Walkers

**St. Kitts and Nevis** had a rough 2024 with a **10–11% overall deficit**, caused by collapsing CBI revenues. However, the 2025 budget is a comeback attempt: the deficit is projected to shrink to **just 1% of GDP**, with hopes of restoring a primary surplus. **Dominica** is in transition—still investing big but slowing down enough to hit a **nearly balanced primary budget** in 2025 (surplus of 0.1%).

### The Fiscal Risk-Takers

**St. Vincent and the Grenadines** is borrowing big. Its 2025 budget deficit is expected to hit a staggering **21% of GDP**—by far the region’s largest. Post-hurricane reconstruction and the \$600+ million Kingstown Port project are driving this spending spree. Debt is now pushing **95% of GDP**. The government says it is “transformational.” The opposition calls it “reckless.” Time—and growth—will tell who is right.

### Debt-to-GDP: Who’s Closest to the 60% ECCU Target?

Country	Debt-to-GDP (2025 projected)
St. Kitts & Nevis	51.8%
Antigua & Barbuda	~62%
Grenada	71.4%
Saint Lucia	~74%
St. Vincent & Gren.	~95%
Dominica	~100%

**Takeaway:** Fiscal discipline is making a comeback in Antigua, Grenada, and Saint Lucia. Others are betting that massive public investment will pay off—eventually. But in the meantime, **debt levels are diverging sharply**, raising big questions for 2026.



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That waste in our culture should no more be heard.

We handed out flyers, gave kids a green badge,  
Helped vendors reduce their disposable stash.  
We sorted the trash with rhythm and pride,  
And taught that the earth walks right by our side.



Each bottle collected, each can in its place,  
Was a win for the planet, a greener embrace.  
And crowds cheered us on as we passed in our gear,  
For it's clear now—the message is starting to steer.

We rhyme and resolve as we answer the call,  
To protect what we love—our oceans, our all.  
But we can't do it solo, we now ask of you:  
Will your next event go eco-friendly too?



Let's build a new standard, let's all take a stand,  
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No more plastic confetti to fly with the breeze,  
No more foam plates tossed with casual ease.  
We're calling on planners, on DJs, on crews—  
Let's choose a green path in the choices we choose.



So weddings, conventions, or picnics in parks—  
Let's light up the world without leaving dark marks.

Let's compost the scraps, let's ban single-use,  
Let's party with purpose, not waste or abuse.



A better tomorrow is built in today,  
With every green step that we take on the way.  
So next time you gather with music and cheer,  
Let the Earth know you care, loud enough for all to hear.

**Join the revolution—make eco your theme,  
And power your party with one Green Team!**



# Cuban official responds to campaign of misinformation

The following is an almost exhaustive analysis of the main lies, half-truths and inconsistencies in the press conference given by Mike Hammer, chief of mission of the U.S. Embassy in Cuba, on May 22, 2025 in Miami, with emphasis on the following elements:

## Falsehoods and half-truths in the economic diagnosis 2.

“The revolution has failed. There is no electricity, shortages of fuel, food and medicine. And this has nothing to do with any U.S. policy.”

- False: U.S. sanctions against Cuba – known as the blockade – have a direct and severe impact on access to financing, technology, inputs and medicines, and are recognized even by the UN as a central obstacle to Cuban development.

- Deliberate omission: It does not mention that the blockade prohibits international banking operations with Cuba, penalizes ships docking in Cuban ports, and hinders the purchase of fuels among hundreds of coercive measures.

- Manipulation: Although it is true that there is an economic crisis, blaming the Cuban government exclusively is an over simplification that ignores the multidimensional economic war imposed from Washington.

## 2. Political manipulation and attempted whitewashing of interference.

“I go out to meet with the people as I did in other countries. There is nothing in the Vienna Convention that prevents it.”

- Deceptive: The Vienna Convention expressly prohibits interference in internal affairs of the host country (Art. 41), which includes systematic contacts with the opposition or support for destabilizing actors.

- Obvious hypocrisy: If a Cuban dip-



**Mike Hammer, chief of mission of the U.S. Embassy in Cuba**

lomat were to make similar tours in the U.S., meeting with opponents and groups critical of the Biden or Trump administration, he or she would be declared persona non grata and expelled.

- Implicit lie: Claiming that such meetings are “with anyone” and “without interference” masks a soft destabilization strategy common in regime change operations.

## 3. Whitewashing of destabilizing figures

“I visit artists, young people, relatives of political prisoners such as Luis Manuel Alcántara, Miquel Osorbo, José Daniel Ferrer...”

- Discursive manipulation: figures financed directly or indirectly by the U.S. are presented as victims of the “regime”, hiding the fact that they have openly called for subversion, sabotage or violent acts.

- Lies by omission: Does not recognize that several of these figures have previous criminal records or have committed criminal offenses even outside the political sphere.

## 4. Blatant lie about the embargo

“The embargo allows food and medicine.”

- False in practice: although there are legal exceptions, the licensing system, financial persecution and fear of secondary sanctions prevent banks, shipping companies and/or companies from selling freely to Cuba, even food or medicines.

- Cynical: It minimizes the effects of a coercive policy that includes sanctions to third countries, persecution of trans-actions and energy asphyxiation.

## 5. Diplomatic inconsistency and propaganda.

“The Trump administration’s policy is clear: tough policy against the regime, support for the people.”

- Dangerous contradiction: “support for the people” includes sanctions that aggravate the daily hardships of the Cuban people.

- Rhetorical falsehood: There is no such thing as “support for the people” when remittances are blocked, consulates are closed, family reunification is hindered and trade with Cuba is criminalized.



## 6. Encouraging irregular migration.

“All Cubans tell me they want to come to the U.S., they love our culture.”

- Self-serving narrative: exaggerates migration perception as if it were widespread desire, rather than the result of a crisis induced by US stifling and disinformation measures.

- Selective attraction strategy: The U.S. has actively encouraged migration to erode the socialist project, generating a brain drain and putting pressure on the political system.

## 7. Hypocrisy on the issue of the press.

“In Cuba there is no freedom of the press, the independent media tell the truth.”

- Gross manipulation: Many of the “independent media” are directly financed by the U.S. or its agencies such as NED and USAID, which makes them extensions of U.S. foreign policy, not free press.

- Silence on U.S. repression: No mention of repression and censorship of progressive or pro-Cuba media on U.S. digital platforms and traditional media.

### Conclusion:

Mike Hammer’s intervention was not a neutral press conference, but a carefully designed political operation to:

- Install a failed state discourse on Cuba,
- Legitimize diplomatic interference as “solidarity”,
- Whitewash U.S. sanctions and take



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no responsibility for the blockade,

- Reinforce figures of the counterrevolution financed by Washington as legitimate spokespersons,

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# Opinion

## The Unfortunate Demise of Caribbean Airport Services Ltd.



**Lesroy Browne**

Caribbean Airport Services Ltd. (CAS) was established in 2002 as a wholly owned subsidiary company of LIAT (1974) Ltd. Mr. Garry Cullen who was the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of LIAT at the time, decided to set up the separate business unit as a strategy to reduce the number of employees on the LIAT payroll in Antigua. Additionally, the plan was to find a successful ground handling company to invest in the new company through the acquisition of shares and put LIAT in a position to benefit from the profits that were likely to be generated from CAS.

After courting several local, regional and international ground handling companies including Airport Services (Antigua) Ltd. (ASA), Menzies Aviation, and Servisair which showed interest and took on a management contract, Seawell Air Services Ltd. (SAS) a ground handling company in Barbados acquired 49% shareholding in December 2003 and became responsible for the day-to-day management of the company through a management agreement.

Apart from providing Ramp and Passenger handling services for LIAT which accounted for the lion's share of CAS's operation, the company



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'inherited' the handling agreements that LIAT had with Air Canada and British West Indies Airways Ltd, (BWIA). In the early years of the CAS operation, LIAT provided HR/ Payroll and equipment maintenance support to complement the SAS day-to-day management.

The CAS customer base grew steadily and by 2009, CAS was providing ground handling service to eleven carriers including American Airlines and American Eagle. LIAT, however, continued to be the main customer, generating over 60% of the company's revenue. In 2012, CAS took over the cargo handling operation from LIAT and became the only ground handler in Antigua that offered Passenger, Ramp and Cargo handling services. CAS became the preferred ground handler in Antigua and obtained most of the handling agreements with carriers which subsequently started an operation into Antigua. CAS got WestJet Airlines when they started in October 2012 and obtained the handling of Jet Blue when that carrier started an operation into Antigua in 2015.

The CAS operation was by that time holding its own; but unfortunately, its majority shareholder – LIAT (1974) Ltd. was experiencing serious losses and was defaulting from as early as 2012 on the payments to CAS for the provision of handling services. Over an eight-year period, the debt climbed into millions.

The indebtedness of LIAT to CAS, resulted in cash flow difficulties for

CAS and the company in turn defaulted on payments to the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority (ABAA). By the end of 2020, CAS owed ABAA approximately seventy-five per cent (75%) of the amount LIAT owed to CAS. In 2019 Massy of Trinidad which was then the owner of Seawell Air Services sold Seawell Air Services (Barbados) Ltd to the Goddards Catering Group (GCG) and offered to sell the SAS 49% shareholding in CAS to LIAT for EC\$1.00. The offer was not taken up by LIAT.

By the beginning of 2020, CAS employed a total of one hundred and forty-seven people. The Covid-19 pandemic, which brought about the suspension of most airline operations into Antigua resulted in CAS having to lay off workers and was forced to dismiss ninety-three employees. Due to financial constraints the company was unable to honor the severance obligations. The majority shareholder LIAT (1974) Ltd. was also affected by the pandemic and ceased its operation. The LIAT story is well known and as the majority shareholder of CAS; the survival of CAS was always in doubt.

Notwithstanding the situation, CAS was the first ground handler to resume handling services after the pandemic shutdown and in 2021 Goddards Catering Group (GCG) expressed an interest in purchasing the assets of CAS. Also, through the assistance of GCG, CAS won its bid to provide ground-handling services to Virgin

**Con't on page 17**



## From page 16

Atlantic Airways. Without the requisite ground handling equipment CAS entered into a lease agreement with GCG for the provision of the equipment. The lease agreement eventually proved to be quite costly to CAS. The GCG proposal to acquire an interest in CAS was not, however, approved by the LIAT Court appointed Administrator. Also in 2021, Massy once again offered to sell the SAS 49% shareholding in CAS to LIAT for EC\$1.00 and to contribute 49% of the outstanding severance liability. The offer was not accepted by the Court appointed LIAT Administrator.

In December 2021 members of the CAS Board of Directors met with the Prime Minister to outline the ongoing and serious issues of the company, but no resolution was agreed. The various issues arising with LIAT were the focus of the government's concern.

In August 2022, ABAA filed a suit in the High Court against CAS for the monies owing. The debt to ABAA coupled with the severance liability and with no hope of getting the money owed by LIAT, resulted in the company's liabilities far exceeding the assets. The CAS Board of Directors unanimously agreed that CAS was trading illegally and should be wound up. The winding up of the company required the Shareholders' approval; but the majority shareholder was unable to agree on that course of action without approval from the Court.

It became clear that Massy wanted to end its relationship with CAS, so a small group of CAS employees formed a company and in 2023 discussed with Massy the purchase of the SAS 49% shareholding in CAS. Massy initially 'warmed' to the idea and was considering giving up the shares for EC\$1.00 and contribute 49% of the outstanding severance li-

ability as well as 49% of the cost of severing the current employees. LIAT in the meantime had indicated that its operation would cease in January 2024, so Massy decided that its preferred course of action was to legally obtain the governance of CAS as the minority shareholder and liquidate the company.

Despite the uncertainty of CAS over the last few years the company was able to secure a small operating profit for the years ending 2022, 2023 and 2024 and delivered an elevated level

of service to all its customers to the end which came on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Before closing the company facilitated smooth and seamless transfer of the various carrier's business to the other ground handling companies.

An unfortunate end indeed for a company that was once at the pinnacle of the ground handling business in Antigua and was able under the circumstances to generate profits in the last three years of its operation.

Lesroy Browne

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# Regional News



## SVG: Triple murder accused tells police to get their investigations right

A 25-year-old man accused of killing three people and attempting to kill three others last weekend on Monday urged police to make sure they get their investigations “right.”

Kesroy Ryan appeared before Chief Magistrate Colin John on charges that he killed Lesline Davis, Demeon Cumberbatch, and Joel Browne in Belmont, east of here, on Friday, May 16. Ryan is also accused of attempting to murder Bancroft Abbott, Lorna Davis, and Hayden Ballantyne, all of Belmont, during the same incident.

Ryan was not allowed to plead to the indictable



charges, and bail was not available to him on the murder charges. While bail is allowed for attempted murder, the magistrate said that providing bail to Ryan would be cosmetic, as Ryan would still be remanded on

the murder charges.

His attorney, Michelle Fife, said she was not making a bail application as the prosecution requested that Ryan be remanded in custody until June 2 for a status hearing.

As he left the court building, Ryan told reporters that he hopes police do their investigation “right.”

“Tell them do their investigation right,” Ryan said in an unsolicited comment as police escorted him from the Serious Offences Court.

Acting Assistant Commissioner of Police Trevor “Buju” Bailey, who is leading the investigation, had earlier told a news conference that the investigation into the killings continues and more charges are likely to be laid.

He said, however, that Ryan was the only person in custody in connection with the killings. (*Loop Caribbean*)



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



# Regional News

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## Haiti government accused of abandoning injured journalist in Cuba



The media organization SOS Journalistes on Friday “strongly condemned” what it termed the attitude of the Transitional Presidential Council (CPT) and the government of Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé in “abandoning” journalist Jocelyn Justin, who is due to undergo surgery in Cuba.

“Once again, and unfortunately, the authorities have failed to fulfill their commitments, including the one made very recently, to provide the ailing journalist with accommodations in

Cuba, food, and medical expenses, essential for his recovery,” SOS Journalistes said in a statement.

Justin’s lower jaw was shattered by bullets fired by gangs during violent incidents on December 24, 2024, near the General Hospital. The attack left three people dead, including two journalists, and 10 others injured.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has since called for urgent action by the CPT, with international support, to protect journalists and the right to information.

SOS Journalistes says it does not understand the “behaviour of the executive authorities, who appear to be acting in bad faith in the case of Justin, who finds himself in a very delicate situation in Cuba.”

“Just a few days ago, the government assured SOS Journalistes that everything necessary would be done to ensure the journalist received all the assistance his case required,” the me-

dia group said, noting that the injured journalist needs less than US\$2,000 to cover the cost of the remainder of his medical stay in Cuba.

“The government cannot claim that it lacks the means to meet this requirement,” SOS Journalistes said, adding that it “regrets having to revisit this issue, which we thought had been resolved.”

“SOS Journalistes calls on the Transitional Presidential Council and the government of Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé to honor their commitments and act immediately to remedy this problem, allowing the journalist to receive treatment, food, and the purchase of the medication he needs,” it said.

RSF said that journalism in Haiti is beset by an unprecedented crisis, marked by extreme criminal violence that has intensified since 2022, when at least six journalists were killed in connection with their work. (*Loop Caribbean*)



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# Regional News



## AG: Govt moving quickly

Attorney General John Jeremie says Trinidad and Tobago will be the first country in the Caribbean to implement Stand Your Ground legislation, which will give homeowners the legal right to protect themselves and their property using deadly force in self-defence.

The AG acknowledged that while the law may be seen as “draconian,” he says it is necessary to deal with criminals, and he believes in moving swiftly to have it brought before Parliament.

Jeremie noted that, on May 8, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar announced at a post-Cabinet news conference that a special committee would be established by Minister of Homeland Security Roger Alexander to evaluate and propose effective measures enabling citizens to defend themselves and their property when faced with criminal threats.

She said a second committee would be formed to examine strategies to combat home invasions and to develop appropriate legislative sanctions.

The Prime Minister also indicated there would be a review of the laws relating to firearm usage.

The Express contacted the AG yesterday for an update on the status of these legislative proposals.

The AG said Minister Alexander would appoint the committees, which would then provide Jeremie with a report to help draft the legislation.

Asked if there was any precedent in the Caribbean for Stand Your Ground laws, the AG responded there is not—Trinidad and Tobago would be the first.

Asked about public consultation on the issue, Jeremie said the committees would engage with relevant stakeholders, including the Law Association. However, the aim is to move quickly and have the legislation before Parliament this year.

Jeremie emphasised that a person’s home is their “castle,” and he said they should have the legal right to defend themselves by whatever means necessary.

Under current law, a person may use reasonable force in self-defence, but if police deem that force excessive, the individual may face criminal charges. The issue became a topic of national debate in 2023 when a Chaguanas woman protected herself and her daughter by using her husband’s licensed firearm to shoot a home invader—identified as 25-year-old security guard Mark Anthony—one of several men allegedly trying to break into her home.

At the time, it was reported the woman could have faced charges for killing the alleged intruder.

In response then, Persad-Bissessar referred to the Express report titled “Woman kills home invader”, reiterating that her government would ensure that anyone killing a criminal in self-defence in their home would not face charges. She read from the Book of Exodus in the Bible: “If a thief is caught in the act of breaking into a house and is struck and killed in the process, the person who killed the thief is not guilty of murder.”

She added, “If the holy book tells you to stand your ground and defend your family, who is the PNM to tell you to do otherwise? The UNC will deal with crime and secure Trinidad

and Tobago. The criminals will never be in control.”

She said that people’s mental health was being destroyed when they could not sleep at night due to fear and the sound of noises outside. “When the criminals invade your homes, you can draw your licensed firearm and light them up! Empty the whole clip! Empty it! Light them up! We have to fight fire with fire!” she said at another public meeting.

According to Britannica, Stand Your Ground laws are American legal statutes that permit the use of deadly force in self-defence when individuals feel threatened with death or serious bodily harm, including during crimes such as rape, robbery, arson, kidnapping, or murder.

In 2005, Florida became the first US state to introduce a Stand Your Ground law. Since then, dozens of other states have followed suit.

When introduced in Florida, the law expanded on the so-called Castle Doctrine, which asserts that people have the right to defend themselves with deadly force when confronted by an intruder in their home (i.e., their “castle”).

The roots of the Castle Doctrine trace back to English common law, referenced as early as 1604. It originally distinguished between self-defence and the defence of one’s home, the latter considered sacrosanct and inviolable, justifying the use of force without a duty to retreat.

Castle Doctrine laws have existed in the US for over 200 years, with variations in application and the degree of legal protection offered, depending on jurisdiction. (Trinidad Express)



## Holness touts infrastructure, jobs and aircraft industry for Clarendon

Prime Minister Dr Andrew Holness says his Government intends to focus on what he calls the “local economy”, now that the nationally economy has been “fixed”.

Holness, who is the leader of the Jamaica Labour Party, was speaking at a party meeting in Clarendon South Eastern on Sunday, days after the Planning Institute of Jamaica reported an estimated 0.8 per cent growth of the economy during the January to March 2025 quarter.

“We a go fix yuh local economy so that you can live, work, do your business, raise your family, and experience your own prosperity right here in your community,” said Holness, who was addressing supporters in the constituency.

The prime minister explained how his administration intends to bring economic prosperity closer to people.

“From the dividends – meaning from the proceeds that we get from the big economy, the national economy – we will divide that up fairly across the country as we did for St Thomas,” Holness said, pointing to the infrastructural development in the eastern parish.

He said the construction of the highway connecting St Thomas to Kingston in a faster and more efficient way has pushed businesses into the parish that will create employment and drive tourism.

He said the administration will do the same for Clar-



endon, which, he said, has a larger economy than St Thomas, pointing to its agricultural, mining, and fishing outputs.

Holness said the parish has the makings of a strong economy and now requires greater infrastructural development, including road and water connections.

Further, he said the Government will develop the Vernamfield Aerodrome in the parish, once it establishes an international airport in Negril.

“Vernamfield will create new employment opportunities for young people in this constituency, and all the constituencies in Clarendon,” Holness said.

He said the Government is targeting a lucrative industry in aircraft maintenance and operation.

“That is where all the airlines carry in their planes to get maintained and repaired. Right now, you have such operations in Honduras. You have them in Latin American countries, but because Jamaica is so centrally located, we can have that

kind of operation here,” he said, noting that the country has the technical expertise to do it.

“So that is going to be a new industry that we are going to develop for your parish, and specifically to help the people here,” he said, mentioning that the highway has opened up Clarendon’s housing market.

Holness said once the aforementioned plans are in place, the parish’s local economy will thrive.

He asserted that the current Government has a track record with the development of St Thomas and the national economy and will create a similar local economy in Clarendon.

He urged supporters to leave the meeting with the hope that things are changing and will continue to change for better under his administration.

Pointing to 2 Peter 1:10, the prime minister urged Labourites to “make your calling and election sure”.

“Don’t take anything for granted. Crowds don’t win election. Polls don’t win

election. Newspaper columns don’t win elections. What wins election is the vote in the box, and elections are all about a choice.

“Some people will make a choice irrationally. They wake up on the wrong side one morning, kiss them teeth and make a wrong vote, and then they suffer for the rest of the time. Some people will make a choice based on a promise. A man come and tell you say, ‘I have a horse for you and that horse can fly’. And you believe, you don’t look at the track record to see if there are any horses that have flown before. And then there are some people who just don’t know and anything you tell them, they do,” the prime minister said.

He said those voters are to be educated to “keep the ship steady”.

He said the pending parliamentary election is about voters doing the right things that will benefit the country. Holness also urged People’s National Party supporters to choose his Government, claiming they, too, will benefit from the sound management of the country.

“We don’t look at people by virtue of their colour and exclude them. No, we are the national party of Jamaica. The Jamaica Labour Party is the national party. The Jamaica Labour Party forms the natural majority of people who think reasonably and rationally about the country,” said Holness. (Jamaica Gleaner)



## Trump administration seeks to end all federal contracts with Harvard

The Trump administration intends to ask all federal agencies to seek ways to end their contracts with Harvard University, a senior administration official told NBC News on Tuesday.

“GSA will send a letter to federal agencies today asking them to identify any contracts with Harvard, and whether they can be canceled or redirected elsewhere,” the senior official said, referring to the General Services Administration.

The development was first reported by The New York Times.

The proposed cuts mark the latest escalation in a monthslong fight between the Trump administration and the nation’s oldest — and arguably most prestigious — university.

A copy of the letter, obtained by NBC News, instructs agencies to respond to the GSA with a list of contracts they have terminated with the university by June 6.

“Going forward, we also encourage your agency to seek alternative vendors for future services where you had previously considered Harvard,” reads the letter, signed by John Gruenbaum, the commissioner of the GSA’s Federal Acquisition Service.

Gruenbaum described the administration’s actions as bolstering civil rights. He accused Harvard of defying a Supreme Court ruling that banned considering race in its admissions process and of “ongoing inaction” over the harassment of its Jewish students.

Harvard did not immediately return a request for comment.

The directive comes a day after Trump said in a post on Truth Social that he was considering taking \$3 billion in grant money away from what he called “a very anti-Semitic” Harvard, and giving the funds to trade schools instead.

The feud between the government and Harvard largely stems from the university’s refusal to comply with sweeping demands from the Trump administration’s Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism last month. The task



force sought to review who Harvard can admit or hire and subject its faculty to a government audit.

In response, the administration stripped the university of \$2 billion in federal research funding.

The administration also sought to block Harvard’s ability to enroll foreign students last week, an effort that a federal judge temporarily halted af-

ter the university sued. A hearing on whether the judge’s order should be extended is set for Thursday.

If the administration’s effort is successful, Harvard’s foreign students, who make up roughly a fourth of the university’s student body, would lose their legal status to stay in the United States or would have to transfer to a different university. (NBC News)

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## Driver arrested after car ploughs into celebrating Liverpool fans

A driver was arrested Monday after ploughing into a crowd of Liverpool football fans who had been celebrating the city football team's Premier League championship, police said.

Merseyside Police said they were investigating reports that multiple pedestrians had been hit.

A video on social media appeared to show a grey minivan strike at least one pedestrian and then veer into a larger crowd of people, carving a path through the group and pushing bodies along the street like a plough before coming to a stop.

Harry Rashid, who was at the parade with his wife and two young daughters, said the car began ramming people about 10 feet away from him.

"It was extremely fast," Rashid said. "Initially, we just heard the pop, pop, pop of people just being knocked off the bonnet of a car."



Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he was being updated on the situation and thanked police for their quick response.

"The scenes in Liverpool are appalling — my thoughts are with all those injured or affected," Starmer said. (Jamaica Gleaner)



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## At least five reported killed in large explosion at China chemical plant

At least five people have been killed and 19 injured in a huge chemical plant explosion in eastern China, according to state media reports.

Six people were still missing following the explosion at the plant operated by Shandong Youdao Chemical in the city of Weifang in Shandong province late on Tuesday morning, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV and state-run Xinhua agency reported.

The plant, situated in an industrial park, manufactures chemical components for use in pesticides and pharmaceuticals, they said.

Videos circulating on Chinese social media and verified by the Reuters news agency showed plumes of orange and black smoke billowing into the sky.

Windows of nearby buildings were ripped from their hinges by the explosion, one of the videos showed.

Authorities launched a large response to the explosion and the blaze it ignited, with officials sending more than 230 responders to the scene, according to CCTV. Drone video posted by The Beijing News, a government-run publication, showed smoke emerging from the chemical plant and from a second, unidentified facility nearby.



Baidu Maps, a navigation app, shows other manufacturing companies next to Youdao's plant, including a textile company, a machinery company and a firm that makes industrial coating materials.

The Weifang Ecological Environment Bureau dispatched staff to test the site of the blast, but said no results were available yet. It advised nearby residents to wear face masks in the meantime, The Beijing News reported.

A local resident, who did not wish to be identified for fear of repercussions, said in a video that his home, more than 7km (4.3 miles) from the plant, shook from the impact of the explosion, The Associated Press news agency reported.

A statement from China's emergency response authority urged response crews to quickly contain the fire and establish the

number of people affected.

Shandong Youdao Chemical was established in August 2019 in the Gaomi Renhe chemical park in Weifang, according to the company's website. The plant covers about 47 hectares (116 acres) and has more than 300 employees. Blasts at chemical plants in China in recent years have included one in the northwest region of Ningxia in 2024 and another in the southeastern province of Jiangxi in 2023.

Two massive explosions at warehouses containing hazardous and flammable chemicals in the port city of Tianjin in 2015 killed more than 170 people and injured 700. The incident prompted the government to tighten laws covering chemical storage.

Another explosion in 2015 at a chemical plant in Shandong killed 13 people. (Al Jazeera English)



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## Former police chief, serving murder and rape sentences, escapes from Arkansas prison



A former police chief in Arkansas who is serving decades-long sentences for murder and rape escaped from prison Sunday, state corrections officials said.

Grant Hardin, the former police chief of the tiny town of Gateway near the Arkansas-Missouri border, escaped from the North Central Unit in Calico Rock, where he has been held since 2017. Corrections officials did not provide any details about how he escaped.

They did say that Garvin had disguised himself and was “wearing a makeshift outfit designed to mimic law enforcement when he escaped the North Central Unit.”

The Division of Correction and the Division of Community Correction are following leads with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

Hardin pleaded guilty in October 2017 to first-degree murder in connection with the shooting death of 59-year-old James Appleton.

According to an affidavit filed in the case, Appleton worked for the Gateway water department and was talking to his brother-in-law, then Gateway Mayor Andrew Tillman, when he was

shot in the head on February 23, 2017 near Garfield.

Police found Appleton’s body inside a car.

Hardin, who was Gateway’s police chief for about four months in early 2016, was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

He is also serving 50 years in prison for the 1997 rape of an elementary school teacher in Rogers north of Fayetteville.

etteville.

KFSM-TV, reporting on his guilty plea in 2019, wrote that police used DNA samples from the crime scene to apply for a John Doe Warrant in 2003 as the statute of limitations neared.

The DNA was tested against old and new profiles, and investigators got a match when Hardin was imprisoned for killing Appleton. (Jamaica Gleaner)



**Barbuda Caribana 2025**  
JUNE 5<sup>TH</sup> - 9<sup>TH</sup>

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

<b>THURSDAY, JUNE 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OPENING PARADE – 4:00 PM</li> <li>• JUNIOR CALYPSO MONARCH – 8:00 PM</li> </ul>	<b>SATURDAY, JUNE 7</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BARBUDA OCEAN CLUB CARIBANA BEACH BASH</li> <li>• FISHING TOURNAMENT</li> <li>• INTERNATIONAL SHOW</li> <li>• STARTS 8:00 AM – UNTIL</li> </ul>
<b>FRIDAY, JUNE 6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CARIBANA CULTURAL SHOW – 8:00 PM</li> <li>• JR'S BLUE OCEAN EXPERIENCE VIP</li> </ul>	<b>SUNDAY, JUNE 8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CARIBANA CLASSIC HORSE RACING – 1:00 PM</li> <li>• CALYPSO/SOCA MONARCH – 8:30 PM</li> </ul>
<b>MONDAY, JUNE 9</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JOUVERT – 4:00 AM TO 10:00 AM</li> <li>• LAST LAP – 6:00 PM TO 10:00 PM</li> </ul>	

**WHERE RHYTHM AND CULTURE THRIVE,  
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# Sports News



## Strictly Business wins again in men's softball cricket competition

Rackaman Construction Strictly Business continued their winning form in the Antigua Barbuda Softball Cricket Association's (ABSCA) WTP 93.5 FM Men's 30-Over Championship on Sunday.

Strictly Business claimed their fourth win in five matches by pulling off a six-wicket victory against Goody's Taxi Service and Tours 300 at the Rising Sun playing field.

Batting first, 300 was restricted to 112 for eight off 28 overs. Molvin James hit 26, while Zack Thomas and Veston Lewis each made 21. Kerry Mentore bagged three for 13, while Kenrique Mentore and Winston Roberts each picked up two for 31.

In reply, Strictly Business achieved victory at 115 for four in 13 overs. Kim George cracked 36 not out, Jevon Howel struck 33, and Clinton Benjamin made 16. Vernel Isadore claimed two for 30.

Dredgers recorded their third win in four matches by snatching a seven-run win against PMS at the Dredgers' playing field.

The Dredgers made 167 for seven off 29 overs. Mervin Higgins smashed 54, including five sixes; Loy Weste cracked 24, and Kurt Douglas scored 17.



**Rackaman Construction Strictly Business softball cricket team. (File photo)**

Hughan Tonge captured four for 16.

In reply, PMS just fell short of their victory target, reaching 160 for seven off 24 overs. Hughan Tonge hit 32, Walter Carr made 21, and Kenny Benjamin scored 19. Kurt Douglas picked up two for 41.

Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets were awarded victory via default against Mix Up Stars, who did not have the required amount of players to start the match at the Powells playing field.

Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors extended their unbeaten run in the Antigua and Barbuda Softball Cricket Association's (ABSCA) St. John's Co-operative Credit Union 15-Over Women's Division Championship on Sunday.

After their previous encounter against Police was abandoned by rain, Survivors notched up their third win in four matches by pulling off a five-wicket victory over Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets at the Dredgers playing field.

The Bullets were restricted to 68 for eight off their 15 overs. Rachael Greaves struck 18, and Cheryl Williams scored 16. Louckehl Pelle claimed two for 12.

In reply, Survivors achieved victory at 69 for five off 15 overs. Grace Persaud hit 24, and Louckehl Pelle struck an unbeaten 13. Lana Thomas captured three for 14, and Mary Browne picked up two for 20.

Alzarri and Sharon Joseph North Sails Antigua Female Flyers defeated

Police by 68 runs at the Rising Sun playing field.

Female Flyers made 104 for one off their 15 overs. Terez Parker hit an unbeaten 34, Gaynel Ogarro cracked 28 not out, and Makada Hector struck 22.

In reply, the Police were restricted to 36 for six off their 15 overs. Gaynel Ogarro snapped up three wickets for seven runs.

Bravos Wholesale and Distributors Rockets snatched a one-run win in the Super Over against the Potters Uprising Cricket Team at the Powells playing field.

The match was decided in the Super Over after both teams finished with the same score at the end of their innings. However, the Rockets prevailed by scoring six runs in response to five runs made by Potters Uprising in the Super Over.

Batting first, the Rockets made 64 for four off their 15 overs. Kushana David scored 17, and Valarie Isaac made 16. Gail Jobe grabbed three wickets for eight runs.

In reply, Potters Uprising was dismissed for 64 in 15 overs. Gail Jobe made 11. Patara Francis snapped up two wickets for five runs, and Pauline Shaw captured two for 18.



## Matthews gains big in ICC Women's T20I Batting Rankings

West Indies captain Hayley Matthews has moved up to a career-best-equalling second position in the ICC Women's T20I Batting Rankings after a valiant show against England, while Pakistan spinner Sadia Iqbal has regained the number one position among bowlers after Sophie Ecclestone missed her team's recent T20I series.

Matthews, who top-scored in the three-match series with 177 runs that included an unbeaten century (100) in the first match in Canterbury and was named the Player of the Series, has overtaken India's Smriti Mandhana and Australia's Tahlia McGrath to reclaim second position, which she had last occupied in December last year.

Former England captain Heather Knight, who contributed 109 runs, including an unbeaten 66 in the third match in Chelmsford, has moved up seven places to 17th, while skipper Nat Sciver Brunt is up five slots to ninth after aggregating 92 runs and leading her side to their recent 3-0 series sweep against the West Indies. Sophia Dunkley is up eight places to 29th.

In the bowling rankings, England spinner Sophie Ecclestone has slipped from first to fourth after missing the series as she was recuperating from an injury and played domestic cricket during the past week.

She has been replaced at the top of the charts by another left-arm spinner, Sadia, while India's Deepthi Sharma and Australia's Annabel Sutherland have taken the second and third positions, respectively.

Sadia was briefly number one in



**West Indies women's captain Hayley Matthews celebrates after reaching a half-century against England during the third T20 International at Chelmsford, Essex, England, on Monday, May 26, 2025. (Getty Images)**

October last year during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in Dubai, when she had become the first from her country to grab the top spot.

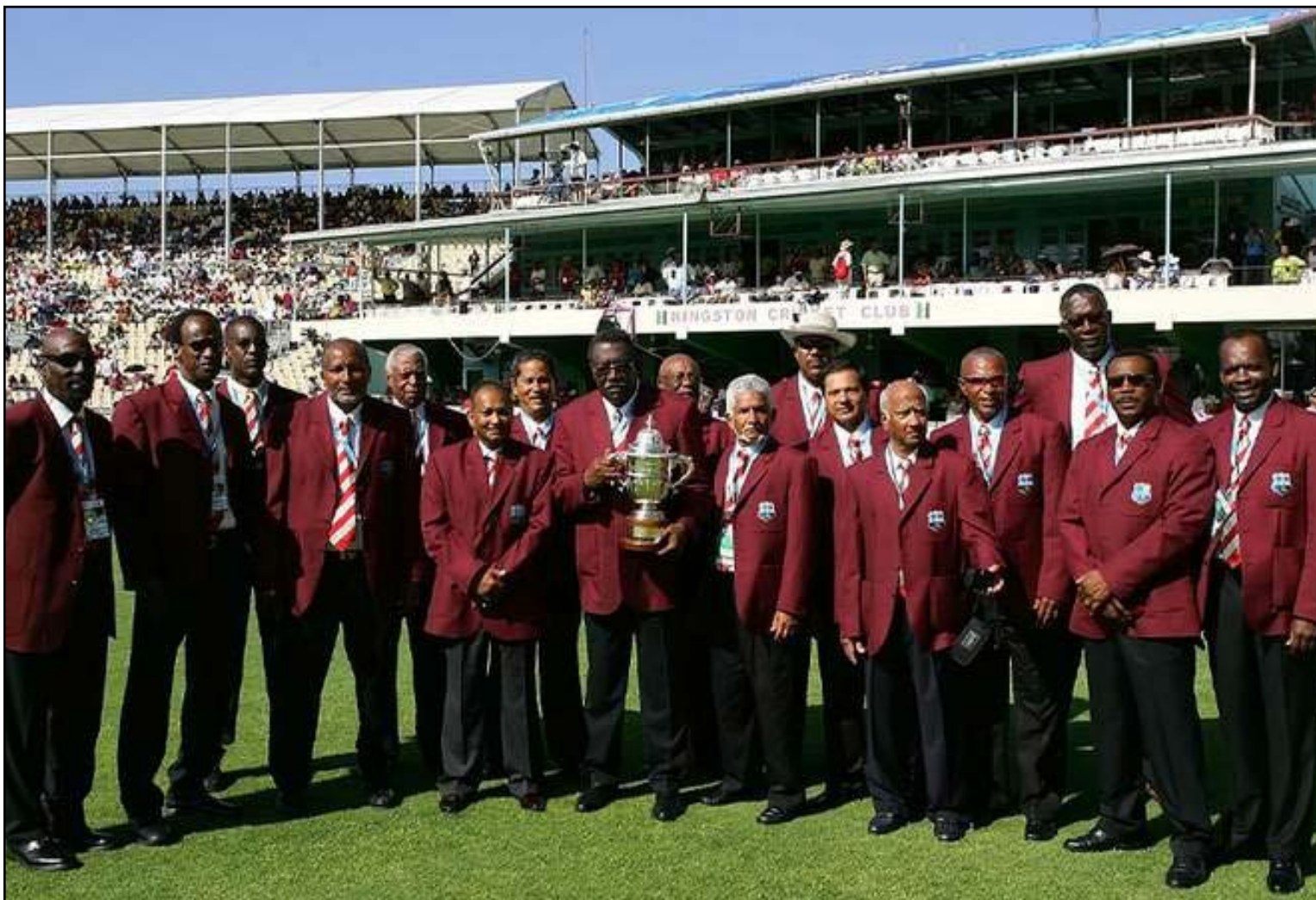
England's new-ball bowler Lauren Bell has advanced 13 places to a career-best sixth position after fin-

ishing with a series-topping seven wickets.

Linsey Smith (up 37 places to 41st) and Issy Wong (up 32 places to joint-62nd) are others progressing in the bowling rankings



## CWI and WIPA officially announce 8th Awards Gala



**Players and staff of the West Indies 1975 Cricket World Cup squad. (CWI Media)**

Cricket West Indies (CWI) and the West Indies Players' Association (WIPA) have announced the staging of the 8th CWI/WIPA Awards Gala, which is set for the historic Wyndham Grand Barbados Sam Lord's Castle on Sunday, June 22, 2025.

The event, which will be televised across the region, will celebrate the greatest achievements of West Indies players and honour the 50th anniversary of the West In-

dies' iconic 1975 ICC Men's World Cup victory.

"The CWI/WIPA Awards Gala is a significant event that highlights the accomplishments of our players, who continue to inspire fans throughout our region and beyond," said Dr. Kishore Shallow, President of CWI.

"This celebration reflects our shared commitment to elevate the game and recognizes the contributions of our cricketers. It is vital that we create

platforms to honor their dedication and hard work, while also paying tribute to the rich legacy of our cricketing heroes from the past," he added.

Wavell Hinds, President and CEO of WIPA, also offered comments on the return of the gala.

"This event reflects the strong partnership between CWI and WIPA to recognize excellence in West Indies cricket. Through this Awards Gala, we not only celebrate the present genera-

tion of players who continue to make their mark, but also honour the past achievements that have paved the way for today's talent," Hinds said.

"The commitment to excellence, unity, and growth within West Indies cricket is what makes this event so meaningful and necessary for our community," he added.

Further details on the broadcast partners, event schedule, and award nominees will be announced in the coming days.



## England's Atkinson to miss ODI series against West Indies



**Gus Atkinson**

LONDON (AP) — England fast bowler Gus Atkinson was ruled out of the One-Day International (ODI) series against the West Indies with a right hamstring strain on Tuesday.

Atkinson was in clear discomfort during the closing stages of the innings victory over Zimbabwe in the one-off Test at Trent Bridge last weekend, bowling only three overs on the final day.

After assessing the problem, England decided not to risk the 27-year-old pacer in Harry Brook's first ODI

series since taking over as white-ball captain.

"He will now undergo a period of rehabilitation under the supervision of the England medical team," the England and Wales Cricket Board said of Atkinson. "No replacement will be added to the ODI squad."

Atkinson took three wickets against Zimbabwe and was not thought to be a major doubt for the upcoming Test series against India, beginning on June 20 at Headingley, Britain's Press Association reported.

He was the most experienced member of the pace attack in Nottingham, with the likes of Mark Wood, Jofra Archer, Brydon Carse, and Chris Woakes all absent on fitness grounds, and England would not want any further setbacks ahead of a signature series.

The ODIs against the touring West Indies will start at Edgbaston on Thursday (tomorrow) before games at Cardiff in Wales on Sunday and the Oval in London next Tuesday.

### *con't from pg 30*

vious matches. Honduras beat Cuba 3-1 at the Estadio Nacional Chelato Ucles in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on June 6, 2024.

Honduras hammered host Bermuda 6-1 at the Bermuda National Sports Centre in Devonshire, Bermuda, on June 9, 2024.

Cuba rebounded to prevail 3-0 against the Cayman Islands at the Estadio Antonio Maceo in Santiago, Cuba, on June 11, 2024.

Following the completion of the second round, the group winners and runners-up (12 teams in total) will progress to the third and final round of World

Cup qualifiers.

The final round matches will be played during the September, October, and November 2025 FIFA Match Windows.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup tournament will take place from June 11 to July 19. It will be jointly hosted by 16 cities in three North

American countries: Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

The tournament will be the first hosted by three nations and the first North American World Cup since 1994. Argentina is the defending World Cup champion

## Antigua to resume battle in 2026 World Cup qualifiers



**The Antigua Benna Boys training at the ABFA Technical Center. (ABFA)**

Antigua and Barbuda will be among teams from the CONCACAF (Confederation of North, Central America, and Caribbean Association Football) Region that will be resuming their campaign in the second round of qualifying matches next week in an effort to reach the 2026 FIFA World Cup Finals.

The second round of the CONCACAF qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA World Cup includes the two round-one winners, the British Virgin Islands and Anguilla, and the Confederation's remaining 28 member associations that are also FIFA members (excluding the three World Cup hosts, Canada, Mexico, and the United States).

For the second round, the 30 participating teams were

divided into six groups of five each during the Concacaf World Cup Qualifiers official draw on January 25, 2024. The six groups are as follows:

Group A: Honduras, Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Bermuda, and the Cayman Islands. Group B: Costa Rica, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, and the Bahamas.

Group C: Haiti, Curaçao, St. Lucia, Barbados, and Aruba. Group D: Panama, Nicaragua, Guyana, Montserrat, and Belize.

Group E: Jamaica, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Dominica, and the British Virgin Islands.

Group F: El Salvador, Suriname, Puerto Rico, St. Vincent and the Grenadines,

and Anguilla.

Second-round matches will be played during the FIFA Match Windows of June 2024 and June 2025, with each team playing four matches (two home and two away).

Antigua and Barbuda's Benna Boys, now under new interim head coach Jacques Antonio Passy Khan of Mexico, will be seeking their first win upon resumption of the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers next month.

Antigua and Barbuda's Benna Boys will play their third match in Group A when they host their second home game against Cuba at the ABFA Technical Center at Paynters on Friday, June 6, at 3 pm.

Antigua and Barbuda will

play their fourth and final Group A encounter away to Honduras at the Estadio Nacional Chelato Ucles in Tegucigalpa on Tuesday, June 10, at 8 pm (10 pm Antigua time).

Antigua and Barbuda Benna Boys kicked off their second round qualifying campaign in Group A with a 1-1 draw against Bermuda at the ABFA Technical Center on June 5, 2024.

But Antigua and Barbuda lost their second encounter 1-0 against the Cayman Islands at the Truman Bodden Sports Complex in George Town, Cayman Islands, on Saturday, June 8, 2024.

Honduras currently leads the Group A standings after winning their two pre-

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