

# Back to school supplies distribution starts today

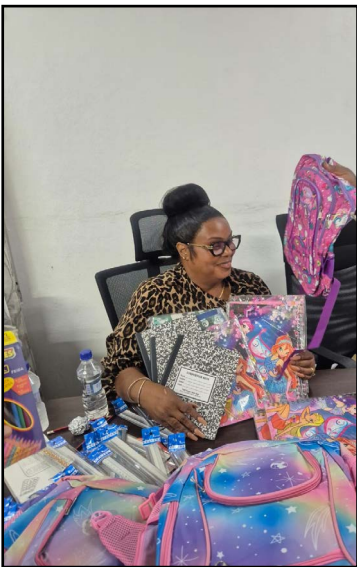
*Story on Page 2*



*Preparations for the distribution of back to school supplies intensified on Monday*



# Back to school supplies distribution starts today



The Social Protection Board, a government agency that provides services as part of the social safety net, will be distributing back-to-school supplies to the less fortunate in the society starting today.

Operations Manager, Mary Baltimore told Point Express the distribution will take place at the Rising Sun Ground

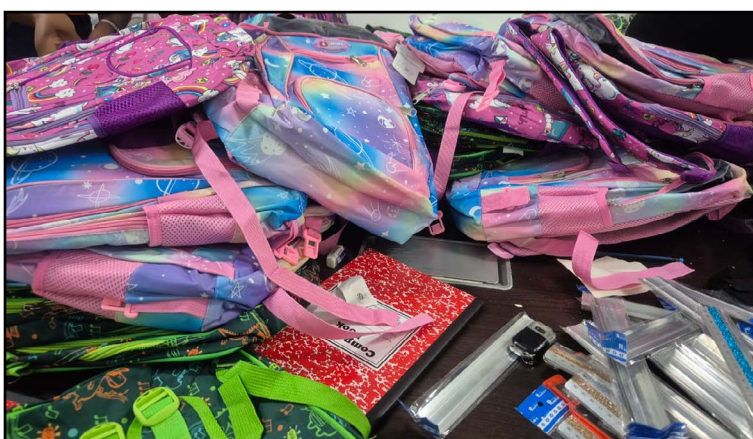


where she anticipates that between 300 to 400 persons will benefit from the programme over the next two days.

“This is a programme that we undertake every year and I have a number of partners in the society, mainly businesses operating in the country, who provide the supplies that we distribute to those in need. We are targeting those at the lower rung of the economic ladder who face challenges meeting the costs involved in providing supplies to their school-age children,” she explained.

Parents of these children will receive school bags filled with supplies including pens, pencils, books and other things required by children to function in school. Additionally, some parents





utes thousands of food vouchers to the indigent.

Among its services, is the care of persons who are victims of fires who are left homeless and often without clothes and who require urgent assistance from the state. While not managed by the Social Protection Board, the

HAPI Programme and the Soup Kitchen, operated by Inspector Veldon Raggette, are two programmes affiliated with its operations.

The board also provides similar services to people on Barbuda.

will also receive shoes for their children. However, the distribution of shoes comes with a proviso; parents seeking these items must be accompanied by their children.

“What we don’t want is to give parents shoes for their children that don’t fit, when these items can go to other children in need,” Baltimore noted.

The Social Protection Board, formerly the Board of Guardians, currently caters to the need of the vulnerable persons in the society. According to the operations manager, every month it distrib-



**BACK TO SCHOOL DISTRIBUTION**

**SOCIAL PROTECTION BOARD**

**10 AM UNTIL**

**AUG 19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup> 2025**

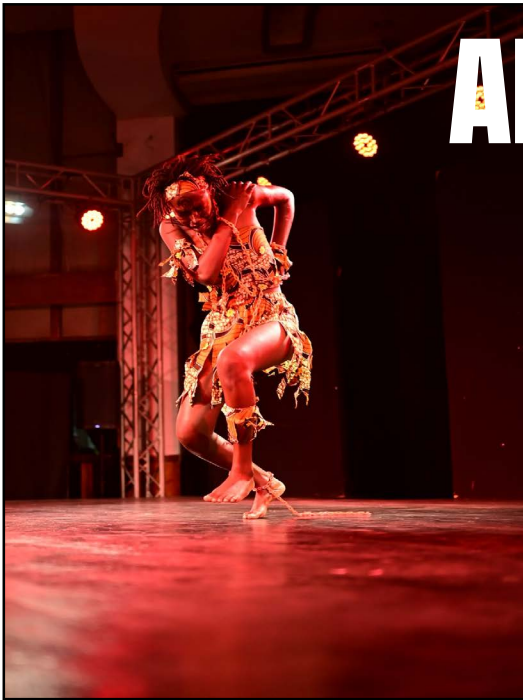
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# ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

TO



## The Antigua and Barbuda CARIFESTA delegation departs on Friday

Antigua and Barbuda is sending a 95-member delegation to the Caribbean's premier exposition of art, craft and creativity, CARIFESTA, which opens on Friday in Barbados.

CARIFESTA, the Caribbean's premier cultural festival, was established in 1972 to unite the region through the arts. Its 15th edition, themed "Caribbean Roots; Global Excellence," will be held in Barbados from August 22–31. Celebrating Caribbean identity and talent, the festival features authentic cultural experiences and showcases the region's creative excellence.

Director of Culture, Khan Cordice, said the delegation will comprise dancers, dramatists, the Hell's Gate Steel Orchestra, other cultural performers and the legendary Burning Flames Band, which is in the midst of its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. Several persons who will perform management roles will also accompany the delegation.

"Antigua and Barbuda's delegation will spotlight the excellence of its youth, innovation, and cultural legacy by showcasing some of the nation's most outstanding contributors. Central

to this showcase is the *Sub-90 cast*, a dynamic group of creatives representing diverse artistic disciplines. From music, dance, and theatre to visual arts, literature, and fashion, this vibrant ensemble reflects the depth and diversity of the twin-island nation's cultural talent. Through their participation, the delegation aims to celebrate artistic excellence while inspiring future generations and strengthening the country's cultural footprint on the regional stage," Cordice explained.

The National Youth Theatre Company, under the guidance of regionally recognized playwright and dramatist, Owen Jackson, will highlight the nation's strong theatrical roots with performances that are expected to excite and thrill audiences.

In the area of dance, Cordice revealed that a 13-member contingent will represent the country. These dancers were selected from various dance companies and they have spent the last several weeks engaged in intense rehearsals for the CARIFESTA presentations. He explained that the choreography is being done by a team comprising three

of the country's top dancers.

For steelband, the 2025 Panorama Champions will send a contingent of 30 players and they are expected to raise the Antigua and Barbuda flag high as this country has a well-established reputation within the steelband fraternity.

What is expected to be one of the main events during CARIFESTA will be the performance from the Burning Flames Band. The group of three brothers and their nephew is one of the most enduring musical groups anywhere in the Caribbean and they have a huge fan base in Barbados.

Other artists heading for Barbados include Kid Fresh, Empress, the 2025 Calypso Monarch Ge'Eve, entertainer Asha Otto as well as author, Joanne Hillhouse. The culinary delights of Antigua and Barbuda will also be on display at the festival.

Well-known choreographer and dancer, Veronica Yearwood, will represent Antigua and Barbuda on a symposium at CARIFESTA that will examine the role of dance in education.

## The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority opens its first independent overseas office in Toronto, Canada

Minister of Tourism Hon. Charles 'Max' Fernandez, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) Colin C. James joined Director of Tourism, Tameka Wharton to officially open the ABTA's Canada office, the Authority's first independent overseas office, in Toronto, Canada last week.

Minister Fernandez shared with the audience, "the elegance of the office represents the destination brand in all respects. It is a one-stop shop that allows the Canadian tourism team to be more responsive and connected to trade and investment partners, along with media and travellers."

CEO James reinforces the sentiment in extending his congratulations to Wharton and her team for setting a standard of excellence with this new office.

"They have created not just a workspace, but an inspiring hub that perfectly blends functionality with innovation. This facility sets a new standard for how a tourism office should operate to maximize productivity and collaboration," he said.

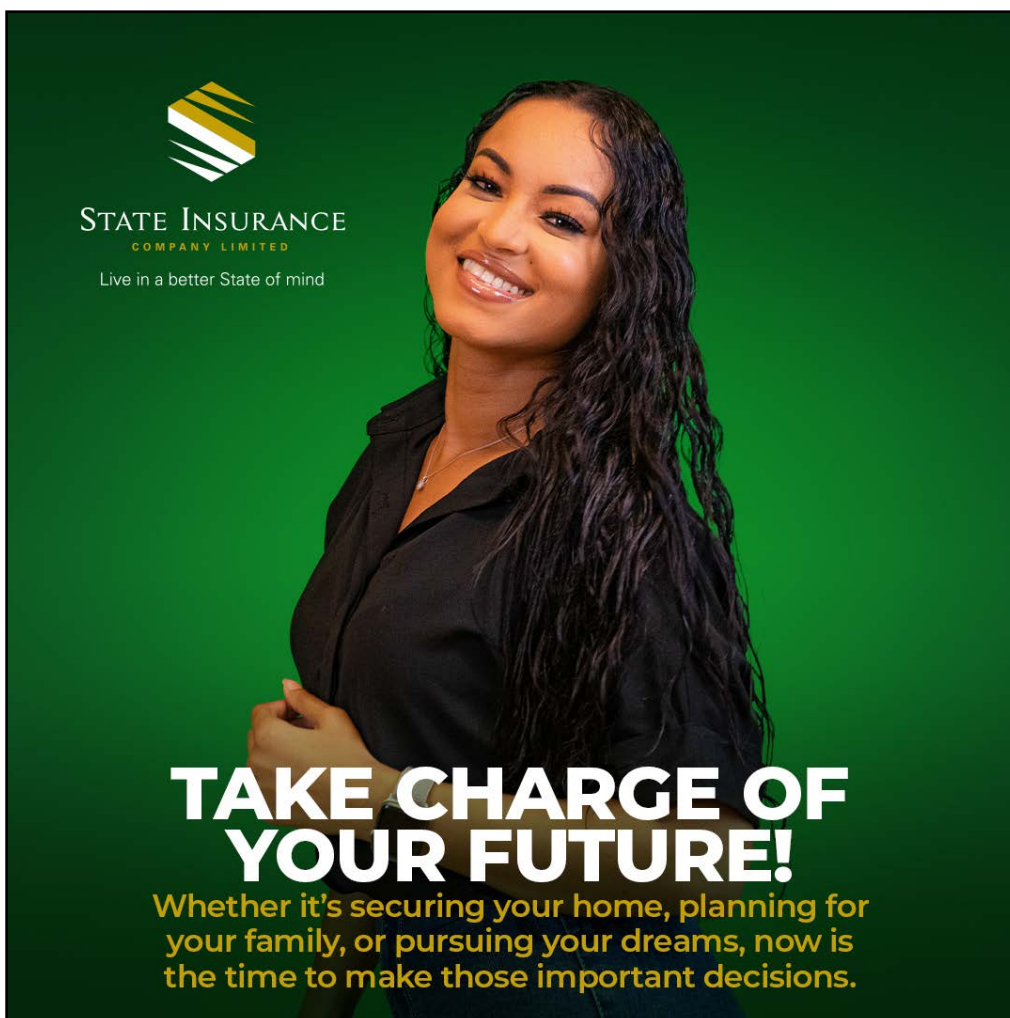
The state-of-the-art office located at 201 - 100 Sheppard Avenue East is outfitted with sound-proof meeting booths, virtual reality and recording stations and the Black Pineapple Academy - a conference and training room designed for travel professionals and travel enthusiasts to delve into expert learning, to discover Antigua and Barbuda beyond the beach.

Director of Tourism for Canada Tameka Wharton noted that the office was a long-awaited achievement. "Ever since we moved to working remotely during the pandemic, this office has been a vision, years in the making. To see it come to life is incredibly rewarding," she said. "The first consideration of the office was the wellbeing of each team member. The team is now better positioned to build on our internal camaraderie while we collaborate with



**Minister of Tourism Hon. Charles 'Max' Fernandez (center), and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) Colin C. James (left) joined Director of Tourism, Tameka Wharton (right).**

our travel advisors, media, and other Canadians to choose Antigua and Barbuda for their next getaway."



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## Senior government officials visit Antiguan/UK couple on milestone anniversary

Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda, Sir Rodney Williams accompanied by Lady Sandra Williams and, High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom, Karen-Mae Hill, visited David and Ketura Thomas on 31st July 2025 during their recent trip to the United Kingdom.

The visit celebrated the couple's milestone of 66 years of marriage. David Thomas was born in Urlings on 21st November 1931 and migrated to the United Kingdom in 1957. Ketura was born in Bolans on 8th June 1942 and joined him in England in 1958. They were married in the United Kingdom on 19th July 1959, beginning a life together that has spanned more than six decades.

Together they raised five children – Chris, Kevin, Andrew, Suzanne, and Sonia and are the grandparents of seven grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren. Their marriage has been recognised twice by the Royal Family. First, in July 2019, the couple received a message from Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for their Diamond (60th) Wedding Anniversary; and in 2025, they received a congratulatory message from King Charles III and Queen Camilla on their 66th anniversary.

During the visit, Sir Rodney



greeted the Thomas' family with a letter of congratulations, continuing a tradition of recognition that began in 2019 when the Governor General also sent the family a message marking their 60th wedding anniversary. Sir Rodney said: "David and Ketura's 66 years together is a shining example of love, respect and partnership.

Their journey from Antigua to the United Kingdom, and the beautiful family they have nurtured, is a testament to their resilience and commitment. It was an honour to meet them and celebrate this extraordinary milestone in person."

High Commissioner Hill also commented: "The story of David and Ketura is one of dedication – to each other, to their family and to their heritage. Their life together serves as inspiration not only to their loved ones, but the wider Antiguan and

Barbudan community here in the United Kingdom and back home. They raised each of their children to have an identity grounded in their Antiguan and Barbudan heritage and two of those children now live in Antigua."

In 1964, David began work at Fords Dagenham, where he was employed in the engine plant for 30 years. Ketura was a dedicated housewife and a skilled seamstress and machinist. The Royal Family traditionally sends congratulatory messages to couples in the United Kingdom celebrating significant wedding anniversaries, such as their 60th (Diamond), 65th, 70th (Platinum), and each year thereafter.

This custom was established by King George V in 1917 and has been carried on through his successors, including the late Queen Elizabeth II and now King Charles III. These messages are a way of formally honouring the commitment and enduring bonds within marriages.

### Adjusted Hours for SJCW Registration Unit

Please note that effective Tuesday 19th August to August 29th 2025, the St. John's City West Registration Unit located at the Villa Primary School will open from 8:30 am - 1pm (Monday - Friday).

The early closure is as a result of maintenance and construction work taking place at the facility. We do apologize for any inconvenience caused at this time.

We thank you all in advance for your cooperation in disseminating this information and will communicate via this forum when the hours of operation return to normal.



**TUES - FRIDAY  
11AM - 2PM**



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# SUCCESS OF PAN IN THE CITY 2025

## Steelpan Vibes Take Over St. John's



Around the world, the month of August is celebrated as World Steelpan Month—and in true Antiguan fashion, we marked the occasion with an unforgettable afternoon of rhythm, culture, and community spirit.

On Friday, August 15, 2025, the heart of St. John's city pulsed with energy as the Department of Culture and partners hosted Pan in the City at the VC Bird Bust Band Stand. The event showcased the very best of Antigua and Barbuda's steelpan talent, drawing scores of onlookers and passersby into a celebration of our national instrument.

From the melodic and rhythmic pulsations of the steel orchestras to the dazzling artistry of solo performers, every note carried the pride of our heritage and the joy of our people.

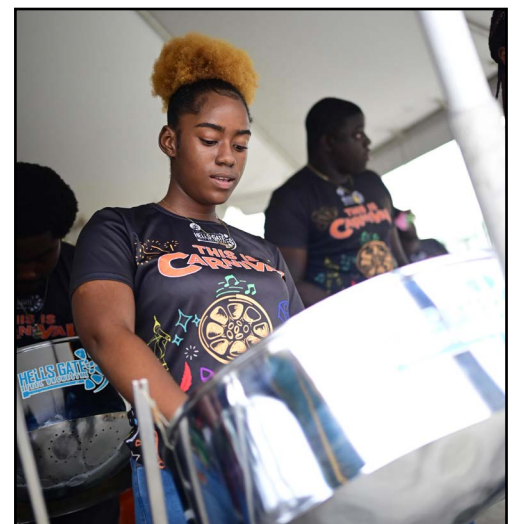
Performances & Highlights Audiences were treated to exceptional solo presentations by Gavin Francis, Curtis "C.C." Cochrane, and Japhon Bartley, each bringing unique flair and passion to the stage. The city further resonated with the powerhouse sounds of Pandemonium Steel Orchestra, Panache



Steel Orchestra, and the legendary CUB Hells Gate Steel Orchestra.

Guiding the afternoon's flow with unmatched energy was none other than Ibis the Livest, who kept spirits high and the crowd engaged throughout the showcase. Community & Partnerships The success of Pan in the City was made possible through the generous support of our sponsors and partners: St. John's Development Corporation,

Antigua and Barbuda Falcons, and KC Music. Their contributions underscored the collaborative spirit that drives our cultural development and the recognition of steelpan's central place in our identity. Steelpan's Importance This celebration was more than entertainment—it was a reaffirmation of steelpan's cultural, social, and educational significance. As Antigua and Barbuda continues to champion this art form, events like Pan in the City highlight the steelpan's role in uniting communities, inspiring future generations, and cementing our legacy as contributors to the world's musical landscape.





## Antigua's longest-running animal shelter suspends operations

The country's longest-running rescue shelter for dogs and cats has announced it is to suspend operations after almost 30 years.

PAAWS says it has been left with no alternative but to close its doors to all new intakes due to dire financial straits.

The care of animals at its Parham shelter will fall entirely to volunteers from September 1 while the charity battles to rehome its remaining 30 dogs and 14 cats.

The facility is open to visitors Tuesdays to Saturdays from 10am-4pm.

"Please do call in and meet our four-legged residents, all of whom are in desperate need of a permanent home," said PAAWS' PRO Gemma Handy.

"People often ask how we can have no money again," she continued. "They see us doing large scale fundraisers – the last Antigua's Got Talent show raised more than EC\$50,000 alone – and they see donors offering to help.

"What they tend not to realise is quite how quickly that money is spent. The cost of pet food continues to soar, we have ongoing vet bills that rack up quickly when you have dozens of animals to care for, many of whom arrive in need of a lot of attention, and on top of that

we have had staff wages, utilities and general maintenance costs to meet. It all adds up to thousands of dollars a week.

"Our board of volunteers, which includes myself, has also dwindled in recent years, adding increased pressure."

The donation-dependent charity said it was "eternally grateful" to its supporters who had helped keep it going since March 1996.

"This is not the end – yet," Handy said. "We are asking for continued support while we assess our finances and determine our next steps.

"Since announcing our suspension on social media last week, we have been blown away by the response from members of the public who recognise the value of the work we do. Every single cent will be used to care for our dogs and cats while we work to place them with loving owners."

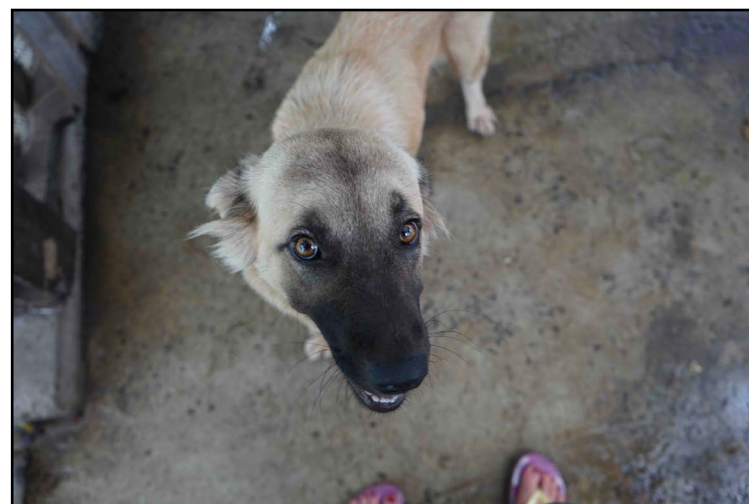
PAAWS has rescued and rehomed more than 4,000 abandoned, abused, sick and injured dogs and cats over the last three decades.

"Some people have asked us how they can help going forward. The stray dog situation affects us all, not least due to the impact on tourism," Handy said.

"Before COVID-19, we had enough regular monthly donations to get by – just about.



**GINGER**



**MARY**

Sadly, those donations have never picked up again since the pandemic.

"Monthly donations allow us to plan ahead, fix pens when they need maintenance, accept new intakes in desperate need of veterinary care, and pay our hard-working staff."

From September 1, PAAWS will also be in need of more volunteers to help run the shelter – including manning the office, walking and bathing the dogs, cleaning

pens, and helping socialise the animals to improve their chances of finding a home – along with fundraising.

"We don't know what the future holds for PAAWS right now. We are preparing for the worst while hoping for a miracle," Handy added.

Email [paaws.antigua@gmail.com](mailto:paaws.antigua@gmail.com) or call 561-1484 or 784-5151 for more information on how to help.



## Antiguan Research Makes International Impact: Scrub Life Cares Selected to Present Groundbreaking Menstrual Health Study at Two Global Public Health Conferences



In a proud moment for Antigua and Barbuda, Scrub Life Cares (SLC) has been selected to present original, locally conducted research on menstrual health at two of the world's leading public health conferences this November: the American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting & Expo in Washington, D.C., and the 13th World Congress on Adolescent Health, hosted by the International Association for Adolescent Health (IAAH) in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

This is a historic moment for Scrub Life Cares, a grassroots, woman-led nonprofit organization based in Antigua and Barbuda and South Carolina, and a powerful testament to the relevance and rigor of Caribbean-based, community-rooted research.

At APHA 2025, SLC will present the poster:

“Exploring Menstrual Health Inequities in Antigua: A Qualitative Study on Period Poverty and Access to Reproductive Health Education” as part of the International Health Program on Monday, November 3, 2025.

Later that week, the organization will share findings from the research project,

“Periods & Period Products: A Qualitative Research Report,” at the World

Congress on Adolescent Health in Jamaica.

These presentations highlight findings from a qualitative research study conducted during the organization's “Your Voice Matters” interactive session in October 2024, in partnership with Aritex Biotech, a UK-based health and biotech company. While the study is presented under different titles tailored to each conference, both reflect the same critical research exploring period poverty, menstrual stigma, and access to reproductive health education in Antigua and Barbuda, a topic too often overlooked, yet deeply intertwined with public health, dignity, and gender equity.

This marks Scrub Life Cares' second appearance at the American Public Health Association's prestigious Annual Meeting. In 2023, the organization's impactful short film on period poverty was accepted into the APHA Short Film Festival, showcasing the emotional and social realities of period poverty through a Caribbean lens. In 2025, Scrub Life Cares returns to APHA, this time with data-driven, community-rooted research that reaffirms the organization's commitment to both storytelling and evidence-based advocacy.

“To see our small island's stories, challenges, and solutions make it to the big stage is incredibly humbling,” said Tanya Ambrose, MPH, Founder and CEO of Scrub Life Cares. “This moment isn't just about recognition, it's about validation of the lived experiences of our community and the urgent need to advance menstrual equity as a public health priority.”

Scrub Life Cares prides itself on evidence-based programming. This research reflects its ongoing commitment to dignified access to menstrual and hygiene products, comprehensive health education, and community empowerment. Its flagship initiative, the Grow With the Flo: Women & Girls Health Expo, now in its fourth year, has served as a vibrant platform for intergenerational care, menstrual health education, and reproductive justice, reaching hundreds of attendees annually. The study's findings directly inform the future of this work.

“This research can serve as a catalyst for policy advocacy, deeper community partnerships, and stronger integration of menstrual equity into national public health strategies,” Ambrose added. “We see the potential for impactful collaborations with the Min-





ment and collaboration of the following individuals:

**Mrs. Billie Sterling-Lewis, MBA, PgDip, MSc**  
**Miss Chloe Ambrose, MPH**  
**Shushanna Ambrose**  
**Miss Claire Donahue**  
**Miss Shavani Stewart- Founder of The Red Pledge Initiative**  
**Miss Britney McDonald, PMP**  
**Miss Tia Philip, MSc**  
**Miss Kayla Joy Richards- Cofounder of Humble and Free Wadadli**  
**Miss Janet Simon- Caricom Youth Ambassador**  
**Miss Villacy Clendenen**  
**Dr. Sherida Philip**  
**Mr. Karil Knight**  
**Miss Kirah Gregory**  
**Lyneth Freeland**  
**Desiree Markham- Antigua Queen of Carnival 2024**  
**Rev. Dr. Bonnie Smith and the Cana**



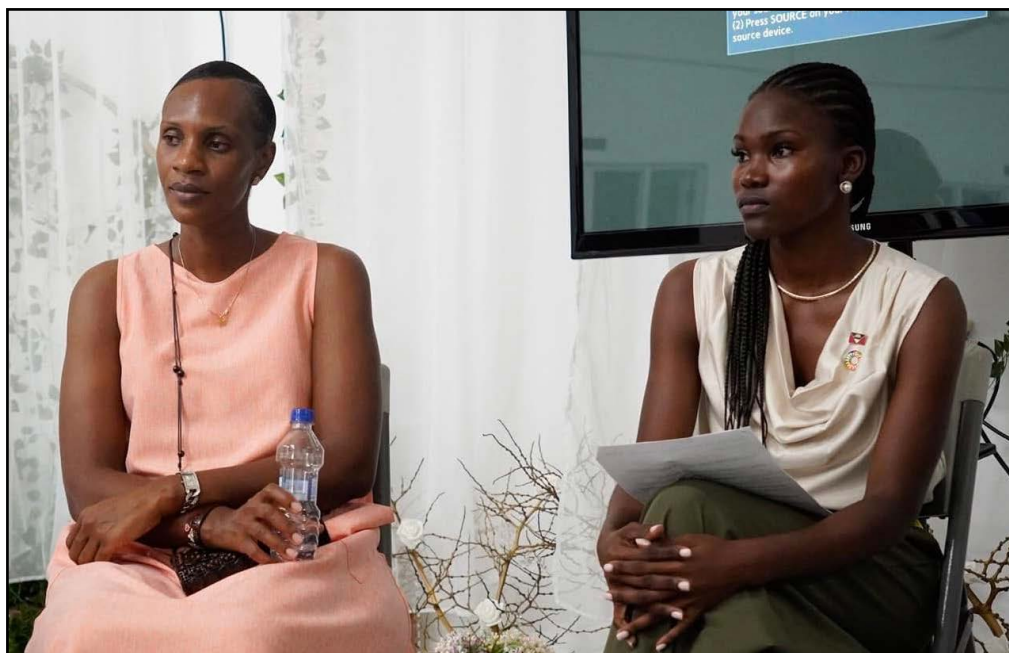
istries of Health and Education, and even broader conversations around health tourism and sustainable, gender-inclusive health systems in Antigua and Barbuda.”

Although Scrub Life Cares is a small organization, its impact has transcended borders, with growing visibility in the United States, particularly in South Carolina, where Ambrose completed her Master of Public Health with a concentration in Health Services Policy and Management and a Certificate in Maternal and Child Health. Her work seamlessly blends research, advocacy, and public engagement to build systems that center the voices and needs of girls and women.

“Being able to take research conducted here at home in Antigua, in partnership with an international company like Aritex Biotech, and elevate it on global platforms speaks directly to my public health training, my roots, and my heart,” said Ambrose.

#### A Grateful Acknowledgment

Scrub Life Cares extends its deepest thanks to the individuals who participated in the study, making this research possible. The community members who shared their experiences, and the passionate team behind the scenes. This qualitative study would not have been possible without the full engage-



#### Moravian Church

“This research is theirs as much as it is ours. It belongs to the community, and to a future where no girl or woman is left behind because of her period,” Ambrose concluded.

#### About Scrub Life Cares

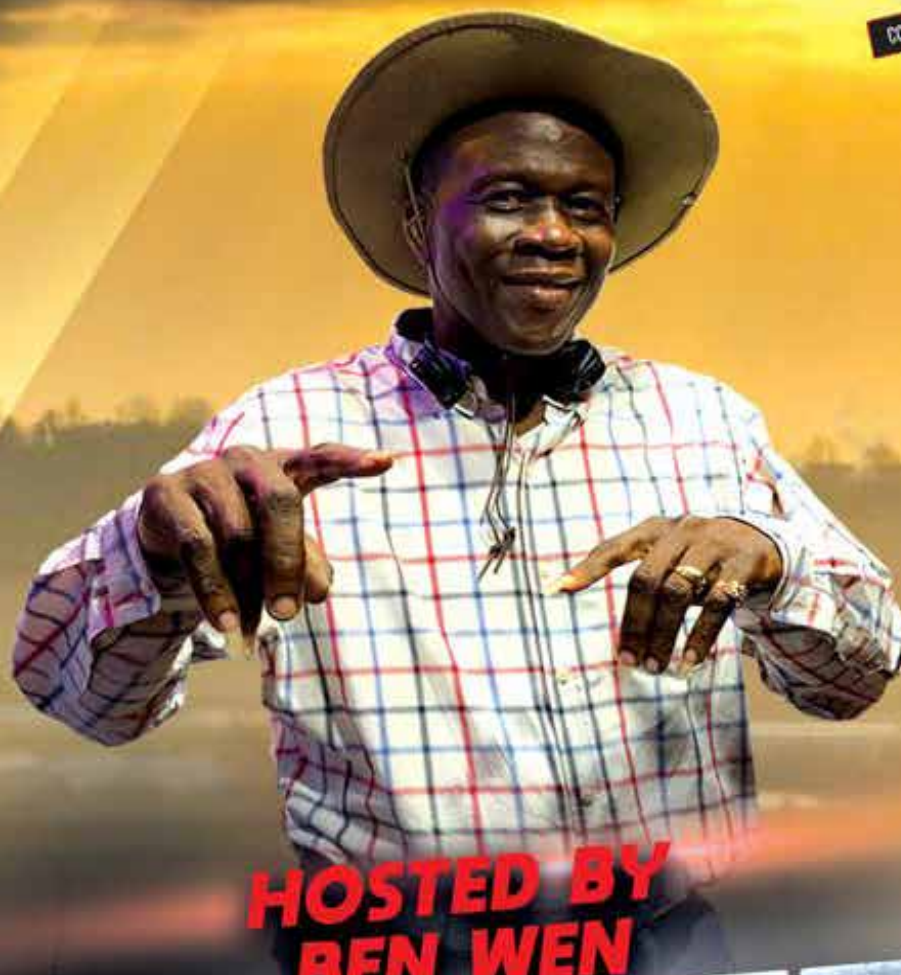
Founded in 2020, Scrub Life Cares is a nonprofit organization that increases access to menstrual health resources and comprehensive reproductive and sexual health education in schools and

the wider community in to promote student well-being, dignity, and equity. Its signature event, the Grow With the Flo: Women & Girls Health Expo, has served hundreds across Antigua and Barbuda, and its programs continue to center holistic, intergenerational care and menstrual justice.

To support Scrub Life Cares or learn more, visit: [www.scrublifecares.org](http://www.scrublifecares.org)  
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**SUNDAYS  
10AM - 1PM**



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## Another Storm More Damaging Than Hurricane Erin



**Cuban Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda**

While our small countries in our beloved Caribbean closely followed the possible path of Hurricane Erin, another storm from the northern part of our hemisphere continues its attempts to batter our region and other parts of the planet. Instead of heavy rains and winds, this storm, originating from the horsemen of the apocalypse of the State Department, the White House, and some members of the US Congress, is unleashed loaded with threats, blackmail, draconian sanctions, and an imperial arrogance never seen before.

Blinded by their hatred against the Cuban Revolution and its social and solidarity work, the current Secretary of State and his followers in the crusade against Cuba, ignore the most basic norms of international coexistence.

Intensifying its obsessive campaign against Cuban medical collaboration with other countries around the world, last Wednesday the State Department announced new sanctions against a group of government officials and international organizations who, in one way or another, have been linked to medical cooperation programs developed between Cuba and their respective countries.

The sanctions list includes representatives of governments from African and Latin American states, and even smaller Caribbean neighbors like our beloved Grenada. The reaction from these countries was immediate. Once again, the pride and courage of these peoples prevailed in defending their sovereign right to maintain relations of collaboration and friendship with the rest of the world, and to work to provide their people with a public health system accessible to all, of higher quality and well-being.

Alexandre Padilha, Minister of Health

in Brazil, a country where more than 2,000 Cuban health workers currently provide humanitarian services, described Washington's actions as unjustified attacks, emphasizing that the work of doctors and specialists in Brazil saves lives and has the support of the Brazilian people. "Health and sovereignty are non-negotiable," he asserted.

Perhaps the most direct reflection on these measures can be found in the comments made by Gleisi Hoffman, Minister of Institutional Relations of the South American giant, who described the measures as petty revenge, noting that such actions could only come from those who have never understood what it means to need medical attention and have no one to turn to.

Once again, as on all previous occasions, the US Secretary of State and his backward followers have encountered the courageous resistance of the peoples and governments of the so-called southern countries, who refuse to bow to imperial threats and sanctions, and defend their relationship of friendship and brotherhood with the noble and indomitable Cuba.



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**VERNON A. SPRINGER**



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# Regional News

## Dominica to be represented by a 75-member team for CARIFESTA XV

Dominica will be represented by a 75-member team at this year's CARIFESTA XV, scheduled to take place in Barbados from the 22 to 31 of August.

This was according to Culture Minister Gretta Roberts during the recently held 2025-2026 Budget debate.

This year's festival will be celebrated under the theme: "Caribbean Roots. Global Excellence." and promises a rich and diverse programme showcasing the best of the region in fashion, film, culinary arts, visual and literary arts, craft, music, dance, theatre, and more.

"We at the Ministry of Culture, we are presently pre-



paring for CARIFESTA XV, which will be held in Barbados this [year]," she said. "We are looking at sending a team of about 75 participants to include 30 of

our youth, 30 of our young people, because we want them to experience the Caribbean Festival of Arts, and Barbados wants us to come because they believe it will

be the best festival of arts ever."

She continued, "So we are planning to send our people there."

Roberts added that the team will be performing in dance, in art, there will be an art exhibition, a fashion parade, and product displays.

She thanked the Dominica Export Import Agency (DEXIA) and the Ministry of Tourism, "because they too are helping us, and Education of course, because we are engaging the youth. So all these three ministries are working with us to ensure that we really represent during CariFest." (Dominica News Online)

## Teenager arrested in connection with fatal shooting at vigil

The St Catherine South police have arrested a 19-year-old male suspect in connection with the murder of a man at a vigil in Portmore on Thursday.

The suspect, held on Thursday, is a mechanic of a Gregory Park, Portmore address.

The deceased has been identified as Dick Uriah Palmer, otherwise called 'Children', a labourer of Cumberland Meadows, Portmore.

Police reports are that about 1 a.m. on Thursday, Palmer was at a vigil in Caymanas



Gardens, Gregory Park, a man. when he was approached by

After a brief conversation

with him, the man reportedly brandished a gun and fired shots, hitting Palmer in the upper body.

The gunman ran from the scene and escaped in the community on foot.

Palmer ran to a nearby premises and was assisted to the Spanish Town Hospital where he died while undergoing treatment.

A probe was launched by the Portmore Criminal Investigations Branch, which resulted in the arrest of the suspect. (Jamaica Gleaner)



## Trinidad's Opposition leader slams cancellation of Independence Day Parade



Opposition Leader Penelope Beckles has demanded transparency from the Government following Friday's announcement that this year's Independence Day Military Parade and associated State events, including the national fireworks display, have been cancelled.

In a strongly worded statement, Beckles said the announcement had left the country "bewildered," noting that Independence Parades had been held even during periods of national crisis, such as the 2011 State of Emergency, and only the COVID-19 pandemic had previously halted the annual ceremony.

"The nation deserves answers: Who made the call to silence our Parade? Will the Prime Minister address the nation on this matter? What is the true reason for the cancellation? What is being hidden from the cit-

izens? Will the Prime Minister do the honourable thing and face the public on this issue?" she asked.

The Opposition Leader criticised what she described as the Government's vague explanations of national security and fiscal responsibility, saying they "only made the situation worse."

She argued that the decision suggested the Parade had been assessed purely in financial terms, without consideration for its patriotic, social, and cultural importance.

Beckles also pointed to the inconsistency between the cancellation and recent government claims that crime levels were falling.

She reminded the public of Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar's assurance just four days before the cancellation that crime was down in the country and citizens could

feel safer, contrasting that with the sudden suspension of the national celebration.

"What should we believe?" she asked, warning that the mixed messages cast doubt over the Government's credibility.

Calling the move "an affront to our independence, democracy, and national identity," Beckles said the cancellation risked damaging national morale, particularly among young people who look forward each year to celebrating the country's sovereignty.

She stressed the wider significance of the annual parade, describing it as "a living classroom where our young people see history in motion; and learn about the sacrifices of those who came before, the discipline of our armed forces, and the values that bind us together."

The Armed Forces, she added, expect to lead the preservation of patriotism and civic pride, and their absence from the celebrations would leave a void.

The Opposition Leader called on the Government to reconsider its decision and consider alternatives such as scaled-down parades, ceremonial flag-raising, or a symbolic fly-past. "We therefore call upon the Government to reconsider its decision and explore options that protect both public safety and national pride," she said.

Trinidad and Tobago's 63rd anniversary of independence will be observed on August 31. (CMC)



# International

AROUND THE WORLD



## Air Canada suspends third-quarter and full-year guidance following 'unlawful' strike



Air Canada is suspending its guidance for third-quarter and full-year operating results after the union defied back-to-work orders, which further halted the airline's plan to resume flights.

"Air Canada deeply regrets the impact the labour disruption has had on its customers, its stakeholders and the communities it serves," the airline said in a Monday press release.

More than 10,00 flight attendants walked off the job early Saturday over pay and scheduling disputes. Patty Hajdu, the Minister of Jobs and Families, stepped in and imposed binding arbitration and extended the existing contract until a new agreement could be reached.

The Canadian Industrial Relations Board ordered flight attendants back to work by 2 p.m. ET on Sunday, but the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) told its members to "remain on strike."

In a statement, union secretary and treasurer Candace Rennick said the government's order was "a disgraceful misuse of power that reeks of systemic bias and corporate favoritism."

Because of the union's defiance, Air Canada said Sunday that it had to cancel about 240 flights scheduled for that day.

All Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge flights remain cancelled until further notice. Air Canada Express flights operated by Jazz or PAL continue to operate as normal.

The airline estimated that 500,000 customers' flights have been cancelled because of the strike. Air Canada said in a Monday news release that the board has declared the strike "unlawful" and ordered leadership to direct its members to return to work.

Air Canada said it hopes to resume operations on Monday evening. (NBC News)



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY



## ‘Skibidi’ and ‘tradwife’ among words added to Cambridge Dictionary

“Skibidi”, “tradwife” and other slang terms popularised on social media are among thousands of new words to be added to the Cambridge Dictionary this year.

Skibidi is a gibberish term which gained popularity via a viral animated video series on YouTube, while tradwife is a shortening of “traditional wife” – a married mother who cooks, cleans and posts on social media.

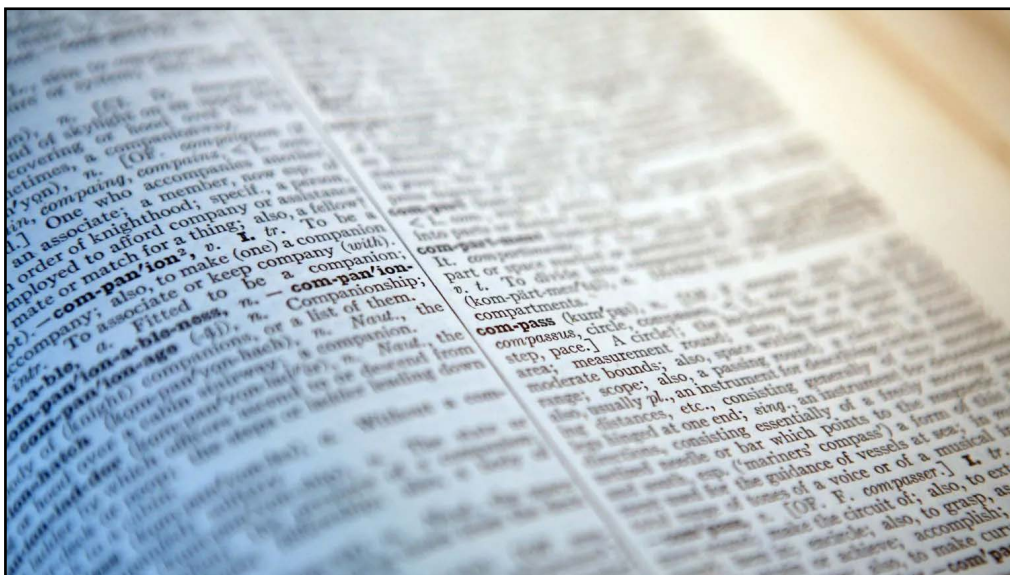
More than 6,000 new words have been added, including those that relate to tech giants and remote working.

“Internet culture is changing the English language and the effect is fascinating to observe and capture in the dictionary,” said lexical programme manager Colin McIntosh.

Skibidi is defined in the dictionary as “a word that can have different meanings such as ‘cool’ or ‘bad’, or can be used with no real meaning as a joke”. An example of its use is “What the skibidi are you doing?”

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian revealed her familiarity with the phrase when she posted a video on Instagram showing a necklace engraved with “skibidi toilet” – the name of the YouTube series.

An earlier use of the word came in 2018 when the band Little Big released a track called Skibidi. The music video has been viewed more than 700 million times and features a dance



that went viral.

As well as new phrases, some shortened versions of existing terms have been added, including “delulu” – a play on the word “delusional”, with a similar definition: “believing things that are not real or true, usually because you choose to”.

An increase in remote working since the pandemic has seen “mouse juggler” – a device or piece of software used to make it seem as though you are working when you are not – gain its place in the dictionary.

Other work-related words to make the cut include “work wife” and “work spouse”, which acknowledge workplace relationships where two people help and trust each other.

Some composite terms such as “broli-garchy” have also been added. Merg-

ing “bro” and “oligarchy”, it means “a small group of men, especially men owning or involved in a technology business, who are extremely rich and powerful, and who have or want political influence”.

It was used to describe tech leaders Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg attending Donald Trump’s inauguration in January.

Mr McIntosh said Cambridge Dictionary only added words which they believed could stand the test of time.

“It’s not every day you get to see words like ‘skibidi’ and ‘delulu’ make their way into the Cambridge Dictionary,” he said.

“We only add words where we think they’ll have staying power.” (BBC News)



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## Zelenskyy to meet with Trump days after red carpet reception for Putin



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will meet with President Donald Trump on Monday afternoon at the White House, just days after Trump and Russia's President Vladimir Putin left an Alaska summit without a ceasefire deal.

Zelenskyy is traveling to Washington, D.C., alongside several European leaders, including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

Trump's sit-down with the leaders will come as he's intensified his efforts in recent weeks to end the war in Ukraine, a more than three-year conflict he insists would not have taken place had he been in office.

Following his meeting with Putin, Trump shifted his aim toward estab-

lishing a full-fledged "peace agreement" between Russia and Ukraine, bemoaning ceasefire agreements as unstable. At the same time, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Sunday on NBC News' "Meet the Press" that a ceasefire was "not off the table," though Russia has not agreed to stop fighting.

In a post to Truth Social Sunday night, Trump appeared to place the onus of ending the war on Zelenskyy, while emphasizing that Ukraine must give up Russian-annexed Crimea and its hopes of joining NATO — a key demand from Putin.

"President Zelenskyy of Ukraine can end the war with Russia almost immediately, if he wants to, or he can continue to fight," Trump said.

A day earlier, Trump indicated in a post on Saturday that if talks with Zelenskyy are successful on Monday, he will facilitate further discussions with Putin in hopes of reaching a perma-

nent end to the war.

The meeting will give the leaders the opportunity to discuss future security guarantees for Ukraine, which U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff floated as potentially looking similar to NATO's Article 5.

Ukraine hoped to use the meeting to negotiate an ironclad security guarantee, similar to Article 5, and convince Trump that a temporary ceasefire is necessary to begin real peace talks, according to a Ukrainian source familiar with the goals. The security guarantees should be treaty-level obligations, the source said, which require Senate approval.

A GOP lawmaker who declined to be identified echoed the need for U.S. security guarantees.

Similarly, a European official said that the meeting would be focused in part on clarifying what security guarantees would look like. Trump has floated land "swapping," but the official said that their belief was that Ukraine would never give up all of its eastern Donbas region, much of which Russia controls. Europe, the official said, would also likely want to participate in any final negotiations for a peace agreement.

Zelenskyy said in a post on X late Sunday that he had arrived in Washington. "I am confident that we will defend Ukraine, effectively guarantee security, and that our people will always be grateful to President Trump," he said. He emphasized that "Russia must end this war, which it itself started."

The Ukrainian president's visit will be his first to the White House since a February meeting devolved into a stunning confrontation between Trump, Vice President JD Vance and Zelenskyy. The moment, which played out





live on television, shocked Ukrainian allies and marked a sharp shift in the United States' years-long support for an ally embroiled in a bloody war that began with Russia's invasion.

Vance will also attend Monday's meeting with Trump and Zelenskyy, a source familiar with the plans confirmed. ABC News was first to report that detail.

Monday's meeting comes after the White House welcomed Putin to Alaska, a controversial move that garnered further criticism when the U.S. rolled out a red carpet for Putin and took the controversial step of allowing the Russian autocrat to ride privately with Trump in "The Beast," a presidential vehicle.

The meeting, which excluded Zelenskyy, ultimately concluded without a ceasefire deal. The leaders departed Alaska after hosting a 12-minute press event where they did not take questions or announce deliverables.

Trump announced his meeting with Zelenskyy in the early hours of Saturday morning, adding in a post to Truth Social that "if all works out, we will then schedule a meeting with President Putin."

The future of major sticking points in discussions to end the war — the status of Ukrainian territories partially occupied by Russia and security guarantees to prevent a future Russian invasion — remained murky over the weekend.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Sunday that there "have to be some security guarantees for Ukraine," noting that the issue would be discussed "over the next few days." Witkoff said Sunday that security guarantees could resemble NATO's Article 5, which triggers a response by the entire coalition if one member is attacked.

In an interview on "Fox News Sunday," Witkoff said that "the United States is potentially prepared to be able to give Article 5 security guarantees, but not from NATO, directly from the United States and other European countries."

The Ukrainian president celebrated what he called "a historic decision" for the U.S. to participate in security guarantees, saying in a post to X on Sunday that they "must really be very practical, delivering protection on land, in the air, and at sea, and must be developed with Europe's participation."

Zelenskyy will also have the opportunity during Monday's meeting to address Trump's comments on the future of Ukrainian land occupied by Russia.

In the days ahead of the Alaska summit, Trump said that an end to the war would include "some swapping of territories." Zelenskyy promptly shot down the prospect, saying that "Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupier."

Rubio said Sunday on NBC News' "Meet the Press" that "no one is pushing Ukraine to give that up," referring to land occupied by Russia. But later that morning, Trump appeared to undercut Rubio's remarks when he reposted a Truth Social user who declared, "Ukraine must be willing to lose some territory to Russia otherwise

the longer the war goes on they will keep losing even more land!!"

Trump left his meeting with Putin without announcing any ceasefire or peace agreements. The president told reporters on his way to Alaska that "I'm not going to be happy" if the meeting did not lead to a ceasefire. He also said that Russia would face "economically severe" consequences if Putin did not seem interested in peace.

However, Rubio said Sunday on "Meet the Press" that he did not believe "new sanctions on Russia are going to force him to accept the ceasefire."

Witkoff defended the president after he failed to secure a ceasefire, saying on "Fox News Sunday" that a ceasefire often precedes a peace deal, and "the president has always talked about a ceasefire until he made a lot of different wins in this meeting and began to realize that we could be talking about a peace deal."

"The ultimate deal here is a peace deal," Witkoff added.

Trump's Friday meeting with Putin was a stark contrast from Zelenskyy's February trip to the White House, when Trump and Vance publicly berated Zelenskyy, arguing he was not grateful enough for U.S. support.

"You're gambling with World War III, and what you doing is very disrespectful to the country, this country, that's backed you," Trump told Zelenskyy at the time. The meeting was ultimately cut short.

The two leaders have met since then, though not at the White House. Trump and Zelenskyy met at the Vatican in April on the sidelines of the pope's funeral, and they met again privately at the NATO summit in June.

Trump has previously falsely called Zelenskyy a "dictator" and falsely accused Ukraine of starting the war. The war began when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. (NBC News)



# Rain forces abandonment of Falcons' CPL match with the Kings



**Covers on the pitch at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium during rainy weather conditions, which led to the abandonment of the CPL match between the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons and St. Lucia Kings on Sunday, August 17, 2025. (CPL/Getty Images)**

Rain forced the abandonment of the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons' second home match in the 2025 Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) on Sunday night.

The match officials made the decision to abandon the match between the Falcons and defending champions St. Lucia Kings at about 10 pm after several downpours and inspections at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in North Sound.

The Falcons and the Kings, who were launching their campaign in defence of their title, both receive one point for the abandoned match.

The washout came 24 hours after the Falcons rebounded from a season-opening loss away to the St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots to claim their first win in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) on Saturday night.

After suffering a six-wicket loss to the Patriots at Warner Park in St. Kitts on Thursday, the Falcons claimed their first win in front of their home fans, defeating the Barbados Royals by six

wickets with just two balls remaining in a pulsating affair at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium.

The Falcons and cricket fans will hope for an improvement in weather conditions at the same venue on Wednesday, when they play their third of five home matches against the visiting Trinbago Knight Riders at 7 pm.

Meanwhile, Colin Munro blitzed a remarkable hundred for Trinbago Knight Riders to give them an impressive victory over St. Kitts & Nevis Patriots by 12 runs in their opening game of the Caribbean Premier League at Warner Park on Sunday.

Munro scored 120 off just 57 balls from the top of the order, hitting at an emphatic 210 strike rate that included 14 fours and six sixes, to propel the Knight Riders to 231 for five off their 20 overs.

A high-scoring match saw the Patriots making a good attempt to reach their victory target, scoring 219 for seven with Jason Holder hitting a top

score of 44. Andre Fletcher cracked 41, Rilee Rossouw hit 38, and Kyle Myers struck 32. Off-spinner Usman Tariq snapped up four for 33.

The Patriots will look back and rue a relatively slow start on a flat batting track with just 23 runs scored off the first three overs of their response that in the end saw them only fall short by a dozen runs.

After winning the toss, Holder inserted the Knight Riders but might well have soon regretted the decision as he saw his bowlers dispatched to all parts of Warner Park.

An opening stand of 114 between Munro and Alex Hales (47 off 27 balls) was broken in the ninth over, but by then, the platform was well and truly set for a monster score.

Player of the match Munro was particularly brutal down the ground, hitting both pace and spin back past the bowlers as he peppered the hoardings.

The New Zealand cricketer was eventually dismissed by Holder, but by then, the Knight Riders had amassed 213 runs, and Munro had eclipsed Nicholas Pooran's 102 not out against Barbados in the 2023 CPL to claim the Trinidad franchise's highest individual score.

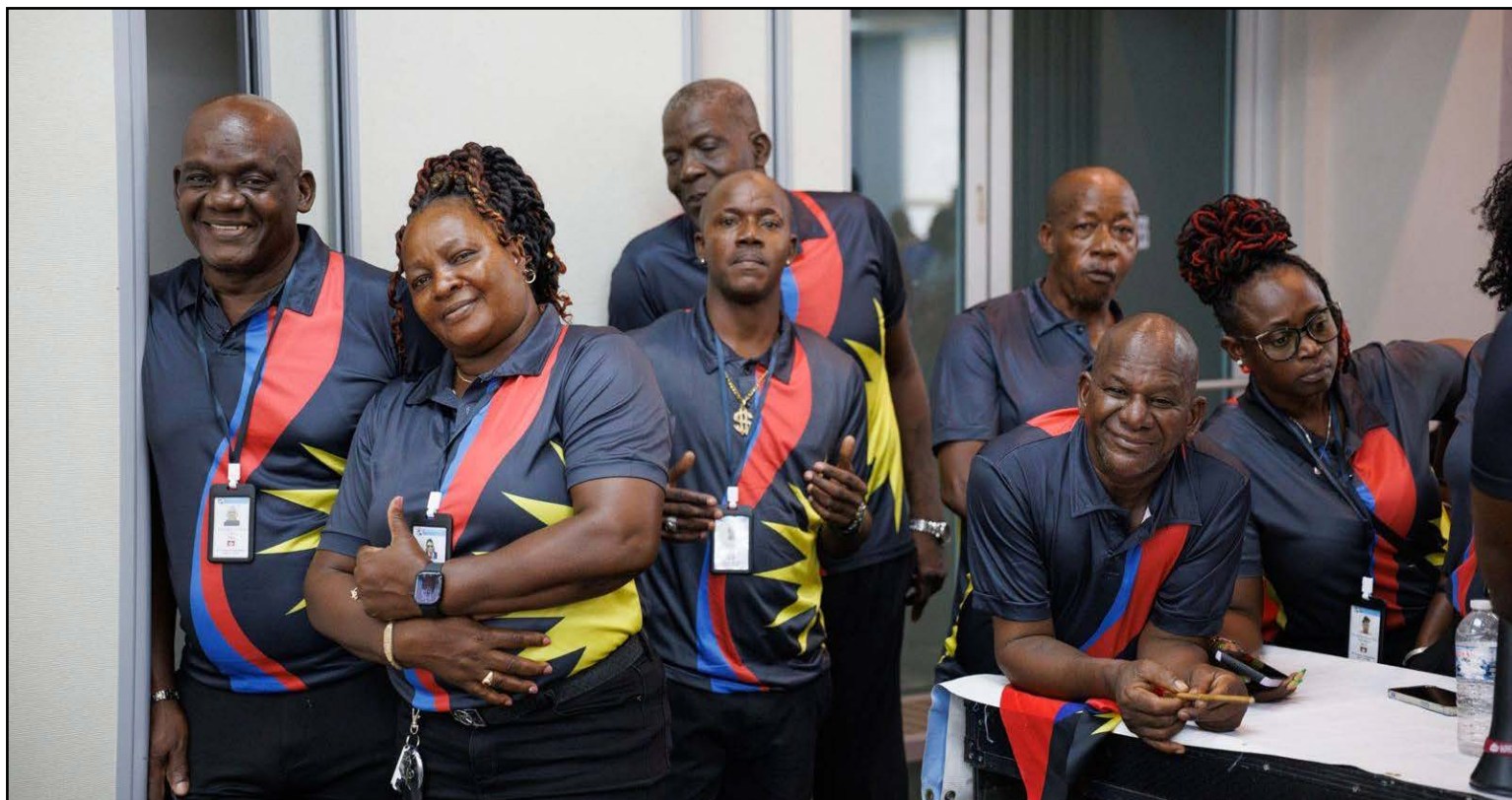
In doing so, Munro also became only the second overseas player, alongside Faf du Plessis, to score two CPL hundreds.

The Knight Riders joined the Guyana Amazon Warriors with one win from one, while the Patriots have chalked up two defeats after victory over the Falcons in their first home game.

The Patriots will take on the St. Lucia Kings when the CPL resumes at Warner Park in St. Kitts on Tuesday at 7 pm.



## Host Antigua retains World Domino Championships



**Some players of the Antigua and Barbuda national team during the 20th World Domino Championships at the John E. St. Luce Conference Center. (Photo courtesy of the ABNDA)**

Antigua and Barbuda created history by winning the World Council of Domino Federations (WCDF) tournament for the fourth consecutive time.

Hosts Antigua and Barbuda achieve the feat by being crowned joint champions with St. Kitts and Nevis at the 20th World Domino Championships at the John E. St. Luce Conference Center on Sunday.

Barbados and St. Lucia defaulted their final match to St. Kitts and Nevis, which allowed the Kittitians and reigning defending champions Antigua and Barbuda to finish at the top of the eight-team competition with 13 points each.

After capturing the world domino championship in

2016, 2018, and 2023, Antigua and Barbuda added the 2025 title to their collection, becoming the first WCDF member territory to win four consecutive crowns.

Barbados clinched their place with a total of five points during the August 10 to 18 world tournament, which concluded with an award and presentation ceremony on Monday.

The other participating countries in this year's event are Dominica, Guyana, the United States of America (USA), and Anguilla.

The participants were engaged in competitive disciplines, comprising Team Four Hand, Female Three Hand, Male Three Hand, Mixed Pairs, Female Pairs, Male Pairs, Queen of Domi-

no, and King of Domino.

Meanwhile, two Antiguanians have retained positions on a newly elected executive body to administer the affairs of the World Council of Domino Federations for the next three years.

The WCDF elected its new executive body during its Annual General Meeting, which was held in Antigua on Saturday, August 16.

Antiguan Carol-Ann Skepple, who served as assistant secretary general on the previous WCDF executive body, was unanimously re-elected to serve as general secretary.

Compatriot Carol-Faye Bynoe served as public relations officer on the previous

executive and was unanimously re-elected to serve as third vice-president.

Bynoe is currently the president of the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Federation, which successfully hosted this year's world championships.

Daniel McBeth of the USA was re-elected as president of the WCDF, and Veda DeBellotte of Barbados also retained her post as first vice-president of the WCDF.

Kirk Straughn of Barbados was elected as second vice-president, Rodwell Phillip of Guyana was chosen as treasurer, and Billy Oswald will serve as public relations officer.



## Windies women attend strategic development camp in India

Fifteen of the region's most promising female cricketers have embarked on a specialized training camp at the Super Kings Academy in Chennai, India, as part of Cricket West Indies (CWI) expansion and continuation of its groundbreaking India development programme.

The female contingent, accompanied by head coach Merissa Aguiliera, assistant coaches Ryan Hinds and Tremayne Smartt and team manager Yasmine St. Ange, departed Barbados for India on August 12 ahead of the comprehensive two-week programme, which runs from August 13 to 30.

The 15-member group features some players capped at senior level, including Ashmini Munisar, Zaida James, Djenaba Joseph, Jahzara Claxton, Janillea Glasgow, Realeanna Grimmond, Trishan Holder, Mandy Mangru, and Nerissa Crafton, in addition to present and former West Indies Under 19 stars Naijanni Cumberbatch, Niya Latchman, Samara Ramnath, Shunelle Sawh, Steffie Soogrim, and Selena Ross.

During this period, the players will participate in a series of practice matches and specialized training sessions designed to enhance their performance



**The promising West Indies female cricketers on a specialized training camp at the Super Kings Academy in Chennai, India. (CWI Media)**

against spin bowling in challenging overseas conditions, with unique emphasis on technical development, mental conditioning and cultural adaptation, all essential traits for international cricket success.

Working alongside the same world-class coaching staff that guided the male contingent, including Academy Director Sriram Krishnamurthy and his expert team, the female players will benefit from Chennai's renowned facilities and coaching expertise.

Cricket West Indies (CWI) Director of Cricket, Miles Bascombe, expressed enthusiasm about the programme's expansion,

stating, "Following the tremendous success of our male players' training camp in December, we are proud to now extend this opportunity to our most promising female cricketers."

"The Super Kings Academy in Chennai offers a world-class training environment that allows our players to experience cricket in a different part of the world."

"This initiative will provide targeted technical development, especially in batting against spin, while also exposing the players to the mental and physical demands of elite training in subcontinental conditions. It forms a key part of our broader vision to

build a deeper, more resilient player pool and ensure gender parity in developmental opportunities.

"We are confident that the players selected will grow from this experience and help raise the standards across our entire women's cricket pathway. It's another important step in strengthening the foundation of West Indies cricket for the future."

With plans to alternate between male and female groups annually, this programme represents CWI's long-term vision for comprehensive player development and continues to position West Indies cricket at the forefront of innovative training methodologies.



## Wings Tough Girls players attend tryouts in Canada

Three Antiguan players of the Wings Tough Gals basketball team are currently in practice at various tryouts in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in Canada.

The young ladies are Dirkisha Fullington, Ciana Burnette, and Vianta Olivera. The three players are accompanied by chaperon Valencia Burnette of the Wings Youth Basketball Unit.

The Antiguan trio participated in their first session on Sunday night in the midst of 30 Canadian girls, who are trying out for the Yellow Jackets basketball club at the Hillfield Strathallan College in Hamilton.

On Monday night, August 18, the Wings Tough Gals were slated to practice at the GTA West Tryouts at the Humber College Lakeshore Gymnasium, and then the YNBA Prep Tryouts at the Magna Centre on Tuesday, August 19.

For their remaining basketball schedule, the Antiguan players will be at the Halton Region Tryouts at King's Christian College on August 20 and



**The three Antiguan players of the Wings Tough Gals basketball team that are currently in practice at various tryouts in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in Canada. (Photo courtesy of the CPTSA Wings)**

the Sheridan College workout at HMC on August 21.

The Antiguan trio will wrap up their Canadian basketball training experience at the Sheridan College workout at Davis Campus on Friday night.

Besides basketball training, the Wings Tough Gals have been enjoying other fun activities during their nine-day tour of Ontario, Canada.

Meanwhile, 40 Canadians, comprising three teams from the JUEL League of Ontario, are expected to participate in the 20th Gillian Brazier Basketball Tournament, which will be hosted by the CPTSA Wings Sports Club from March 29 to April 5, 2026.

The Wings Basketball Unit will be having early tryouts from mid-September for female players to represent the club at the 20th Gillian Brazier Tournament and other tournaments.

Interested female players between the ages of 12 and 19 should have their parents contact the Wings Youth Basketball Unit at 268-788-8783 / 786-2881 / 771-6582, or email [cpt-sawings1989@gmail.com](mailto:cpt-sawings1989@gmail.com) to register.

### Con't from page 24

Seamus Oshea contributed 20 points, 11 rebounds, and four assists; Ari Mottley Squires sank 18 points and grabbed 10 rebounds; and Darren Massiah chipped in with 17 points, 14 rebounds, and five steals for the Bajan Ballers.

The tournament concluded with a presentation of awards to the participating teams and outstanding individual performers.

Elijah Charles of Antigua Ballers claimed Most Valuable Player (MVP) and the most points awards, while the most rebounds award was

captured by Jaheem Dyett of Island Hoopers.

Derrick Perez of Combine Express secured the Most Outstanding Player Award.

Elliott Samuel Jr. of Combine Express won the award for the most steals, while Yohan Nicholas of Antigua Ballers captured the most block shots award.

Tajahron Davis of Antigua Ballers claimed the awards for the best basketball IQ and most assists.

Ari Mottley-Squires of the Bajan Ballers won the Most Disciplined

Player Award, while Ethan Browne of Island Hoopers claimed the Best Rookie Award.

The second annual Mahijah Davis Basketball Academy (MDBA) Under-15 Youth Summer Basketball Splash Invitational tournament is supported by several sponsors.

They are the Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board, the Citizen by Investment Unit, Total Imports Limited, Blue Waters Hotel, Mario Davis, Michael Joseph, Cool and Smooth, and Unlimited Ice Limited.



# Sports

TUESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2025



## Antiguan Ballers win MDBA invitational basketball tournament



**The Antiguan Ballers team with their awards after winning the second annual Mahijah Davis Basketball Academy Under-15 Youth Summer Basketball Splash Invitational tournament at the JSC Sports Complex on Sunday, August 17, 2025. (Photos courtesy of the MDBA)**

The Antiguan Ballers won the second annual Mahijah Davis Basketball Academy (MDBA) Under-15 Youth Summer Basketball Splash Invitational tournament at the JSC Sports Complex on Sunday night.

The Antiguan Ballers, who played unbeaten throughout the competition, secured the title with a commanding 86-58 victory against Combine Express in the final of the four-team tournament.

Tajahron Davis produced 28 points, seven rebounds, five steals, and four assists; Erije Joseph contributed 22 points, five rebounds, and five steals; and Elliott Samuel Jr. sank 11 points for the Antiguan

Ballers.

Derick Perez converted 24 points, and Yohan Nicholas chipped in with 11 points, nine rebounds, and block shots for Combine Express.

Islands Hoopers claimed the bronze medals by snatching a 73-69 victory against last year's inaugural tournament winners, the Bajan Ballers of Barbados, in the playoff for third place.

Elijah Charles produced 44 points, 10 rebounds, seven steals, and four assists, and Derick Perez scored 10 points and claimed five steals for Island Hoopers.

**Con't on page 23**



**Elijah Charles, right, accepts his MVP Award from tournament organizer Mahijah Davis.**



**Tajahron Davis, right, accepts an award from tournament organizer Mahijah Davis.**