

The Social Security's Jolly Beach investment proposal goes before parliament on Monday

Story on Page 2



Prime Minister Gaston Browne (blue shirt back row) with the students who are departing shortly on scholarships to China

Story on Page 3

The proposal for Social Security to invest in the Jolly Beach Hotel goes before parliament on Monday



Jolly Beach Hotel

The government is taking to parliament on Monday its proposal to allow the Social Security Scheme to invest in the Jolly Beach Hotel.

This is to allow for broad-based discussion on this critical matter which the government sees as a strategic move to ensure the long-term economic viability of the scheme.

This comes as the Cabinet on Wednesday continued its discussions on the government's plan to consolidate bond obligations owed to Social Security Scheme, explore strategies to leverage the Jolly Beach property as an investment vehicle, and advance a broader vision for the long-term sustainability of the pension fund.

Cabinet spokesman, Maurice Merchant said the executive body approved an immediate allocation of \$20 million to renovate 33 rooms at Jolly Beach Resort, construct a 500-person capacity conference facility, and up-

grade the hotel's sewage system, as well as its internet and communications infrastructure. Upon completion of the renovations, the hotel's total room count will increase to 351, with works expected to be finished in time for the next tourism season.

The government also announced plans to consolidate all arrears to the Social Security Scheme, inject approximately \$75 million into the Jolly Beach Resort, and issue a \$450 million bond over a five-year period, at 3% initially and 5% thereafter. These measures aim to transform Jolly Beach Hotel into a major investment prospect for Social Security.

Once fully renovated and expanded, the resort will be vested in the Social Security Board, turning a previously non-performing government obligation into a revenue-generating asset.

This strategy will provide Social Security with:

- Long-term capital appreciation
- Steady operational income; and
- The ability to resell rooms under the Citizenship by Investment Programme (CIP)

The Prime Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to:

- Sustain Social Security without raising the pension age or contribution rates
- Maximize the value of underutilized national assets
- Collaborate constructively with Social Security leadership to finalize the investment structure

The Parliament of Antigua and Barbuda will convene on Monday, 25th August, to debate the proposal for Social Security to invest in Jolly Beach Resort. Parliament will also consider amendments to the CIP legislation in response to concerns raised by the United States and the European Union.

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Investing in Education and Nation Building: 16 students gain scholarships to study in China



Prime Minister Gaston Browne with the students who are departing shortly on scholarships to China

Encouraging Excellence Through Education

As a group of sixteen students prepare to depart for studies in the People's Republic of China on scholarships offered by that country's government, Prime Minister Gaston Browne has emphasized the importance of education as a pathway to personal growth, national pride, and global competitiveness.

The nation's leader made the point as he addressed the students at a send-off ceremony held at the Office of the prime Minister on Thursday. Students were encouraged to pursue higher education, and use their academic success as an example for others, steering young people away from

crime and violence.

"I pledge the full support of the government to ensure that students' academic journeys are successful, while also reminding you of your responsibility to work diligently. Education, I wish to emphasise, is not only a personal achievement but also a representation of family, community, and nation," PM Browne stated.

Competing on the World Stage

The students were urged to view themselves not just as local or regional competitors but as international contenders capable of excelling alongside the best in the world. The prime minister encouraged high ambitions, including aiming for terminal degrees such as PhDs,

while also ensuring that graduates become effective, disciplined, and high-performing professionals.

Expectations of Leadership and Nation Building

In his remarks, PM Browne highlighted that today's students are not only the future but also the present leaders-in-waiting. As current leaders grow older, the governance and development of Antigua and Barbuda will be entrusted to the younger generation. Students were urged to set high standards and prepare themselves for leadership roles across various sectors.

The prime minister reaffirmed the government's strong youth focus, promising to continue creating opportunities for young people

to seize and monetize their skills. The goal is not only intellectual success but also economic empowerment—encouraging students to consider entrepreneurship and side ventures in addition to traditional employment.

The speech emphasized that education should not only prepare students for jobs but also give them the ability to create wealth. Students were reminded that financial success is not inherently negative, but rather a means to progress and stability. By monetizing their skills and pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities, they can maximize the value of their education while taking care of personal and family obligations.

Local News

The names of the students and their areas of study

Name: **Zhaveah Rhycor Quayade Benjamin**
 Chinese Language: Capital Normal University
 Major: Chemical Engineering & Industrial Biological Engineering
 University: Tsinghua University
CASSADA GARDENS

Name: **Kerisa Keryl Karanje Campbell**
 Chinese Language: China University of Geosciences (Wuhan)
 Major: Computer Science and Technology
 University: Wuhan University of Technology
UPPER FORT ROAD

Name: **Olia Nyla Campbell**
 Chinese Language: Huaqiao University
 Major: Software Engineering
 University: Shandong University of Science & Technology
HERBERTS ESTATE

Name: **Daniella Amanda Nadia Mohamed**
 Chinese Language: Shandong University of Science and Technology
 Major: Clinical Medicine
 University: Central South University
UNION ROAD, HATTON

Name: **Ciara Crystal Mc Kinnon**
 Chinese Language: Central China Normal University
 Major: Business Administration
 University: University of Science & Technology Beijing
GOLDEN GROVE

Name: **Davonny Chermilla Chancee Diaz**
 Chinese Language: Tongji University
GOLDEN GROVE

Name: **Ken-Nyse Nasdiiq Lynch**
 Chinese Language: Tongji University
GAMBLES TERRACE

Name: **Nailah Takiya Jacobs**
 Chinese Language: Tongji University
CASSADA GARDENS

Name: **Leon Joshua Alexander Tomlinson**
 Chinese Language: Tongji University
BELMONT

Name: **Rahshon Solone Looby**
 Chinese Language: Tongji University
PAYNTERS

Name: **Allesha Kenesha Monee Le Blanc**
 Chinese Language: Tongji University
PAYNTERS DEVELOPMENT

Name: **Isizis Judeishia Le Blanc**
 Chinese Language: Tongji University
PAYNTERS DEVELOPMENT

Name: **Kimone Britania Peters**
 Chinese Language: Tongji University
FREEMAN'S VILLAGE

Name: **Aunjelique Nayomi Liddie**
 Chinese Language: Tongji University
ST. CLAIR HEIGHTS

Name: **Maddyson Sammyster Talisa Mills**
 Chinese Language: Tongji University
NUT GROVE

Name: **Jesse Dean Jonas**
 Major: Master's Degree in Information and Communication Engineering MPA (Master of Professional Accountancy)
 University: Huazhong University of Science & Technology (2 yrs)
POTTERS

Zidane Martin
2nd Year Student in China

Roy-Ann Boyer
2nd Year Student in China

END

Barbuda airport runway's expansion to start soon

The planned expansion of the Barbuda International Airport runway is expected to start shortly with mobilization efforts already taking place.

The announcement was made by the Director General of Communications, Maurice Merchant, during Thursday's post Cabinet press briefing when he revealed that \$15 million has been approved to undertake the expansion.

The government had earlier stated that it intended to expand the runway by a further 2-thousand feet to allow it to accommodate the 737 Boeing jets, which are one of the most popular aircraft in use by commercial airlines.

According to Merchant the consultants are currently on island conducting their research as well as to assist with preparing the tender documents for the selection of a contractor to carry out the work.

He outlined that the expansion will bring the runway's length to approximately 8,000 feet but it will also include the expansion of the parking apron, install the appropriate lighting system as well as including the construction of an FBO facility.

The new Barbuda International Airport was formally opened last October.





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Prime Minister Gaston Browne to lead official delegation to CARIFESTA opening



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Antigua and Barbuda is sending an official delegation to attend the grand opening of the Caribbean's premier cultural exposition, CARIFESTA, which opens in Barbados this evening.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne, Works Minister Maria Browne, Minister of Creative Industries, Daryll Matthew, Minister of State, Sen. Shenella Govia, Ambassador Elizabeth Makhoul, and other officials are expected to attend and participate in aspects of the ten-day regional festival.

The Minister for Festivals informed Cabinet that a 105-member national contingent of artists and support staff will travel to Barbados Friday (today) to participate in CARIFESTA XV—the premier celebration of Caribbean culture and creativity.

The delegation will showcase Antigua and Barbuda's rich cultural heritage through diverse artistic expressions, including:

□ Hellsgate Steel Orchestra



- The National Youth Theatre
- The National Dance Theatre
- Visual and Craft Arts
- Literary Arts
- Caribbean Pop Music and DJs
- Culinary Arts
- Film Practitioners

□ And the internationally acclaimed Burning Flames

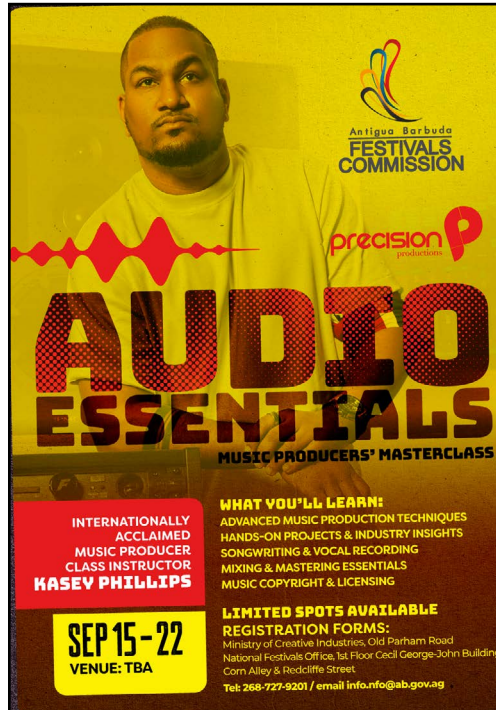
The group also includes a management team, media and technical officials, and 20 schoolchildren who will gain invaluable cultural exposure and experience.

THE FESTIVALS COMMISSION LAUNCHES MUSIC PRODUCERS' MASTERCLASS: AUDIO ESSENTIALS

Following the overwhelming success of Antigua Carnival 2025, the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission (ABFC) is continuing its commitment to strengthening the nation's music industry with the launch of Audio Essentials: Music Producers' Masterclass. This week-long workshop is designed to equip music producers, musicians, and record professionals with tools, techniques, and industry knowledge to compete not only on the Carnival stage but also on the global music scene.

The Masterclass, scheduled for September 15 – 22, 2025, will be facilitated by internationally acclaimed music producer Kasey Phillips, CEO & Founder of Precision Productions, widely recognized as the regional benchmark for excellence in music production. Kasey, a son of legendary Caribbean producer Kenny Phillips, spent his formative years in the studio, producing his first track at just ten years old. After building his name in Trinidad, Kasey broadened his vision with an internship in Los Angeles, California, where his passion to bring Soca and Caribbean music to the world solidified. Returning home, he established Precision Productions, which quickly became the most sought-after production company in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean.

Kasey's international footprint is vast. He has collaborated with global icons such as Ciara, Chris Brown, Toni Braxton, Chaka Khan, Tessanne Chin, and Carl Thomas, while also producing hits for Caribbean stars like Machel Montano, Bunji Garlin, Kes The Band, Rupee, Kevin Lyttle and Tian Winter. His portfolio includes producing six songs on Ciara's most recent album *CiCi*, and his work on Ciara and Chris Brown's single *How We Roll* went viral and soared up global charts. He has also worked alongside diamond-selling artist Shaggy and Australian vo-



calist Jessica Mauboy.

Kasey's impact extends beyond the studio. He is signed to Sony Music Publishing, the world's leading music publisher, and serves as Chairman of the Grammy screening committee for Global Music. His accolades include the Soul Train Music Award for Best International Performance and the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award. Deeply committed to advancing the Caribbean's music industry, Kasey has facilitated Masterclasses throughout the region. He is currently based in Los Angeles, where he continues to lead Precision Productions into a future of global prominence.

What Participants Will Learn:

- Advanced music production techniques
- Hands-on projects with real industry insights
- Songwriting and vocal recording strategies
- Mixing and mastering essentials
- Music copyright and licensing fundamentals

This initiative underscores ABFC's vision to invest in the professional development of Antigua and Barbuda's music producers and musicians, ensuring they are equipped not only to produce music for Antigua Carnival but also to elevate their work to international standards.

Ambassador Elizabeth Makhoul, Chairperson of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission, emphasized the Commission's dedication to building the nation's music industry: *"This Masterclass is a continuation of our commitment to investing directly into our music and our professionals. By providing access to world-class knowledge and training, we are giving our engineers, producers and musicians the tools to propel their work beyond Carnival and ensure Antigua and Barbuda's music resonates across the global stage."*

The Hon. Daryll S. Matthew, Minister of Education, Sports, and Creative Industries, stressed the importance of this moment for the music community: *"Kasey Phillips is an icon in the music industry, and having him share his knowledge and experience with our producers and musicians is a tremendous opportunity. Even more so, for this to be offered free of cost by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda demonstrates our unwavering commitment to nurturing and elevating our music sector. I encourage every music professional to take full advantage of this initiative."*

With very limited spots remaining, music producers and musicians are urged to secure their place without delay. Registration can be done by submitting via WhatsApp at (268) 727-9201 or by emailing info.nfo@ab.gov.ag your name, email address, contact number, and professional area of focus as it relates to the wor

Shining Light Teachers' Professional Conference Ignites Passion and Purpose in Educators



**Anesta Ambrose-Walker, Owner/
Director of The Shining Light Day-
care**

he Shining Light Daycare & Preschool Teachers Professional Conference, held on August 14th and 15th, united educators from across the region for two days of transformation, connection, and empowerment. Under the theme “Refreshing, Reclaiming, Recharging, and Renewing,” the event sparked a wave of enthusiasm among the 44 participants, sending teachers back to their classrooms with renewed energy and vision for the year ahead.

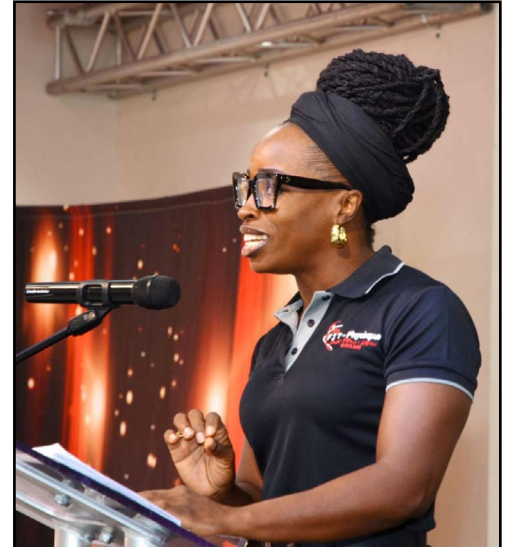
From the powerful keynote by Dr. Andrew Campbell to dynamic workshops led by regional facilitators, including Ms. Julianna Powell of St. Kitts, Ms. Verdesa Browne of St. Vincent, and local experts Mrs. Embler Spencer, Dr. Kwasi Tonge, Ms. Ayanna Shadrach, Mrs. Kimonet March Mills, Dr. Desiree Antonio, and Mrs. Ingrid Daniel-Simon. The conference was a vibrant exchange of knowledge, strategies, and inspiration. Teachers explored innovative approaches to classroom management, technology integration, and student engagement, leaving not only with practical tools but also with a renewed sense of pur-



pose in their calling.

More than just a professional gathering, the conference became a movement of encouragement and unity, reminding every participant that teaching is both an art and a mission.

“On behalf of The Shining Light Daycare & Preschool, I extend heartfelt gratitude to all the participants and facilitators who made this conference unforgettable,” said Anesta Ambrose-Walker, Owner/Director of The Shining Light Daycare & Pre-



school. “Your dedication and presence reminded us that when teachers are supported and inspired, they can truly transform the future. This year, everyone walked away Refreshed, Reclaimed, Renewed, and Recharged, ready to make a lasting difference in the lives of their students.”

As the doors closed on this year’s conference, the impact was undeniable: a community of educators uplifted, united, and eager to shape a brighter future for children across the region.

For more information about upcoming conferences and events, please contact Anesta Ambrose-Walker at 720-4989.

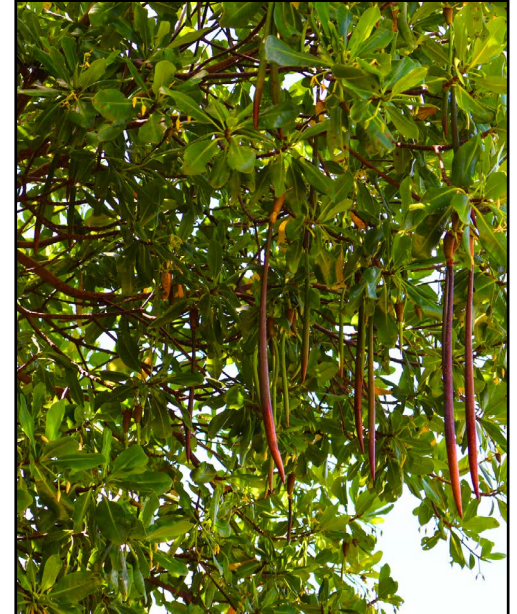
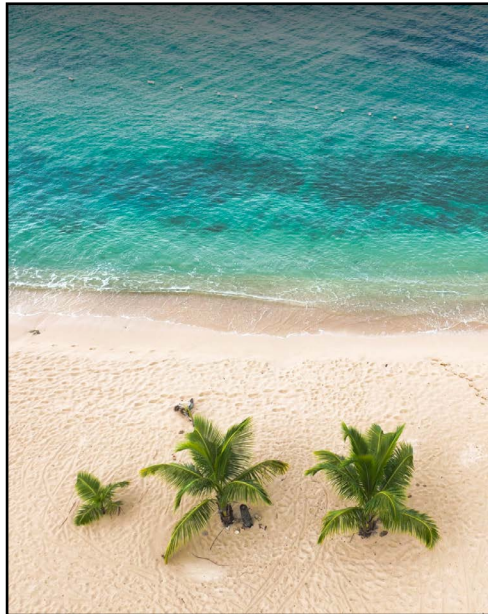
Antigua and Barbuda ClimateTech Start-Up to Present at TechBeach Retreat's Carbon Shift Demo Day

EcoShores Expeditions has announced it was selected to participate in the **TechBeach Retreat Carbon Shift Demo Day**, on Thursday, the culminating event of the Carbon Shift Climate Tech Startup Program. This initiative, developed by **TBR Lab** in partnership with Europe's leading climate innovation ecosystem **Climate-KIC** and the **Development Bank of Jamaica**, is dedicated to equipping Caribbean-based innovators with the resources, networks, and expertise to tackle the region's most pressing environmental challenges.

Over the past eight weeks, the EcoShores Team has been part of a cohort of dynamic early-stage founders working intensively to validate ideas, refine technologies, and design scalable, impactful climate solutions. The Carbon Shift program offers participants access to mentorship, commercialization pathways, global networks, and funding readiness support. The purpose is to accelerate climate resilience and sustainable economic opportunities across the Caribbean.

"Our mission at EcoShores has always been to bridge environmental conservation with technological innovation," said Britney McDonald, Founder/CEO at EcoShores Expeditions. "The Carbon Shift accelerator has been an invaluable platform to strengthen our impact and connect with leaders shaping a sustainable future for our region and internationally. We have built a network with founders from other Caribbean islands seeking to make a positive impact." McDonald, who holds a Masters in Computer Information Systems from Boston University concentrating in Security, has been working to raise funds to support equipment purchases, research and software development of the regenerative tourism product.

The Demo Day will showcase bold startups from across the Caribbean,

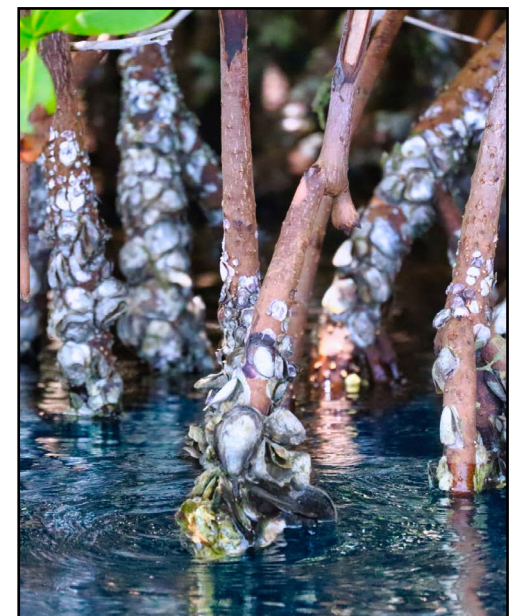


pitching their climate tech solutions to a live global audience of investors and climate resilience stakeholders. The showcase is a movement toward a climate-resilient Caribbean, powered by sustainable innovation. The Founder noted that participation can continue to be a catalyst to inspire youth especially women and girls who are underrepresented in technology fields. "Seeing women, Caribbean women, working in technology spaces and participating at this level is something we dreamed of, for our team to be selected for the program has been motivation to keep pushing forward. Our young people need these examples of perseverance and progress" said McDonald.

EcoShores Expeditions is joined at the Demo Day by its nonprofit branch, EcoShores Sustainable Futures Network (ESFN) which actively engages in community and educational projects in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and other islands in the region.

About EcoShores Expeditions

EcoShores Expeditions is an Antigua and Barbuda based start-up dedicated to connecting people with nature through immersive, educational, and sustainable outdoor experiences. We work to address key challenges, in-



cluding climate justice, biodiversity, youth development, technology innovation and education, through initiatives such as the Expeditioner Internship Program.

For more details and to stay updated on the latest news from EcoShores Expeditions, follow us on IG/Facebook: @ecoshores_expeditions

Contact Information, contact:

□ EcoShores Expeditions

□ info@ecoshoresexpeditions.com

Government puts in place regulations to govern cremations in the country

The government has announced that with the approval of a local cremation service in Antigua and Barbuda, the Ministry for Health, Wellness and the Environment sought and received Cabinet's approval for the establishment of a number of rules to guide the management of cremation in Antigua and Barbuda.

This Cabinet Notes have indicated that the regulations for these services are as follows;

□ **Approval & Registration:**

Crematoria must be approved by the Minister and registered with the Central Board of Health; embalmers must be licensed. Annual inspections and fees are required.

□ **Medical Certification:** A valid death certificate is mandatory; coroners may intervene for sudden or unexplained deaths.

□ **Application & Authorization:** Family or authorized persons apply; the Central Board of Health grants permission for cremation.

□ **Cremation Process:** Identity verification, removal of medical implants, and proper handling of medical/metal residues are required. Separate cremation for individuals unless special cases apply.

□ **Ash Disposal:** Ashes may be returned to applicants or stored in a columbarium; unclaimed ashes require notification. A register of all cremations must be maintained, and official authorization is required for interment in cemeteries or other disposal methods.

Here is a more detailed explanation of the essential procedures and regulatory requirements:



1. Crematorium Establishment and Operation

□ The Minister, advised by the Chief Health Inspector, can approve sites for cremation.

□ Crematoria must be registered with the Central Board of Health before operation.

□ Regulations cover construction, management, annual registration, and inspection (between January and March) with associated fees.

□ Embalmers must be licensed under the Public Health Act.

□ The Central Board of Health can close a crematorium for sanitary breaches or expired registration/licensing.

2. Medical Certification and Notification

□ Applicants must provide personal details (name, relationship, contact info, proof of identity) and a valid death certificate in English with cause of death and other key details.

□ Coroners are involved in cases of sudden or unexplained death.

□ Shipping cremated remains requires certified documents, embalmer's affidavit, a letter confirming non-contagious disease, and proof of deceased's citizenship.

3. Application and Authorisation

□ Family members or authorized persons apply for cremation.

□ The Central Board of Health grants formal authorization for cremation as a method of disposal.

4. Cremation Process and Documentation

□ The identity of the deceased must be verified; identification markers remain with the body throughout cremation.

□ Separate cremation for each individual, except in special cases (e.g., mother and child, twins) if requested.

□ Removal of medical devices/implants before cremation.

□ Metal residues and medical waste are managed according to Ministry of Health protocols.

□ A waste management plan must always be maintained.

5. Disposal of Ash

□ Ashes may be returned to the applicant or stored in a columbarium if uncollected.

□ The authority must notify applicants via registered letter if ashes remain unclaimed after a period (two weeks).

□ A register of all cremations must be maintained.

□ Central Board of Health authorization is required for interment in public cemeteries or other disposal methods.



VACANCY

MAINTENANCE MANAGER

The **St. John's Development Corporation (SJDC)** is inviting applications from suitably qualified individuals for the position of **Maintenance Manager**.

The successful candidate will be required to ensure smooth, safe, and efficient operation of the Corporation's facilities by overseeing all aspects of maintenance, including planning, scheduling, execution and quality control. This involves managing resources, leading a team and optimizing maintenance practices to reduce downtime, extend asset life and minimize cost. The Maintenance Manager will be required to work closely with the Executive Director and Board of Directors to support the Corporation's strategic goals.

Key Responsibilities include:

Overseeing daily maintenance of facilities, equipment, and machinery

- Managing and guiding maintenance staff
- Developing preventative maintenance schedules and procedures
- Coordinating with vendors and contractors
- Managing inventory, budgets, and maintenance records
- Ensuring compliance with safety regulations
- Supporting emergency repairs and disaster preparedness initiatives

Minimum Qualifications:

- Degree or certification in Engineering, Facilities/Maintenance Management or a related field (BSc/BA in Business or Facility Management is an asset)
- Minimum 5 years' experience in maintenance management
- Strong technical knowledge in plumbing, electrical, carpentry, and mechanical systems
- Proven leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills

Application Instructions:

Interested persons should submit a cover letter, detailed resume, and copies of relevant qualifications no later than June 15, 2025 to:

The Executive Director
St. John's Development Corporation
P.O. Box 1473
St. John's
Antigua

Or email: hr@sjdcanu.com

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Make 'Haitian-Led' Mean Something



By Sir Ronald Sanders

The Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Albert Ramdin, has proposed a Road Map for Haiti. It is ambitious, detailed, and promising if adequately owned by Haitians. But plans don't save people; action, commitment, and accountability do. Haitians must set priorities, approve budgets, and be accountable to their citizens and the international community for results.

Ramdin deserves credit for taking a frontal, active position on Haiti. He has put a framework on the table and invited OAS Member States, Permanent Observers, and Inter-American institutions to help shape it. That is leadership. If others join the momentum he has initiated, this plan can move from paper to practice.

A crisis that can't wait for perfect Haiti is living through the hemisphere's severest security and governance breakdown. Armed gangs

dominate much of Port-au-Prince; hundreds of thousands are displaced; schools, clinics, water, food—everything is frayed. Women and girls face the brunt of this crisis. Gang rape is rampant, particularly in the capital, and is exacerbated by precarious conditions in displacement camps. The plea is simple and urgent: act now.

What the Road Map gets right and the help it needs

The Road Map acknowledges that the United Nations must lead on peace and security; the OAS should facilitate, convene, and provide targeted civilian support. It casts the Government of Haiti as owner and agenda-setter, with a Coordinating Group Mechanism (CGM)—Haiti, the UN, CARICOM, and the OAS—providing strategic direction and political oversight. That architecture is sound—if “Haitian-led” is operationalised as Haitian decision rights, not just attendance.

Security financing is the plan's roadblock. The Multinational Security Support mission runs on voluntary contributions, and deployment has lagged. A UN support office has been proposed to improve logistics, but until predictable money and machinery exist, timelines will slip—and so will confidence.

The Haitian test: ownership as control

Ownership must be matched by decision authority. Three practical safeguards would make that real, as the Antigua and Barbuda delegation argued to the OAS Permanent Council on August 20.

First, Haiti should chair—or at least co-chair—the Coordinating Group.

No pillar workplan, budget, or major procurement should proceed without Haitian concurrence recorded in the minutes, with an emergency-only exception and prompt written notice after any action. This ensures that no one can claim the Road Map was imposed.

Second, a Haitian-issued annual implementation plan should become the map to which donors align. If Haitians cannot say, “This is our plan,” then it isn't.

Third, billions of dollars have been spent on Haiti over decades, yet donors have not seen commensurate social and economic improvements. Scepticism is natural; accountability is essential. Therefore, the Road Map should include a public scorecard. Quarterly results issued by Haitian authorities—tracking security, governance, humanitarian access, and the fight against gun-running and criminal finance—would provide assurance and accountability.

These safeguards turn “Haitian-led” from words into decisions.

CARICOM's role

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has tried to play a role in Haiti to the extent of its Member States' collective capacity. The CARICOM Eminent Persons Group (EPG) helped broker the current transitional arrangements, which have not been without criticism. Ramdin's Road Map envisages a role for CARICOM in the CGM, but CARICOM has yet to review the plan collectively; it was recently submitted to Jamaica's Prime Minister, Andrew Holness, as CARICOM Chair. CARICOM should ensure its role reinforces Haitian consensus-building and deci-

Feature

PAGE 13

sion-making when it engages.

Money talks. Make it speak plainly.

The Road Map's price tag—about US\$2.6 billion—is hefty. Guardrails must give donors confidence. These should include predictable security support through a UN-managed platform with clear modalities, drawing on voluntary and bilateral funds—not a scatter of ad hoc pledges. Before any donors' conference, there should also be pre-pledged packages for humanitarian action and elections; the conference can then align medium- and longer-term projects to the Haitian plan. Significantly, each country should contribute according to real capacity, not quotas or expectations. Finally, to attract funding, the budget and unit costs should be published, and funds should be released in tranches only when verified security, governance, and access benchmarks are met.

The calendar cliff: 7 February 2026

One date could undo everything. Haiti will hit a governance barrier if

a lawful successor to the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) is not in place by 7 February 2026. Security coordination will stall, election preparation will drift, and dissatisfaction and dissension will grow. There is already growing concern in Haiti that the deadline must not arrive with the unelected TPC still in place.

As contingency planning, a last-resort mechanism should be prepared by the end of September 2025 to replace the TPC if elections cannot credibly be held to install a representative government. It is now evident that no such elections can occur while gangs dominate daily life.

The contingency should be formulated jointly by appointees of Haitian representative groups, CARICOM, the UN, and the OAS, and noted by the OAS Permanent Council. It should provide a 90-day “caretaker body” limited to essential functions: security coordination, humanitarian facilitation, and election prepara-

tions.

The measure of solidarity

There's a cruel belief that Haiti's suffering is inevitable. It isn't. Haitians are a proud people despite the poverty of their country and the grinding conditions they endure.

The OAS Secretary-General's proposed Road Map can help—if the funding is real, the security support is predictable, and Haitian leadership is committed and at the decision-making table.

The plan is not perfect, but it offers a tunnel with a light at its end. Haitians and the international community should help refine, support, and implement it. No one should become immune to Haiti's horrors.

(The author is the Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the United States and the OAS, and Dean of the OAS Ambassadors accredited to the OAS. Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronaldsanders.com)



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

CLIMATE CONSCIOUS

RHYME AND RESOLVE: CLIMATE CALLS

 Good Humans
268 Inc

Do You Know What is Climate Change and Why It's Important?

Do you know what climate change means, my friend?
It's a story of Earth that we all must defend.
The planet is warming, the ice starts to fade,
Forests are burning, and oceans cascade.
The gases we trap in the sky like a dome,

All tied to the climate, more close than we think.

A farmer depends on the sun and the rain,
But too much or too little can ruin the grain.
A fisher relies on the balance of seas,

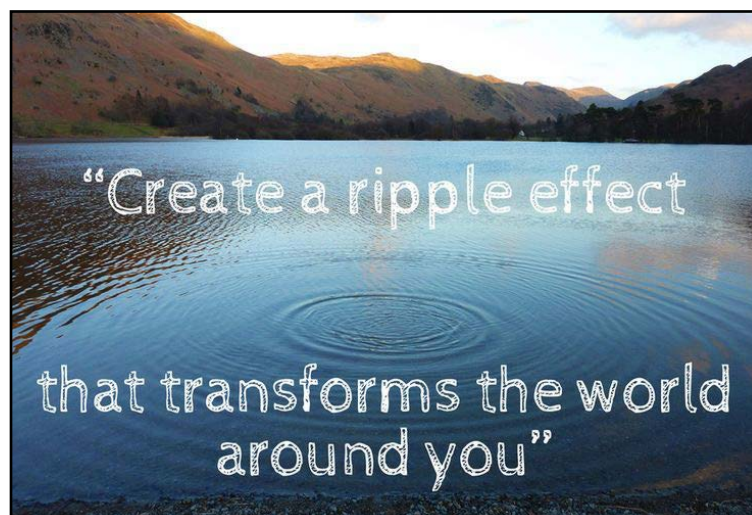
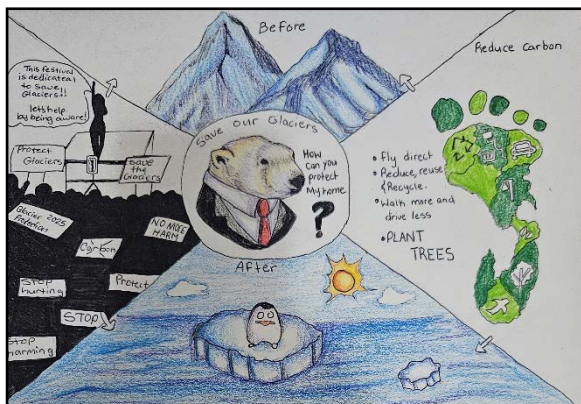


They thicken the air and affect every home.
Carbon and methane from cars, oil, and coal,
They capture the heat and they take heavy toll
The glaciers are melting, the sea level's high,
The storms are more violent, the deserts are dry.
The weather gets wilder, the seasons confused,
And creatures of nature are battered, abused.
Why does it matter? Oh why should we care?
Because it's our Earth, it's the breath that we share.
The food that we harvest, the water we drink,

But warming and plastic bring oceans disease.

The children of tomorrow will live with the cost,
If forests are wasted and species are lost.
So do you not see how the warning is clear?
Our choices today shape the future each year.

Some whisper, "It's hopeless, the damage is done,"
But action together is how battles are won.



Feature

PAGE 15



Reduce what we waste and recycle with care,
Plant trees in the ground and protect what is rare.

Switch lights when they're idle, let sunshine come through,
Use clean, green power—the wind and the blue.
Ride bikes or take buses, let cars take a rest,
Choose habits and products that treat Earth the best.

Do you know that small steps can ripple out wide?
One voice can inspire, one truth can't be denied.
When neighbors and nations all join hand in hand,
We nurture the soil and we heal every land.

It matters for justice, for fairness, for right,
For those most affected are out of the sight.
The poor and disabled, the small island states,
Face floods and disasters, uncertain of fates.

So climate change isn't just numbers or charts,
It's people and futures, it's beating of hearts.
It's homes swept away in the blink of a wave,
It's courage required, it's lives we must save.

Imagine the beaches with waters so clear,
The forests alive with the songbirds we hear.
Imagine a balance where humans and trees
Both flourish together in soft gentle breeze.

That vision is possible, but only if we
Stand up for the Earth and protect land and sea.
It's not just a duty, it's love, it's a song,
To cherish the planet where all life belongs.

So now that you know what climate change is for,
It's knocking, it's asking, it's right at the door.
The question is simple, the moment is near,
Will you take a stand? Will you act? Will you hear?

Because climate is life and the Earth is our stage,
We're writing tomorrow with ink on each page.
So rise with conviction, let action be true,



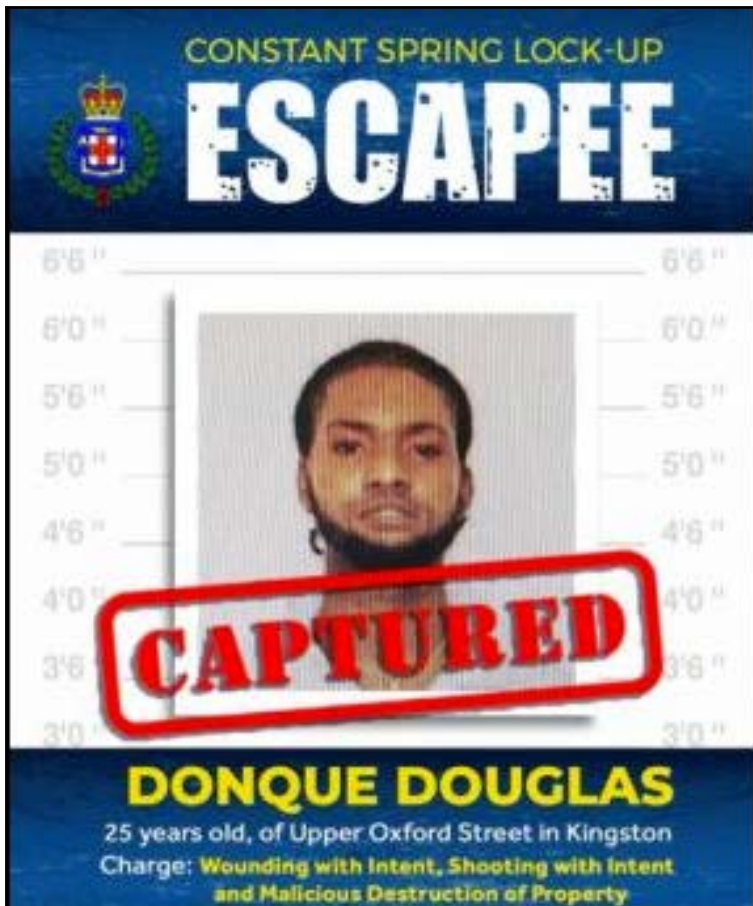
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Regional News

Another Constant Spring lock-up escapee back in custody



Another of the Constant Spring police lock-up escapees has been recaptured.

Apprehended is 25-year-old Donque Douglas of Upper Oxford Street in Kingston.

Douglas was in custody on charges of wounding with intent, shooting with intent, and malicious destruction of property.

This brings to seven the number of escapees who have been recaptured.

Earlier today, three of the men were arrested in Trelawny.

Still at large are 18-year-old Fray Messias of Pinto in Stony Hill, St Andrew, and 19-year-old Alunzo Espute of Cassava Piece, St Andrew.

Messias is charged with rape, while Espute is charged with murder. (Jamaica Gleaner)



RETAIL SALES TEAM LEADER

The Antigua Public Utilities Authority is now seeking applications from suitably qualified persons for the position of Retail Sales Team Leader:

The Retail Sales Team Leader is responsible for overseeing key aspects of our retail store operations, including managing Retail Sales Representatives, supporting achievement of sales targets, and ensuring excellent customer service. The role also includes safeguarding company assets, managing inventory, and ensuring compliance.

Key duties include:

- Lead, motivate and monitor retail sales representatives; communicate sales targets and performance expectations, provide regular feedback & coaching.
- Actively engaging with customers to improve their experience, identify sales opportunities and staff coaching
- Oversee cash handling and bank deposits procedures.
- Coordinate inventory reconciliation, control, and delivery aligned with established goals.
- Support recruitment activities; facilitate onboarding activities and professional training.
- Conduct regular team meetings.

The successful candidate MUST possess the following:

- Minimum of an Associate degree in Business Administration, Sales, Marketing, or a related field.
- 3-5 years experience in a senior sales or customer service role OR a suitable combination of education and experience.
- Strong interpersonal, communication, and problem-solving skills.
- Excellent organizational and time-management abilities.
- Self-motivated with the capacity to inspire and motivate others; demonstrated ability to be an effective leader and team motivator.
- Familiar with APUA Telecoms products, services, and customer relationship software utilized.

Interested persons are asked to apply in writing to:
RE: Retail Sales Team Leader

The Human Resources Manager - Antigua Public Utilities Authority
Cnr. High Street & Independence Drive, PO BOX 416
St. John's, Antigua

OR email - hr@apua.ag

Deadline for application is Tuesday 26th August, 2025

**** Only suitable applicants will be acknowledged ****

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Guyana Elections Commission bans cell phone use at polling stations

The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) says it has, as a matter of policy, decided to introduce a comprehensive set of measures to prohibit the use of cell phones within polling stations for the September 1 general and regional elections.

“This decisive action is aimed at protecting the sanctity and secrecy of the ballot, particularly to address existing concerns regarding the potential for vote selling that is directly linked to photographing of ballots. The prohibition on cell phone use and the penalties for vote selling are rooted in the Representation of the People Act,” GECOM said in a statement.

Earlier this month, after stating that all stakeholders have a statutory duty and civic responsibility to contribute to the elections being conducted in a free, fair, transparent, and credible manner, GECOM was reported to have voted down a proposal requiring voters to surrender their mobile phones before casting their ballots.

Opposition parties had contended that persons take photographs of their ballots before placing them in the box to ensure they are paid for casting their votes in support of certain candidates.

But while the commission maintained that taking a photograph of one's ballot is illegal, it has opted not to implement the mandatory phone storage policy at polling stations.

“At GECOM ... a decision has been taken not to have voters lodge their phones as a measure to ensure that they are not used to photograph their ballots. GECOM, however, agrees that the taking of such pics is prohibited,” said opposition-nominated GECOM commissioner, Vincent Alexander.

However, in its statement issued late Tuesday night, GECOM said that con-



Featured SPEAKERS

DR. HANYBAL YAZIGI
SLBMC CONSULTANT ONCOLOGIST

DR. CHERIE TULLOCH
SLBMC CONSULTANT OBGYN/CHAIR, CERVICAL CANCER ELIMINATION PROGRAM (ANTIGUA & BARBUDA)

DR. JONATHAN MAKANJUOLA
UROLOGIST

DR. ANESA AHAMAD
RADIATION ONCOLOGIST

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SLBMC Allied Health Professionals	\$100		



Regional News



sidering the integrity of the electoral process is of crucial importance, “the new measures are designed to ensure that every citizen can cast their vote freely and without undue influence, and that the secrecy of their choice is absolutely protected.”

It said that, as a consequence, new policies are being implemented to enforce the prohibition of the use of cell phones in polling stations, including the posting of a “clear and prominent notice by the entrance” and within every polling station “explicitly stating, pictorially and in words, that the use of cell phones is strictly prohibited.”

It said regular announcements will be made to all voters in line by polling day officials, informing them to turn off their cell phones before entering the polling station.

“Every voter will be reminded of the need to turn off his/her cell phone before he/she is given the ballot to vote,” GECOM said, adding that the national ID card, valid Guyana passport, or driver’s licence, as the case may be, of every voter will be retained by the presiding officer at the point of issuing the ballot and returned after the voter has completed the voting process.

It said that voting compartments will be strategically positioned to allow GECOM staff and accredited party agents “to observe if a voter is attempting to use his/her phone to take a photo of his/her ballot.

“This observation will be respectful of voter privacy while maintaining vigilance against the use of cell phones in polling stations,” GECOM said, adding that in the event a voter is observed attempting to photograph his/her ballot, the GECOM staff and/or party agents will immediately raise an alarm to prevent the action.

“Any voter observed taking a photograph of his/her ballot paper will result in a formal note being made of the incident, and a report will be immediately submitted to the Guyana Police Force for investigation.”

GECOM said a designated desk or table will be placed next to each voting compartment, where voters will be instructed to place their cell phones before using the voting compartment to cast their vote. This will provide a visible location for phones, by all concerned, during the voting process.

It said GECOM officials will instruct every voter to place their phones on

the designated desk/table before proceeding to the voting compartment.

“This instruction will be clear and consistently applied to all voters.”

GECOM said that its decision aligns with international best practices for election administration, which often include provisions to protect ballot secrecy and prevent electoral fraud.

“In this regard, collaboration with the Guyana Police Force underscores the seriousness with which electoral offences are viewed and the commitment to rigorous enforcement.

“It is imperative to understand that the selling of a vote constitutes a serious electoral offence which carries significant penalties. Offenders found guilty of selling their vote are liable to a fine of GUY\$65,000 and imprisonment for a term of six months.

“The commission urges all voters to cooperate with these new measures, specifically because they are crucial for upholding the integrity and transparency of the electoral process.

“GECOM is committed to upholding the principles of free and fair elections and will take all necessary steps to prosecute those who attempt to undermine the democratic process.” (CMC)

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UWI announces a new University General Counsel



The University of the West Indies (UWI) Office of Administration recently announced the appointment of Ms. Delrene Liverpool-Young as the institution's new University General Counsel, effective August 1, 2025. A release from UWI shared that her term will span five years, during which she will bring extensive legal knowledge, strategic expertise, and a proven history of regional and international public service.

UWI outlined that Ms. Liverpool-Young is recognized as a distinguished professional in law and governance, with notable leadership in areas such as regulatory compliance, public procurement reform, and capacity development within institutions. Her experience extends

across multiple jurisdictions, including Jamaica, Italy, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Prior to her appointment, it is reported that she served as Corporate Secretary for the Board at Trinidad and Tobago's Office of Procurement Regulation. In this capacity, she provided legal guidance and strategic direction to executive leadership and spearheaded initiatives aimed at transforming governance practices and improving operational efficiency. Her scholarly work on cybersecurity and public procurement has reportedly garnered international acclaim, underscoring her dedication to innovation and national security issues.

Academically, Ms. Liverpool-Young earned her degree with top honors (Summa Cum Laude) from the International Master in Public Procurement Management (IMPPM) program at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, where she was also chosen as Valedictorian.

Her educational credentials include an LLM in Corporate and Commercial Law from UWI St. Augustine, an LLB from UWI Mona, a Legal Education Certificate (LEC) from Sir Hugh Wooding Law School, and a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and Law from UWI Cave Hill. Additionally, she holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Procurement Law and Practice from Osgoode Hall Law School at York University and has earned various certifications in governance, strategic planning, legislative drafting, and procurement management.

As the University's General Counsel, Ms. Liverpool-Young will be responsible for managing legal matters across all UWI campuses, advising the University Council and executive leadership, and fostering a culture of legal integrity and institutional resilience. Her role will be vital as The UWI continues to enhance its legal frameworks and align with international standards.

The University of the West Indies extended its heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Liverpool-Young and says that it anticipates her leadership in navigating complex legal environments and "supporting the University's mission of

academic excellence and regional development." (Dominica News Online)

US hitwoman jailed for 30 years over bungled plot

A US woman at the centre of a failed assassination attempt in the UK has been jailed for 30 years.

Aimee Betro, from West Allis in Wisconsin, was hired as a killer as part of a plot to attack a British family in Birmingham in 2019, before going on the run for nearly five years.

She approached her victim during the attempt, in September 2019, only for her gun to jam when she pulled the trigger.

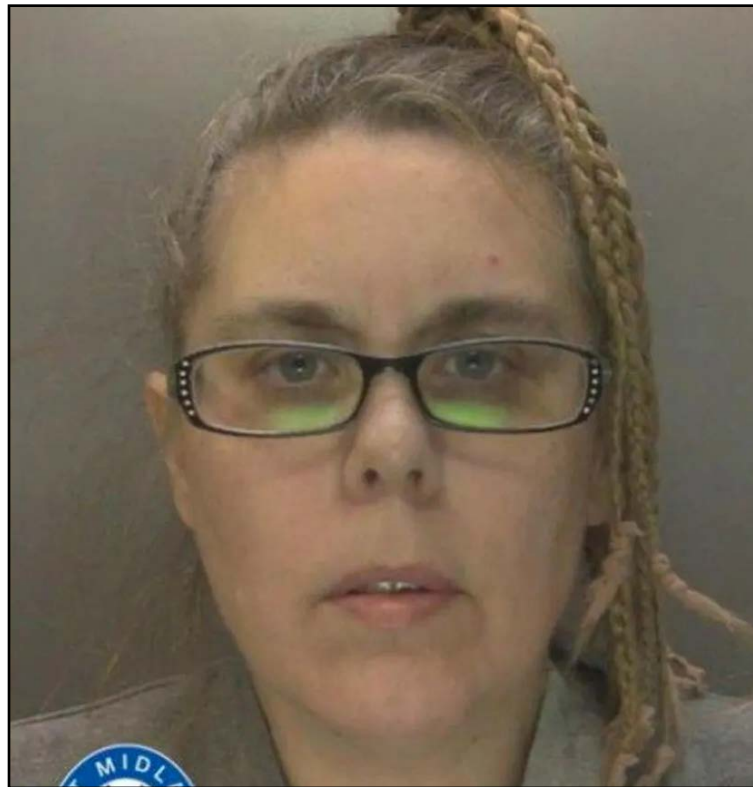
She was found guilty of conspiracy to murder, possessing a self-loading pistol with intent to cause fear of violence and illegally importing ammunition after a trial at Birmingham Crown Court.

During the sentencing hearing on Thursday at the same court, Judge Simon Drew KC said that Betro, 45, played a "leading role" in the attempt, which was carried out alongside Mohammed Aslam and his son Mohammed Nazir.

The two men, from Derby, were jailed for 10 and 32 years respectively for their role in the plot last year.

The judge said the trio had planned the attempted killing after Nazir and Aslam were injured during a fight at Aslat Mahumad's clothing boutique in July 2018.

On 7 September 2019, Betro had parked up outside the house of Birmingham



businessman Mr Mahumad and tried to shoot his son Sikander Ali, but the gun jammed.

"You went beyond simply reaching an agreement to kill and, in reality, you did intend to kill Mr Ali," he said.

"It is only a matter of chance that Mr Ali wasn't killed.

"You were engaged in a complex, well-planned conspiracy to murder.

"You were prepared to pull the trigger and did so on two separate occasions."

The court heard, following the first failed attempt, Betro returned hours later, firing three shots into the upstairs window of the South Yardley home.

During the trial, jurors were

told that Betro, a childhood development and graphic design graduate, met Nazir on a dating app.

The pair formed a close online friendship through text messages and video calls before she visited the UK twice in December 2018 and May 2019.

The court heard that Betro again travelled to Birmingham in August 2019, at which point she had fallen in love with Nazir and as a result had agreed to carry out the killing.

On the day of the attack, Betro bought a second-hand Mercedes under the name Becky Booth before scoping out Measham Grove where the target lived.

She then waited in the cul-de-sac for her victim and

disguised herself with a niqab, jurors heard.

She approached Mr Ali and attempted to shoot him from behind, but the gun malfunctioned, allowing him to get back into his car and flee.

Betro escaped but later returned to the road in a taxi before shooting three times at the property.

She then travelled to Manchester Airport where she flew back to the US, the court heard.

Following the sentencing, Det Ch Insp, Alastair Orenkas of West Midlands Police, said: "This is a unique case which has involved a huge amount of work tracing the movements of Betro from her arrival into the UK, her subsequent failed attempt to shoot a man dead, and her departure from the UK.

"It's by luck that her attempt to kill her target failed, thanks to the jamming of her gun.

"An incredible amount of work went into building up a really detailed picture of her activities while in the UK.

"We worked really closely with partners such as the Armenian Government, (NCA), FBI, Crown Prosecution Service and Derbyshire Constabulary to bring Betro back to the UK to face justice. I'd like to thank all of them for helping to achieve justice." (BBC)

Guatemala grants temporary status to 161 Mexicans fleeing organised crime



Guatemala on Wednesday granted temporary humanitarian status to 161 Mexicans who fled their country last week seeking refuge from organised crime, even as Mexican officials denied that anyone had been displaced.

The Guatemalan Immigration Institute said that 39 families, including 69 children, from the Mexican municipality of Frontera Comalapa would be allowed temporarily to remain legally in the country.

The families were staying in rented homes, with relatives or in temporary shelters in the Guatemalan border town of La Mesilla.

But Eduardo Ramírez, governor of the Mexican border state of Chiapas, said Wednesday on X that those who went to Guatemala have relatives who have been arrested and are facing charges in Mexico, a claim he made without providing evidence.

“The organized crime that operates in the neighbouring country of Guatemala wants to discredit our public safety strategy that has given tranquility and social peace in Chiapas” by saying people have been forcibly displaced by crime, Ramírez wrote.

“I categorically deny that fact.

It was not the first time that Mexicans crossed the border to escape violence.

In July of last year, nearly 600 crossed at another point on the border.

Two of Mexico’s most powerful cartels from the northern states of Sinaloa and Jalisco have been battling for control of smuggling routes in the area of southern Mexico in recent years causing multiple displacements

In June, Chiapas state police pursued suspects into Guatemala and engaged in a shootout. (AP)



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

Russia launches biggest wave of strikes on Ukraine for weeks



Russia has launched 574 drones and 40 missiles on Ukraine in one of the heaviest bombardments in weeks, Ukrainian officials say.

One person was killed in a drone and missile strike on the western city of Lviv, while 15 others were reported wounded in an attack on the south-western Transcarpathia region.

The attacks came as US President Donald Trump spearheads diplomatic moves to halt the war. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said the strikes highlighted why efforts to bring it to an end were “so critical”.

President Volodymyr Zelensky has said Ukraine was ready to meet Russia’s Vladimir Putin “in neutral Europe” - mooted Switzerland or Austria - adding that he was not against Istanbul either.

Zelensky has stated his willingness to meet Putin in “any format”, although he has poured cold water on the idea of talks taking place in Budapest, which he said “is not easy today”.

The prospect of direct talks emerged after Trump met Putin in Alaska, and then hosted Zelensky and European

leaders at the White House on Monday.

The US president initially suggested trilateral talks involving him, Putin and Zelensky, but has since suggested he might not take part: “Now I think it would be better if they met without me... If necessary, I’ll go.”

Ukraine’s air force counted 614 drones and other missiles fired by Russia overnight into Thursday and said it had stopped 577 of them. It is the biggest air attack since July.

While Russian strikes tend to focus on eastern regions close to the front lines, the latest attacks hit western areas as well.

Since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, its forces have occupied most of Ukraine’s eastern Donbas region, including Luhansk and Donetsk.

Russia currently controls around a fifth of Ukrainian territory, including the Crimean peninsula, which it annexed in 2014.

Sybiha said hypersonic, ballistic and cruise missiles were among the weapons used in the overnight barrage.

The Ukrainian air force said many of the attacks came from western Russia, as well as from the Black Sea, while one missile came from Russian-occupied Crimea.

In the western Lviv region, where one person was killed, three more were injured in attacks that damaged more than 20 civilian buildings including residential homes and a nursery.

Another 15 people were injured when cruise missiles hit a US electronics firm in the far south-western town of Mukachevo in Transcarpathia, not far from Ukraine’s borders with Hungary and Slovakia.

“One of the missiles struck a major American electronics manufacturer in our westernmost region, leading to serious damage and casualties,” Sybiha wrote on social media on Thursday. The plant produces coffee machines and other household goods, officials say.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Zelensky said there was still no sign from Moscow that they “truly intend to engage in substantive negotiations” to end the war.

He also made clear his lack of enthusiasm for Budapest as a host for potential talks on Thursday, citing Prime Minister Viktor Orban’s strong ties with Moscow: “I’m not saying that Orban’s policy was against Ukraine, but it was against supporting Ukraine.”

The idea of the Hungarian capital as a potential venue for peace talks has emerged in recent days. Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said Budapest was ready to provide “appropriately fair and safe conditions” for negotiations to take place. (BBC)

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Sports News

Antigua names volleyball squad for Pan American Cup in Mexico



The Antigua and Barbuda team celebrate with their trophies after retaining the ECVA Men's Championship at the indoor volleyball stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex on Sunday, October 27, 2024. (File photo)

The Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association (ABA-VA) has announced its national squad to represent the nation at the 18th Senior Men's Pan American Cup in Mexico.

Erwin Mathurin has been named as captain to lead the senior national men's team, the Wadadli Spikers, at the tournament in Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico, from August 24 to September 1.

The squad also includes experienced opposite attacker Adrian Constant, along with regular national players Cairon Davis, Collin Thomas, Dwight Bonnie, and Yashid Auguiste.

The squad is completed by inexperienced national players Ronel Richards, Barrymore Daley, George

Freeland, Raenor Sharpe, Javorn Carbon, Miguel Pena-Lugo, and Kemarni Joseph.

The team was selected from a 25-member national training squad that has been preparing for the event since May under the guidance of coach Augusto Sabbatini of Brazil and assistant coach Carl Williams.

Sabbatini, who arrived in Antigua on February 15, has previously been working with junior and senior beach volleyball players in preparations for several tournaments.

Antigua and Barbuda qualified for the Senior Men's Pan American Cup by winning the Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association's (ECVA) for the past two years.

The Men's Pan-American Volleyball Cup is a men's volleyball tournament organized by NORCECA. Initially, only NORCECA teams participated, but South American Volleyball Confederation (CSV) teams have been invited since 2010.

Twelve teams, including defending champions Canada, will be contesting this year's tournament. The teams have been divided into three groups to compete in the round-robin preliminary stage.

Antigua and Barbuda will contest Group A along with the United States of America (USA), Venezuela, and Cuba. Canada, Colombia, Puerto Rico, and Guatemala will compete in Group B, while Chile, Mexico, the Dominican Republic,

and Suriname will contest Group C.

The event served as a qualifier for the World League and the America's Cup. Now, the event serves as an America qualifier for the Pan American Games classification. The women have their own equivalent of the tournament, the Women's Pan-American Cup.

Meanwhile, the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association (ABA-VA) will host two ECVA tournaments in September.

The ABAVA will host the ECVA Men's Final Four from September 19 to 21 and the ECVA Women's Final Four from September 26 to 28 at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex in St. John's.

Antigua joins Caribbean countries to contest ECCB International Netball Series



St. Vincent and the Grenadines won the 2024 ECCB International Netball Series in St. Lucia. (File photo)

Antigua and Barbuda will be joining several countries from across the region in contesting the Fifth Annual Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) International Netball Series, which will be hosted in Grenada at the Tanteen Sports Complex in St. George's from August 23 to 30.

Antigua and Barbuda is among seven ECCB member countries that will be participating in the tournament. The others are Anguilla, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Lucia, and defending champions St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which won last year's championship in St. Lucia.

Barbados, the Cayman Islands, and Guyana will join the tournament as invited teams.

The opening and closing ceremonies and all matches will be streamed live on the ECCB Connects Facebook page and YouTube channel.

The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank

(ECCB) International Netball Series was launched in June 2019 with the ECCB as its title sponsor and forms part of the bank's community outreach thrust. The competition replaces the OECS Under-23 Netball Tournament, which the ECCB sponsored from 1991 to 2018.

The decision to upgrade to an international series hinged on the bank's desire to provide an opportunity for netballers from the ECCB member countries to play annual international matches, thereby improving their ranking on the world stage.

It is anticipated that this undertaking will facilitate the showcasing of elite netballers in the OECS on the international platform and the establishment of netball pathways for OECS netballers to realise their full potential.

It will also provide the capacity to monitor the respective countries' performance against the rest of the world; transfer and adoption of international

best practices, with respect to netball umpiring and coaching; marketability of netball as a sports tourism option in the OECS; and the "internationalisation" of the corporate social responsibility profile of the ECCB as the title sponsor of the only funded netball tournament in the region.

The ECCB International Netball Series is also geared towards contributing to the improvement of the sport of netball in the ECCB member countries and providing an avenue for the region's young women to develop both socially and physically.

A personal development session, which is aimed at enhancing the netballers' interpersonal and professional skills, is included in the programme.

The ECCB collaborates with the Caribbean Netball Association (CNA) and the netball association of the host country to plan and coordinate all the activities required to ensure a successful tournament.



Carlos Alcaraz, of Spain, gestures to fans during a mixed doubles match at the US Open tennis championships in New York on Tuesday, Aug. 19, 2025. (AP)

Alcaraz and Djokovic could get early US Open tests

NEW YORK (AP) — Carlos Alcaraz and Novak Djokovic will face potential difficult American opponents when they begin their quest for another US Open title.

Venus Williams, meanwhile, returns to the event at age 45 against No. 11 seed Karolina Muchova, a past French Open finalist who has reached the semifinals in New York the past two years.

That was one of the early highlight matches after the draws were conducted Thursday for the men's and women's singles tournaments.

Those begin Sunday, a day earlier than in the past, and a pair of recent US Open champions could be tested early.

Alcaraz, the No. 2 seed, starts against Reilly Opelka. Opelka, a former top-20 player before injuries, is 6-foot-11 with a powerful serve that he rode to the fourth round in New York in 2021.

Alcaraz won his lone US Open title the following year and has gone on to add four more Grand Slam titles.

Djokovic owns a men's record 24 of them, including four at the US Open. Seeded seventh, he will face Learn-

er Tien, a 19-year-old left-hander who upset Daniil Medvedev en route to the fourth round of this year's Australian Open.

Now playing infrequently outside of the majors at 38 and having fallen to No. 7 in the rankings, Djokovic could have to beat 2024 US Open runner-up Taylor Fritz, the No. 4 seed, in the quarterfinals, then Alcaraz in the semifinals and No. 1 Jannik Sinner, the defending champion, in the final.

Williams was given a wild card by the US Tennis Association into a tournament where she won two of her seven Grand Slam singles

titles, and will be the oldest player to compete in singles at Flushing Meadows since 1981.

But she faces someone who has shown the ability to raise her game in the biggest tournaments. Muchova, after falling in the 2023 French Open final, got to the semis in New York later that summer and again last year.

No. 3 seed Coco Gauff, who won her first major title in the 2023 US Open, will first face Ajla Tomljanovic, the Australian who beat Williams' younger sister, Serena, in her final match in 2022.

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Premier League clubs break window spending record



Liverpool's Florian Wirtz

LONDON (Reuters) - The Premier League's transfer spending spree reached record levels with more than a week of trading to go as promoted Leeds United signed AC Milan forward Noah Okafor for a reported 18 million pounds (\$24.17 million) on Thursday.

Okafor's arrival at Elland Road, following Bournemouth's signing of Amine Adli from Bayer Leverkusen, pushed the total spend beyond the 2.36 billion pounds splashed out in the 2023 summer window, according to FootballTransfers.com.

Several other big-money deals between now and the closing of the window, including the likely sale of Eberechi Eze from Crystal Palace to Arsenal, mean spending by the world's most lucrative soccer league could even hit three billion pounds.

While the list of big spenders is topped by the likes of champions Liv-

erpool (289 million pounds), Chelsea (246 million), Manchester United (208 million) and Arsenal (194 million), even clubs with smaller resources have been splashing the cash.

Six clubs have broken their transfer records, including Liverpool paying 100 million pounds, and another 16 million in add-on payments, to Bayer Leverkusen for Florian Wirtz.

Burnley set a new club record by paying 25 million pounds for Chelsea midfielder Lesley Ugochukwu, while fellow promoted club Sunderland did the same by signing midfielder Habib Diarra for 26 million pounds from Strasbourg, part of a 142 million pounds squad-strengthening drive.

Despite being outside the Premier League for eight seasons, Sunderland have spent more than any club in Europe's other top leagues apart from Spain's Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid.

Nottingham Forest broke their transfer record twice during the current window in which they have spent almost 150 million pounds, including the signings of Switzerland winger Dan Ndoye from Bologna and winger Omari Hutchinson from Ipswich Town.

Spending by England's Premier League this summer is more than that of Italy's Serie A, Germany's Bundesliga, France's Ligue 1 and Spain's LaLiga combined.

Serie A is second on the spending list with around 783 million pounds on player investment although the league's clubs have recouped more than that in sales.

The Premier League's muscle in the transfer market is largely explained by huge broadcasting deals. This season is the first of a four-year domestic TV rights deal worth a record 6.7 billion pounds.

Falcons soar over Knight Riders in gripping CPL encounter



Antigua and Barbuda Falcons batsman Fabian Allen plays an attacking shot during his team's match against the Trinbago Knight Riders in their CPL match at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Wednesday, August 20, 2025.

Con't from page 29

Wasim gave good support with 39 not out off 27 balls, including two sixes and a four. Opener Jewel Andrew struck 22 off 25 balls at the top of the order, and Sharmar Springer made an important contribution of 10 not out off five balls. The runs were crucial and hauled the Falcons to a respectable total.

Off-spinner Usman Tariq claimed two for 37, and left-arm pacer Nathan Edwards captured two for 56.

Left-arm pacer Obed Mc-

Coy produced a career-best to earn the player of the match award by taking four for 39 with the ball to keep the Knight Riders at bay.

McCoy tilted the match in the Falcons' favour by dismissing the dangerous Colin Munro, who provided the Knight Riders with another rattling start with the bat, and fellow opener Alex Hales in the same over.

Munroe, who slammed a century to propel the Knight Riders to a six-wicket win against the St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots in their opening encounter, threatened to

take the game away from the Falcons with a blistering 44 off 18 balls, including eight fours and a six.

But his dismissal by McCoy stemmed the quick flow of runs, which allowed the Falcons bowlers to take gradual control of the match.

Keacy Carty chipped away with 35 off 31 balls but couldn't stay at the crease long enough to make a match-winning contribution. Pollard then smashed seven boundaries, four sixes and three fours, to get Knight Riders back in the contest, but ultimately

couldn't get his side over the line at the last hurdle.

Off-spinner Rahkeem "Jimbo" Cornwall was superb, picking up one for 14 in three overs, while left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan also snatched a wicket in one over for two runs.

The Falcons will play their penultimate home match against the Guyana Amazon Warriors at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium on Friday (today) at 7 pm. The Falcons' last home match will be against the St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots at the same venue on Sunday at 11 am.

Falcons soar over Knight Riders in gripping CPL encounter



Players of the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons celebrate after Shamar Springer, center foreground, bowled a brilliant last over to wrap up victory against the Trinbago Knight Riders in their CPL match at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Wednesday, August 20, 2025. (CPL/Getty Images)

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons claimed their third consecutive win against the Trinbago Knight Riders to soar to the top of the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) on Wednesday night.

The Falcons produced a disciplined bowling performance to snatch an eight-run victory against the Knight Riders in a gripping and pulsating match before a large and energetic crowd at the Sir Vivian Richards

Stadium.

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons recovered from a slow start to post 167 for six off their 20 overs and then restricted the Trinbago Knight Riders to 159 for six to record their second win in three home matches to soar to the top of the CPL standings with five points from four encounters.

Needing 14 off the final over and with the mighty Kieron Pollard well set,

the Knight Riders looked set to snatch victory. But right-arm Barbadian pacer Shamar Springer held his nerve to produce a superb final over that kept Pollard in check.

Pollard, who finished on 43 not out off 28 balls, only managed to hit a four off the final ball of the match, as the Knight Riders crashed to their first defeat after winning their opening encounter in this year's CPL.

Skipper Nicholas Pooran won the toss and inserted the Falcons; this looked to have worked out very nicely, as the Knight Riders bowled tightly to reduce the hosts to 77 for five in the 14th over.

But the Falcons were rescued by Fabian Allen, who produced a counter-attacking knock of 45 off just 20 deliveries, including three fours and three sixes.

Falcons skipper Imad

Con't on page 30