

# Burning Flames Band receives Diplomatic Passports; Knighthood recommendation confirmed

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Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Minister Maria Browne (centre) posed with members of the Burning Flames band at Wednesday's Cabinet meeting



## Burning Flames Band receives Diplomatic Passports; Knighthood recommendation confirmed



The four members of the Burning Flames Band – Clarence Edwards, Toriano Edwards, David Edwards and Rone Watkins – were special guests of the Cabinet on Wednesday.

The Burning Flames are celebrating the forty-year anniversary of their Carnival hits; *Style Tight* and *Go Go*, which introduced them to Antigua and Barbuda and to Carnival back in May 1985.

At the meeting with the

Cabinet, the band members were presented with their official Antigua and Barbuda Diplomatic Passports. They were also informed that the recommendation for them to receive knighthood has been made on their behalf and that it is likely to be conferred during Independence celebrations on November 1<sup>st</sup> this year.

Members of the Cabinet all congratulated the Burning Flames individually, praising them for their longevity

and the incredible impact they have had on Antigua and Barbuda popular music and its impact on the music of the rest of the Caribbean.

Burning Flames music has influenced top Caribbean artists such as Machel Montano and bands such as 17-Plus and here at home bands such as LA Crew and Vision often sang the praises of the Flames for setting the standards for them to follow.

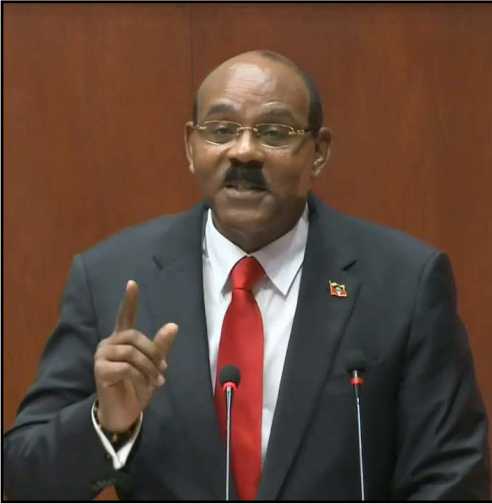
Cabinet urged the band to

look at ways that they can instill the passion and the creativity in younger musicians so that the 'Burning Flames' and the music will continue for another forty years.

Just last week, the Burning Flames performed at CARIFESTA 15 in Barbados and from reports coming out of Bridgetown they gave a performance they will be talked about for many years to come.



## House of Representatives appoints select committee to consider new CIP legislation



The House of Representatives has appointed a select committee to conduct an in-depth study of the new bill before it that forms part of regional efforts to harmonise their respective legislations on the Citizenship by Investment Programmes.

The legislation – the Eastern Caribbean Citizenship by Investment Regulatory Authority (Agreement) Bill, 2025 – had its first and second readings in the House on Monday.

The mover of the bill, Prime Minister Gaston Browne noted that based on recommendations from the United States, Canada, the UK and the European Union and following extensive consultations across the sub-region to get input from interested parties as well as from members of the public, the legislation was drafted and it is being presented before the parliaments in the respective countries for approval.

He noted however that these recommendations were previously proposed by Antigua and Barbuda as much as ten years ago, but the other CIP countries in the region were not willing to go along. However,

he added, international pressure has brought them all together to agree on the need for a unified approach to the operation of these programmes.

“We have gone the extra mile by establishing a regulatory authority which will be backed by the legislation and to which all of the CIP Units will be accountable. There are some fundamental changes such as the collection of biometrics to assist in traceability as well as provisions for funding of the authority and agencies such as IMPACS which assist with the due diligence procedures. There will also be a residency requirement that is enshrined in the bill. Currently, only Antigua and

Barbuda has that provision,” PM Browne reported.

The legislation is to be adopted by all five CIP-granting territories in the OECS; Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, Grenada, Dominica and St. Kitts-Nevis. It is anticipated that the legislation will be adopted by all five parliaments no later than October this year.

The Select Parliamentary Committee will be chaired by PM Browne and the other members are; Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin, Opposition Leader, Jamale Pringle, MP for St. Phillip South, Sherfield Bowen and the MP for All Saints West, Anthony Smith Jr.



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## ABEC officials to observe elections in Guyana and Jamaica



Three senior officials from the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) have been selected by CARICOM to serve on Election Observer Missions in Guyana and Jamaica — a move that highlights Antigua and Barbuda's growing leadership in regional democratic governance.

Supervisor of Elections, Ian S. Hughes, will be a member of the mission deployed to Guyana, while Member of the Commission, Clovis St. Romain, and Public Relations Officer, Elisa Graham, will form part of the delegation assigned to Jamaica.

General Elections will take place on Guyana and Jamaica on September 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively.

Their participation underscores ABEC's longstanding commitment to regional democracy, transparency, and good governance, while

strengthening Antigua and Barbuda's contribution to the **CARICOM Election Observation process**. Observer missions are critical in promoting confidence in electoral systems, ensuring compliance with democratic standards, and fostering greater trust among citizens in the electoral process. Further, these missions help strengthen ABEC's technical capacity through exposure to regional best practices.

Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission, Ambassador Arthur G.B Thomas, extended congratulations to the officials, noting:

"We are proud that our team members have once again been called upon to contribute their expertise to regional electoral processes. Their inclusion reflects the high regard for the professionalism and credibility of ABEC. When our officials serve

abroad, they bring back valuable lessons that enhance our own electoral processes while at the same time actively shaping regional democratic cooperation."

The missions will monitor key aspects of the electoral cycle, including the pre-election environment, polling day activities, and post-election processes, before presenting their findings in comprehensive reports to CARICOM.

ABEC reaffirms its dedication to safeguarding electoral integrity both at home and across the region, and wishes the officials success in their important assignments. As ABEC continually prepares for national electoral exercises, the Commission will strive to deepen its engagement with regional partners to ensure that the people of Antigua and Barbuda benefit from the highest standards of electoral integrity.





ST. JOHN'S DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (SJDC)

## 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:

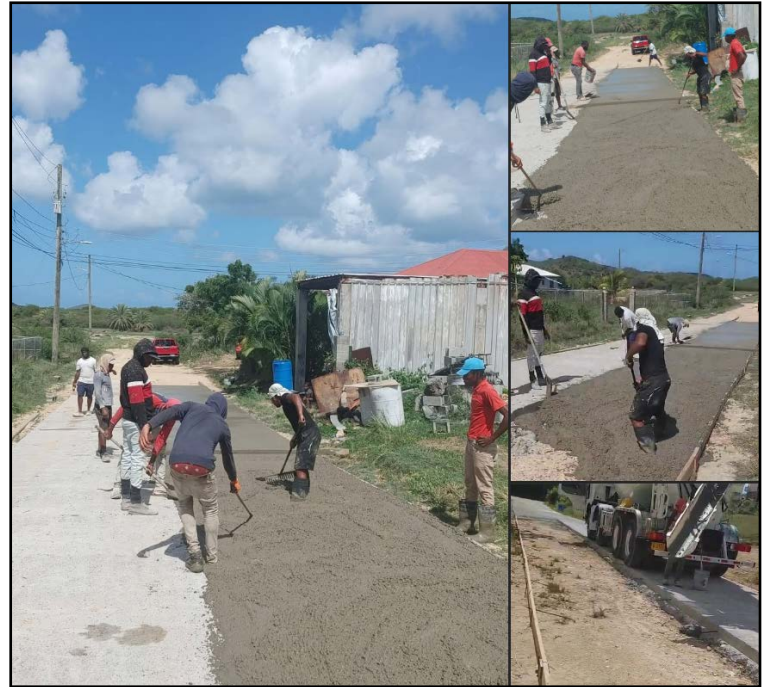
Interested persons should submit a cover letter, detailed resume, and copies of relevant qualifications no later than June 15, 2025 to:

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

Or email: [hr@sjdcanu.com](mailto:hr@sjdcanu.com)

**Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.**

## The All Saints Road repairs set to start in October



The Ministry of Works has announced the date for the start of repairs to the All Saints Road, one of the most-traveled thoroughfares in the country and one which remains largely untouched by recent road improvements.

The ministry said work on the All Saints Road will begin in October and that it will be financed by the \$100 million major road improvement project which the government will undertake.

Financing for this project comes from a loan which the government has negotiated with a consortium of local banks and which is backed by an increase in vehicle licence fees that parliament approved earlier this year.

Minister of State in the Minister of Works, Senator Clement Antonio explained that the delays in the commencement of work on the All Saints Road had much to do with the need to conduct



certain engineering studies that will guide the road crew when the repairs commence.

The announcement of the date for the start of the roadworks is contained in the Ministry of Works response to a road user on its interactive social media page.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, road crews were dispatched to the ARG Roundabout, Old Parham Road restoring the asphalt following APUA's laying of distribution pipes. Other teams

were in Golden Grove Extension conducting concrete roadworks in the area. This as extensive roadworks continue in the Lightfoot area as well.

In related development, the ministry has emphasized that proper drainage is critical to the strength and safety of the road network, as it prevents flooding, reduces erosion, and extends the lifespan of its investments in infrastructure.

“Without effective drain-

age, even well-built roads can quickly deteriorate under heavy rainfall and rising water levels. That is why we continue to tackle drainage challenges across the island—installing, upgrading, and maintaining systems to better manage storm water and protect communities. This ongoing work ensures not only smoother travel but also greater resilience to the impacts of climate change,” the ministry said in a social media post.



## MP Smith pleased with roadworks in All Saints West

Member of Parliament for the All Saints West Constituency Anthony Smith Jr. has expressed his satisfaction and excitement with the commencement of concrete pouring in the Lightfoot area, marking a significant milestone in long-awaited road infrastructure improvements across the constituency.

This development has been ongoing for the past week.

Speaking on the progress, MP Smith described the moment as “*very exciting for the people of All Saints West,*” especially those in Lightfoot, where residents have lived for over 40 years without proper infrastructure.

*“We’ve prepped quite a bit of roads all over the constituency with the aim of pouring concrete, and today we were able to start the process,”* he said.

The MP emphasized that this is part of a broader, inclusive development plan.

*“We are not leaving anybody behind,”* he assured, highlighting several communities set to benefit from future works, including Herberts, St. Clair Heights, Bellevue Heights, Buckley’s, Sea View Farm, and Freeman’s Village.

MP Smith reaffirmed his commitment to fulfilling campaign promises, stating, *“We had a very comprehensive plan developed with the Minister and Director of Works to address the infrastructure issues... It’s a promise that we will come to every corner in All Saints West—it’s just a matter of time.”*





## Men's Critical Issues Session Sparks Honest Dialogue on Financial Pressure and Stability



The Directorate of Gender Affairs hosted a dynamic session under the Men's Critical Issues series, themed **"Home-ownership & Financial Pressure: The Weight of Stability on Men."** The event, held on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2025, created a much-needed space for men to explore and discuss the emotional and financial toll associated with societal expectations of stability and success.

Rooted in the understanding that many men face immense pressure to provide, build, and maintain a sense of financial security—often through home-ownership and other visible achievements—this session provided a platform for open conversation, validation, and support. Participants engaged in thoughtful discussions about their personal experiences, systemic barriers, and the silent burdens that often go unspoken.



The session addressed key topics including the challenges of acquiring property, navigating loans and mortgage systems, and balancing the desire for stability with rising economic demands. It also touched on how these pressures can affect men's mental health, relationships, and sense of identity.

Feedback from attendees revealed that the session **met and, in many cases, surpassed their expectations.** Many participants expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to connect with others facing similar struggles and to gain

insight from professionals and peers alike.

One participant shared, *"It felt like a weight off my chest. These are things we think about every day but rarely talk about. It helped knowing I'm not alone in this."*

Ashlea Ambris, Project Officer at the Directorate of Gender Affairs, emphasized the significance of this topic in ongoing gender and social development work.

"There is often a silent expectation that men must always have it all together—especially when it comes to financial matters

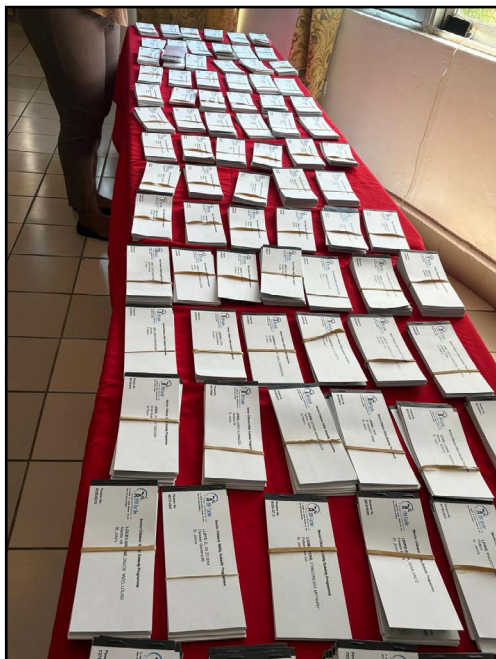
and home-ownership," said Ambris. "By creating a space where men can talk about these issues without judgment, we take a powerful step toward emotional wellbeing and true gender equity. We are proud that this session met the expectations of our participants and grateful for their openness and trust."

The Directorate extends its heartfelt thanks to all participants, guest speakers, facilitators, and community partners who helped make the event a success. As the Men's Critical Issues series continues, the Directorate remains committed to fostering inclusive, honest dialogue and ensuring that men's perspectives are recognized and valued in national gender discourse.

For more information on future events and support services, please contact the Directorate of Gender Affairs at 462-3990.



## More than 3,000 beneficiaries have collected PDV Caribe booklets over three days



More than three thousand PDV Caribe beneficiaries have collected their booklet for their \$100.00 monthly vouchers to assist with their utility bills from the distribution point at the Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre.

Distribution is taking place this week with beneficiaries asked to attend on

specific days when the booklets are distributed based on the initials of their last names.

General Manager of PDV Caribe (Antigua and Barbuda) Jellette Ralph, said overall there are over six thousand persons who benefit from the programme and the collection rate has been quite

**PVD Caribe GM Jellette Ralph (left) and a representative of Frank B Armstrong show off the Mountain Peak teas**

high so she expects that most of the booklets will be collected by the end of the week.

She reported that on Monday and



# Local News

Tuesday, just over one thousand persons collected on each day, but on Wednesday, the figure rose to more than eleven hundred.

“This means that more than half of the booklets have been collected with a rate of over 80 percent of available booklets per day. On Thursday (today), persons with their surnames beginning with the letters; N, O, P, Q, R and S are asked to collect their booklets. For Friday, those with surnames beginning with the letters; T, U, V, W, X, Y and Z will collect theirs,” she stated.

Ralph said her office is also planning to operate the collection centre on Saturday between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm for those who missed collecting on their specific day.

“The benefit that we offer is \$100 monthly towards bill payment at APUA. Persons interested in registering for the programme should note that the next registration period comes up in November. The eligibility criteria are the person must be 65 years or over and a Social Security pensioner with a monthly income of less than \$1,000.00. Also if there is already someone in the household who is currently benefiting from the programme, then the new person would be deemed ineligible,” she explained.

PVD Caribe has partnered with the firm of Frank B. Armstrong which provided hot beverages to customers from their Mountain Peak brand.





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



**HOSTED BY  
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# A Community Invested: St. Paul's Ready for School



**By Hon. E.P. Chet Greene**

As the long sunny days of summer gradually yield to the haunting reality of the hurricane season, a palpable sense of anticipation fills the air in the St. Paul's constituency. It's also back-to-school season; a time of fresh starts, sharpened pencils and renewed ambitions. This year the preparation feels a bit different; more unified, more supportive and deeply rooted in positive community spirit, thanks to the visionary initiatives, a supportive team and an appreciative community.

Recognizing the significant financial burden the new school year places on families, our carefully orchestrated groundbreaking 'Back to School Fair' which took place yesterday, Tuesday 26th August 2025, is designed to ensure every primary school student in our community steps into their classroom with confidence and the right tools. This

event held at the Liberta Basketball Court, caters to each child from the Cobbs Cross, Liberta and New Bethel SDA Academy, who will receive a personalized package of essential school supplies.

But this is more than a simple hand-out; it is a gesture of profound pride and identity. Each package has been carefully curated and color-themed to reflect the unique spirit of the child's school. Students from Cobbs Cross will find their supplies in vibrant green, Liberta's children in their signature orange and New Bethel's scholars in a dignified blue. This thoughtful detail ensures that from the very first day, students feel a reinforced sense of belonging and school pride.

Understanding that preparation is both academic and personal, this year's initiative was beautifully expanded to include grooming. In a fantastic show of community support, four local barber-shops came onboard to offer fresh haircuts for the boys, ensuring they look as sharp as their new pencils feel.

In a display of inclusivity that stretches beyond constituency lines, I have also extended this support to primary school students who participated in our highly successful 'Youth Empowered to Succeed' Summer Camp. This demonstrates a commitment to nurturing the nation's youth wherever we can make a positive impact.

This vision extends far beyond a single day. Deeply concerned about academic performance, my team and

I have created a robust plan to work directly with parents, teachers and the principals of our three primary schools to provide extra classes for all Grade 6 students. This critical intervention, wisely placed under the supervision of a triumvirate of principals, is a clear commitment to excellence through targeted investment in our children's futures.

The investment in education is not limited to our youngest learners. For every member of the St. Paul's community with ambitions for tertiary education, a world of opportunity awaits. From the UWI Global Campus and Lifelong Learning Unit to the merged programs at ABIIT, Antigua State College and ABHTI, the pathways to advancement are open through scholarships. To compliment the foregoing initiatives, on the horizon, our soon-to-be-completed Leroy 'Billy Tonge' Technical Center in Liberta stands as a testament to a promise kept for a first of its kind facility designed to provide specialized training and uplift our entire community.

There can be no doubt: my commitment to the educating of members of this our beloved St. Paul's constituency is comprehensive, compassionate and concrete.

As we send our children back to the classroom, we do so knowing they are supported by a community that believes in them. Every success is wished to our students and every encouragement is extended to those continuing their own educational journey. Together, we are building a smarter, stronger and more successful St. Paul's.





**MON - FRI  
9AM TO 11AM**



**HOSTED BY  
TROY ALLEN**

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# CLIMATE CONSCIOUS

RHYME AND RESOLVE: CLIMATE CALLS

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## When the Storm Meets the Soul



show,

That justice in climate means letting all grow.  
 The river and mountain, the coral, the tree,  
 Remind us of balance, of shared dignity.  
 And those who adapt to a body's constraint,  
 Know well how to flourish when systems grow faint.

The climate is shifting, the oceans rise high,  
 The wind tells a story, the clouds start to cry.  
 Yet hidden in headlines, so often dismissed,  
 Are voices of people the world might have missed.

If climate is calling, then who should respond?  
 The ones who know struggle, who dream far beyond.

For access and fairness are keys to the fight,  
 In building a future that honors what's right.  
 The plastic that strangles, the smoke in the sky,  
 They matter to all who breathe, live, and ask



“why?”

But one truth is sharper, it cuts like a blade,  
 Disasters exclude where inclusion's delayed.  
 Imagine evacuation with crutches in rain,  
 Or trying to sign warnings no one can explain.  
 Imagine the shelters with bright blinding glare,

Disability weaves through the planet we share,  
 A bond with the climate, both fragile, both rare.  
 When floods break the levee or drought steals the land,

It's often the weakest who first feel its hand.  
 The heat can be cruel, the storms can be wild,  
 But harsher it feels for a vulnerable child.  
 A wheelchair gets stuck when the pavement is torn,

A shelter has steps where no ramp has been worn.  
 When hurricanes thunder, when fire turns red,  
 How does one escape with no safe path ahead?  
 The silence of policy, blind to the plea,  
 Leaves thousands forgotten by land and by sea.  
 Yet strength isn't measured by muscle or might,  
 But courage in darkness, insisting on light.  
 The disabled have wisdom, perspectives that





No thought of the deaf or the blind who'll be there.

The climate is screaming, the hour is late,  
 But access and justice can shift what we face.  
 We need every voice, every hand, every mind,  
 For healing the Earth means no one's left behind.  
 The ocean remembers, the forest can teach,  
 The mountain of silence still waits for our speech.  
 And people with bodies deemed "less than" or "small"

Have power and stories that strengthen us all.  
 So let's build a system both sturdy and kind,  
 Where ramps meet the flood line, where warn-

ings are signed.

Where transport is ready for wheelchairs to ride,  
 And no one is stranded with nowhere to hide.

The fight for the climate, the work to restore,  
 Is tied to the struggle for rights at the core.

For justice is justice, it cannot be split,  
 The world will be healed when all voices fit.

A world more resilient, a planet that's free,  
 Demands that we practice true equity.

The storms of tomorrow, the fires, the seas,  
 Are battles for humans of all abilities.

So rise up together, let barriers fall,

The climate, the people—one struggle, one call.

The Earth is a mirror, it shows what we do,  
 And justice for one is for everyone too.

Let rhymes be reminders, let rhythm be guide,  
 The climate and disability walk side by side.

Their stories are braided, their futures aligned,  
 A web interwoven through body and mind.

So next time the thunder is rolling above,  
 Remember that climate is tied to our love.

And justice will blossom, inclusion will grow,  
 When all of us matter—that's when change will show.



Photo: A wheelchair outside a nursing home where 34 people died in the Hurricane Katrina disaster in 2005. Photograph: Carlos Barria/Reuters





# Regional News

## Calls grow for better access for persons with disabilities at the polls

The Government-run entity that represents the interests of persons with disabilities is “trusting” that their experiences casting ballots in next week’s general election will be better than past polls, a top executive has indicated.

This caution comes despite a series of consultations and training sessions between the Electoral Office of Jamaica (EOJ) and the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD), both entities confirmed yesterday.

“I cannot guarantee 100 per cent that people with disabilities will not face challenges because there are also attitudinal barriers,” Dr Christine Hendricks, executive director of the JCPD, told *The Gleaner* yesterday.

“We are hoping that they do not because we have been part of their training and we have gone through the protocols of how you treat with persons with disabilities ... words not to use, ensuring that they are not discriminatory and we have indicated how they can treat with situations as they arise,” she said.

There is no data indicating the total number of disabled persons who are eligible to cast ballots in the upcoming parliamentary election set for September 3, Director of Elections Glasspole



Brown revealed.

However, Brown disclosed that his office has already implemented measures to address some of the issues raised by persons in the disabled community that have made life uncomfortable for them in past elections.

At the top of the list, he said, is that 98.8 per cent of all polling stations to be set up in 7,256 public school buildings across the country on election day will be on the ground floor.

Further, the director of elections noted that the Representation of the People’s Act – Jamaica’s electoral law – allows for voters who are visually-impaired to be accompanied to a polling station by a friend who will act on their behalf “based on his or her instruction in terms of marking the ballot”.

“As long as they are registered they won’t be disenfranchised,” he insisted.

“We are not there yet in terms of accommodating the disabled community, but we are moving to put a number of things in place.”

Physical access to polling stations, especially for wheelchair-bound voters, was among the complaints the JCPD was asked to raise during its consultations with the EOJ, Hendricks disclosed.

Among the critical issues from past elections, she said, is how persons with disabilities are treated by functionaries of the two main political parties when they show up to cast their ballots.

“Tending to lift people from wheelchairs and that kind of behaviour. It’s not very dignified and we really want our people with disabilities to operate with their own private, dignity and personal space,” said Hendricks.

She said the JCPD has requested that portable ramps

be provided at polling stations that do not have permanent ones in place and underscored the importance of having sign language interpreters available or on call.

“Persons can [provide] support via video, technology allows for that these days, for guidance or any direction that might be needed by the deaf person who shows up,” Hendricks reasoned, while acknowledging that it may not be practical to have an interpreter in every polling division.

Further, she said the JCPD suggested that information disseminated by the EOJ before, during and after an election should be an “easy-read” for all members of the disabled community so that, across the spectrum, persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with literacy issues can understand.

The director of elections said a suggestion by the JCPD to introduce a special ballot or Braille voting for members of the disabled community was being explored, but indicated that it would require changes to the electoral laws.

“We haven’t gone there yet in terms of the in-depth review or study of the practicality and the costing of it,” he said. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)



## Guyana gov't denies patient died at hospital due to lack of oxygen



The Guyana government Tuesday denied that a 19-year-old patient died at the Lima Regional Hospital as a result of an “absence of oxygen”.

In a statement, the Ministry of Health quoted the management of the hospital as indicating that it is “aware of malicious and misleading reports being circulated regarding the unfortunate passing of a patient on August 23.”

Regional Health Officer (RHO) Dr Ranjeev Singh described the article circulating on social media as “false”, stating categorically that the claims of an “absence of oxygen” and suggestions that the hospital was unprepared as “false, malicious, and without basis in fact.”

According to Singh, the 19-year-old male had a longstanding medical history of Sickle Cell Disease with frequent hospital admissions over the years.

He was also recently suspected of leukaemia and was referred to the Georgetown Public Hospital Haematology Clinic, but unfortunately, he did not follow through with this referral.

On August 23, he was transferred from Oscar Joseph District Hospital in Charity, a small township located in the Pomeroon-Supenaam Region that is part of the Essequibo Region, to the Lima Regional Hospital in critical condition, “presenting with fever,

nose bleeds, jaundice, and passing dark brown urine, symptoms consistent with severe complications of his underlying disease.”

Singh said that based on records, shortly after admission, the unnamed patient developed acute respiratory distress and low oxygen saturation. Immediate medical interventions were initiated, including oxygen therapy, CPR, defibrillation, and administration of emergency medications.

“Despite every effort by the attending doctors and nurses, resuscitation attempts were unsuccessful, and he was pronounced dead at 22:52 hours,” the ministry said in the statement.

Singh stressed that oxygen was available at the facility, and the medical team responded swiftly and professionally.

“The unfortunate outcome was due to the patient’s advanced, chronic, and critical medical condition, and not because of any negligence or lack of resources at the Lima Regional Hospital.”

Singh is urging members of the public not to be misled by false and sensational reports, which only serve to create panic and undermine confidence in our health system.

“The Ministry of Health remains committed to transparency, accountability, and the continuous strengthening of healthcare delivery across Region Two and Guyana.” (CMC)



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# Regional News

## Trinidad's opposition party condemns PM's 'reckless and sinister' statements on US naval presence in Caribbean waters

The main opposition People's National Movement (PNM) has described as "unfortunate, reckless and sinister" the statement by the government of Trinidad and Tobago supporting the decision of the United States to deploy "military assets" into the Caribbean region to destroy what it described as "the terrorist drug cartels".

Former foreign affairs minister, Dr Amery Browne, told a news conference that the statement made by Prime Minister Kamla Persad Bissessar that Port of Spain has "not engaged and has no intention of engaging" the 15-member regional integration grouping CARICOM "on this matter" is "unfortunate".

The government said that on this matter, each CARICOM member state "can speak for themselves" and that "Trinidad and Tobago has been helplessly drowning in blood and violence for the last 20 years".

But Browne said he is aware that efforts are being made to convene a meeting of the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) so as to present a united CARICOM position on the matter.

"Look how the Prime Minister dismissed CARICOM in her statement...and this is extremely unfortunate,"



said Browne, noting that in the quasi CARICOM cabinet, Prime Minister Persad Bissessar has responsibility for security in the region.

"That is a repudiation of her duties and responsibilities to our regional community," he said, adding that the prime minister had also "boldly, recklessly and completely out of place" indicated that each member state can speak for itself.

"In other words, every country for itself. Who is she to make such a statement, especially when we in this country has worked so hard to uplift and build the profile of the very same CARICOM and we have always taken our responsi-

bilities very seriously.

"We, as an opposition have to condemn in the very clearest possible terms those words and the disregard the prime minister of this nation is showing to the Caribbean Community," Browne said, adding "it is really unfortunate and I have to say sinister because even as that statement was being released by the prime minister there are efforts under way to mobilise CARICOM to examine these very issues towards building a consensus.

"So what was done there over 24 hours ago is to fire a shot across the bow of CARICOM solidarity and literally sabotaged our

region's ability to form a consensus and craft a united position," Browne said.

The 15-member regional integration movement, CARICOM, has not issued any statement on the matter, while Guyana and Barbados governments have reiterated the need for the region to be a zone of peace.

Last week, the United States ordered an amphibious squadron to the southern Caribbean as part of President Donald Trump's effort to address threats from Latin American drug cartels.

A nuclear-powered attack submarine, additional P8



# Regional News

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Poseidon reconnaissance aircraft, several destroyers and a guided-missile cruiser are also being allocated to US Southern Command as part of the mission.

Browne told reporters he was also concerned at the response of Trinidad and Tobago to a statement made last week when United States Vice President James D Vance, in speaking about crime in his country referenced Trinidad and Tobago as an example.

Browne quoted Foreign and CARICOM Affairs Minister, Sean Sobers, as saying he believes that Vance was speaking about “the PNM Trinidad and Tobago.

“Now what is that. That is a serious comment from a government cabinet minister...there is no such thing as the Trinidad and Tobago of the PNM...we have one nation here, Browne said, adding “when serious countries engage with us or reference us, they are engaging with the state and not any political party.

“So leave those references to our domestic discourse and engaging with others there is no PNM or UNC (United National Congress) Trinidad and Tobago”.

Browne was also critical of the statements made by Trinidad and Tobago’s ambassador to CARICOM, Ralph Maraj, who in supporting Washington’s move, said “the sovereign will of Venezuelans must be restored.

“However this unfolding situation off the coast of Venezuela turns out, of one thing there should be no doubt. The will and welfare of the people of Venezuela must be restored. Their freedom and democracy must be returned,” Maraj said, adding that their suffering must end and the almost eight million citizens who have fled their homeland must be allowed to resume their lives.

“The people must have the chance to share in the pros-

perity and opportunities provided by their nation. The sovereign will of Venezuelans must be restored to become the major force determining the future of their nation.

“These are the critical issues in this scenario before us for most right-thinking people in the region and beyond,” said Maraj, a former foreign affairs minister.

Browne said Maraj “spoke in some detail about regime change” in Caracas.

“Very unusual ...he is not talking about CARICOM he is talking about regime change in a sovereign state,” Browne said, adding “in reality what these three officers of Trinidad and Tobago have been doing is making a mockery of generations of hard work that has gone into crafting and building a credible and respected foreign policy for this our beloved nation”. (CMC)

## NOTICE

**To: The Commissioner of Police**  
**Police Headquarters**  
**American Road**  
**St. Johns**  
**Antigua.**

**To: Your Worship**  
**St. Johns Magistrate Court**  
**Gray’s Farm**  
**St. Johns**  
**Antigua.**

**Dear Sir/Madame,**

### **Re: Notice-Application for Tavern Licence**

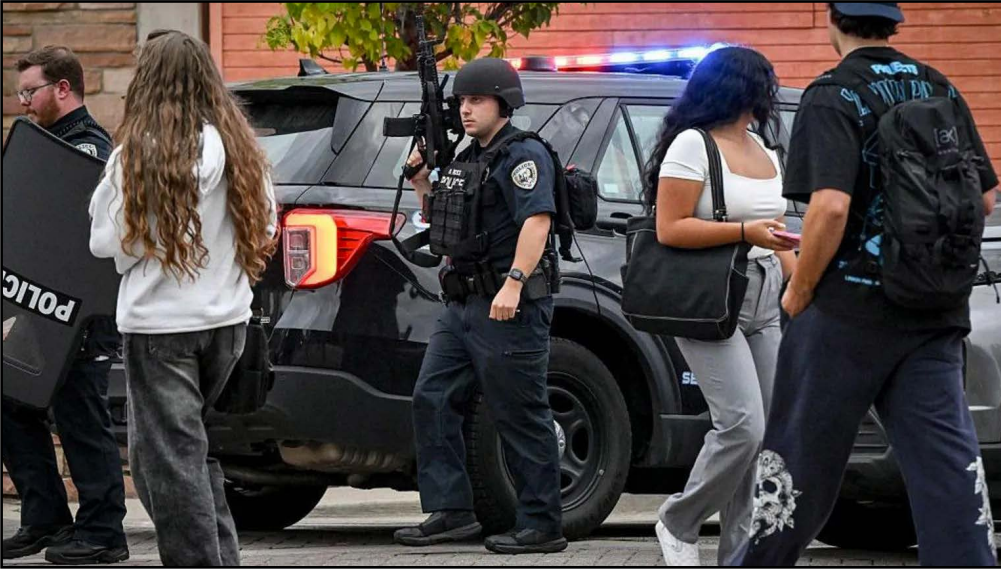
**I Rian Rickard Johnson of Fort Road with registered business situate at Camacho Avenue in St. John’s Antigua and Barbuda DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that it is our intention to apply at the next sitting of the liquor licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate’s Court, High Street, St. John’s, Antigua on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025 next ensuring for a liquor Licensing Pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (intoxication Liquor) Act Cap. 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as “Irie Jerk Centre & Restaurant” situated at Camacho Avenue in the parish of St. John’s, Antigua and Barbuda.**

**Dated the 18th day of October , 2025**

**Rian Johnson**



## FBI urges students to be vigilant amid wave of swatting hoaxes



The FBI is investigating a wave of active shooter hoaxes at US universities which have triggered chaotic armed police responses as students return to campus for a new semester.

Since Thursday, nearly a dozen universities have been hit by swatting hoaxes - leading to panic as students, parents and faculty flee.

Authorities say swatting - making prank calls to emergency services to deploy a Special Weapons and Tactics team (Swat) - has grown in popularity.

In a statement issued in response to the latest wave of hoaxes, the FBI encouraged the public "to remain vigilant and immediately report anything they consider suspicious to law enforcement".

Villanova University, a Catholic university in Pennsylvania, has been hit by two separate threats in just four days. Student Ava Petrosky was singing in an orientation Mass on Thursday when people in the audience began to run.

"Honestly, at that moment I thought, 'I'm gonna die,'" she told CNN, explaining how she joined the crowd and ran for cover.

Hours later on Thursday, a swatting hoax hit the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, sending the campus into lockdown.

"In two seconds, the whole classroom evacuated," senior Luke Robbins told the Chattanooga Times Free Press.

"Run outside, there's cops with ARs [assault rifles] in the hallways, and they're like, 'Hey, go up this way,' so we get out. Run across the street. There's even more cops telling us to go.

"I mean, it was just hectic. It's crazy."

False reports have also hit Iowa State University, the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Northern Arizona University, the University of South Carolina, Doane University, the University of New Hampshire, the University of Colorado Boulder and Kansas State University, according to

local media reports.

The FBI has declined to comment on the latest wave of hoaxes, but in a statement to BBC News said: "We are aware of recent swatting incidents involving a number of colleges and universities and are working with our law enforcement partners."

"The FBI is seeing an increase in swatting events across the country," the agency said.

Each false report "drains law enforcement resources, costs thousands of dollars, and, most importantly, puts innocent people at risk".

The FBI created a database in 2023 to better track hoax threats. The database uses information provided by local police agencies, and has so far tracked "thousands of incidents," the agency said.

Swatting hoaxes have led police to accidentally shoot - and sometimes kill - the victims of the hoax.

Last year, a British man became the first in the UK to be charged with committing a swatting hoax, after police in the US state of Maryland responded to a fake call accusing someone of taking a hostage, and shot the victim with plastic bullets.

The FBI statement notes that several young men have now been jailed for calling in swatting hoaxes. They include a man extradited to the US from Romania, a Wisconsin man who hacked doorbell cameras to livestream the police raid, and a 19-year-old American-Israeli teen convicted of making thousands of threats to Jewish institutions around the world. (BBC)



## South Korea to ban mobile phones in school classrooms



South Korea passed a bill on Wednesday to ban the use of mobile phones and other digital devices in school classrooms nationwide, as concern grows about the impact of heavy social media use among the young.

The ban, which will take effect from March next year, makes South Korea the latest country to restrict the use of smartphones and social media among minors.

Australia recently widened its pioneering ban on social media for teenagers. A ban

on mobile phones in Dutch schools has improved focus among students, a study found in July.

Surveys show South Korea is among the world's most digitally connected countries, with 99% of South Koreans online and 98% owning a smartphone, according to the U.S.-based Pew Research Center, the highest rate among the 27 countries it examined in 2022 and 2023.

The legislation imposing the ban garnered bipartisan support in Wednesday's parliamentary vote.

"Our youth's addiction to social media is at a serious level now," said Cho Jung-hun, a lawmaker from the opposition People Power Party and a sponsor of the bill.

"Our kids, their eyes are red every morning. They are on Instagram until 2 or 3 a.m.," Cho told parliament.

About 37% of middle- and high-school students say social media affects their daily lives, while 22% feel anxious if they cannot access their social media accounts, a survey by the

Education Ministry found last year.

Many schools in South Korea already have their own restrictions for smartphone use, which the bill now formalizes.

Digital devices will still be permitted for students with disabilities or for educational purposes.

Some youth advocacy groups have opposed the smartphone ban, saying it would violate children's human rights. (NBC)



## Lil Nas X says he's OK after 'terrifying' arrest



Lil Nas X has said he's OK after a "terrifying last four days" following his arrest in Los Angeles.

The Grammy winner, known for his country-rap hit *Old Town Road*, was arrested on Thursday after police officers said he assaulted them after they found him walking the streets naked. He was taken to hospital for treatment for a possible overdose.

On Monday, the 26-year-old rapper pleaded not guilty to injuring a police officer and resisting arrest. He was later released after paying a \$75,000 (£56,000) bail.

Posting on Instagram on Tuesday, he assured fans: "Your girl is gonna be OK, y'all." He added: "That was terrifying, that was a terrifying last four days."

The performer, whose real name is Montero Lamar Hill, is facing three felony counts of battery

with injury to a police officer and one felony count of resisting arrest.

If convicted, he could face up to five years in prison, according to the Los Angeles District Attorney.

Police in LA said he charged at them when they responded to a call about a nude man on a busy main road.

They said they believed he was using drugs at the time, and he must now attend an outpatient drug rehabilitation programme.

The star's attorney Christy O'Connor said there was no evidence of drug use, however.

"This is just an aberrant episode in an otherwise productive life," she said, according to the Reuters news agency.

His father, Robert Stafford, told reporters outside court that his

son was "very remorseful for what happened".

"He's going to get the help that he needs," Mr Stafford added. "Just keep him in your prayers."

Lil Nas X rose to fame in 2018 with his debut single *Old Town Road*, which - with the help of a later remix featuring country star Billy Ray Cyrus - went on to become the longest-running number one song in US chart history, at 19 weeks.

He came out as gay at the same time, going on to upend hip-hop with his LGBT-positive lyrics while also pioneering new ways of promoting his music online.

UK music fans may recall him riding on to Glastonbury's Pyramid Stage on a giant fake horse while performing just ahead of Sir Elton John's farewell gig at the festival in 2023. (BBC)



## Some in Uganda question a deal to receive deportees from the US like Abrego Garcia

Opposition figures and others in Uganda on Tuesday criticised an agreement with the United States to receive deported migrants, questioning the lack of parliamentary approval and claiming that the deal eases political pressure on the country's authoritarian president.

After facing US sanctions that have targeted many government officials, including the parliamentary speaker, Ugandan President Yoweri "Museveni will be happy" to transact with Washington, said Ibrahim Ssemujju, a lawmaker who is a prominent opposition figure. "He will be asking, 'When are you bringing them?'"

Ugandan officials have released few details about the agreement, although said they preferred to receive deportees of African origin and didn't want individuals with criminal records. However, the country is being put forward as a possible location for high-profile detainee Kilmar Abrego Garcia, an El Salvador native who has been charged with human smuggling.

Abrego Garcia, the subject of a protracted immigration saga, was detained on Monday by immigration officials in Baltimore, and the Department of Homeland Security said in a statement that Abrego Garcia "is being processed for removal to Uganda."



Without parliamentary oversight, "the whole scheme stinks," said Mathias Mpuuga, until recently the leader of the opposition in Uganda's national assembly.

He said the agreement with the US left him "a little perplexed" because Uganda is struggling to look after refugees fleeing violence in neighbouring countries. He suggested the agreement makes sense only as a matter of "economic expediency" for the Ugandan government.

It remains unclear precisely what Ugandan authorities are getting in return for accepting deportees.

Uganda's attorney-general, as well as the government ministers in charge of refugees and internal affairs, were not immediately available for comment. Okello Oryem, the deputy minister in charge of international relations, told the AP that such a deal was "complete rubbish" — the day before his permanent secretary confirmed an agreement was in

place to accept individuals who are "reluctant to or may have concerns about returning to their countries of origin."

Negotiators for the Ugandan side are believed to have been reporting directly to Museveni, an authoritarian leader who has been in power in the east African country since 1986.

For much of his time in power, Museveni was widely seen as a strong US ally, especially for his support of counter-terrorism operations in Somalia when he deployed troops there to fight the al-Qaida-linked rebels of al-Shabab.

But his cachet in Washington declined in recent years. The Biden administration piled pressure over corruption, LGBTQ rights concerns and other rights abuses, with a growing list of Ugandan officials facing sanctions. In addition to Speaker Anita Among, a key ally of Museveni's, Ugandan officials sanctioned by the US include the current

prisons chief, a former police chief, a former deputy army commander, and some former government ministers.

In 2023, reacting to US sanctions against Ugandan officials that followed the enactment of a law against homosexuality, Museveni told a gathering of government officials that he had no wish to visit the US.

For Museveni, the deal with the US to accept deportees is desirable "for political and perhaps economic reasons," said Marlon Agaba, the head of a leading anti-corruption group in Uganda.

The deal eases pressure on Museveni and may come with trade opportunities, said Agaba, executive director of Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda.

"The Trump administration is about deals, about deal-making, and any strongman would welcome that," he said.

Ssemujju, the opposition lawmaker, said he believed "the matter should be handled by Parliament" and that the agreement is flawed without parliamentary authorisation.

In July, the US deported five men with criminal backgrounds to the southern African kingdom of Eswatini and sent eight more to South Sudan. Rwanda has also said it will receive up to 250 migrants deported from the US. (AP)



## Antiguans suffer first loss at ECCB International Netball Series



**Players of Antigua and Barbuda (yellow and black uniform) and Montserrat compete during their second match at the 2025 ECCB International Netball Series at the Tanteen Sports Complex in St. George's, Grenada, on Monday, August 25, 2025. (ECCB)**

Antigua and Barbuda suffered their loss on Tuesday evening at the Fifth Annual Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) International Netball Series, which is being hosted in Grenada at the Tanteen Sports Complex in St. George's from August 23 to 30.

After winning their first three encounters with victories against Anguilla, Montserrat, and Guyana, Antigua and Barbuda's unbeaten run was ended in a 33-45 loss to St. Lucia in their fourth encounter at the 10-team round-robin tournament.

It was the second win for the St. Lucians, whose opening match against Montserrat was stopped by rain.

Host Grenada rebounded from their first loss of the tournament, a 60-68 defeat against guest team Barbados, to

win their next two matches. The Grenadians claimed their third win in four matches with a commanding 53-16 victory against Anguilla on Wednesday morning.

The Grenadians, who launched their campaign with a 65-43 victory against Dominica, surged to a 69-16 victory against Guyana on Tuesday evening.

After their opening game against Guyana was stopped due to rain, defending champions St. Vincent and the Grenadines claimed their third win in a row with a 57-40 victory against the Commonwealth of Dominica, who slumped to their third loss in as many encounters.

Guest team Barbados made it two wins in as many games with a commanding 65-27 victory against An-

guilla on Tuesday. The Anguillians have lost three of their four matches so far.

Guest team Cayman Islands rebounded from a 43-55 loss to St. Vincent and the Grenadines by winning their next two matches.

The Cayman Islands notched up a 78-16 win against Guyana on Wednesday morning after romping to an emphatic 71-10 victory against Montserrat on Tuesday. It was the third loss in a row for both the Montserratian and Guyanese teams.

Montserrat, Guyana, and the Commonwealth of Dominica remain the only three teams who are yet to record a win at this year's ECCB International Netball Series.

## Francis ton guides Leewards past Jamaica in U-17 tournament

Leeward Islands Tropical Wave's captain Tanez Francis scored a superb century to lift his side to a nail biting one-wicket win over Jamaica via the Duckworth/Lewis/Stern (DLS) method in round two of the CWI Rising Stars Under-17 Men's 50-over Championship in Trinidad on Tuesday.

On a day that saw all three matches affected by rain, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago registered convincing DLS victories over Guyana and the Windward Islands, respectively.

At the National Cricket Centre, in Balmain, Francis cracked a century at the top of the order, the first of this year's competition, to lead the Leeward Islands to an exciting one-wicket victory over Jamaica.

In a match that was reduced to 35 overs per side, Jamaica posted 186 for eight after being sent in to bat. Demarco Scott led the way with a knock of 57 from 53 balls, with six fours and one six, while Odane Binns hit 39 off 32 balls.

The two shared a partnership of 79 for the fourth wicket that helped Jamaica rebuild their innings after sliding to 67 for three. Kasim Challenger



**Tanez Francis**

claimed three for 31, and Kunal Tilokani picked up two for 19.

Francis then played a captain's knock, blasting 110 from just 94 balls, inclusive of five fours and four sixes, to put his side in prime position to coast to a comfortable win after being set a revised total of 197.

However, from a comfortable position of 174 for two in the 29th over, the Leeward Islands collapsed to 193 for eight in the 33rd over.

After losing Kasim Challenger with the scores tied, the last wicket pair of Jathan Edward and T'sharvier Pemberton carried the Leewards over the

line with an over to spare. Adrian Silvera bagged five for 26, while Ryan Littleton took two for 44.

At Gilbert Park, California, a sensational spell of bowling from T&T's left-arm pacer Daron Dhanraj condemned table leaders Windward Islands to a comprehensive five-wicket defeat.

Dhanraj claimed spectacular figures of seven for 22 to dismiss the Windwards for 125 in 42.4 of their allotted 44 overs. Only Johnathan Daniel (34) and Tyler Venner, who made 31, offered any resistance against the young Trinidadians.

T&T were then buoyed by a half-century opening

stand by Christian Lall (44) and Saleem Khan (23), and easily overhauled their target, finishing on 130 for five in 27.4 overs. Roberto Badree scored an unbeaten 24 to lead T&T to their first win of the tournament.

And at Inshan Ali Park, Preysal, Barbados produced a strong bowling effort on their way to strolling to a seven-wicket victory over Guyana.

Justin Parris took three wickets and Raphael Lovell and Asher Branford snared two wickets apiece to rout Guyana for 105 in 27.5 overs.

Parmeshwar Ram scored 24, while Shamar Apple made 23, but they were the only two batters to score more than 20 in a disappointing batting display by Guyana.

Barbados lost both of their openers cheaply, but captain Gadson Bowens batted sensibly in his match-winning unbeaten knock of 50 from 46 balls, with three fours and two sixes, as Barbados cruised to 108 for three in 20 overs.

Guyana did themselves no favours by conceding 24 extras, the second highest contributor to Barbados' total.



# Kings beat Warriors in Caribbean Premier League



**St. Lucia Kings batsman Ackeem Auguste, right, hits through the leg-side during his team's CPL match against the Guyana Amazon Warriors at the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground in Gros Islet, St. Lucia, on Tuesday, August 26, 2025. (CPL/Getty Images)**

Host and defending champions, the St Lucia Kings, pull off an impressive four-wicket win against last year's losing finalists, the Guyana Amazon Warriors, in their Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) match at the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground in Gros Islet on Tuesday night.

Ackeem Auguste played a wonderful innings of 73 off 35 balls to earn the player of the match award and propel the Kings to victory at 203 for six with 11 balls remaining.

The Warriors would be disappointed not to defend a robust total, as they won the toss and elected to bat first, scoring 202 for six off their 20 overs.

Romario Shepherd plundered an unbeaten 73 off just 34 balls with five fours and seven sixes to set a challeng-

ing score. Iftikhar Ahmed hit 33 off 27 balls, including three sixes and a four.

Opener Ben McDermott cracked 30 off 18 balls, including three fours and two sixes, and Shai Hope chipped in with 23 off 27 balls. Pacer Keon Gaston captured two for 57.

The Kings didn't blink in their response as they inflicted a first defeat in three matches upon the Warriors in this year's competition.

Tim Seifert, who made 37 off 24 balls, and Auguste got the chase off to a flier after the early loss of Johnson Charles for 13.

The Kings smashed 86 runs in the powerplay to break the back of the total, and the reigning CPL champions never looked back from there.

Auguste eventually fell with his team on 140 for four, with plenty still to do, but the experienced hands of Tim David (25), Aaron Jones (16), and captain David Wiese (10 not out) guided the Kings to victory.

Left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie captured two for 32, and left-arm pacer Jediah Blades claimed two for 35.

The Kings laid down a real marker in hauling in a huge total set by the Warriors in ice-cool fashion.

The victory lifted the Kings to second position in the table with six points from five matches, albeit two of those were abandoned due to rain.

The Amazon Warriors slipped from second to third place with four points from three matches.



## Men's Pan American Cup puts crucial ranking points on the line



**An aerial view of two teams competing during the opening day of matches at the Domo de la Feria in León, Guanajuato, Mexico, on Tuesday, August 26, 2025. (ABA-VA)**

LEÓN, Guanajuato – The Senior Men's Pan American Volleyball Cup awards important ranking points for qualification to the 2026 Central American and Caribbean Games in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

The competition, which is being held from August 26 to 31 at the Domo de la Feria in Mexico, features twelve teams aiming to collect as many points as possible to boost their chances of qualifying for Santo Domingo 2026. The qualification system will be completed next year.

Augusto Sabbatini, Head Coach of Antigua and Barbuda, said, "The team has been training for 60 days. We're bringing up a young

team with a mix of experienced players. We are looking to improve for our next competition, the ECVA Final Four, which will be held in Antigua. This tournament is very important for us to showcase what we've been training in order to strengthen the team."

David Preston, Head Coach of Canada, stated, "We've had a very good training block. We have nine new members of our team that have limited international experience, so like most teams in their first year of their quad, we've made some good transitions.

"We do have some guys with some experience, so it could be a little bit different. Our senior team is preparing for the World

Championship, so it's been two agendas as we've been getting the guys ready. We are looking forward to seeing our young guys and how they handle this international event, so there's a lot of excitement."

Daniel Nejamkin, Head Coach of Chile, claims, "We have never experienced a Pan American Cup with twelve teams, so we are very happy to be able to compete with everyone. We are glad to see so many teams from South America and NORCECA."

Paolo Montagnani, Head Coach of Colombia, said, "We didn't have a long preparation because I had to make a preselection and know all the players from Colombia, it's my first year

in Colombia. We did our best, unfortunately, we had no friendly matches nor international events. I think we will be competitive and ready; we expect to have fun."

Alexander Gutiérrez, Head Coach of Dominican Republic, stated, "We will try to put on a good show because we are coming with practically a 'B' team due to multiple international commitments. This tournament is for testing and preparing ourselves for the Final Six, where we will have our full roster. We will give the responsibility to the players so they can embrace their role in the national team project."

Reider Lucas, Head Coach of Guatemala, said, "This is a high-quality event with a good level of competition, and we are very happy to be here. We came with the objective of earning the ranking points necessary to qualify for the 2026 Central American Games. We will aim to compete well and show a good image."

Rubén Wolochin, Head Coach of Venezuela, said, "Our main goal is qualifying for the Central American and Caribbean Games. The second goal is to collect as many points as possible for the world ranking and to compete again after Venezuela's five-year absence from international competitions. We will go step by step, seeing where we stand, and trying to put on the court what we've been able to train."



# Sports

THURSDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2025



## Cuba dominates Antigua and Barbuda in Pan American Cup debut



**Cuba blocks an attack from Antigua and Barbuda during their Group A match at the 18th Men's Senior Pan American Volleyball Cup at the Domo de la Feria in León, Guanajuato, Mexico, on Tuesday evening.**

Cuba opened the 18th Men's Senior Pan American Volleyball Cup with a strong performance, defeating Antigua and Barbuda 3-0 (25-19, 25-10, 25-12) on the first day of Pool A action at the Domo de la Feria in León, Guanajuato, Mexico, on Tuesday evening.

The Pool A match was quick-paced, with the Cubans showing absolute dominance in all aspects of the game, sealing the victory in just 49 minutes.

Cuba controlled the fundamentals in attack (41-15), blocking (6-2), and serving (11-2). Antigua and Barbuda committed fewer errors than Cuba (17 to 27) but could not counter the power of their opponents.

To close the match, the

Cubans needed four match points, after a service error and two consecutive reception mistakes following powerful attacks from Antiguan Cairon Davis briefly extended the finish.

Cuba's top scorers were Víctor Andreu and Endriel Pedroso with 11 points each, while Davis led Antigua and Barbuda with six points.

Cuban captain Víctor Andreu said, "We came from a long trip, arriving just last night, so starting with a match that didn't demand much from us was good, because we are still uncoordinated and making many mistakes.

"We don't underestimate any opponent; the ending was exciting for both teams.



**The senior men's Antigua and Barbuda volleyball team in Mexico. (Photo courtesy ABAVA)**

This match worked as good practice for us ahead of tougher challenges, like Venezuela and the United States."

Erwin Mathurin, captain of Antigua and Barbuda, said, "For us, coming from a small island in such a big tournament is absolutely incredible. Maybe we anticipated a little bit more from ourselves in this match, but we enjoyed it. We hope to do better going into the other games."

Venezuela opened their campaign with a straight-set victory 3-0 (25-21, 28-26, 31-29) over the United States of America (USA) in the first match of Pool A on Tuesday.

Defending champion Canada opened with a victory in the Senior Men's Pan

American Volleyball Cup, defeating Puerto Rico in a hard-fought match 3-1 (25-21, 25-18, 22-25, 25-20) in Pool B action on Tuesday.

Colombia made a victorious debut in the opening match in Pool B, sweeping Guatemala in straight sets 3-0 (25-18, 25-20, 25-23).

Chile opened the Senior Men's Pan American Volleyball Cup with a 3-1 victory (25-19, 23-25, 25-17, 25-23) over the Dominican Republic in the first match of Pool C.

Host team Mexico got off to a strong start in the 18th Senior Men's Pan American Volleyball Cup, defeating Suriname 3-0 (25-18, 25-14, 25-17) in the other Pool C match on Tuesday's opening day of the 12-team competition.