

Blue Ocean Dredging Company to acquire additional equipment

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Government commits to build 400 new homes

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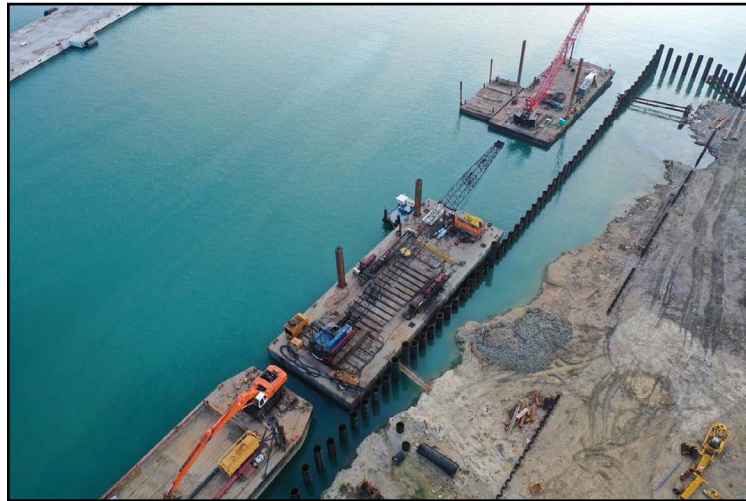
The government-owned, Blue Ocean Dredging Company, is to acquire additional equipment to enable it to undertake critical dredging assignments at the Deep Water Harbour and the Crabbes Harbour.

This as the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda has approved a strategic partnership between the Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority, the Ministry of Works, and the Blue Ocean Dredging Company to invest in specialized dredging equipment for the completion of critical projects at St. John's Harbour and Crabbs Harbour.

This initiative addresses long-standing challenges at both harbours, where significant volumes of material remain unremoved:

- **St. John's Harbour:** Approximately **20,000 m³ of rock** and **120,000 m³ of maintenance dredging**, totaling **140,000 m³**.
- **Crabbs Harbour:** Approximately **150,000 m³** outstanding.

A delegation comprising the Port Manager, the Manager of Blue Ocean, an engineer from the Ministry of Works, and Cabinet Minister Hon. Rawdon Turner will travel to Holland to engage potential equipment suppliers. This mission will support the modernization of Blue Ocean



Dredging Company, now fully owned by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.

Challenges with International Contractors

Previous efforts with international dredging firms have proven costly and uncertain:

- **Boskalis (Holland):** ~USD 2M mobilization/demobilization.
- **Van Oord (Holland):** USD 430K/day for one week, no completion guarantee.
- **Jan De Nul (Holland):** USD 9M (~USD 32/m³).
- **Dutch Dredging (Belgium):** USD 57–120/m³.
- **Van Tunen (Holland):** USD 715K mobilization + USD 67K/week.
- **Seaward Marine Corp. (USA):** USD 3–4M mobilization, USD 62.50/m³.

□ **Gallega (Santo Domingo):** USD 380/m³.

By comparison, **Blue Ocean Marine (Antigua)** currently dredges at **USD 21.50/m³**, well below international rates. However, the company lacks the specialized equipment needed to complete large-scale projects.

Current Assessment

- International contractors remain reluctant, citing uncertainty over rock hardness and preferring **charter agreements** instead of fixed cubic-meter pricing.
- Local capacity offers **competitive and sustainable rates**, but requires equipment upgrades.
- A negotiated rate of **USD 32/m³** is considered acceptable for completing the Crabbs and St. John's projects. ***Strategic Actions Endorsed by Cabinet***

1. Investment in Equipment

- Purchase of a **Caterpillar 6015 Excavator** with attachments (Xcentric Ripper XR80, Hydraulic Breaker HB7000, Quick Coupler).
- Lease, with option to purchase, of a **Pontoon Barge**.
- Recruitment of experienced dredge operators and mechanics.

2. Expansion of Operations

- Maintenance dredging at St. John's Harbour (cruise terminal, cargo terminal, fisheries complex).
- Beach replenishment projects across Antigua and Barbuda.
- Sand mining for the construction industry.
- Extension of dredging services to regional markets.

3. Hopper Dredger – M.B. Amaru

- Operating cost projections for three months estimated at USD 600,500.00

The delegation will evaluate equipment options and negotiate arrangements in the best interest of Antigua and Barbuda. Their findings will be presented to Cabinet for a final decision.

Government commits to build 400 new homes



Government has announced an ambitious plan to construct more than 400 homes across Antigua and Barbuda with Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHAPA) and the National Housing and Urban Renewal Company leading the charge.

To this end, the Director of CHAPA, Mark Richards, was invited to Cabinet to present an update on the Division's progress so far. He reported that CHAPA is already mobilizing resources and personnel to begin construction in the Belmont area, where the first phase will deliver 27 starter homes. These homes will be built with reinforced concrete for durability and resilience and will be sold at one-third of the current market price, ensuring accessibility for lower- and middle-income families.

Simultaneously, preparations are underway for the construction of 76 homes in North Sound on a 10-acre parcel of land. To guide the rollout of this project, model homes have already been completed in Glanvilles, and additional amenities are being planned to support the surrounding communities.

The housing programme will also extend to other constituencies, with two- and three-bedroom starter homes earmarked for development in St. Paul,



St. John's Rural West, and St. Peter. These efforts form part of a wider strategy to expand affordable housing opportunities across the nation.

Over the past several years, the Gaston Browne administration has transformed the housing sector, overseeing the construction of thousands of affordable homes and placing homeownership within reach of many Antiguan and Barbudans for the first time. This new wave of projects continues that momentum, further strengthening the government's commitment to housing as a pillar of social and economic development.

Richards also noted that while progress has been steady, the availability of skilled labour remains a major challenge. With greater access to construction workers, the pace of building could be accelerated significantly, allowing the government to meet the

growing demand for affordable housing more quickly.

Meanwhile, the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHAPA) is pleased to inform the public that our Housing Program remains active and ongoing. A range of housing options is currently available and can be viewed on our official website at www.visitchapa.com.

Application forms are also accessible on the Forms and Resources page of the website.

Please note that the prices displayed online apply only to the houses. Land is priced separately and will vary based on the size and location of the lot selected.

For more information, we encourage interested persons to visit our website or contact the CHAPA office directly.

Government continues to focus on the expansion of the Barbuda International Airport



Director General of Communications in the Office of the Prime Minister, Maurice Merchant

Almost a year after its formal opening, the government continues to focus on the expansion of the Barbuda International Airport, a key pillar on the island's developmental thrust.

On Wednesday, the Deputy Chief Immigration Officer, Nigel Emmanuel and the Acting CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority, Joseph Samuel attended Cabinet to provide an update on the **Barbuda International Airport** and to seek approval for measures to further enhance its operations.

"Cabinet approved the allocation of additional premises to house

the Immigration Department, ensuring smooth and efficient processing at the airport. This step forms part of a broader programme of improvements being made in advance of the planned expansion of the Barbuda International Airport into a modern international gateway," Director General of Communications in the Office of the Prime Minister, Maurice Merchant has reported.

He noted that since its opening on October 3, 2024, the airport has seen an increase in landings and takeoffs, particularly the movement of private jets which are arriving from both Canada and the United States among other destinations.

Against this backdrop, the expansion project will see the facility upgraded to:

- Accommodate larger international aircraft, opening new routes for tourism and commerce.
- Expand the passenger terminal, creating more comfortable and efficient spaces for arrivals and departures.
- Improve cargo handling ca-

capacity, positioning Barbuda as a hub for trade and logistics in the sub-region.

- Integrate modern security and customs facilities, enhancing the island's readiness for increased airlift and economic activity.

"In support of these developments, Cabinet also confirmed the pre-approval of a loan for the construction of concrete roads across Barbuda in the latter half of this year. The current state of the road network has hindered the movement of workers and passengers to and from the airport. Once completed, the improved road system will directly support airport expansion while also benefiting the island's residents, tourism sector, and wider economy," Merchant added.

He said this combined investment in aviation and infrastructure underscores the Government's commitment to making Barbuda more accessible, strengthening its economy, and laying the foundation for long-term sustainable growth.



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Minister of Education Presents Seed Funding for Sports at National Schools Collaboration Meeting



The Minister of Education and Sports, Daryll Matthew

The Minister of Education and Sports, Daryll Matthew, on Friday presented seed funding for sports to government secondary schools during the Sports Development Workshop with principals and schools' sports coordinators, held at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium.

As part of this initiative:



- Large Schools received \$20,000.00 each
- Medium Schools received \$15,000.00 each
- Small Schools received \$8,000.00 each

In addition to the allocation of seed funding, all schools also received their prize monies from the 2024 Inter-School Competitions. This in-

vestment underscores the Ministry's commitment to enhancing sports development across the education sector, providing schools with the resources needed to strengthen athletic programmes and nurture emerging talent.

Minister Matthew expressed his satisfaction in delivering on a promise made last year to ensure schools received their funding. He emphasized that the primary goal of school sports

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Local News



Deputy Commissioner of Sports, Mr. Joel Rayne (left), Permanent Secretary, Ena Dalso Henry (center) and Director of Sports, Heather Samuel Daley (right).

is grassroots athlete development, stressing that stronger cooperation between the Ministry and schools is essential for advancing programmes. “Developing talent from the ground up is critical,” he stated, highlighting the importance of sports in building pathways for young athletes.

Commissioner of Sports, Dr. Colin Greene, outlined the Ministry’s vision of “Development of Sports and Sports for Development.” He noted that the day’s activity focused on how sports can achieve multiple objectives, including:

- Driving economic growth through sports
- Creating linkages across industries and communities
- Expanding career opportunities in the field of sports

Dr. Greene further explained that the Ministry is working to create a sound platform of partnership between education and sports, ensuring sustainable collaboration and long-term development.

Also in attendance were Minister of State, Sen. Shenella Govia, Permanent Secretary, Ena Dalso Henry, Director of Education, Clare Browne, Director of Sports, Heather Samuel Daley, and Deputy Commissioner of Sports, Mr.

Joel Rayne. Their participation reflected the strong, cross-sectoral support for advancing school sports in Antigua and Barbuda.

This milestone marks a significant step toward the empowerment of young athletes and the integration of sports into national development strategies.

Principals or representatives from four private secondary schools were also in attendance; these were the St. Joseph’s Academy, the St. Anthony’s Secondary School, Christ the King High School and the Seventh Day Adventist Secondary School



Commissioner of Sports, Dr. Colin Greene



SLBMC strengthens its team of specialists

The Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre is taking a big step to bolster the medical and other skills in the Emergency Department with the additional of a specialist who will be assigned to that area.

SLBMC has announced the recruitment of Dr. Ayanna Whittington who now joins the SLBMC family as its newest Emergency Medicine Physician in the Emergency Department.

Dr. Whittington brings strong training, experience, and a passion for emergency care that will be a big plus for both our patients and the hospital's team.

"I am ecstatic to join the Emergency Medical team at the SLBMC. It is my pleasure to bring my years of experience to the people of Antigua and Barbuda with the aim to continually improve the care that this institution



Dr. Ayanna Whittington

offers," she stated.

Marketing Manager for the SLBMC,

Salma Crump, said the recruitment of Dr. Whittington serves as an indication of the institution's determination to come to grips with the area of the hospital with the highest levels of complaints, Emergency Department.

"We know the challenges in health-care are real — we've faced many and continue to face them — but our commitment to strengthening the care and support we provide to patients and families remains just as strong. Welcoming Dr. Ayanna Whittington and Dr. Christopher Sulowski to our Emergency Department is another step forward. Their expertise and dedication will help us keep building the kind of care our community deserves," she stated.

Dr. Whittington is Barbadian by birth and a graduate of the University of the West Indies.



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Local News

Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre Launches Newborn Hearing Screening Programme

Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) takes another important step in advancing child health with the recent launch of its Newborn Hearing Screening Programme. This initiative, the first of its kind at the hospital, ensures that every baby born at SLBMC is screened early for potential hearing challenges — a critical step in giving children the best possible start in life.

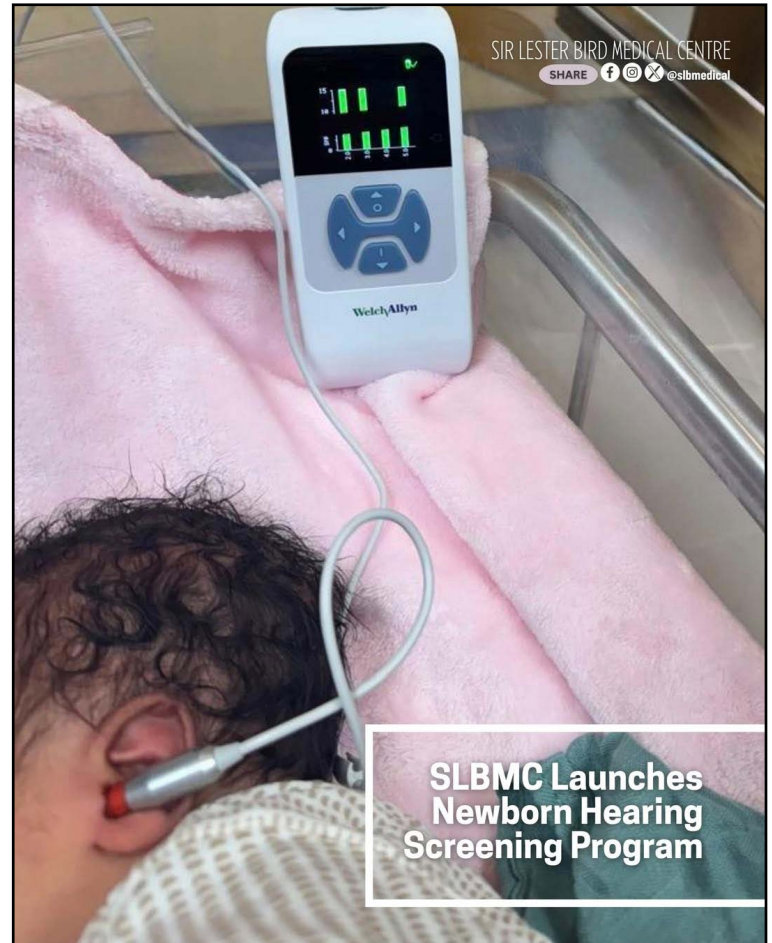
Hearing is essential for a child's speech, language, social, and emotional development. When hearing loss is detected early, children can receive timely interventions such as hearing aids, therapy, and family support. Research shows that babies identified with hearing loss within the first six months of life, and who receive early support, develop significantly better communication skills com-

pared to those diagnosed later.

"Early detection is the foundation of better outcomes," said Dr. Saleem Hughes, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at SLBMC. "With newborn hearing screening now a standard part of our care, we can identify potential concerns right away and work with families to provide the necessary support. This programme reflects SLBMC's commitment to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential."

The screening process is simple, safe, and painless, using a small device that checks a newborn's hearing while they sleep. Families receive results promptly, and those requiring further testing are guided to follow-up care and support.

SLBMC continues to ex-



pand its services to meet the needs of the community, with this program marking a significant milestone in improving outcomes for children across Antigua and Bar-

buda.

For more information about the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme, please contact the Department of Pediatrics at 484-2772.

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Antigua and Barbuda Elected to Chair the Association of Caribbean States Special Committee on Transport

Antigua and Barbuda has been elected to serve as Chair of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) Special Committee on Transport, marking a significant milestone in the nation's growing leadership within regional and international fora, for the first time.

The election took place during the 34th Meeting of the ACS Special Committee on Transport, where Antigua and Barbuda received unanimous support from member states. The Committee is the principal body responsible for advancing regional cooperation in transport and logistics across the Greater Caribbean, with a strong focus on air and maritime connectivity, digitalisation of transport systems, and sustainable infrastructure development.

Dr. Clarence E. Pilgrim, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs, has been appointed Chairman of the Committee. Dr. Pilgrim brings to the position decades of experience in public administration, trade facilitation, and strategic regional engagement. His leadership will be pivotal in advancing the ACS's 2025–2026 Transport Work Programme, which prioritises:

- ☐ Modernisation of transport systems to enhance efficiency and resilience;
- ☐ Digital transformation projects to strengthen logistics and competitiveness;
- ☐ Improved maritime and air connectivity across the Greater Caribbean;
- ☐ Public-private partnerships to mobilise investment in transport infrastructure; and
- ☐ Inclusion initiatives integrating youth and women into the transport and shipping sectors.

In accepting the Chairmanship, Dr. Pilgrim reaffirmed Antigua and Barbuda's commitment to regional cooperation and sustainable development:

“This is not merely an honour for An-



Ambassador Dr. Clarence Pilgrim

tigua and Barbuda, but a responsibility we embrace on behalf of all Caribbean

peoples. Strengthening connectivity, harnessing innovation, and building resilience in our transport systems are fundamental to our region's competitiveness and prosperity.”

The ACS Transport Committee plays a central role in shaping regional strategies that align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the areas of industry, innovation, sustainable cities, and climate action. Antigua and Barbuda's election to the Chair reflects confidence in the nation's vision and capacity to lead these transformative efforts.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs will continue to coordinate with regional partners, international organisations, and the private sector to deliver on the Committee's ambitious agenda for 2025–2026.



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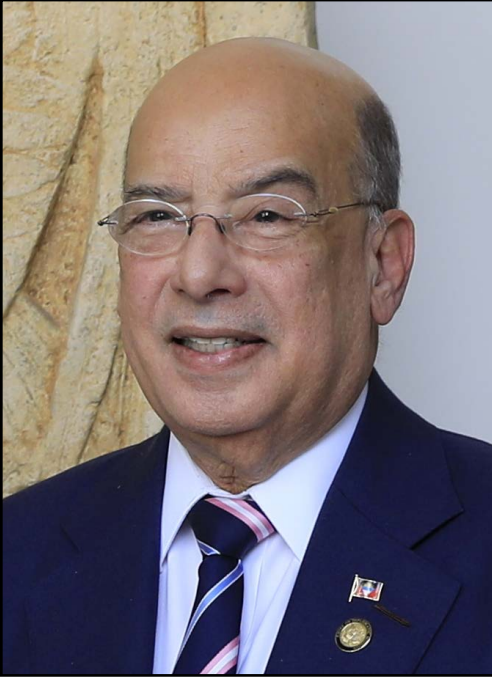
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A Case for Caribbean Action on Mental Health



By Sir Ronald Sanders

Mental health is no longer hidden in the margins of public life, whether in Europe, North America, or the Caribbean. It is a growing global reality that costs lives and livelihoods, and prevents social cohesion and economic inclusion.

Yet, while the problem is no longer a secret, its treatment in the Caribbean too often remains one of embarrassed secrecy. Elderly people are institutionalized; younger people are locked away at home or in institutions. Dedicated practitioners do their best, but they lack equipment and medications. And there are not enough trained mental-health doctors and nurses.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than one billion people live with mental-health conditions, and the trend is upward. The latest official global count is that 727,000 people died by suicide in 2021. In 2023, in the United States alone, 49,316 people died by suicide.

Caribbean record-keeping is weak. What little exists often reflects only institutionalized patients, but anyone working in schools, clinics, or courts knows the cases are rising.

Social media is part of this picture, particularly for the young. It is near-universal among teens: roughly 95% of 13–17-year-olds use it. Frequent users are more likely to report bullying (in school and online), persistent sadness or hopelessness, and suicide risk. Spending more than three hours a day on social media is associated with roughly double the risk of anxiety and depressive symptoms, and teens now average about 4.8 hours daily online.

In the Caribbean, accurate records are thin, but the pattern is unmistakable. In The Bahamas, a 2023 survey of 1,563 grade-nine students found two-thirds spending 3+ hours/day on social media; 46% had experienced cyberbullying; 62% reported depressed mood; and 48% had seriously considered suicide. Girls reported more cyberbullying (55% vs 37% for boys), and cyberbullying or sexting roughly doubled the odds of depression and suicidal ideation.

Jamaica shows similar strain: UNICEF reports six in ten students have been bullied at some point, and a U-Report poll found about 39% of youth had experienced cyberbullying. However, this data is not comprehensive because the problem is not being tackled fully. The pattern is the same throughout the region.

Climate stress is compounding the problem. The mental pressure of hurricanes does not end with the chaos they wreak before moving on. They leave behind anxiety, grief, and trauma

that surface months later in classrooms, clinics, and workplaces.

Against this backdrop, Antigua and Barbuda has chosen to act. Prime Minister Gaston Browne has kept mental health squarely on the national, hemispheric, and international agenda. At the 55th Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States in June 2025, member states adopted the Resolution, “Addressing the Critical Mental Health Crisis in the Americas.” As Antigua and Barbuda’s Ambassador to the OAS, I advanced this initiative to move the issue from sympathy to structure: a working group open to all states, and a partnership with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to explore a regional fund to address the problem.

The mental health problem is real worldwide and worsening. Wealthy countries have the means to address their domestic needs. The Caribbean must do the same. Resources must be allocated, country by country, based on clear plans and measurable objectives. But first, we must acknowledge the scale of the challenge, stop hiding it in families or locking it away in institutions that were never designed to heal, and commit to care that is close to daily life: in primary clinics, in schools, in communities, and at moments of crisis.

This September, world leaders will meet in New York for the United Nations High-Level Meeting on non-communicable diseases and the promotion of mental health and well-being. The Caribbean should arrive not with rhetoric, but with clear objectives they want to achieve.



World Health Organization

In the margins of that meeting, there will be a private roundtable on “Political action and investment for mental health equity,” organized by the Clinton Global Initiative, co-hosted by Prime Minister Browne and PAHO, to spotlight recent progress and identify practical pathways to accelerate investment. The goal is simple: turn high-level words into financed, measurable delivery.

But the Caribbean should not rely on

external support for addressing its worsening mental health problem. Across the world, nations are confronted with their own challenges. Therefore, the Caribbean should collectively design and finance a roadmap for mental health—owned by CARICOM, budgeted by our governments, and delivered through our clinics, schools, and communities.

Governments should not wait for the outside world to underwrite their na-

tional responsibilities. If we put real policy on paper and real money in our budgets -however limited - then implement a timetable the public can see, partners will come. That is how small states show seriousness: we start with our own resources, prove momentum, and invite the world to match what we are already doing, not to do it for us.

It is in the region’s interest not to depend on handouts to end its critical challenges, including worsening mental health.

(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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AI in education: Understanding CXC's Policy through Digital Literacy



By Andrecia Lewis

Technology and AI have become widespread during the modern digital age. Therefore, it is unsurprising that CXC has outlined plans to integrate AI into its assessment processes, ensuring that students within the region are not left behind. Its inevitability was incontrovertible. The standards and guidelines for the use of Artificial Intelligence in assessments as outlined by the examination body will go into effect for the 2026 CXC administered exams.

The policy's purpose is to establish parameters for the ethical and responsible usage of Artificial intelligence tools. The guidelines state that students are allowed to use these tools to brainstorm, generate ideas,

improve the quality of their work and to produce videos, photos, gifs. However, new content cannot be produced using the artificial intelligence tools.

Additionally, students are required to document the AI platform and prompt used. It is widely recognized that students already utilize AI to complete assessments, and preventing its usage is entirely unrealistic. Therefore, CXC should be commended for seeking to ensure that its integration amongst students is ethical and responsible. The outlined guidelines fall within the domain of digital literacy skills.

In August, a radio panel discussion explored the long-term implications of CXC's AI policy for the Caribbean region. One of the panel-

ists, Ms. Andrecia Lewis; highlighted the correlation between CXC's AI policy and digital literacy. However, the CXC representative present at this panel discussion suggested that propounding digital literacy was not directly relevant to the discussion at hand.

According to UNESCO, digital literacy can be defined as: "the confident and critical use of a full range of digital technologies for information, communication and basic problem-solving in all aspects of life." Furthermore, as outlined by UNESCO, digital technologies refer to "the use of technology to access, share, and produce information and knowledge." AI tools are not simply digital technologies. They are specially classified as emerging digital technologies.

An emerging digital technology, as defined by UNESCO is "the rapid advancements in technology, that are reshaping various aspects of life, particularly in education." As mentioned prior, this is inclusive of AI/Generative AI tools. According to UNESCO, generative AI refers to "artificial intelligence technologies that automatically generate content in response to prompts through natural language conversational interfaces." These various forms of content include texts, images and videos. As outlined by

CXC's guidelines, students will be allowed to utilize generative AI to produce images, gifs and videos and other related content.

To expound even further, the policy states "When using AI, it is expected that users will not manipulate the systems to promote misinformation and conspiracies. For example, knowingly using systems trained with propaganda and using the outputs as truths is forbidden." This emphasizes information literacy. Information literacy is a digital literacy competency. Furthermore, the guidelines specify that all sources must be properly cited and that the work should not be presented as the candidate's original creation. This requirement reflects reproduction literacy, a key component of digital literacy competencies. The policy guidelines in its entirety can be dissected in this manner.

Digital literacy is still often narrowly understood as the ability to operate devices such as laptops or smartphones. However, the ongoing technological revolution has accelerated the pace of innovation, prompting continuous updates to both practices and terminology. Consequently, it is essential that policy makers remain attuned not only to emerging technologies but also to the evolving language that defines them.

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Deaf Awareness Month



Imagine walking into a classroom where hands move faster than your eyes can follow. A place where silence isn't empty but filled with meaning. That's what it feels like inside the School for the Deaf Antigua—a hidden gem in our community that has been shaping lives for decades. Deaf Awareness Month gives us the chance to pause and reflect: How much do we really know about deaf culture? How much do we value the voices that are spoken not with sound, but with hands, faces, and hearts?

In Antigua and Barbuda, the 2011 Population and Housing Census counted 84,816 people. Of that number, 967 individuals reported having some difficulty hearing, 197 reported lots of difficulty, and 46 said they could not hear at all. On paper, those numbers may look small. But what if that “small” number includes your neighbor, your student, or your colleague? What if it's you?

The truth is, deafness and

hearing loss are part of our community, not a side story. The UN reminds us that more than 1.5 billion people worldwide live with hearing loss, and by 2050 nearly 2.5 billion people are projected to have some degree of difficulty. Should Antigua and Barbuda wait until the numbers grow before we take action? Or should we lead the way in showing that inclusion is not just necessary—it is beautiful?

The School for the Deaf Antigua has been a pioneer, but schools don't exist in isolation. They need communities to rally around them. They need employers who are willing to learn basic sign language, churches who open their doors with interpreters, and neighbors who stop assuming silence means inability. Isn't it time we stopped equating sound with intelligence, and listening with understanding?

When we look across the globe, we see deaf leaders and influencers blazing trails. Nyle DiMarco, model and activist, has shown the

world that deafness is not a barrier but a superpower. Creators like @deaf_scientist, @being_her, @burgundre, and @thatdeafamily are flooding social media with stories of resilience, humor, and brilliance. They are proof that deafness is not something to “overcome”—it's a culture to be celebrated. Wouldn't it be incredible if Antigua and Barbuda had our own wave of deaf content creators telling their stories to the world?

The Disabilities and Equal Opportunities Act, passed in 2017, promises protection against discrimination. It promises equal access to education, health care, and employment. But laws are only as strong as the people who breathe life into them. Have we, as a community, truly embraced that Act? Or are we still waiting for “the government” to make it happen? What about us—the churches, the teachers, the employers, the friends?

Do we not all carry some responsibility to create spaces where deaf Antiguan and Barbudans can thrive?

Think about communication. Hearing people often take it for granted that communication is automatic. But what happens when words don't match the ears? Misunderstandings arise, opportunities get missed, and friendships stay shallow. Yet, imagine a different reality—where schools teach all children the basics of sign language, where television broadcasts include interpreters, where businesses see sign language as customer service. Wouldn't that transform the way we interact? Wouldn't that finally mean “inclusion” is more than just a word?

The census also tells us that 1,816 people didn't even state their hearing status back in 2011. What does that say? Could it mean stigma was so strong that peo-



ple didn't want to be identified? Could it mean families didn't know how to answer? If so, then Deaf Awareness Month is about more than awareness—it's about courage. Courage to say, "This is who I am, and I deserve to be heard."

The UN has called disability rights the "unfinished business of human rights." Doesn't that phrase hit home? For Antigua and Barbuda, this means disability is not a side issue; it's central to our democracy, to our nation's growth. A society that silences its deaf members is a society that silences creativity, innovation, and wisdom. Why would we silence that?

In our culture, we love storytelling. We love calypso, carnival, and cricket stories. What if we started making space for deaf stories, too? Imagine a calypso sung with hands, a carnival troupe that dances in sign, or cricket commentary translated into visual rhythms. Fun? Yes. Impossible? Not at all. The question is: Are we ready to imagine?

I can't wait for the day when

Antigua is creating our own

content—videos, podcasts, and platforms—about living and thriving with a disability. I can't wait to see Antiguan deaf creators trending, teaching, and telling the world that we are not just about sun, sand, and sea—we are about inclusion. We are about love. We are about human rights.

So this Deaf Awareness Month, let's move from awareness to action. Let's honor the School for the Deaf Antigua, not just with applause, but with investment, inclusion, and innovation. Let's teach sign lan-

guage, hire deaf workers, and amplify deaf voices. Because when we do, we are not just helping a minority—we are building a stronger, smarter, and more compassionate Antigua and Barbuda.

Joshuanette Francis

Founder and President, Good Humans 268 Inc.

Mobile: +1 (268) 789 GOOD (4663)

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2011 Population and Housing Census – Book of Statistical Tables I Section 6 – Disability and Health (Non Institutional Population)

Table 6.1: Population by Degree of Disability by Type of Disability by Sex

Seeing	Total	Male	Female	Self Care	Total	Male	Female
Total	84,816	40,395	44,421	Total	84,816	40,395	44,421
No difficulty	77,543	37,548	39,995	No difficulty	81,954	38,967	42,987
Yes, some difficulty	4,790	1,646	3,144	Yes, some difficulty	497	235	262
Yes, lots of difficulty	697	245	452	Yes, lots of difficulty	211	79	132
Cannot do at all	114	55	58	Cannot do at all	189	84	106
Don't know/Not stated	1,672	901	771	Don't know/Not stated	1,965	1,031	933

Hearing	Total	Male	Female	Upper Body	Total	Male	Female
Total	84,816	40,395	44,421	Total	84,816	40,395	44,421
No difficulty	81,790	38,928	42,862	No difficulty	82,097	39,056	43,040
Yes, some difficulty	967	403	565	Yes, some difficulty	546	224	322
Yes, lots of difficulty	197	77	120	Yes, lots of difficulty	178	64	114
Cannot do at all	46	24	22	Cannot do at all	64	33	31
Don't know/Not stated	1,816	965	851	Don't know/Not stated	1,931	1,018	914

Walking	Total	Male	Female	Communicating	Total	Male	Female
Total	84,816	40,395	44,421	Total	84,816	40,395	44,421
No difficulty	79,658	38,300	41,358	No difficulty	82,205	39,053	43,151
Yes, some difficulty	2,414	798	1,616	Yes, some difficulty	367	173	194
Yes, lots of difficulty	746	260	486	Yes, lots of difficulty	205	102	103
Cannot do at all	209	88	121	Cannot do at all	71	40	31
Don't know/Not stated	1,789	949	839	Don't know/Not stated	1,969	1,028	941

Remembering	Total	Male	Female
Total	84,816	40,395	44,421
No difficulty	81,215	38,776	42,438
Yes, some difficulty	1,388	504	884
Yes, lots of difficulty	263	95	168
Cannot do at all	48	19	29
Don't know/Not stated	1,902	1,001	901

Regional News

‘Not a victory by default,’ says Holness of JLP’s election win



Prime Minister-designate Dr. Andrew Holness on Wednesday night praised supporters of the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) for the historic third-straight victory which it carved out over the People’s National Party (PNP), telling Labourites that it was not a victory by default, but a hard fought

one.

The JLP secured 34 of the 63 seats in the House of Representatives.

Speaking before jubilant party supporters at Belmont Road Wednesday night, Holness said it was a fight to the winner’s enclosure.

“This was not victory by

default. Make no mistake about it. This was not an easy victory. This was a fight, which took discipline and focus and we ran a decent campaign,” he said.

“There are those who are trying to say to be re-elected, it shouldn’t happen because somehow that is a threat to democracy. Well, today has dispelled that,” Holness further stated, asserting that “the people who voted, the majority spoke, and chose Jamaica.”

This is the first time the JLP is securing a third consecutive term, since it began contesting general elections. Holness also equalled the record of retired former prime minister PJ Patterson, who is the longest serving prime minister to date.

He said the JLP was rewarded for being a performing government that Jamaicans want to continue to deliver a robust economy.

“They have spoken and chosen. Those who may not share their views. They see prosperity in some areas, but they want prosperity to come now to their community...” he stated.

Holness promised to continue to fulfil that promise of a knowledgeable, educated and informed society, where every child can have access to the best quality education.

He said the third term will also be one of renewal within the JLP to attract new people and expose new talent. (Jamaica Gleaner)

SIR LESTER BIRD MEDICAL CENTRE Multidisciplinary Cancer Symposium



Hanybal Yazigi MD
ONCOLOGIST



Cherie Tulloch MD
A&B CHAIR
CERVICAL CANCER
ELIMINATION
PROGRAM



Dr. Jonathan Mekanjuola
UROLOGIST



Dr. Anesa Ahamad
RADIATION
ONCOLOGIST



Samantha Moitt
CHIEF NUTRITION
OFFICER (ANTIGUA
& BARBUDA)

4 OCTOBER 2025 SANDALS
GRANDE
RESORT & SPA

Regional News

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Winair forms new partnership to expand cargo service regionally

Windward Islands Airways (Winair) has announced an alliance with World Cargo Solutions (WCS), a company specializing in cargo management. Specifically, this collaboration aims to enhance air freight services within Sint Maarten and extend its reach across the Caribbean region, said a Winair press release.

It further stated that the partnership leverages Winair's established regional network alongside WCS's extensive expertise in cargo logistics. By integrating their strengths, the two organizations plan to deliver more dependable and efficient cargo solutions, facilitating better connections between island communities and vital international markets.

Hans van de Velde, CEO of Winair, emphasized the significance of this development, stating, "Cargo has always supported our operations, but this partnership allows us to take it a step further. We can now transform our fleet into a high-performing logistics network that empowers local businesses, supports communities, and connects the Caribbean to the world."

The company says that upgraded cargo services are expected to bring several benefits, including:

- Increased frequency and reliability of inter-island freight connections
- Enhanced access to international trade routes through strategic gateways
- Customized logistics solutions designed to meet the specific needs of Caribbean enterprises
- An integrated model combining cargo and passenger services for streamlined operations

Under WCS's Total Cargo Management system, clients will receive comprehensive support throughout the shipping process, including booking, handling, and customs clearance.



Daniel Gengo, Executive Director of WCS, highlighted the broader vision, stating, "Our vision is to support airlines like Winair in offering world-class cargo services that are locally rooted but globally connected. This partnership will open new opportunities for trade and growth in the Caribbean."

In the immediate future, Winair states that it plans to optimize current routes and broaden cargo options between islands. Long-term objectives include establishing regional logistics hubs, supporting the expansion of e-commerce, and extending services into the Americas and other key markets. (Dominica News Online)



Regional News

US and Panama propose new force of 5,550 in Haiti with the power to detain gang suspects

The United States and Panama are urging the UN Security Council to authorize a 5,550-member force with the power to detain gang members in Haiti to help stop the escalating violence.

The two countries outlined their proposal to transform the Kenya-led multinational force now deployed in the Caribbean nation into a much larger force in a draft resolution to the UN Security Council obtained Wednesday by The Associated Press.

The first Kenyans arrived in Haiti in June 2024 and the force was supposed to have 2,500 troops, but it has been plagued by a lack of funding and its current strength is below 1,000.

Gangs have grown in power since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021.

They now control 90% of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and have expanded their activities, including looting, kidnapping, sexual assaults and rape, into the countryside.

Haiti has not had a president since the assassination.

The six-page draft resolution expresses appreciation to Kenya for leading the multinational force but reaffirms Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' finding in February that it hasn't been able to keep pace with the dramatic expansion of the gangs and needed to be scaled up.

Acting US Ambassador



Dorothy Shea had announced on August 28 that the US was seeking UN authorisation for a new Gang Suppression Force.

The draft resolution would authorize UN member nations to transition the mission into such a force in cooperation with Haiti's government for an initial period of 12 months. The force would be able to de-

tain and arrest Haitians.

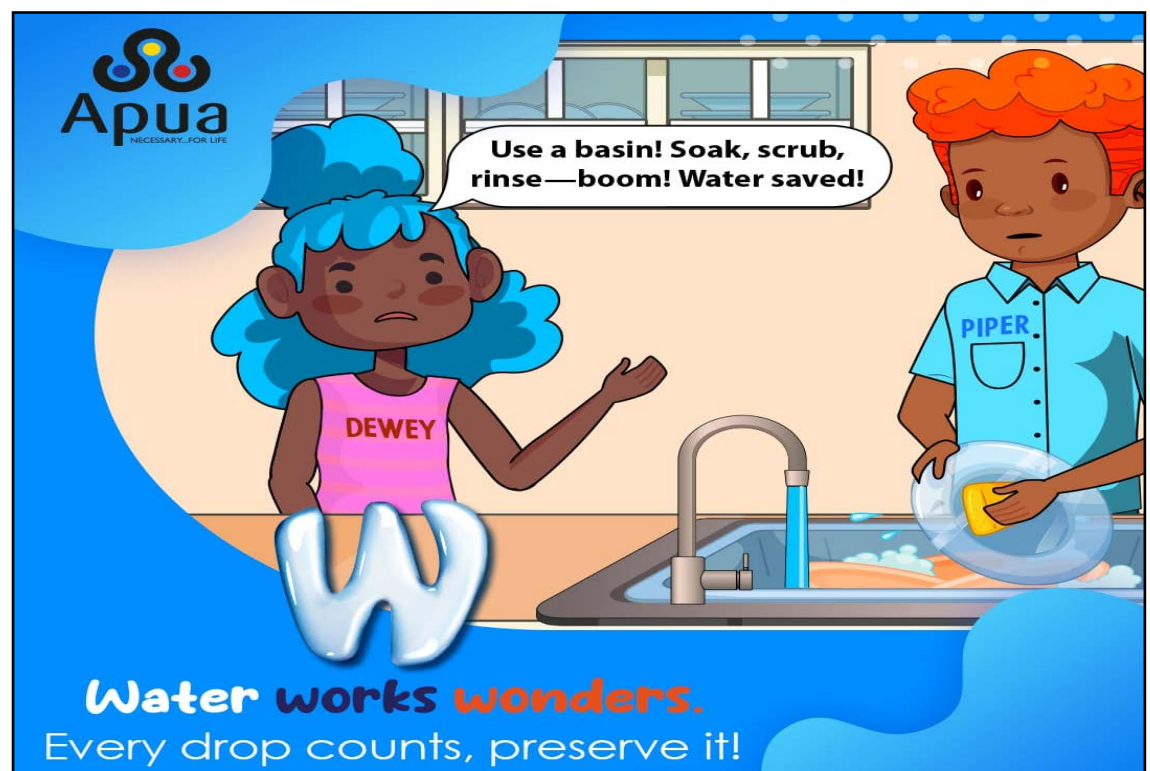
It states that the force would consist of 5,500 uniformed personnel and 50 civilians who would be paid from voluntary contributions. But it does not specify whether Kenya or any other country would contribute troops or police.

The new force would also provide security for criti-

cal infrastructure, including the airport and ports, schools and hospitals, along with the Haitian police and armed forces. And it would support Haitian efforts "to combat illicit trafficking and diversion of arms and related materiel."

The Security Council mandate for the Kenya-led multinational force ends October 2 and council members are expected to vote at the end of the month on the US and Panama draft resolution.

The resolution would authorize participants in the new force to "conduct independent, intelligence-led targeted counter-gang operations to neutralize, isolate, and deter gangs that continue to threaten the civilian population, abuse human rights and undermine Haitian institutions." (AP)



CDB president urges unified action amid growing ‘web of risks’ confronting the Caribbean



The President of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Daniel M. Best, issued a call for the Caribbean region to move away from fragmented approaches and instead adopt comprehensive, cross-sectoral strategies to address what he identifies as the complex network of risks threatening sustainable development in the area.

During the 2nd Wider Caribbean Regional Risk Conference, hosted by CDB, CCRIF SPC—the Caribbean and Central America parametric insurance facility and development insurer—and CAF – Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr. Best emphasized that isolated responses are no longer sufficient.

He stated, “Fragmented responses are no longer viable. We cannot afford to respond to interconnected crises with disconnected strategies.”

He expressed concern that the combination of the climate emergency, economic instability, and social inequality is heightening the Caribbean’s vulnerability. To build resilience, he proposed a framework based on six key pillars: policy coherence, cross-sectoral collaboration, data-driven risk assessment, community participation, innovative financing mechanisms, and regional cooperation.

CDB reported that Best urged national governments to harmonize climate, economic, and social policies so that they support each other rather than conflict. He emphasized the importance of embedding disaster risk re-

duction, climate resilience, and social protection into national budgets, with scalable measures for times of crisis.

He also highlighted the necessity of breaking down institutional barriers, noting, “Ministries of finance, education, health, and environment must come together proactively before a crisis, in everyday planning and policy design.”

The role of data and technology in identifying vulnerabilities was another focal point. Mr. Best underscored that “what we cannot see, we cannot measure, and we therefore cannot solve,” calling for increased investment in geospatial data systems to enhance resource allocation and social protection targeting.

He also stressed the significance of local communities, describing them as “our greatest source of wisdom, resilience, and innovation,” and advocating for the integration of indigenous knowledge and grassroots expertise into policymaking. Regarding financing, he advocated for blended finance models, green bonds, and resilience-linked instruments to attract private sector investments while promoting fairness and justice. Recognizing that risks transcend borders, he called for stronger regional cooperation to pool resources and align policies.

Addressing the Caribbean Development Bank’s commitments, Mr. Best reportedly reaffirmed the institution’s support for its Borrowing Member Countries. He highlighted ongoing initiatives, including Climate Action programs, with 35% of all approvals planned for climate-related projects over the next five years. Within the USD 460 million Special Development Fund, the target is set at 40% for climate resilience projects. The Bank’s expanded Green Climate Fund accreditation now allows it to finance projects up to USD 250 million, facilitat-

ing larger-scale climate interventions and accelerating the region’s energy transition.

On economic resilience, the Bank stated that its new Private Sector Development Strategy aims to improve access to finance for Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), women-led businesses, and export sectors. Innovations like the electronic Port Community System in Barbados are streamlining logistics and enhancing regional competitiveness.

For social inclusion, the company reports efforts include promoting gender equality and inclusive growth through initiatives like the Caribbean Gender Equality Market Sustainability Technical Assistance Project (Caribbean GEMS), the Basic Needs Trust Fund, and advanced poverty assessments that combine data and community participation to better target social support.

Mr. Best also pointed to reforms within the Bank itself to enhance risk management capabilities, including the Exposure Exchange Agreement to expand lending capacity and a new Enterprise Risk Management Framework to embed risk governance across operations. He affirmed that these measures reflect the Bank’s commitment to acting decisively against the pressing challenges faced by the region: “This is the role of your development bank, as a partner in transformation driving a pathway for a future-proofed Caribbean.”

The 2nd Wider Caribbean Regional Risk Conference, scheduled for September 3-4 in St. Philip, Barbados, convened governments, development partners, private sector stakeholders, and civil society to address the increasing interconnected risks confronting the Caribbean. The goal is to develop integrated strategies that bolster resilience and promote sustainable development. (Dominica News Online)

Regional News

Officials underscore importance of bioeconomy in Costa Rica and the region at IICA gathering



The bioeconomy functions as a catalyst for sustainable progress, integrating innovation, scientific expertise, and the responsible management of biological resources.

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), reports that for Costa Rica, along with the broader Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region, this sector is viewed as a strategic avenue for generating employment, revitalizing rural economies, and promoting social inclusion. The Agency also said that the bioeconomy positions these nations as emerging leaders in sustainability and transformative production methods.

In its press release, IICA shared that this consensus was echoed by experts attending “Biohélice 2025: Biotecnología y Bioeconomía en Costa Rica,” an event organized by the National University of Costa Rica (UNA), the

Costa Rican Cluster for Biotechnology, Life Sciences and Medical Devices (CRBiomed), and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

The two-day gathering, held at IICA’s headquarters in San Jose, convened over 130 participants representing government agencies, academic institutions, scientists, bioentrepreneurs, and investors dedicated to advancing Costa Rica’s sustainable development. The goal was to enhance collaborations between scientific research, technological innovation, and sustainable growth strategies.

The opening ceremony was led by notable figures including UNA President Jorge Herrera, IICA Director General Manuel Otero, CRBiomed President Álvaro Peralta, and Marianela Urgellés, Director General of the Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agen-

cy (CINDE).

Herrera highlighted that “Today, innovation and the bioeconomy are pointing the way to the sustainable development of countries. For Costa Rica, the bioeconomy offers a historic opportunity for socioeconomic development”.

He also emphasized that Costa Rica’s reputation for natural beauty and environmental respect positions it well to emerge as a global leader in this sector.

Otero reaffirmed IICA’s dedication to advancing the bioeconomy as a means to transform agriculture and invigorate rural areas. He stressed that this approach fosters job creation, environmental benefits, and new value chains, transforming rural zones into hubs of innovation and opportunity.

“The bioeconomy provides a bridge between production and the environment. We must no longer view it as a threat but rather as a source of enor-

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mous opportunities. We support it and hope that IICA will become the leading expert on the bioeconomy in Latin America, promoting public-private partnerships and technical capacity development throughout the entire region” Otero stated.

Peralta underscored the importance of linking scientific research with practical market applications through stronger ties among academia, industry, and public policymakers. He expressed confidence that Costa Rica has the potential to become a leader in bioeconomy innovation, leveraging its skilled talent and distinctive advantages.

CRBiomed’s president remarked that “The country has the opportunity to become a heavyweight in bioeconomy research, development and innovation. This is not a dream but is completely realistic. Laboratory science can be taken to the market, becoming intellectual property for businesses and creating a powerful innovation ecosystem”.

Urgellés from CINDE highlighted the critical role of cross-sector collaboration in advancing bio-innovation as a driver of sustainable and competi-

tive growth. She praised events like Biohélice for serving as platforms that unite key stakeholders and facilitate ecosystem development.

“Biohélice and its synergies are driving the ecosystem forward with dynamism and based on a shared vision. Costa Rica has the capacity, talent and vision to lead the way towards a sustainable and inclusive bioeconomy”, she asserted.

The event’s agenda was structured into two main sessions: Symbiosis and Bioleaders.

The first day emphasized the integration of bioeconomy principles with scientific leadership. Its focus was on fostering the synergy between science, technology, and societal needs, encouraging academia to scale up innovative solutions. Strengthening partnerships among universities, research centers, and strategic players was also a priority to position knowledge as a key driver of the national bioeconomy.

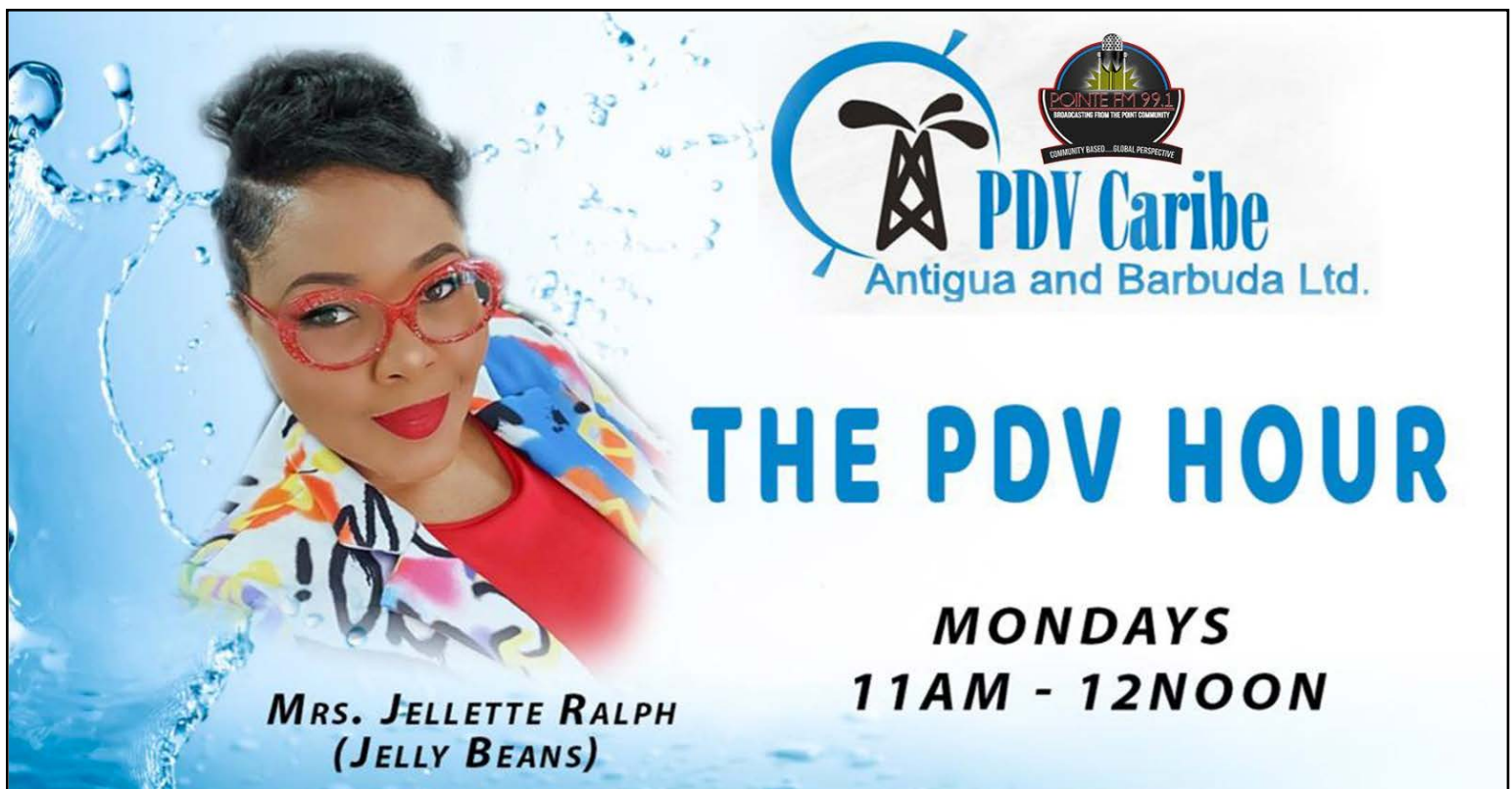
The second day concentrated on multisectoral coordination and fostering public-private partnerships to advance high-impact biotechnologies. Its aim

was to facilitate dialogue among scientists, industry leaders, and investors to identify actionable pathways for translating innovation into sustainable economic growth.

Throughout the event, participants engaged in conferences, panels, workshops, and discussions on a range of topics, including international innovation ecosystems, advances in biocatalysis and bioplastics, and successful global examples in sectors such as biofuels for aviation and cosmetics.

Presentations also covered commercialization strategies for startups and intellectual property management. Expert panels analyzed public policies, investment prospects, and pathways for sustainable production transformation in Costa Rica.

During the conference, UNA and IICA formalized a five-year technical cooperation agreement aimed at fostering regional development in the bioeconomy through academic collaboration, scientific research, educational initiatives, extension services, and regional mobility of people and ideas. (Dominica News Online)



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MONDAYS
11AM - 12NOON

MRS. JELLETTE RALPH
(JELLY BEANS)

Legendary Italian designer Giorgio Armani dies

The Italian fashion designer and billionaire brand owner Giorgio Armani has died at the age of 91.

He was the archetype of Italian style and elegance, reimagining men's and women's suits for a modern audience.

Armani, which began as a fashion company, expanded into beauty, fragrance, music, sport and even luxury hotels, while as a revered businessman, his company brought more than £2bn a year.

Donatella Versace paid tribute to the late designer on her Instagram page, posting a picture of him, saying: "The world lost a giant today, he made history and will be remembered forever."

In a statement on the brand's Instagram page, it said Armani "worked until his final days, dedicating himself to the company, the collections and the many ongoing future projects".

It also said he was "indefatigable to the end" and "driven by relentless curiosity and a deep attention to the present and to people".

The designer was seen as a pioneer in many ways, elevating red carpet fashion to what we see today.

He was also the first designer to ban underweight models from the runway, after the death of model Ana Carolina Reston in 2006 from anorexia nervosa.

Russell Crowe described Armani as a man who "made a mark acknowledged around the globe".



The actor said he "adored" Armani and was meant to be seeing him this month, adding that the designer was there for "so many significant moments in my life".

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni also paid tribute, saying: "With his elegance, sobriety, and creativity, he was able to bring lustre to Italian fashion and inspire the entire world."

"An icon, a tireless worker, a symbol of the best of Italy. Thank you for everything." In a profile in *The Financial Times*, in one of the designer's last interviews, Alexander Fury wrote: "He put women into a uniform of suits just as radical as Chanel's, creating forceful, confident clothing that helped to power the working woman's social revolution of the 1980s."

"By contrast, he relaxed menswear, deconstructing traditional tailoring in a manner that has affected how just about every suit in the world is made."

A friend of Hollywood, he understood the power of publicity and dressed some of its biggest stars for the red carpet including for the

Oscars - including Zendaya, Cate Blanchett and Julia Roberts.

He also designed stage outfits for Lady Gaga and various costumes for films *American Gigolo* and *The Wolf of Wall Street*.

Even as he entered his 10th decade, Armani continued to present new collections on the French and Italian catwalks.

His March 2025 show was designed to make a statement on global politics, with him stating that he "wanted to imagine new harmony" as he believed "that is what we all need".

Concern over his health was first expressed in June this year, when he missed Milan fashion week.

He directed a couture show in Paris in July 2025 but did this remotely from his home in Milan.

Armani was described as a "true gentleman" and "titan of the industry" by *Vogue's* Laura Ingham, who paid tribute to the late designer. She added: "If you don't know anything about fashion, you'll still know Giorgio Armani. Mr. Armani built a house synonymous

with timeless Italian elegance and enduring style". Referencing his classic style, which included "refined silhouettes" and "immaculate tailoring", she concluded that "his legacy is woven not only into fashions past and present but will continue to shape its future for generations to come".

Starting his career in medicine, he moved to fashion in the 1960s and set up his own luxury label in 1975 alongside his late partner Sergio Galeotti.

He faced much criticism during his career, including in 2015 when he said a gay man "does not need to dress homosexual".

His company also reached a financial settlement with Italian tax authorities over offshore subsidiaries in 2014, though no wrongdoing was admitted.

Away from fashion, he was a keen sports fan and supported Serie A football team Inter Milan and owned the Olimpia Milano basketball team.

The fashion brand also had a partnership with the Scuderia Ferrari F1 team, with one of their drivers, Charles Leclerc writing on Instagram that it was "a great honour to have had the chance to meet and work with such an amazing person".

Armani was also presented with the French Legion of Honour and Italian Order of Merit for Labour for his work in fashion. (BBC)

‘Out of control’: Witnesses describe fatal Lisbon funicular crash



It was just after 18:00 on Wednesday when a carriage on Lisbon's famous Gloria funicular careened around the bend of a steep cobblestoned street, crashed into a building, and crumpled, eyewitnesses said.

The carriage “lost control”, descending at full speed and crashing on its side, Helen Chow, who was at the base of the hill, told the BBC.

It sounded like a bomb, she said, followed by “complete scary silence... There was pitch black smoke. Once it dissipated, you saw exactly what happened.”

People were frantic and crying, with others running to help, she described.

“It was awful,” she said. “I am shaken.”

Police are still investigating the cause of the crash, which killed at least 16 people and injured about 20 more, some critically, near Lisbon's Avenida

da Liberdade in the Portuguese capital.

Video verified by the BBC shows the crashed yellow-and-white train against the building on the bend of a hill, with another train stopped at the bottom. People are running up the incline towards the scene of the crash.

The two carriages of the 140-year-old funicular, which runs on electric motors, are attached to a cable that enables one to travel downhill while the other goes uphill, passing each other briefly along the three-minute one-way journey.

Witnesses described how the carriage near the bottom of the hill, which was starting to ascend, crashed a short distance backwards before the upper carriage raced down the incline and into the building.

Just before the crash, Ms Chow, who is originally from Canada but was visiting Lisbon, said she heard a loud

screech.

She saw the bottom carriage fall back a couple of metres, past the white line where it usually halted, and make “a hard stop” at the end of the tracks.

Ms Chow saw black debris and heard people screaming as the driver rushed to open the gates to the entrance.

“People jumped out of the window of that tram,” she said. “Just as this happened, I saw the incident tram crash over into the building next to the Subway restaurant.”

Abel Esteves, a Lisbon resident, was in the lower carriage with nearly 40 people when he saw the other “coming down at a great speed”.

“I shouted to my wife, “we are all going to die here”, because I thought that funicular was coming down to hit ours,” he told the BBC.

Another witness was running to help

International

AROUND THE WORLD



after the lower carriage dropped - before seeing the other coming down "out of control".

"We only had time to escape, turn our backs and run," they told Sic Notícias television channel. "It came down and struck the building at high speed."

Teresa d'Avó said the carriage "hit a building with brutal force and collapsed like a cardboard box," telling TV channel SIC it seemed like it "had no brakes".

Tour guide Marianna Figueiredo was among those who rushed to the scene to try to rescue people.

"I started to climb the hill to help the people but when I got there the only thing I could hear was silence."

Ms Figueiredo said she initially thought the second funicular was empty, but when the roof was pulled off she "started to see the dead bodies".

"We tried to instantly call the ambulances and the firemen to help," she said, adding that the local community, including drivers and shop workers, assisted.

"A lot of people were crying around me. They were very frightened. I was trying to calm down the people - asking their names, where they came from," she said.

She said what she saw is "very difficult to describe".

"It was very bad. A big tragedy."

Some tourists told the BBC they had almost taken the funicular at the time of the crash.

Eric Packer, from the US but visiting Lisbon on holiday, told the BBC he had discussed with his friends taking the cable car and took pictures at 18:00 and 18:01, but decided to walk back to their hotel instead.

They walked about 60 metres and heard a loud crash noise "like a rock falling, like a dump truck had dropped a load of rocks" at 18:02.

They turned around to see dust coming out of the alley about 45 metres behind them and walked back to see what happened. At first, he thought it was the train at the bottom that fell, until he turned and saw the other train that was above it, and realised "the magnitude of what had taken place".

His photograph shows the yellow-and-white train, a tangle of metal, on the corner of the narrow alley under a Subway restaurant sign, with the other train at the bottom of the hill below it.

"People [were] walking up and running up to try and help," he said. "Horrible tragedy and our thoughts and prayers go out to the families and survivors." (BBC)

DAILY PROGRAMMING



EARLY VIBRATIONS 6AM-10AM MON. - FRI.
WITH GREMSTA

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

Judge rebukes the Assemblies of God for failing to turn over records in sex abuse case



This article is part of “Pastors and Prey,” a series investigating sex abuse allegations in the Assemblies of God.

A Texas judge is cracking down on the Assemblies of God for repeatedly failing to turn over documents as part of a lawsuit accusing the Pentecostal denomination of mishandling sex abuse allegations.

At a hearing last month, District Court Judge Lauren Reeder, based in Houston, said the denomination’s national office had been “flagrant” in its failure to comply with her orders to produce records related to alleged abuses by Daniel Savala, a convicted sex offender and former missionary. Pastors in the Assemblies of God’s college ministry, Chi Alpha, hailed Savala for years as “the holiest man alive” and sent hundreds of teens and young adults to his home for spiritual guidance, including after he was convicted

of child sex abuse.

Reeder told lawyers representing the Assemblies of God on Aug. 11 she would order the denomination to pay some of the legal fees of two former Chi Alpha members who sued over alleged abuses by Savala. Reeder also threatened additional sanctions — including holding the church in civil or criminal contempt of court — if it failed to comply with her orders to produce reports, investigations, personnel files and other documents.

“You don’t get to just decide when to start engaging in the discovery process,” Reeder told lawyers representing the church, according to a transcript.

Assemblies of God officials declined to comment on pending litigation. John Sullivan, a Texas lawyer representing the denomination, acknowl-

edged while under oath and being questioned in court that his client had not fully complied with the court’s orders to produce documents, according to the court transcript. Sullivan testified that his client had been hoping to avoid the expense of going through the court’s “incredibly broad request for production.”

The judge’s rebuke comes as the Assemblies of God — which has nearly 3 million members across 13,000 churches in the United States — faces criticism from abuse survivors and whistleblowers over its refusal to release internal investigations into the church’s handling of sex abuse allegations against Savala. These advocates have called on the Assemblies of God to commission an independent review of its handling of sex abuse allegations nationwide to ensure vulnerable church members are protected in the

International

AROUND THE WORLD



future.

In signed statements, lawsuits and criminal filings, at least 10 men and boys have accused Savala of sexually abusing them, many at his Houston home and in his backyard sauna. An NBC News investigation revealed last month that senior Assemblies of God officials were warned repeatedly about the danger Savala posed but failed to cut off his influence, allowing more teens and young men to be abused.

Two of Savala's accusers, identified in court documents as John Doe 1 and John Doe 2, sued the Assemblies of God last year in Houston, alleging that church leaders were negligent in allowing Savala to work with students. In November, Reeder ordered the Assemblies of God to produce documents related to allegations of Savala's misconduct. But nearly 10 months later, the denomination has still failed to do so, court records show.

Anjali Nigam, the lawyer for John Does 1 and 2, said the Assemblies of God's failure to produce documents fits a pattern of denomination leaders stating publicly that they are doing all they can to help Savala's alleged victims while withholding information from her clients in court.

"They say to the public they're letting the facts shine," Nigam said in an interview with NBC News. "In the lawsuit, what they are doing is keeping it in the dark by not producing documents and information the court has ordered them to produce."

Dozens of boys and young men have described how Savala, 69, used scripture to convince them to strip naked in his sauna. Visiting his Houston home became a rite of passage for generations of Chi Alpha students in Texas — even after he pleaded guilty in 2012 to sexually abusing two boys in Alaska in the 1990s. Over the decade that followed, state and national Assemblies of God leaders were warned repeatedly about Savala's presence at Chi Alpha events, according to interviews and emails obtained by NBC

News. But Chi Alpha pastors continued to bring students to him for spiritual guidance.

The former Chi Alpha student identified in the lawsuit as John Doe 2 was one of them. He says Assemblies of God pastors sent him and other students on mission trips to Savala's house to do home repairs for the man they called "Papa Daniel." Savala sexually abused him for two years starting in 2013, according to the lawsuit.

John Doe 1, a blind student who joined Chi Alpha hoping to find purpose and friendship, says Savala groomed and sexually abused him from 2017 to 2022. This included coercing the student to have oral and anal sex with Savala, according to the lawsuit.

Savala's alleged abuses became public in 2023 after survivors spoke out on an online forum created by whistleblowers. He was charged with sexually abusing four boys since 2005, all of whom he met through pastors connected to Chi Alpha. Savala has yet to enter a plea on the charges, and he and his lawyers didn't respond to requests for comment.

Assemblies of God officials addressed the controversy at their biennial meeting last month, pledging to take steps to prevent anything like it from happening again. "We're committed to identifying within our system, within our structures, what's broken, what can be fixed to prevent these kinds of things," said Doug Clay, the denomination's general superintendent.

Do you have a story to share about the Assemblies of God's handling of sex abuse allegations? Email reporter Mike Hixenbaugh.

Donna Barrett, the denomination's general secretary, defended the denomination's refusal to release the findings of an internal investigation by a law firm, because, she said, doing so would violate the privacy of victims and deter others from coming forward.

Nigam said Barrett's comments,

which were reported by NBC News, were the first she'd heard about an internal investigation by the Assemblies of God's national office.

"I do not have that document," Nigam said. "Those documents should have been provided in this litigation, and they have not been."

Reeder, the judge, is expected to decide at a future hearing how much the Assemblies of God will be ordered to pay in legal fees and whether she will impose any additional sanctions. In legal briefs filed last week, Nigam asked the judge to award \$57,000 in legal fees and requested that she further punish the Assemblies of God by instructing jurors at trial that they can infer from the denomination's failure to produce documents that the church knew Savala was a sex predator and "did nothing to stop or warn children and young men from being sent" to him.

The Assemblies of God has said it "took appropriate actions" once it received reports of sexual abuse by Savala.

At the next scheduled hearing on Sept. 29, Reeder will consider whether to impose sanctions against the Assemblies of God district council that oversees the church's affairs in South Texas, which also has failed to comply with orders to produce documents related to Savala, court records show.

Lawyers representing the Assemblies of God South Texas District Council didn't respond to a request for comment.

Nigam said she hopes the court's moves force the denomination to reveal what state and national officials did — or failed to do — in response to allegations about Savala.

"My clients have been wanting to have the truth come out, and that is a real driving force in why they filed this lawsuit," Nigam said. "You can't conceal facts. That's not permitted." (NBC)

Kings outclass Knight Riders in CPL clash



Players of the St. Lucia Kings celebrate after capturing a wicket against the Trinbago Knight Riders in their CPL match at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, Trinidad, on Wednesday, September 3, 2025. (CPL/Getty Images)

The defending champions, St. Lucia Kings, beat Trinbago Knight Riders by seven wickets in their top-of-the-table clash in the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, Trinidad, on Wednesday night.

The Knight Riders were dismissed for 109 in 18.1 overs, and the Kings romped to their emphatic victory over their nearest rivals in the competition by scoring 112 for three with 53 balls remaining to guarantee a place in this year's playoffs.

It was a match to forget for the Knight Riders; after a five-match winning streak,

they suffered only their second defeat of the campaign. They lost it with the bat. After being inserted by Kings captain David Wiese, the Knight Riders spluttered to a total that was never going to be defensible.

The Knight Riders' captain Nicholas Pooran top-scored with 30 off 27 balls, and the next best contributor was Nathan Edwards, who made 17 off 24 balls.

Tabraiz Shamsi did the damage with his fizzing left-arm wrist spin. The South African claimed the Player of the Match award with his three for 12 off four overs, ripping the heart out of the Knight Riders' vaunted

middle order.

Akeal Hosein, Kieron Pollard, and Andre Russell were all clean bowled by Shamsi, with some beautiful, spinning deliveries that left them bamboozled.

Medium pacer Dalano Potgieter snapped up two wickets for six runs, and off-spinner Roston Chase picked up two for 19.

For the Kings, Tim Seifert continued his blistering form at the top of the order to break the back of the chase inside the powerplay. Seifert slammed 36 off 19 deliveries.

Ackeeem Auguste hit 28 off 18 balls, Roston Chase cracked an unbeaten 27

off 18 balls, and Tim David struck 17 not out as the Kings romped to victory in style that also boosted their net run rate.

The win allows the Kings to overtake the Knight Riders on net run rate at the top of the standings, with both teams on 12 points from eight matches.

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons, who are currently in third place with seven points from eight matches, will resume their quest to secure a spot in the playoffs on Friday (today).

The Falcons will take on the Barbados Royals at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown at 7 pm.

Yorke's young T&T squad ready for business



T&T senior men's football team coach Dwight Yorke, second from right, watches on closely during a national team training session at St. Mary's College Ground in St. Clair, Trinidad, on Monday, September 1, 2025. (Photo courtesy of the T&TFA)

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad (CMC) — With a fresh, merit-based squad and a steely resolve to break from the past, Trinidad and Tobago's senior men's team head coach Dwight Yorke declared his side ready for business ahead of their crucial Concacaf World Cup qualifying opener against Curaçao on Friday.

The Soca Warriors will step onto the pitch at the Hasely Crawford Stadium in Mucurapo at 8 pm on September 5 to begin their arduous campaign for a spot in the 2026 World Cup.

The match kicks off a demanding schedule that sees Yorke's troops travel to face Jamaica in Kingston just four days later, followed by October road fixtures against Bermuda and Curaçao, before concluding the group stage at home against the Reggae Boyz on November 13.

Despite fielding a squad with notable inexperience, the former Manchester United superstar expressed unwavering confidence.

"I'm very confident that my players, come Friday night, we'll be ready to

perform at the highest level," Yorke stated.

Addressing concerns about a potential leadership vacuum following the integration of many new faces, Yorke was clear that leadership would be forged in the fire of competition. He believes the entire team will grow and evolve together with each match.

The coach left no room for ambiguity regarding his selection philosophy, marking a definitive break from what he suggested was a complacent culture of the past.

"I think that there's been a trend, a trend usually in Trinidad and Tobago football, that the older players tend to pick themselves, and that's not the case here. There is no curry favours, there is no pat on the back. You've got to earn the right to be in this squad."

He emphasised that his 26-man roster was selected on merit alone, sending a powerful message that reputation holds no weight under his command.

"Whether young or a senior player, you can't take anything for granted. We don't have the luxury to entertain

that in our sport. We're here for business."

That business, according to Yorke, has one ultimate objective, and that is winning Group B to secure an automatic qualification spot for the 2026 World Cup.

The first, and most critical, step towards that goal is securing all three points at home against Curaçao.

"The home games are the most important games," Yorke said, acknowledging the must-win nature of the Friday night's clash.

"We know that in this format, you're going to have to win your home games. Of course, when we play Curaçao at home, we want to win."

Yet, the debutant coach is under no illusions about the challenge ahead, warning fans that nothing will be handed to them.

"By no means is it going to be a walk in the park. You don't have the luxury of an easy game. Every game is really difficult for us."

Tottenham chairman Levy steps down after nearly 25 years



LONDON (Reuters) - Tottenham Hotspur's long-serving executive chairman Daniel Levy is stepping down from his role after nearly 25 years, the Premier League club announced on Thursday.

"This is all part of the club's ambition to ensure that it is set up to deliver long-term sporting success," the London club said in a statement on its website.

Levy, known for his tough negotiating style, has often been a source of frustration for fans who blame him for failing to deliver the players capable of winning regular silverware.

But he has also been responsible for transforming the club with a new stadium and a state-of-the-art training ground.

Last season Tottenham beat Manchester United to win the Europa League, their first trophy since 2008.

"I am incredibly proud of the work I have done together with the executive team and all our employees," Levy said.

"We have built this club into a global heavyweight competing at the highest level."

Tottenham said there were no changes to the ownership or shareholder struc-

ture of the club. Levy took over as chairman from Alan Sugar in February 2001 after ENIC bought a majority stake in the club.

During his time in the role Spurs have won two trophies, the League Cup, and last season's Europa League, albeit after coming 17th in the Premier League - their worst finish.

Following Tottenham's win against United in Bilbao Levy sacked manager Ange Postecoglou and appointed Brentford's Thomas Frank, his 13th full-time managerial appointment.

Peter Charrington takes over in the newly-created

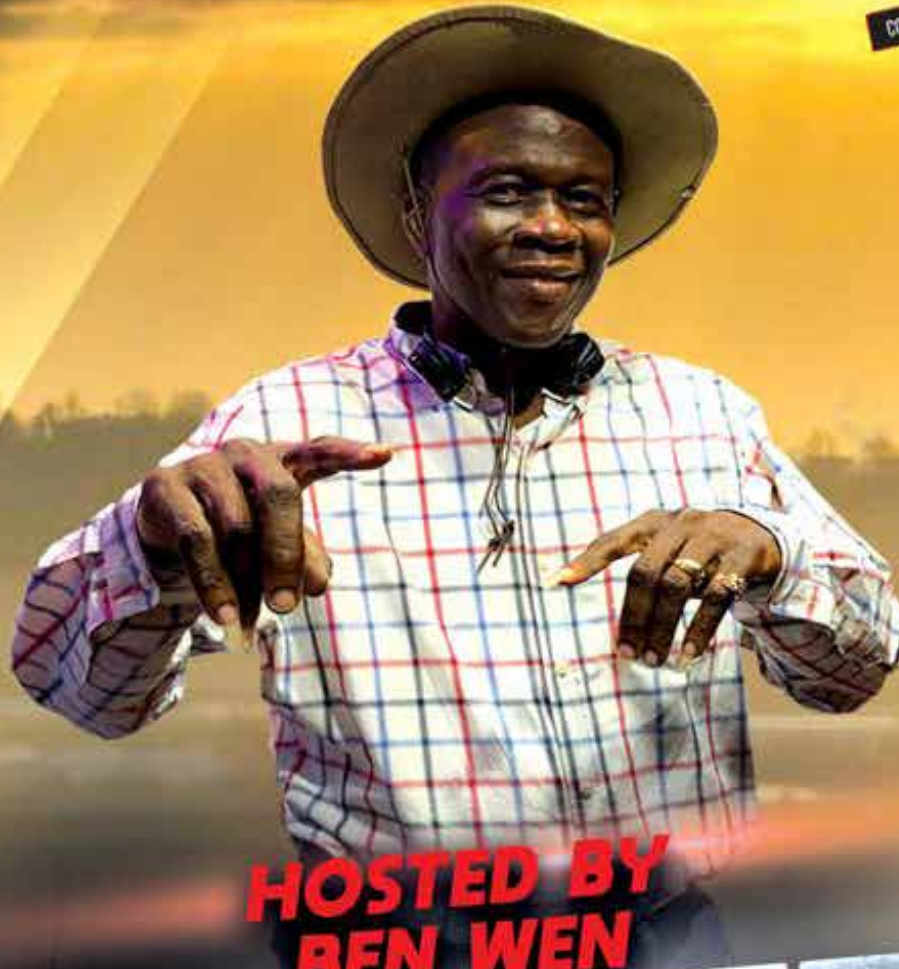
role as non-executive chairman, the club said.

"On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Daniel and his family for their commitment and loyalty to the club over so many years," Charrington said.

"This is a new era of leadership for the club, on and off the pitch. I do recognise there has been a lot of change in recent months as we put in place new foundations for the future.

"We are now fully focused on stability and empowering our talented people across the club, led by (CEO) Vinai (Venkatesham) and his executive team."

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Sinner takes his US Open title defense into the semifinals



Jannik Sinner of Italy returns a shot to Lorenzo Musetti of Italy during the quarterfinal round of the US Open tennis championships in New York, Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2025. (AP)

NEW YORK (AP) — Jannik Sinner returned to the US Open semifinals by beating No. 10 Lorenzo Musetti 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 on Wednesday night in the first all-Italian matchup in a men's major quarterfinal.

The No. 1 seed continued what's been an easy title defense and on Friday will face No. 25 seed Felix Auger-Aliassime, who beat No. 8 Alex de Minaur 4-6, 7-6 (7), 7-5, 7-6 (4).

Sinner is into his fifth straight Grand Slam semifinal and, with a win Friday, would reach the finals of all four majors this year. He has won 26 consecutive matches in majors on hard courts. That includes the past two Australian Open titles along with his triumph in New York a year ago.

"These are very special occasions. Finding myself again in the semis of a Grand Slam, it's a great, great achievement," Sinner said.

He needed just two hours Wednesday — the first set took only 27 minutes — fighting off all seven break points he faced. He has dropped just 38 games in his five matches, the second-fewest by a man to reach the US Open semifinals since 2020.

Sinner, who has won 31 consecutive service games, won 42 of 46 first-serve points (91%).

Musetti was trying to reach his first US Open semifinal after getting that far at the French Open this year and Wimbledon in 2024. But he got off to a horrible start against his Davis Cup

teammate, falling behind 5-0 and winning just nine total points to Sinner's 25 in the first set.

"I never played, honestly, someone who put me on this kind of rush in the rally, and I didn't have many chances on the rally and he was always leading the rally," Musetti said. "So that was kind of a bad feeling."

He started to get more chances against Sinner's serve as the match went on but could never get a break that maybe could have swung things.

"We have to take the friendship away for the match and obviously when we shake hands, it's everything's fine," Sinner said.

Sports

FRIDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 2025



Sub-regional volleyball contests take place in Antigua this month



The Antigua and Barbuda national volleyball team will face Bermuda in another double-header at 11 am against Grenada at 8 pm. Antigua and Barbuda senior men's national volleyball team. (File photo)

Fresh from their last-place finish in their inaugural participation at the 18th Senior Men's Pan American Volleyball Cup in Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico, from August 24 to September 1, the Antigua and Barbuda national team will return to competitive action at home later this month.

The Antiguanians will be among the participating teams when the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association (ABAVA) hosts two Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association (ECVA) competitions 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 and Barbuda, who qualified for the Senior Men's Pan American Cup by winning the Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association's (ECVA) tournament for the past two years, will be among the favourites to win this month's inaugural ECVA Men's Final Four.

The host nation will be joined by the national men's teams of St. Lucia, Grenada, and Dominica to compete for the ECVA Men's Final Four title.

The four teams will engage each other in

round-robin pool play, with the two teams advancing to the final. The tournament will serve off with an opening night double-header on Friday, September 19.

St. Lucia will face Dominica at 6 pm, and host Antigua and Barbuda will launch their campaign against Grenada at 8:30 pm.

The tournament will continue with a double-header on the morning of Saturday, September 20. St. Lucia will tackle Grenada at 9 am, and Antigua and Barbuda will face Dominica at 11 am.

The teams return to the venue later that evening to battle in the final two round-robin matches. Dom-

inica will take on Grenada at 7 pm, and Antigua and Barbuda will clash with St. Lucia at 9 pm.

Team Antigua and Barbuda will also compete in the ECVA Women's Final Four along with the national teams of tournament favourites St. Lucia, Bermuda, and Grenada.

The ECVA Women's Final Four will be contested under the same format as the men's competition.

The four teams will engage each other in round-robin pool play, with the two teams advancing to the final. The women's tournament will serve off with an opening night double-header on Friday, September 26.

St. Lucia will face Bermuda at 6 pm, and host Antigua and Barbuda will launch their campaign against Grenada at 8:30 pm.

The tournament will continue with a double-header on the morning of Saturday, September 27. St. Lucia will tackle Grenada at 9 am, and Antigua and Barbuda will face Bermuda at 11 am.

The teams return to the venue later that evening to battle in the final two round-robin matches. Bermuda will take on Grenada at 7 pm, and Antigua and Barbuda will clash with St. Lucia at 9 pm.