

\$10 Million Payback!

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Local News

\$10 Million Payback!

Cabinet is reporting that at least one car dealership has agreed to repay the government an amount totaling \$10 million arising out of the unauthorized scheme where vehicles were acquired on behalf of the government without proper documentation and authorization.

Cabinet spokesman, Maurice Merchant reported that at Wednesday's meeting of the Cabinet, Prime Minister Gaston Browne led the discussions on the unauthorized purchases of vehicles for the government of Antigua and Barbuda, and the review by the Financial Secretary of information received on such purchases to determine where there have been unauthorized purchases and other irregularities, and to negotiate and settle restitution for any such excesses.

"The Cabinet was advised that the Financial Secretary commenced discussions with the car dealerships and through reconciliation, restitution in the amount of \$10 million dollars was recovered by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda from one car dealership. The Financial Secretary will continue discussions with another car dealership with the intention of negotiating and settling the repayment of revenues lost," Merchant revealed.

Cabinet is also putting in place stronger oversight procedures to ensure that there is no recurrence of these excesses.

According to Merchant the Cabinet also approved the implementation of a new Government Vehicular Policy, which will be rolled out within the next fourteen (14) days. Key provisions of the policy include:

- ▶ Establishment of an Advisory Committee to oversee vehicle allocations and usage
- ▶ Allocation of vehicles based on



the duties of ministries and depart-

ments

- ▶ Vehicles are to be used only for authorized government services
- ▶ Passengers must be on official government business, except in emergencies or with prior authorization
- ▶ Vehicles unsuitable for use, or exceeding five years of service, must be disposed of via public auction
- ▶ All vehicles must be parked at ministry headquarters or designated locations upon completion of daily duties

In relation to the unauthorized purchase of vehicles, Merchant said those vehicles, when identified, will be sold at a public auction as the government seeks to recoup lost revenues.



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All duty-free concessions are to undergo a review

An extensive review of all duty-free concessions offered to companies in Antigua and Barbuda will take place later this year.

That's the word from the highest executive authority in the country, the Cabinet.

"Cabinet has decided that effective November 30th, all Tax Concessions granted to all businesses and entities in Antigua and Barbuda will cease to exist. All businesses and active projects may re-apply to the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda effective 1st December, 2025," spokesman Maurice Merchant stated.

Merchant identified the rationale behind this decision of the Cabinet; Policy Review and Alignment

- The government wants to review existing concessions to ensure they align with current economic priorities, sustainable development goals, and investment strategies.
- It allows Cabinet to reassess which sectors or projects truly need support and which can operate without tax incentives.

Promoting Fair Competition

- As blanket concessions creates uneven advantages for some businesses over others.
- Ending existing concessions and allowing businesses to re-apply ensures a level playing field, where incentives are targeted to projects that bring real economic value, such as employment, innovation, or



real development.

Encouraging Compliance and Accountability

- The need for re-application ensures that businesses and projects meet updated

criteria and adhere to proper regulations.

- It strengthens transparency and accountability in the allocation of tax benefits.

Strategic Economic Planning

- This move gives the government an opportunity to align incentives with long-term national goals, such as green energy, tourism diversification, health and education development.
- This also allows the Cabinet to phase out concessions that no longer serve the country's interests.



Local News

Government to set up robust procedures to monitor all goods entering the country



Maurice Merchant

The fallout over the unauthorized purchase of vehicles for the government has given rise to the strengthening of government's procedures in other areas of its operation.

Coming out of this week's meeting of the Cabinet is an announcement that new news measures are to go into ef-

fect regarding the inspection process for goods imported into the country.

Cabinet spokesman Maurice Merchant indicated that a new layer of oversight; the setting up of a Finance Audit Team is conducting a new system of random checks of containers before they leave the St. John's Harbour.

This move is a direct consequence of the noticeable decline in government revenues from the port and it is designed to plug any leaks in the system.

"Following reports of government observing significant reduction in revenue from the Port and businesses not paying correct duties and taxes on imports, the Cabinet announced last week that it will engage private individuals and the Finance Audit Team to accompany customs officers to randomly inspect containers to ensure that manifested items

comprise the contents of containers and that correct value are assigned to the imports," Merchant stated.

Additionally, the Cabinet has further expanded the team of individuals to carry out spot checks at the port to include law enforcement officers. A special fund will be established to compensate individuals who will be selected randomly from a Register of competent private citizens of good standing to carry out the checks. Individuals listed in the Register will be selected in a fashion similar to the Jury Duty selection process.

The Cabinet has also identified a protected space at the Port Authority where the spot checks on containers will be executed, to be observed by a modern security system during the unpacking.

The Consulate General of the Dominican Republic in Antigua & Barbuda, under the direction of the Honorable Consul Joaquín Díaz, cordially invites the Dominican diaspora to join us for a special meeting on Friday, October 24th at 5:00 p.m.

We will have the participation of Mrs. Katrina Yearwood, Director of Immigration, to discuss important topics related to the Dominican community residing in Antigua & Barbuda.

The event location is included in the image description.



Invitación al Conversatorio con las Autoridades Migratorias

El Consulado de la República Dominicana en Antigua y Barbuda invita a la comunidad dominicana al Conversatorio con las Autoridades Migratorias, un espacio informativo donde se presentarán las iniciativas conjuntas para atender las situaciones migratorias de nuestros compatriotas. Participarán la Directora de Migración Sra. Katrina Yearwood, autoridades locales y el Cónsul General Sr. Joaquín Díaz López, quienes ofrecerán orientación sobre derechos, deberes y procesos de regularización.

Centro Cultural Multiusos
24 de Octubre del 2025 • 17:00
 Carretera Principal de Pery Bay

DEPARTAMENTO DE MIGRACIÓN DE ANTIGUA Y BARBUDA

The Census Office Urges Public Cooperation as 2025 National Census Intensifies

The Census Office is appealing to residents across Antigua and Barbuda for their full cooperation as field activities for the 2025 National Population and Housing Census intensify.

Over the past several weeks, trained census enumerators have been visiting households throughout the island to collect vital data that will help shape national policy, guide development planning, and inform key decisions in areas such as health, education, infrastructure, and other essential sectors.

All official census workers can be easily identified. Enumerators are equipped with:

- ♦ An **official Census ID badge**
- ♦ A **Census 2025-brand-ed vest**
- ♦ A **government-issued letter of authorization**
- ♦ A **digital tablet** for data collection

Residents are reminded that the Census is a national exercise, and their participation and cooperation are critical to its success. All data collected will remain strictly confidential and used only for statistical purposes, in accordance with the Statistics Act of Antigua and Barbuda.

The Census Office advises residents to verify the iden-



tity of any person claiming to be a census worker if necessary. Verification can be done by calling 562-7495, 562-7492, or 462-4770, or by emailing info@statistics.gov.ag.

The 2025 Census will continue over the coming months, with results expected to be released in stages starting in the first quarter of 2026. The Census Office thanks the public for its continued support and cooperation in this important national undertaking.



Antiguans and Barbudans in the tristate celebrate 44th Independence anniversary this Sunday

Members of the Antigua and Barbuda diaspora living in the tri-state area of the United States (New York, New Jersey and Connecticut) will begin the celebrations of the country's 44th anniversary of political Independence this Sunday.

The occasion is the annual Independence Thanksgiving Service, which will this year be held at the Westchester Methodist Church in the Bronx at 4:00 pm and will once again bring together Antiguan and Barbudans for an afternoon of reflection in song and prayers for the many blessings that have fallen on the nation since November 1st, 1981.

A clergy corps made up of Antiguan and Barbudans will lead the worship. Rev. F. Craig Henry of the Little Rock and Shiloh Baptist Churches in Brooklyn will serve as officiant while the sermon will be delivered by Rev. Dr. Lennox Pigott of Grace Wesleyan Church in the Bronx.

Also leading the church with their melodious voices will be the Antigua and Barbuda International Chorale under the direction of Dean Belgrave Pelle of the St. Mary's Anglican Church. The City South Steel Orchestra will be in attendance to render their beautiful medley of patriotic songs that always remind the congregation of the land of their birth.

Meantime, retired Antiguan Minister Rev. Stanley Charity will deliver a special hymn of reflection adding to the atmosphere of reverence and celebration expected to fill the church on Sunday.

Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Walton Webson, is expected to address the congregation of Antiguan and Barbudans on behalf



of Prime Minister Gaston Browne on the theme of this year's Independence **"Solid, Stable, Soaring."**

The service will be streamed live from the church's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/wmcbronx/> and the New York Offices of Antigua and Barbuda invite anyone who cannot be physically in attendance to join on-

line. They also encourage Antiguan and Barbudans who intend to be in the congregation to wear their national attire.

Similarly, thanksgiving services to celebrate Antigua and Barbuda's 44th anniversary of Independence will take place in Philadelphia this Sunday and in Boston on Sunday 2nd November.



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORTS AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

THE DEPARTMENT OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ANNOUNCES THE CHRISTMAS HOME AND BUSINESS LIGHTING COMPETITION 2025:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Wednesday 01st, October 2025 – *St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda.....*
The Department of Creative Industries is pleased to announce the Christmas Home and Business Lighting Competition 2025.

We aim to evoke the spirit of the season through the creative and dazzling lighting display of our 2025 competitors, the Department encourages all interested Home and Business owners to register for the competition on or before Wednesday, December 17, 2025.

Registration Forms are available Mondays to Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Department of Creative Industries Headquarters on Old Parham Road, upstairs INET or the National Festivals Office, 1st Floor Cecil George-John Building, Redcliffe Street and Corn Alley.

Pre-judging will commence on December 20th and 21st December, 2025, while the final displays will be judged on December 28, 2025. Winners will be announced via Good Morning Antigua, Barbuda on Friday, January 5th 2026.

Home entries will be categorized and judged according to the zones – East, West, North, and South. All Home participants will receive a 100% waiver on electricity service for December 15th 2025 to January 15th 2026, Duty-Free concessions on Christmas Lights and or Decorations and a Cash component for the top three winners in each zone as outlined below.

- **First Place - \$ 3,000.00 XCD**
- **Second Place - \$ 2,000.00 XCD**
- **Third Place - \$ 1,000.00 XCD**

Business entries will receive a 50% waiver on electricity service for December 2025, Duty-Free concessions on Christmas Lights and or Decorations and a Cash component for the top three winners as outlined below.

- **First Place - \$ 3,000.00 XCD**
- **Second Place - \$ 2,000.00 XCD**
- **Third Place - \$ 1,000.00 XCD**

Register now to be a part of the joy and splendor of Christmas 2025.

END.

Local News

Antigua and Barbuda Art Week 2025 to Showcase an Impressive Line-Up of Artists

The third edition of Antigua and Barbuda Art Week returns from November 26 – December 2, 2025 featuring over fifty talented artists from Antigua and Barbuda. Promising a burst of ‘Culture in Colour’, the event will showcase the vibrancy and creativity of artists in the twin-islands.

The 2025 edition will feature a line-up of outstanding visual artists to include Heather Doram, Mark Brown, Makō Williams, Emile Hill, Gilly Gobinet, Dina Brozzi Goodenough, Faye Edwards, Stephen Murphy, Carol Gordon-Goodwin, Jan Farara, Dylan Phillips, Guava De Artist, Gilly Gobinet, Nkoye Zifah, Kelly Hull, Glenroy Aaron, Candi Coates, Anfrenette Joseph, Gerron Farquharson, Marc Xavier, Sadiiki Roberts and Dominique Trotman.

Joining the list will be students of the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies - Fine Arts and Creative Studies Department, with an exhibition called ‘Vernacular’, and finalists in the Art Week Student Art Competition.

Visual Artist Stephen Murphy invites residents and visitors to immerse themselves in the week saying, “Come out and experience the incredible works of our local artists, each piece telling a unique story shaped by island life and imagination. Let the art inspire you!”

A special exhibition pop-up for Art Week will be the Barracks Studio in Redcliffe Quay, which will honour the work of late Antiguan and Barbudan artists, preserving their legacy and contribution to the nation’s cultural identity.

“At Barracks Studio expect a powerful retrospective honouring the legacy of fallen Antiguan artists. Step into a moving celebration of vision and voice, featuring the timeless works of E.T. Henry, Frank Walters, Jill Walker, Taylor Hikin, and more. Their art lives



on, come witness the stories they left behind”, says Murphy.

He adds, “In a dedicated room, visitors can explore artwork by local Antiguan and Barbudans, a living dialogue between past and present. It’s a must-see, especially for young people, as it offers a rare opportunity to connect with the nation’s cultural roots. This is more than an exhibition; it’s a journey through time, showing where

we come from and where we are going, from history to now.”

At V. C. Bird International Airport, the ‘Expressions of Art and Fashion’ Exhibition will highlight the work of the top student artists in the Art Week Student Art Competition, as well as other visual artists and fashion designers in the twin-islands.

Galleries and studios across the island to include, The Quay Studio, Margrie



Hunte, Fig Tree Studio Art Gallery, Art House, Rotten Hil Studio Art Gallery, Gunpowder House Art Gallery, Jan Farara Art Gallery, Gilly Gobinet Art, Julees Restaurant's Art and Culture Village, Makö Fine Arts, Zemi Art Gallery, Guava De Art, Goodhumans268 and Studio One and Studio Two at the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies' Dr Alister Francis Campus, will also be showing work.

"This year, we are not only celebrating the creativity that exists here at home but also developing meaningful connections with artists outside of Antigua and Barbuda, creating new opportunities for growth and collaboration",

said Art Week Lead and Marketing Communications Manager at the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, Maria Blackman.

Art Week 2025 audiences can look forward to live performances by musicians, dancers, sip and paint experiences, photography, craft, workshops, a panel discussion and more.

What else is happening for Antigua and Barbuda Art Week this November:

- **Art and Culture Tours:** Guided bus tours for students and adults to art galleries in Antigua. (Nov 28 and Nov 29)
- **Mandalas and Mojitos:** A relaxed

art-and-cocktail evening of painting and sipping at "Local" in Bay Gardens (Nov 28)

- **Rhythm and Vibes:** An evening of vibes, music, dance and spoken word at Hodges Bay Resort and Spa (Nov 28)
- **Canvas and Cocktails:** A sip and paint experience in Heritage Quay presented by Long Bay Brewing and the Antigua Cruise Port along with an artisan market (Nov 29)
- **Brunch with the Arts:** A Sunday brunch featuring local entertainment at Julees, along with Sweet Shades and Flavours ChARTcuterie – a creative and culinary sip and paint experience (Nov 30)
- **Open Studios and Galleries:** Meet the artists in their studios and galleries (view the map here)
- **Art Demonstrations and Workshops:** with Gilly Gobinet, and Good Humans 268.

Art Week features a mix of free and paid events. Event Tickets start as low as EC\$70. The full event schedule, and Hotel Packages starting from US\$259 per night are now available on visitantiguabarbuda.com

Antigua and Barbuda Art Week is presented by the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, The Department of Culture and Long Bay Brewing.



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Rotary Club of Antigua Joins the Global Effort to End Polio

**WORLD
POLIO DAY**
24 OCTOBER



World Polio Day – October 24, 2025

The Rotary Club of Antigua joins millions worldwide in marking World Polio Day 2025, reaffirming Rotary's unwavering commitment to a world free of polio.

Polio, a crippling and potentially deadly infectious disease, once paralyzed hundreds of thousands of children each year. Since Rotary launched the PolioPlus program in 1985, global cases have been reduced by over 99%, with only a few remaining in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This remarkable progress represents one of the most successful global health initiatives in history.

Rotary's contribution to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)—in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation—has surpassed US\$2.1 billion and countless volunteer hours. Every dollar donated to the End Polio Now campaign is matched two-to-one by the Gates Foundation, tripling the impact of contributions from individuals and clubs worldwide.

Locally, the Rotary Club of Antigua, under the leadership of President Elisa Graham, continues to champion this mission through community awareness, fundraising, and education. President Graham emphasized the importance of sustained action:

“Until polio is eradicated everywhere, every child remains at risk. Our message is simple: no child should ever suffer from polio again.”

As part of the local observance, the Rotary Club of Antigua, in collaboration with the Rotaract Club of Antigua, Interact Club of St. Joseph Academy, and Interact Club of Christ the King High School, hosted a Purple4Polio Cardio Kickboxing and Karobics Session. Led by Kreative Fitness, this high-energy event brought together Rotarians, Rotaractors, Interactors, and community members in a vibrant show of unity and fitness for a cause. Proceeds from the session support Rotary's End Polio Now initiative.

World Polio Day reminds us that while the finish line is in sight, vigilance and commitment are essential. Rotary urges all citizens to contribute by donating, advocating, or spreading awareness to help ensure that no child, anywhere, ever faces polio again.



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
**ANNIVERSARY
OF INDEPENDENCE**

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2025 INDEPENDENCE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

25 OCT - 03 NOV

SATURDAY 25 OCT

- **NATIONAL SCHOOLS' PANORAMA**
SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS STADIUM
5:00PM

SUNDAY 26 OCT

- **INDEPENDENCE CHURCH SERVICE**
SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH CREEKSIDE
4:00PM

MONDAY 27-29 OCT

- **NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE
BUSINESS DECOR COMPETITION**

MONDAY 27 OCT

- **NATIONAL HEROES DAY
WREATH LAYING CEREMONY**
HEROES PARK- SIR SYDNEY WALLINGS HIGHWAY
10:00 AM

TUESDAY 28 OCT

- **FESTIVAL OF CHOIRS**
ST. ANTHONY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL
8:00PM



TUESDAY 28 OCT

- **BARBUDA DAY ACTIVITIES (TBC)**

WEDNESDAY 29 OCT

- **SCHOOLS' INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMS**
SCHOOLS ACROSS THE STATE
- **GOLDEN AGE CELEBRATIONS**
VARIOUS COMMUNITIES IN ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
- **THEATRICAL PRESENTATION
"WADADLI ROOTS"**
MULTIPURPOSE CULTURAL CENTRE
7:30PM

THURSDAY 30 OCT

- **NATIONAL YOUTH RALLY** 8:30AM
- **CHEERLEADING COMPETITION** 11:30AM
SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS STADIUM
- **INDEPENDENCE CALYPSO COMPETITION**
JACK IDLE
8:00PM

FRIDAY 31 OCT

- **NATIONAL DRESS DAY**
- **NATIONAL FLAG DAY**

MONDAY 03 NOV

- **INDEPENDENCE FLAG CEREMONY**
BARBUDA
9:00AM
- **NATIONAL FOOD FAIR**
SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS STADIUM
10:00AM UNTIL
- **INDEPENDENCE CEREMONIAL
PARADE & NATIONAL AWARDS**
SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS STADIUM
5:30PM



Commentary

Law, Power, and the Caribbean's Test of Unity – in face of U.S. military action



By Sir Ronald Sanders

Four days after the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government reaffirmed the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, Prime Minister Kamla PersadBissessar of Trinidad and Tobago startled the region with a public statement that CARICOM should “get together” and take some of the “illegal Venezuelans” sheltering in her country, and that the Community should press Caracas to accept two hundred Venezuelans now in Trinidad’s prisons. She went further, saying that if any CARICOM state withdrew support for Trinidad’s foreign-policy ambitions because of her stance, “she did not care.”

The remark appeared to be an exasperated—and sarcastic—response to the joint statement of her CARICOM colleagues: a perhaps intemperate reminder that Trinidad and Tobago bears one of the heaviest per-capita burdens in CARICOM of Venezuelan migration and the trans-Caribbean narcotics trade. It was a sharp politi-

cal riposte that unsettled the harmony of CARICOM’s communiqué of October 18, which sought to reaffirm the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace amid unilateral U.S. military action against alleged narco-traffickers off the coasts of Venezuela and Colombia.

In the Caribbean, small states value regional unity, yet face national pressures that make collaboration with other powers tempting. Many have done so from time to time. Therefore, while the position and tone of Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar’s statement are troubling, every government in the region knows the regular calculus between adhering to regional positions and putting national interest first.

But understanding cannot mean silence when the boundary line is crossed. If the Caribbean’s response to migration, crime, and security becomes a chorus of individual voices – each pitched to its own domestic concerns – then the collective shield that should define CARICOM will splinter. Disunity weakens the strength of the regional collective. No CARICOM state benefits, for none has the capacity to cope in a world where the might of the powerful is continuously imposed.

CARICOM’s survival has always rested on the discipline of acting within international law, never outside it. Cooperation with larger democracies has served the region well when kept squarely within the framework of law. When cooperation with larger partners begins to place their priorities over the region’s, partnership turns into proxy, and sovereignty erodes.

The problem is not that Trinidad and Tobago drew attention to its burden; it

is that the regional discourse slipped from coordination to confrontation. The duty to readmit nationals belongs to the state of origin – in this case, Venezuela. Burden-sharing among CARICOM members is a political choice, not a legal one, and cannot be imposed by rhetoric. To conflate the two is to replace law with leverage.

None of this denies the need for action. Crime, trafficking, and uncontrolled migration are real threats. But security built outside of law inevitably turns inward; lawlessness cannot be disguised as necessity. The October 18 CARICOM statement warned against “security build-ups in the region” that could disturb peace or sovereignty. It was a caution, not a command. The message was that CARICOM states can cooperate with larger partners –indeed they must – but under clear agreements, transparent mandates, and regional consent. That is how a Zone of Peace becomes more than a phrase on paper.

Properly understood, the Zone of Peace limits the reach of power, not the reach of justice. It forbids aggression between states, not the pursuit of traffickers and lawbreakers. Yes, any external lunge at regime change in Venezuela would ripple across the region – law and prudence both counsel restraint. But restraint runs in two directions: Venezuela must also meet its obligations – consular access, travel documents, and the readmission of its own nationals – while CARICOM holds its line on legality and consultation. CARICOM’s partnerships with all bigger countries endure best when they are squarely within law, and CARICOM unity holds when it tolerates legitimate national concerns.

CARICOM’s cohesion has always

Commentary

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contained diversity. Geography, aid, and commerce dictate that some members will align more closely with some external powers than others. That diversity is not betrayal; it is reality. But collective sovereignty - our ability to act as one where it matters - requires tolerance of those national variations without permitting them to unravel the whole.

As I wrote last week: "Governments will have to understand and tolerate why some amongst them, in their national interest, have to be more accommodating of larger powers. They will also have to accept that 'collective sovereignty' cannot be exercised if it invites individual punishment." Trinidad and Tobago's position embodies that tension. The test is whether the Community can absorb it without tearing itself apart. But a necessary condition is that leaders must keep the entrancement of local control at bay; it is unsustainable for small states.

Leaders declared CARICOM a "Community of Sovereign States"; too often, emphasis has fallen on Sovereignty at the expense of Community, accentuating individual weaknesses and deepening external dependence. However, if CARICOM truly wants to keep the Caribbean a Zone of Peace - and it should, because its economies and the well-being of its people depend on it - its members must now commit, more than ever, to regular consultation and to regional positions that account for each other's specific circumstances as well as their regional commitments. CARICOM's strength lies in the willingness of its member states to speak in concert when it counts—and to keep that concert squarely within the law.

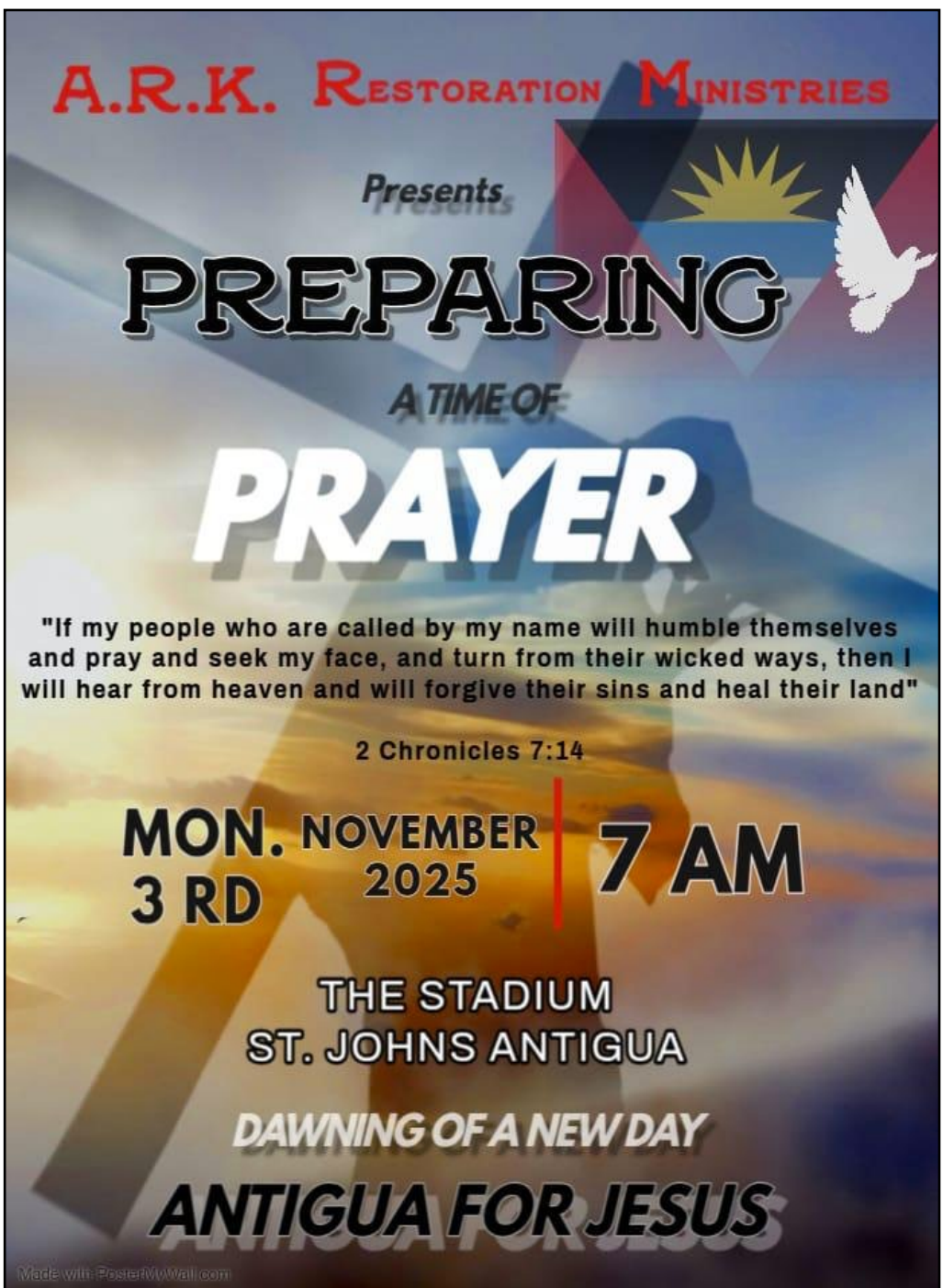
If CARICOM leaders allow the region's security debates to become contests of loyalty - to any external country - they will find that the Zone

of Peace has been outsourced, and the rent is payable in loss of sovereignty.

CARICOM states stand at a crossroads familiar to every small state in a power-driven world. They must cooperate with others in the international community - but within the framework first of the CARICOM Treaty and the UN Charter, and thereafter in the context of the multilateral agreements to which they are signatories, including the Law of the Sea Convention.

Accommodation may be necessary; abdication is not. CARICOM can cooperate with others without surrendering agency. And that is what, collectively, CARICOM states must strive to do.

(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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"If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land"

2 Chronicles 7:14

MON. NOVEMBER 3 RD 2025 | 7 AM

**THE STADIUM
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Seeing the Unseen: Standing with People Living with Invisible Disabilities



Invisible disabilities affect millions of people around the world — and thousands right here in our region. From chronic pain and mental-health conditions to learning differences and neurological disorders, these challenges may not be visible to the eye, but their impact runs deep. During Invisible Disabilities Week 2025, we pause to recognise the courage, resilience, and daily determination of those living with unseen conditions — people who remind us that strength is not always visible.

Invisible disabilities are long-term physical, mental, or neurological conditions that limit a person's movements, senses, or activities but are not immediately apparent. They include illnesses such as lupus, fibromyalgia, chronic-fatigue syndrome, Crohn's disease, diabetes, PTSD, depression, anxiety, autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and many others. Some are episodic, with symptoms that fluctuate; others are constant companions. For those affected, the greatest challenge is often not the illness

itself but the misunderstanding that surrounds it. When pain, exhaustion, or sensory overwhelm cannot be seen, people are sometimes met with disbelief or judgment. Too many hear the phrases, "You don't look sick" or "You seem fine to me." These words, though unintentional, can sting more deeply than the symptoms they describe.

The statistics tell an undeniable story. According to the United Nations, more than 1 billion people — roughly 15 percent of the world's population — live with some form of disability, making this community the world's largest minority group. The World Health Organization reports that over 1.3 billion people experience a significant disability, and as many as 80 percent live in developing countries. While not all of these conditions are invisible, a large portion are. The Invisible Disabilities Association estimates that one in ten Americans lives with an invisible disability. Statistically, that means most of us already know someone — a friend, teacher, colleague, or neighbour — who wakes each day managing a condition that others cannot see. Across the Caribbean and Australia, the picture is similar. Many residents quietly manage chronic illnesses or mental-health conditions while working, raising families, and contributing to so-



ciety. Yet stigma often keeps them silent. In small island communities where "everybody knows everybody," sharing an invisible disability can invite gossip or disbelief. But silence, born of fear, leads to exclusion — and inclusion can only begin when stories are told.

The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has stated: "Everyone has a moral imperative to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities." He has further reminded governments and communities that, "Upholding the rights of persons with disabilities is not only a moral imperative; it is a practical necessity if humankind is to overcome the many existential challenges it faces." These words challenge us to look beyond ramps and eleva-

tors, beyond wheelchairs and white canes. Accessibility must also address invisible realities: flexible work policies, mental-health support, empathetic education systems, and healthcare that validates what cannot be seen on an X-ray.

Imagine the teacher who pushes through severe migraines to finish the school day; the student with dyslexia who stays up late re-reading every assignment; the office worker with chronic fatigue who silently calculates whether to use energy for work or for family; or the young mother managing anxiety while smiling through it all. For each of them, every day requires planning, perseverance, and resilience. Many must constantly weigh when

to disclose their condition and when to stay quiet. Too often, disclosure leads to pity or discrimination rather than understanding. The emotional toll is real — invisibility can be exhausting.

Awareness weeks like this one matter because they invite change on multiple levels: 1. In Workplaces — Employers can offer flexible schedules, remote work, and rest breaks without demanding visible proof of illness. Sensitivity training for managers can transform company culture. 2. In Schools — Teachers can accommodate fluctuating attendance or concentration challenges. Recognising neurodiversity and chronic illness as legitimate learning differences builds inclusion. 3. In Healthcare — Professionals can listen more deeply to patients whose symptoms are not visible, improving diagnosis and treatment while reducing stigma. 4. In Communities — Friends, families, and faith groups can practise empathy: believe people when they share their pain, even when you cannot see it. These shifts, though small, build a foundation for equality.

Both regions have vibrant cultures built on community and connection — but also strong expectations of resilience. “You’ll be fine,” we often say, dismissing quiet suffering. To truly live our values of compassion and respect, we must redefine resilience not as silence but as support. For island nations vulnerable to climate change and economic strain,



inclusion is not a luxury — it is essential. Persons with disabilities, visible or invisible, bring talent and insight vital to national development. Ensuring their participation strengthens the social fabric for all.

This week, and every week: 1. Believe people when they describe their pain or challenges. 2. Learn about invisible disabilities — read, attend seminars, follow advocates. 3. Speak up when you hear dismissive comments. 4. Encourage inclusive practices in your school, workplace, or church. 5. Share posts that promote understanding and compassion. Each small act helps make the invisible visible.

Invisible Disabilities Week is a time to shine light on what the eye cannot see but the heart must recognise. Inclusion is not merely about physical access — it’s about emotional access, belief, and

belonging. As we celebrate this week across the Caribbean, Australia, and beyond, let’s remember: the person

beside you may be fighting a battle you know nothing about. When we choose empathy over assumption, we build communities where everyone — seen or unseen — can thrive. Because not all disabilities are visible, but every person deserves to be seen. **Joshuanette Francis**

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Reparations for Slavery – Reality or Fantasy?



Let's confront the question posed by the title of this article right away. Are reparations for slavery a realistic possibility or just a fantasy? I firmly believe that reparations are a practical, fair, and achievable way to compensate the descendants of Africans in the Caribbean for the atrocities committed by European nations during the transatlantic slave trade and slavery. Many people in Antigua and Barbuda, and in the black world at large, perhaps a majority, believe that reparations are unlikely, a mere dream, and will never happen. Respectfully, and with no intention to offend anyone, those individuals should ask themselves: why should other races and peoples receive reparations for injustices done to them, and not black people? Is the black race considered unequal, such that we are undeserving of an apology and compensation for the injustices we have faced?

The Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Commission (ABRSC) notes that the concept of reparations was never foreign to the thinking of the British, US, and European nations. ABRSC presents the following facts in support of their contention:

- ▶ Germany has paid Israel (the Jews) an estimated 60 billion dollars as reparations for the Holocaust in Nazi Germany during World War II.

- ▶ Japanese Americans received an apology and \$20,000.00 per person from the US for unjust racial discrimination during World War II.
- ▶ The US has made reparations payments of \$1.3 billion to Native American Indians and has provided large areas of reserve.
- ▶ The Allies of World War II (the victors) claimed approximately \$33 billion from Germany after the war.
- ▶ Poland demanded \$284 million and land from Germany for using Poles as slave labor.
- ▶ The Eskimos received \$1.5 billion from the Canadian government and vast areas of land.
- ▶ The Aborigines received large areas of bauxite land from the Australian government and a significant amount of money.
- ▶ The Maoris in New Zealand received \$160 million and a large amount of territory.

So again, why should Afro-Caribbeans not receive appropriate compensation for wrongs committed against them? ABRSC defines reparations as the act of redressing a wrong. It states that the reparations process involves recognizing past injustices, addressing current inequalities, and implementing measures to restore dignity, rights, and opportunities to affected groups. This concept is grounded in the principles of justice, fairness, and reconciliation, which aim to repair social, economic, and psychological damages caused to our communities.

1. The argument is made that reparations for the horrific and murderous treatment meted out during slavery are impossible to quantify, as the sum would be so enormous that no nation could afford it—not even the United States or the United Kingdom. Further-

more, the amounts mentioned in the reparation examples above are paltry compared to what would be required to compensate for the wrongs committed during slavery in the Caribbean. Skeptics should review the Caricom Reparations Commission's (CRC) proposals. These proposals are mainly developmental and can be funded by the offending nations over time using various methods, including in-kind contributions rather than cash. Briefly, Caricom governments have identified ten (10) areas that represent the path toward reconciliation, truth, and justice for the victims and descendants of chattel slavery (where people were treated as property and not human beings), and for indigenous genocide (the intentional killing of the native Tainos/Arawaks and Kalinagos/Caribs). These are:

1. Full and formal apology
2. Indigenous Peoples Development Programme
3. Repatriation to Africa Programme
4. Cultural Rehabilitation Projects
5. Repairing the Public Health Crisis (particularly in hypertension and Type 2 diabetes).
6. Education and Development
7. Enhancement of Historical Knowledge
8. Psychological Rehabilitation
9. The Right to Technology Development
10. Debt cancellation & Monetary Compensation

Therefore, reparations as proposed by the CRC are not about paying cash to today's descendants of slaves. The ten areas mentioned above require detailed analysis, which will be addressed in future articles. However, before that, I need to introduce you to the primary arguments made by European coun-

Commentary

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tries that oppose paying reparations for slavery. Their chief defense is that slavery was legal at the time, similar to the infamous statement from the UN Conference against Racism held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, that “slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity and should always have been so.”

As indicated above, the European enslavers practiced chattel slavery. Chattel slavery is a system where one person is treated as the absolute property, or chattel, of another and can be bought, sold, or traded like livestock or furniture. Enslaved individuals are considered to have no legal rights, and their children are born into the same state of enslavement as property of the master. It can be conclusively shown that chattel slavery has never been legal under international law, and internal laws in colonial territories claiming to legalize slavery were ineffective.

It can be clearly demonstrated that slavery in Africa, until the colonial powers arrived, mainly resulted from captivity during war, punishment for crimes, and debt bondage. It can be convincingly shown that slaves in Africa resembled serfs in medieval Eu-

rope, who were obliged to live on their lord’s land and give homage, labour, and a share of the produce, or even like slaves in Rome, who could own real property (land) and even their own slaves. Additionally, slaves in these times had legal rights. The key point is that slaves in Europe and Africa during medieval times were considered human. They were not dehumanized and regarded as chattel.

The second argument from enslaver European territories is that slavery happened so long ago that everyone involved, including victims and perpetrators, has long since died. They also contend that descendants of enslavers should not be held responsible for their ancestors’ crimes. In English law, this idea is known as laches, a legal doctrine that can bar a claim if the plaintiff delays unreasonably in bringing it and if that delay harms the defendant. Essentially, it is a defense claiming that the claimant waited too long to act, and this delay has made the situation worse for the defendant. The European enslavers argue that the call for reparations has come too late. In fact, there has always been resistance from enslaved people and calls

for reparations. Every effort, before or after Emancipation in 1834/1838, whether through individual or group revolts, aimed at securing reparations.

The Maroon Wars of Jamaica (1728-1740), the King Court uprising in Antigua (1736), the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), the Barbados Riot of 1876, the 1930s Labour Riots across the English-speaking Caribbean, the arguments and philosophies of Pan-Africanists such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey, the Rastafarian strong support for repatriation to Africa, and the Caricom Reparations Commission’s demand for justice all reflect a growing call for reparations and return to Africa to improve people’s economic, developmental, and cultural conditions. The call for reparations occurred during and after slavery. In any case, under English law, a person’s descendants—such as an executor or administrator—can act on their behalf after death. Under English law, the descendants of a person or people can seek compensation for wrongs done to the deceased person(s).

Another argument advanced by colonialist sympathizers, including some from the Black community, is that



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Commentary

African chiefs and kings collaborated during transatlantic slavery. There were many Jews who collaborated with the German Nazis during World War II, but that did not prevent reparations from being paid to the Jews. Throughout history, there have always been individuals who sided with oppressors for money and selfish gain. Some people cannot resist betraying others for profit. The fact that European enslavers beguiled and coerced others into supporting their evil scheme is not a reason to absolve them of paying reparations.

Caribbean historians and researchers are currently documenting the basis of the factual, moral, and legal claim against European enslavers. To this end, slavery and the slave trade were crimes against humanity. One of the more critical UN conferences on racism held in Durban, South Africa in 2001 provided a classic description of the effects of slavery and the slave trade:

We acknowledge that slavery and the slave trade, including the transatlantic slave

trade, were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity not only because of their abhorrent

barbarism but also in terms of their magnitude, organized nature and especially their negation of the essence of the victims, and further acknowledge that slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity and should always have been so...

The modern definition of a crime against humanity is set out in Article 7 of the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. "Crime against humanity" refers to a series of acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack. One of the crimes listed as a crime against humanity is enslavement. For the Rome Statute, "enslavement" means the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over a person and includes the exercise of such power in the course of trafficking in persons, in particular women and children. (This writer abhors the term "right of ownership over a person" suggesting as it does that one human being can own another; the term should be "*claimed* right of ownership..."). UN General Assembly resolution 2391 (XXIII) of November 26, 1968: Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity confirms that there are no statutes of limitations on crimes against humanity.

Reparations for slavery might not happen in my lifetime or yours, but they will come. I am sure of that. There is a growing global movement for reparations. In September 2023, the Government of Ghana held an international reparations conference, themed 'On building a united front to advance the cause of justice and reparations to Africans'. After the Ghana confer-

ence, the African Union announced its theme for 2025 as: "Justice for Africans and people of African descent through reparations." On December 17, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly officially adopted a resolution to establish a second International Decade for People of African Descent, which will run from Jan. 1, 2025, to Dec. 31, 2034. This Second International Decade will focus on 'People of African descent: Recognition, Justice, and Development' and is an opportunity for everyone to take concrete steps to confront the legacies of slavery and colonialism, deliver reparatory justice, and secure full human rights and freedoms for people of African descent worldwide.

We will prevail. This is a reality. Justice for our ancestors!

Dr. Lenworth Johnson

22 October 2025

About Dr. Lenworth W. Johnson:

Dr. Lenworth Johnson is a chartered accountant and an attorney-at-law, as well as a former member of the Senate, the Upper House of Parliament in Antigua and Barbuda. In 2024, he graduated from the University of the West Indies with the degree of Doctor of Education. Dr. Johnson is a member of the Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Commission.



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Mavado's son Dantay Brooks facing assault, weapon charges



Dantay Brooks, the son of dancehall superstar Mavado, has once again found himself in trouble with the law.

Observer Online understands that the junior Brooks is now facing charges of unlawful wounding and assault at common law.

According to police sources, charges were laid against Brooks on Wednesday. In addition to wounding and assault charges, the entertainer's son is also facing charges of possession of a prohibited weapon and using a prohibited weapon to commit a scheduled offence.

The police said the new charges stem from a July incident in Mavado's hometown of Cassava Piece. Specific details related to the matter were not revealed, however it is understood

that Brooks is also being investigated on a gun related charge.

This is the second time official charges have been laid against Brooks who was freed in March after his 2021 murder conviction was overturned by the Court of Appeal. At the time, the then 18-year-old Brooks was sentenced to life imprisonment for the 2018 killing of Lorenzo Thomas in Cassava Piece. His co-accused, Andre Hinds, was also freed.

The Brooks family was reunited last week after Mavado returned to Jamaica for the first time in almost a decade. This after a 2018 warrant for his arrest was vacated recently. He had been wanted for assault occasioning actual bodily harm. (Jamaica Observer)

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Regional News

Jamaican Ammoya Patrick wins Best Diplomat award at UN conference

There is a famous saying that goes: “a diplomat is a person who can tell you to go to hell in such a way that you actually look forward to the trip”.

While Jamaican business investor and aspiring diplomat Ammoya Patrick may not agree with this dour assessment, she remains a firm believer in the power of diplomacy.

She has an intense passion for international relations and diplomacy, all of which led her to serve as a political coordinator and most recently, to represent Barbados at the Best Diplomats United Nations Simulation Conference in the United States. The all-conquering Ms Patrick copped the Most Outstanding Diplomat Award.

The event took place on October 16, 2025.

“My biggest takeaway from the event was a combination of learning how to handle diplomacy and gaining a richer understanding of the Caribbean and Caricom through a Barbadian lens,” she said.

She emerged victorious out of a pool of 70 competitors representing over 38 countries.

“Both cases had me deeply invested in representing how business for peace was and can be handled when linked with the sustainable development goals 16, 8 and 10,” she explained.

The SDG 16 promotes peace, justice, and strong institutions; SDG 8 focuses on decent work and economic growth; and SDG 10 aims to reduce inequality.

“I am deeply honored to have been recognized as the Most Outstanding Diplomat. This award holds significant meaning for me, as it not only reflects my dedication to the field but also reinforces my commitment to pursuing a career in international relations and diplomacy,” she said.



She hopes that this recognition “will open doors and create meaningful opportunities to serve my country”.

She represented Barbados and not Jamaica because she entered the contest too late.

“While I am deeply proud of my Jamaican heritage, I was equally excited by the opportunity to represent Barbados; another Caribbean nation with which we share strong historical, cultural, and regional ties,” Patrick said.

She noted the similarities between the two Caricom countries.

“Our nations are deeply interconnected, not just by geography, but by shared struggles, values, and goals within the wider Caribbean Community. Representing Barbados allowed me to explore these connections further and gain deeper insight into the unique contributions and perspectives of our sister nation. Ultimately, I saw this not as choosing one over the other, but as embracing the unity and diversity of the Caribbean as a whole, something that is crucial in international diplomacy,” Patrick said.

Patrick is a highly driven professional, investment enthusiast, and business owner.

Her leadership journey began early, winning debate and poetry competitions in school and later serving on student councils. She is committed to service and development, often volunteering and taking initiative in various academic and professional settings.

In her spare time, she conducts research, drafts investment proposals, diplomatic correspondences, and speeches, and writes poetry.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica on November 6, 1995, she now has over a decade of experience in the financial industry; spanning operations, accounting, and investment advisory.

She holds a BSc in International Relations from the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean and is currently pursuing an MSc in Development Studies with a concentration in Governance and Public Policy at the University of the West Indies.

Patrick’s career began after earning a diploma in General Accounting from Stony Hill HEART Academy, which led to an internship with the Ministry of National Security’s Internal Audit Unit. In 2016, she joined Mayberry Investment Limited, rising from Junior Accountant to licensed Investment Advisor. While continuing to connect and engage in investment education independently, she expanded into insurance operations as a client service representative at Sagicor Life Jamaica.

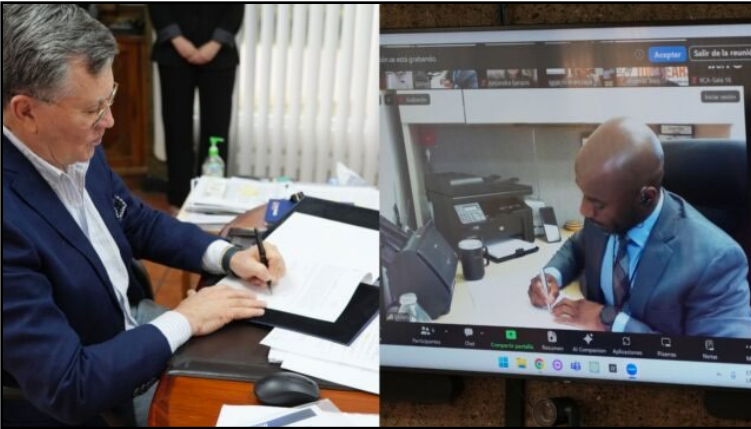
She continues to pursue excellence in both diplomacy and finance, with a vision to serve as a diplomat for Jamaica and the wider Caribbean and the world at large.

She is determined to live her life by the mantra inspired by a famous quote from Oprah Winfrey- “You become what you believe”.

“I know I can become anything I want to be,” she said. (Jamaica Observer)

Regional News

The International Seed Testing Association and IICA collaborate to upgrade seed testing and certification in region



The International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) have entered into a formal partnership designed to enhance seed quality testing laboratories and bolster seed certification systems across the Americas.

This collaboration will focus on exchanging technical

expertise, providing training for personnel, adopting standardized seed analysis procedures, and strengthening the capacity of certification and quality assurance organizations.

In a statement, ISTA President Ernest Allen highlighted the significance of the agreement, saying, “This document is a bridge between our two organiza-

tions. We know that from a small seed, great things can grow. Today we are planting this partnership with every expectation that it will grow into a robust collaboration that will bear fruit for all 34 IICA Member States.” He emphasized that the agreement creates a structured pathway to keep the region at the cutting edge of scientific and technological advancements.

IICA Director General Manuel Otero underscored the critical role of seeds in driving modernization and ensuring food security throughout the Americas. He pointed out the necessity for tangible actions, saying, “We must have a clear roadmap and identify actions to demonstrate to the entire hemisphere that we

are working to improve people’s quality of life.”

According to IICA, partnership aims to facilitate joint technical support and training initiatives, promote regional projects that encourage technological innovation, and enable countries in the Americas to participate more actively in international seed trade and certification processes.

Through this alliance, IICA stated that both organizations seek to make the agricultural sector in the Americas more competitive by implementing science-based, internationally accepted standards for seed quality analysis. (Dominica News Online)



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Brazil's Lula says he will seek a fourth term in 2026 elections



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who turns 80 next week, confirmed Thursday he will run for a fourth term in office in 2026 elections.

"I'm about to turn 80 years old, but you can be sure I have the same energy I had when I was 30. And I will run for a fourth term in Brazil," Lula said at a joint press conference with his Indonesian counterpart Prabowo Subianto in Jakarta.

Lula is on a state visit to Indonesia as he seeks to expand ties in a country Brazil sees as a fellow rising economic power with similar perspectives on global issues.

"I'm telling you this because we're still going to see each other many times," Lula told Subianto.

Lula had hinted in recent months at a fourth-term run, without confirming he would be a candidate.

In December, he underwent emergency surgery to stop a brain bleed linked to a bad fall two months prior.

Lula served as president for two terms between 2003 and 2010, but the man who rose from poverty to become an icon of the Latin American left had a dramatic fall from grace when he was imprisoned for corruption in 2018.

However, the controversial case was overturned and he made a spectacular comeback in a bitter 2022 election that deeply divided Brazil, with a narrow victory over right-wing incumbent Jair Bolsonaro.

That election sparked a political crisis that still resonates today: Bolsonaro was sentenced to 27 years in prison for a botched coup attempt in the wake of his election loss.

Brazil's Supreme Court on Wednesday published his sentence, a step which gives Bolsonaro's lawyers a five-day deadline to appeal the sentence.

With Bolsonaro under house arrest and out of the running, Brazil's sizable conservative electorate is currently without a champion for next year's election. (AFP)



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Nigerian military says 50 jihadists killed in army base raids



Nigeria's military said on Thursday it had killed 50 jihadists using drones to carry out multiple attacks on army bases in the volatile northeast.

The authorities in Africa's most populous country and one of its powerhouses, have been fighting the Boko Haram jihadist group and its Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) splinter for 16 years.

The groups are seeking to establish a caliphate in the northeast.

In the early hours of Thursday, troops aided by fighter jets engaged insurgents who had launched coordinated attacks on bases in the towns of Dikwa, Mafa and Gajibo in Borno state as well as in Katarko in neighbouring Yobe state, a military spokesman said in a statement.

The military did not say which faction was behind the attacks but intelligence sources told AFP that ISWAP militants were responsible.

"The combined ground and air efforts resulted in the neutralisation of over 50 terrorists across all the locations," Lieutenant Colonel Sani Uba, a military spokesman in the northwest said in the statement.

He said several soldiers were wound-

ed in the fighting, without giving numbers.

"Some vehicles and buildings were also gutted by fire from the terrorists' armed drones and RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) fire during the battle, especially in Mafa and Dikwa, where a

part of the defences were momentarily breached," he said.

Armed insurgents are increasingly using drones, often commercial models modified to drop bombs or grenades.

A resident in Mafa showed AFP videos and pictures from the area showing the charred carcasses of several trucks and said the militants had set them ablaze during the attack.

Mafa locals said the trucks were mostly laden with cement heading to Chad whose drivers had parked for the night for fear of militant attacks on the highway.

The conflict has killed more than 40,000 and displaced around two million in northeastern Nigeria.

It has spilt over into neighbouring countries, prompting the creation of a regional military coalition to combat the Islamist groups. (AFP)



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Trump says Putin talks 'don't go anywhere' as he imposes new sanctions



The US has announced new sanctions targeting Russia's two largest oil companies in an effort to pressure Moscow to negotiate a peace deal in Ukraine. The announcement came one day after US President Donald Trump said a planned meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Budapest would be shelved indefinitely. "Every time I speak to Vladimir, I have good conversations and then they don't go anywhere," Trump said. While the economic impact to Russia is likely to be minimal, it represents a major shift in Trump's foreign policy, having previously said he would not impose sanctions until European nations ceased buying Russian oil. The Kremlin said Russia was "immune" to the sanctions. The development came just days after

the UK sanctioned the same two Russian oil companies, Rosneft and Lukoil. European Union countries have also issued their own new sanctions that ban the import of Russian liquefied natural gas from January 2027. Trump had repeatedly threatened tougher US measures against Moscow, but has avoided them until now in hopes of brokering a peace deal in the three-and-a-half year long invasion. His administration has sought to cast the US as a somewhat neutral mediator between the two warring nations, after years of full-throated support for Ukraine from his predecessor, Joe Biden. But the US president has grown increasingly exasperated with the Kremlin over its failure to move forward with negotiations.

The sanctions are also something Ukraine's leader, Volodymyr Zelensky, has been urging for months. He said they were a "good signal" from the US, adding that a ceasefire was possible if other nations applied more pressure on Russia.

On Wednesday, Trump criticised Putin for not being serious about making peace and said that he hoped that the sanctions would force a breakthrough. "I just felt it was time. We waited a long time," he said.

He called the sanctions package "tremendous", adding that he hoped they could be swiftly withdrawn if Russia agreed to stop the war.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the sanctions were needed due to "Putin's refusal to end this senseless war".

He said the affected oil companies - Rosneft and Lukoil - funded the Kremlin's "war machine".

Oil and gas are Russia's biggest exports. The two Russian oil firms export 3.1 million barrels of oil per day. Rosneft is responsible for nearly half of all Russian oil production, which makes up 6% of the global output, according to UK government estimates.

Moscow's biggest customers include China, India and Turkey. Trump has also urged these countries to halt purchases of Russian oil in a bid to put economic pressure on the Kremlin.

India is poised to sharply reduce Russian oil imports in light of Trump's



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announcement, news agency Reuters reports, citing unnamed industry sources. China has said it opposes the US sanctions.

Ukraine has in recent months targeted Russian oil refineries and energy infrastructure in an attempt to hurt its economy.

Zelensky had visited the White House on Friday, seeking to acquire long-range Tomahawk missiles that could strike deep into Russian territory, but came away empty-handed.

The day before, Trump had announced the proposal to meet Putin in Hungary after an unscheduled call from the Russian leader.

But following a call between US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, the idea was put on hold, with Trump saying he didn't want a "wasted meeting".

Trump later said he had refused to give Ukraine the missiles as they were "highly complex" and took a year of intense training to use. Zelensky appeared to suggest that, like with the sanctions, Trump may change his mind in the future.

Fighting on the ground continued overnight, with strikes on Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, killing at least two people, officials said.

Earlier on Wednesday, Russia unleashed an intense bombardment that killed at least seven people in Ukraine, including children.

Meanwhile, power was restored to the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant on Thursday, in what the UN's atomic watchdog called "a crucial step for nuclear safety and security". It had been without electricity for 30 days, leading to fears of a meltdown.

Last week, the UK slapped a similar sanctions package on Rosneft and Lukoil, with Chancellor Rachel Reeves stating that "there is no place for Russian oil on global markets".

Russia's embassy in London said targeting its country's major energy companies would disrupt global fuel supplies and drive up costs worldwide.

It added: "Pressure only complicates peaceful dialogue and leads to further escalation."

Europe's reliance on Russian oil and gas has fallen dramatically since the start of Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, but Russian gas still accounts for 13% of EU imports - though the bloc has pledged to phase it out completely.

Trump had previously said he would only impose further sanctions on Moscow if Europe completely stopped buying Russian energy.

EU Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen praised a new sanctions package approved by the EU on Wednesday, which includes a ban on Russian liquefied natural gas imports by 2028.

She said this, along with the US sanctions, were "a clear signal from both sides of the Atlantic that we will keep up collective pressure on the aggressor".

Earlier this year, the UK and US also sanctioned major Russian energy companies Gazprom Neft and Surgutneft-

egas.

Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte was at the White House when the sanctions were announced, and praised the move for "putting more pressure" on Putin.

He was expected to discuss a 12-point plan formulated by European allies and Kyiv that would see the current front lines frozen, a return of deported children as well as a prisoner exchange.

The plan also includes a war recovery fund for Ukraine, as well as security guarantees and a clear pathway for Ukraine to join the EU.

Trump has indicated that a key sticking point has been Moscow's refusal to cease fighting along the current front line - something Zelensky is in favour of.

Russia has pushed back against that idea, with Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov indicating Russia had not changed its position of wanting Ukrainian troops to leave the parts of the eastern Donbas region Kyiv still controls. (BBC)



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Sports News

Pares get first win in Schools' U-14 Boys Division League

Pares Secondary snatched their first win in the Under-14 Boys Division of the Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth, and Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup Secondary Schools' Football Competition on Wednesday.

After suffering losses in their first two matches, Pares Secondary rebounded to snatch a one-nil victory against St. Mary's Secondary School in the first game of a double-header at the Mock Pond playing field in All Saints. Jervaghn Freeland scored the only goal of the match in the second minute.

It was the second defeat for St. Mary's Secondary School after battling to a 2-2 draw with Jennings Secondary in their opening encounter.

But the second game at Mock Pond between All Saints Secondary and defending champions Antigua Grammar School ended prematurely.

Both teams were deadlocked at 0-0 when an incident early in the first half caused the referee to bring an abrupt end to the match. All Saints Secondary had lost their previous two matches in the competition.

The Antigua Grammar School won their previous two matches in defense of their Under-14 Boys Division league title.

After launching their campaign with a 6-0 drubbing of Sir Novelle Richards Academy, Antigua Grammar School claimed their second win by snatching a 1-0 victory against Pares Secondary.

After losing their opening encounter, the Sir Novelle Richards Academy



Nafisa Quashie of AGHS

my recorded their second win in three matches by snatching a 2-1 victory against Ottos Comprehensive School at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

The goals for Sir Novelle Richards Academy were scored by Karique Martin in the second minute and Xaden Cabey in the third minute.

Levi Roberts had a 33rd-minute conversion for Ottos Comprehensive School, who was playing their first match in this year's competition.

But last year's third-place finishers, Princess Margaret School, continued their winning start in the under-14 boys league.

After coasting to a 3-0 victory against Pares Secondary and a 7-0 drubbing of St. Mary's Secondary School, Princess Margaret School notched up their third consecutive win with a 2-0 victory against last year's second-place finishers, Clare Hall Secondary School, at the Clare Hall playing field.

Colin Wright had a seventh-minute conversion, and Alan Henry scored in the 27th minute for Princess Margaret School as Clare Hall Secondary crashed to their second defeat in as many games.

Meanwhile, Antigua Girls High School (AGHS) made an impressive start to their campaign in the Under-20 Girls Division of the Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth, and Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup Secondary Schools' Football Competition on Wednesday.

Nafisa Quashie scored six goals to lead Antigua Girls High School to an 8-1 drubbing of Clare Hall Secondary at the Clare Hall playing field in their opening match of this year's competition.

Quashie had conversions in the second, fourth, 24th, 26th, 38th, and 48th minutes, and the other goals for Antigua Girls High School were scored by Na'jreh Wijndaldu in the seventh minute and Blessings Creese in the 18th minute.

Jonica Matthias scored a consolation goal in the 16th minute for Clare Hall Secondary School.



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More success for Ministry of Agriculture in Business Football League

Runners-up in last year's contest, the Ministry of Agriculture, continued their successful run in the 2025 JOMA Caribbean Ministry of Sports Business Football League Championship during the latest round of rescheduled matches.

The Ministry of Agriculture consolidated their position at the top of Group 2 with a 5-0 drubbing of Jolly Harbour Stingers at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

Tyrique Tonge scored twice, and the other goals were scored by Ruben Reubel, Clive Sansculotte, and Daniel Bryan.

The result allows the Ministry of Agriculture to remain at the top of Group 2 by advancing to 13 points after securing their fourth win in six matches, while Jolly Harbour Stingers stay second from the bottom of the standings with two points after crashing to their third loss in five games.

The University of the West Indies (UWI) Frigate Bird FC claimed their second win in four matches by soaring to a 2-0 victory over bottom team Hodges Bay in their Group 2 affair at the same venue.

The result carried UWI Frigate Bird FC to seven points, and Hodges Bay remained in the cellar with one point after suffering their third loss in four matches.

His Majesty's Prison



The Ministry of Agriculture football team

(HMP) United stormed to the top of Group 3 with a 3-1 victory over Royalton Chic at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

Royalton Chic's Amiel Greenaway scored in the 15th minute, but HMP United roared back in style as Jeffel George equalized with a powerful strike in the 20th minute.

Misfortune struck Royalton Chic when Shamir Flormias inadvertently turned the ball into his own net in the 31st minute, and Jermaine Thomas sealed the win for HMP United by scoring the team's third goal in the 45th minute.

The result allows HMP United to leapfrog Postal Services into the top spot in Group 3 by advancing to 12 points after claiming their fourth win in five matches.

Royalton Chic remains on seven points after slumping

to their second loss in five matches.

Chapa Warriors stay third in Group 3 by advancing to 10 points after securing their third win in four matches with a 3-0 victory against Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority at the Golden Grove playing field.

The Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority remains third from the bottom of the Group 3 standings with five points after crashing to their second loss in five matches.

APUA Head Office jumped from fifth to second place in Group 1 with a 4-0 victory against Blue Waters Hotel at Radio Range.

Njre Buckley scored in the 33rd minute. Nadre Thomas followed up with a dazzling brace in the 39th and 42nd minutes, before Jeremiah Nivile sealed the rout with a tidy finish in the 57th minute.

The result carries APUA Head Office to nine points after claiming their third win in four matches, while Blue Waters Hotel slipped from third to fourth place on seven points after suffering their first defeat in four games.

After losing their previous two matches, AS Bryden Green Acres claimed their first win after being awarded a 3-0 victory via default against APCMOL, who failed to show up for their Group 4 encounter at Radio Range.

The result allows AS Bryden Green Acres to jump out of the cellar to third from the bottom of the Group 4 standings with three points from three matches.

APCMOL dropped into the cellar with one point after suffering their third loss in four matches.

Sports News

Richie's Shooterz among winners in Business Basketball League

Third-place finishers for the past two seasons, Richie's Shooterz, were among the winners in the 2025 Cool and Smooth Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Business League championships on Wednesday night.

Richie's Shooterz claimed their sixth win in nine games with a commanding 105-67 victory against J&J Company Landscaping Services at the JSC Sports Complex.

Devorn Benjamin produced 36 points and four assists; Tajahron Davis contributed 26 points, 11 rebounds, six assists, and four steals; Darnell Azille chipped in with 14 points, 37 rebounds, and six assists; and Jaheem James scored 12 points for Richie's Shooterz.

Dwayne Samuel shot a game-high 37 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for J&J Company Landscaping Services, who crashed to their eighth loss in nine games.

Cornerstone Builders and Maintenance

notched up their sixth win in 10 games by snatching a narrow 60-58 victory against the Sledge O Ballers.

Raheem Sawyer shot a game-high 21 points, and Yohan Nicholas converted 19 points and grabbed nine rebounds for Cornerstone Builders and Maintenance.

Bernard Andrew converted 19 points and grabbed 19 rebounds, and Leroy Percival scored 13 points for the Sledge O Ballers, who slumped to their sixth loss in 10 matches.

Fearless Security Services recorded their second win in 11 games by prevailing 48-46 against Police in a bottom-of-the-table clash.

Shaquille Kelly sank 11 points and snatched 16 rebounds, and Beniah Mark scored 11 points for Fearless Security Services.

Julian Henry converted 16 points, and Javon Simon scored 15 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for the Police, who remain in the cellar after suffering

their 12th loss in as many games.

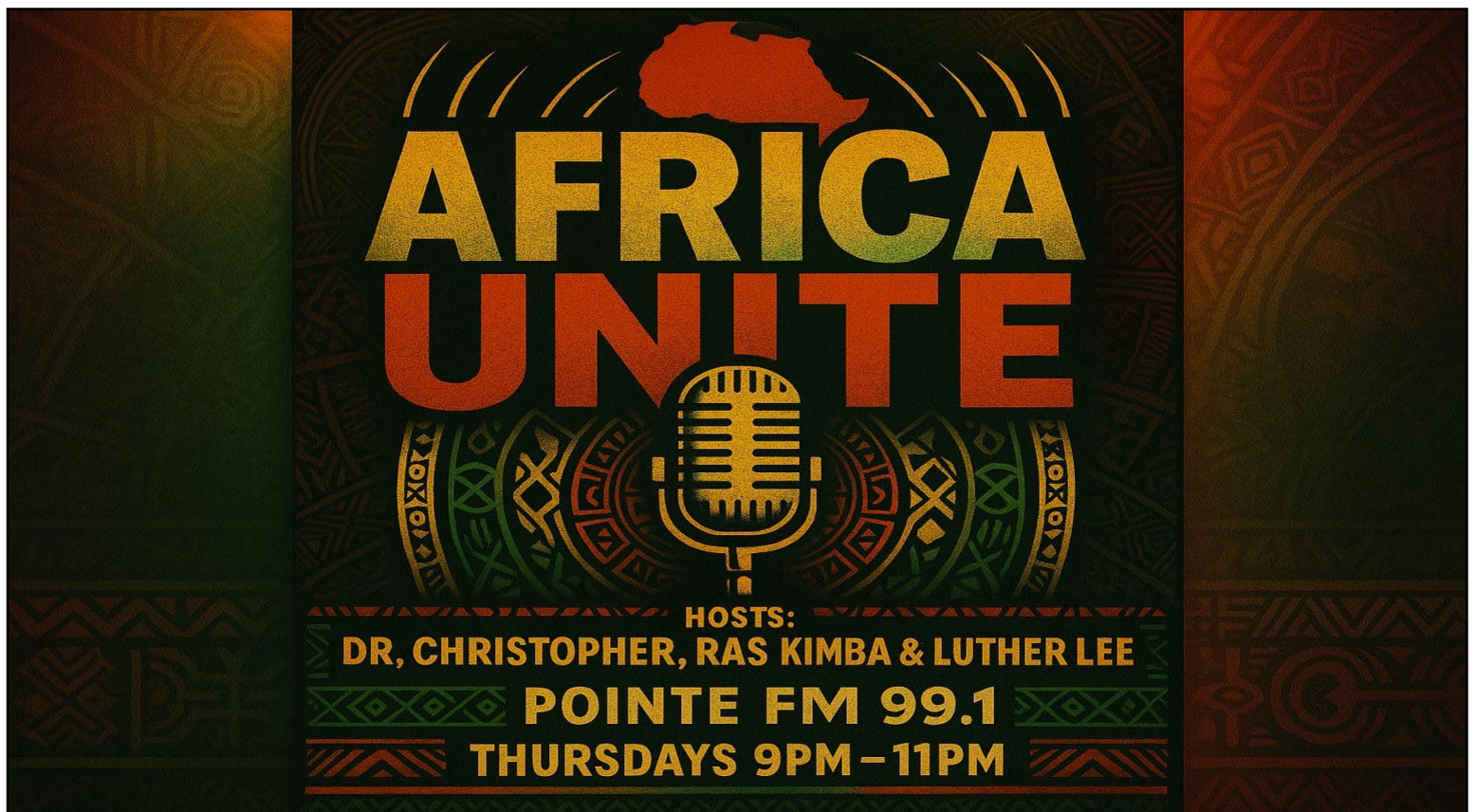
H. Wright Promotions notched up their eighth win in 11 encounters with a 54-44 victory against Antigua Power Company.

Javonte Daley produced 21 points, seven assists, and five steals, and Don-te Trimmingham sank 13 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for H. Wright Promotions.

Ammiel Williams converted 11 points, and Sheldon Abrams scored 10 points and claimed nine rebounds for the Antigua Power Company, who suffered their fourth loss in nine matches.

The business basketball league will continue with a triple-header at the JSC Sports Complex on Saturday.

Fearless Security Services will take on the Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board at 7 pm, Police will meet the Sledge O Ballers at 8 pm, and Sandals will face the Antigua Power Company at 8 pm.



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Bangladesh win ODI series against West Indies



Bangladesh leg-spinner Rishad Hossain, second left, celebrates with teammates after dismissing West Indies batsman Gudakesh Motie, right, during the third One-Day International in Mirpur, Bangladesh, on Thursday, October 23, 2025. (Getty Images)

MIRPUR, Bangladesh (AP) — The Bangladesh spinners were responsible for all 10 wickets as their team thrashed West Indies by 179 runs in the third and final One-Day International (ODI) in Mirpur to take the series 2-1 on Thursday.

The dominant victory, their second largest overall and biggest ever against the Caribbean side, helped Bangladesh to claim their first ODI series triumph since March 2024. In between, Bangladesh lost four ODI series.

Leg-spinner Rishad Hossain capped a successful

spell with three for 54, taking his wicket-tally to 12, the highest by a Bangladesh spinner in an ODI series. The West Indies were bowled out for 117 in 30.1 overs, chasing 297 for victory.

Left-arm slow bowler Nasum Ahmed also took three for 11 to rip through the West Indies top order, while off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz and left-armers Tanvir Islam each picked up two wickets.

Mustafizur Rahman, the lone paceman in the side, didn't even have to bowl.

Earlier, Bangladesh open-

ers Saif Hassan and Soumya Sarkar put on 176 to give their side a solid start after captain Mehidy had won the toss and opted to bat first.

Sarkar hit an 86 ball-91 with seven fours and four sixes while Hasan, who raised a maiden fifty in his sixth ODI, was dismissed for 80 from 72 balls. He cracked six fours and as many sixes as Bangladesh piled up 296 for eight off their allotted 50 overs.

Left-arm spinner Akeal Hossain, who led West Indies' breathtaking Super Over victory in the second game to level the series,

took a career-best four for 41.

But he was largely ineffective when Sarkar and Hasan were batting on a pitch that was better than the previous two matches, with the bounce appearing to be even this time.

Najmul Hossain Shanto also made 55 before Hosein claimed three wickets in an over. Nasum then took three wickets to leave West Indies reeling on 35 for three.

The two sides will now play a T20 series in Chattogram, starting on Monday, October 27.

Sports

FRIDAY 24TH OCTOBER 2025

POINT EXPRESS
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TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

ABFA kicks off 2025-26 domestic season this weekend



Special Security Services and Bitar Pizza All Saints United celebrate after winning the 2024-25 ABFA's Premier Division title at the ABFA Technical Center on Sunday, March 30, 2025. (Photo courtesy All Saints United)

The Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) will kick off its 2025-26 domestic season this weekend with matches in the Premier Division. There is a reduction from 14 to 12 teams for the new premier league season.

The twelve (12) teams, including reigning back-to-back champions All Saints United and newly promoted clubs Ottos Rangers and Jennings United, will contend for the premier league title this season.

Five Islands, Parham, Willikies, and Greenbay Hoppers were relegated from the Premier Division last season and will be competing in the 2025-26 First Division.

This season's Premier League will kick off at the ABFA Technical Center with a triple header on Saturday.

Last season's fifth-place finishers, FC Aston Villa Lions, will face the Potters Tigers in the opening game at 4 pm.

The Pigotts Bullets will meet John Hughes FC at 6 pm, and last season's third-place finishers, Old Road FC, will clash with newly promoted Ottos Rangers FC at 8 pm.

The Premier League games will continue with another triple header at the ABFA Technical Center with matches on Sunday, October 26.

Last season's fourth-place finishers, Garden Stars FC, will oppose Green City FC at 4 pm, and defending champions All Saints United will launch their title defense against the Attacking Saints in an All Saints derby at 6 pm.

The newly promoted Jennings United will clash with 2022-23 champions and second-place finishers for the past two seasons, Sandals and Inet Jennings Grenades FC, in a round south derby at 8 pm.

The ABFA's First Division will kick off on Tuesday, October 28, with four matches.

Five Islands FC will tackle newly promoted Golden

Grove FC at Five Islands, Parham FC will entertain newly promoted Cedar Grove Blue Jays FC at Parham, and Swetes FC will clash with Empire FC at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park. All three matches will commence at 4:30 pm.

SAP FC will take on Bendals FC in Tuesday's other First Division affair at the ABFA Technical Center at 5 pm.

However, the start of the ABFA's Second Division has been delayed to allow teams to finalize their registration. The Second Division is now slated to kick off on Wednesday, November 5.

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