

Caribbean Peace at Risk: PM Browne Seeks U.S. Engagement with Venezuela

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Great Job Team Antigua & Barbuda!



Team Antigua and Barbuda secured a Bronze Medal, along with individual silver medals at Taste of the Caribbean, held in Barbados from 16th-18th November, 2025. The culinary competition saw participation from 11 countries. Bonaire won the Gold Medal, while Grenada, Saint Lucia and Turks and Caicos secured Silver Medals. Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Barbados, Belize, Curacao, Puerto Rico and the USVI are recipients of Bronze Medals.

Story on Pages 7 & 8

Local News

PM Browne Writes US President on Military Presence in Caribbean



Prime Minister Gaston Browne (left) and President Donald Trump

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has written to U.S. President Donald J. Trump expressing Antigua and Barbuda's concern over the growing military build-up in international waters shared by Caribbean States. He has called for renewed diplomatic engagement between the U.S and Venezuela to prevent escalation in the Caribbean region.

In his letter, Prime Minister Browne reaffirmed the Caribbean's longstanding commitment to being a Zone of Peace, noting that the region has earned its reputation as one of the few places in the world where calm and stability still offer respite in an increasingly turbulent international

environment.

He emphasized that the economies of Caribbean small states — particularly tourism-dependent nations — are highly vulnerable to geopolitical tensions. “A hint of armed confrontation in our waters reverberates instantly through hotel bookings, airlines, foreign investment, and the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of families,” the Prime Minister wrote. Military action near Caribbean shores, he warned, could cast “a long shadow” over an industry central to regional development and economic security.

Prime Minister Browne urged

President Trump to “follow your instincts which, as far as I have seen, are rooted in dialogue and negotiation,” highlighting that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro has signaled willingness to engage in direct discussions. He emphasized that diplomacy, though sometimes slow and imperfect, “delivers fewer sorrows than the alternatives.”

Antigua and Barbuda, the Prime Minister said, stands ready to support any international initiative that reduces tensions and opens channels for constructive negotiation. The letter underscores that the nation's only objective is to safeguard regional peace and ensure that the Caribbean — “your near-shore neighbour and long-standing friend” — remains an area of stability.

Prime Minister Browne concluded by reaffirming Antigua and Barbuda's respect for the United States and the enduring friendship between the two nations. “We value the United States as a friend and as a force for good,” he wrote, calling for diplomacy to prevail.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda will continue to engage regional and international partners to uphold the peace, security, and prosperity of the Caribbean.

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Government Launches Incentive Program to Clear Derelict Vehicles

Government is set to announce a new incentive program for the removal of derelict vehicles marked by police for disposal.

The incentive program will give private individuals the opportunity to aid in the removal of abandoned vehicles, with compensation set at \$150 per vehicle.

The initiative, part of a wider national cleanup strategy, aims to clear abandoned vehicles from communities and reduce the environmental and safety risks they pose.

The removal program will be managed by the Ministry of Urban Development, working in close collaboration with the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) and the Development Control Authority (DCA). Each agency will play a specific role—from verifying marked vehicles to ensuring



proper transport and disposal at the Cooks Landfill.

Government officials say the coordination among agencies is essential to making the effort both efficient and sustainable. By unifying oversight, authorities hope to avoid delays and duplication of efforts that have hindered past cleanup campaigns.

Further details are expected to be released by the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation through radio, television, and online media. The notices will specify the dates, times, and designated drop-off or collection points for derelict vehicles, and how persons can qualify for the program.

Derelict vehicles have been a chronic problem across several communities, contributing to visual pollution, harboring pests, and creating safety hazards for residents. In some areas, abandoned cars have blocked sidewalks, impeded drainage systems, and become breeding grounds for mosquitoes and rodents.

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Testing and Surveys Continue Ahead of All Saints Road Repairs



Preparation work is continuing on the long-awaited transformation of All Saints Road, with teams conducting surveys, testing, and preliminary assessments.

The large-scale upgrade is being executed by Amdex, a collaboration between the Canadian-based Dexter Company and a local partner, according to Maurice Merchant, the Government's Director General of Communications.

Merchant explained that the Canadian firm brings extensive experience in road construction across North America, providing valuable expertise for the project.

"Teams have already begun surveying the road and cutting patches for testing," Merchant said, noting that these initial activities signal the official start of the road's transformation.

The work extends far beyond resurfacing. In partnership with the

Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA), the project will also include the removal and replacement of old utility pipes along the roadway. "This unified approach ensures we won't have to dig up the road again anytime soon," Merchant noted. "It will be a full upgrade—road surface and essential underground utilities".

He added, "The goal is to perform this work in one unified effort, ensuring that the road is not just resurfaced, but that essential utilities are upgraded as well," Merchant explained. "This means that the road will be significantly transformed, not just for vehicles, but for the long-term benefit of the community."

The reconstruction will span roughly 11 to 12 miles, stretching from the V.C Bird Bust in St. John's all the way to English Harbour. The scale of the work will make this one of the most significant infrastructural undertakings

in recent years.

Authorities are already planning traffic diversions to limit inconvenience for commuters.

"The planning stage includes creating smart diversions to ensure that persons are not affected in any significant way," Merchant assured.

As the work continues to progress, residents and commuters are encouraged to stay informed about traffic updates and road conditions. Officials are optimistic that, while there may be some short-term disruptions, the final product will result in a vastly improved road infrastructure that will benefit the entire island.

The All Saints Road project marks a critical step in modernizing Antigua's and Barbuda's road network—bringing together local and international expertise to deliver a roadway built for the future.

Ambassador Black-Layne Featured Prominently in Global Climate Diplomacy Discussions



Ambassador Diann Black-Layne, Director of the Department of Environment

Antigua and Barbuda continues to hold a leadership role in global climate diplomacy, as Ambassador Diann Black-Layne, Director of the Department of Environment co-chaired a critical meeting of the UNFCCC's Response Measures forum held on the heels of COP30 in Brazil.

Ambassador Black-Layne was elected

by the Plenary of the COP to serve as one of the Co-Chairs as the work reconvened alongside Ms. Veronica Bagi, Climate Policy Officer with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) who was also elected by the Plenary as the other Co-Chair. Together, they guided parties through a demanding round of negotiations focused on the impacts of mitigation policies—including how climate action affects economies, workforces, and communities, particularly in developing countries.

She stressed that the effort reflects the collective strength of the Antiguan and Barbudan delegation and highlighted the significant contributions of Gita Gardner, Arry Simon, and Ambassador Ruleta Camacho-Thomas, who continue to work across various parts of the negotiation process.

As Co-Chairs, Ambassador Black-Layne and Ms. Bagi played a central role in helping parties manage areas where consensus was difficult to reach.

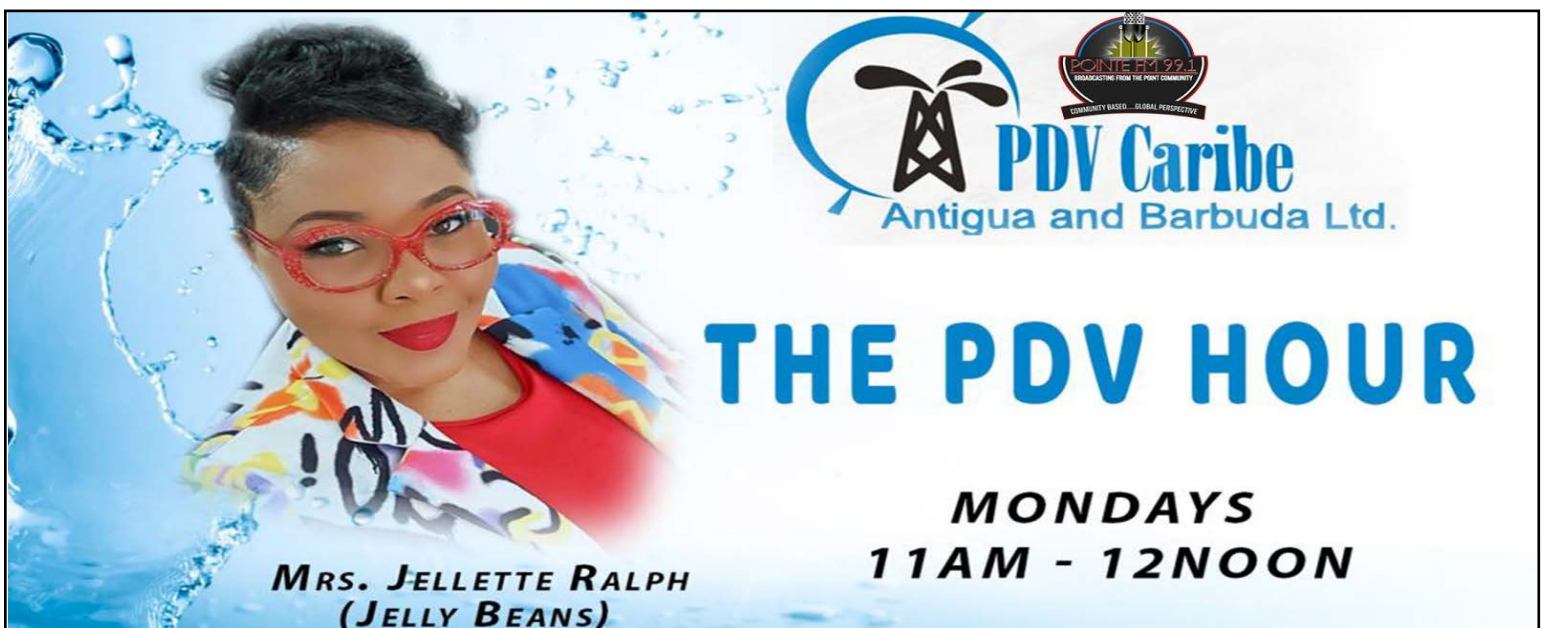
A major priority for Antigua and Barbuda under the Response Measures

agenda is ensuring a just transition for workers and industries.

As the global community moves toward renewable energy to remain aligned with the 1.5°C temperature goal, it is essential that the transition be fair and equitable, especially for nations and sectors that depend heavily on fossil fuels for their economic stability.

Although a broader framework decision was adopted, several sensitive and unresolved issues remain. These matters will now be elevated to the COP President, who will conduct further consultations and present alternative pathways for parties to consider.

The Ministry commends Ambassador Black-Layne and the Antiguan and Barbudan delegation for their continued leadership, diplomacy, and unwavering advocacy on behalf of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Their work reinforces Antigua and Barbuda's commitment to shaping global climate policy and ensuring that the transition to a low-carbon world is both responsible and just.



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Team Antigua and Barbuda Takes Bronze Medal at Taste of the Caribbean Competition



Senior Chef – Eustace Cabral

Antigua and Barbuda delivered an outstanding performance at the highly anticipated Taste of the Caribbean 2025 competition, earning multiple silver medals and securing a Bronze Overall Team Award among a field of elite culinary nations.

Competing against top regional teams



Bartender – Auslando Davis

from Aruba, Barbados, Belize, Bonaire, Curaçao, Grenada, Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, Turks & Caicos Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Team Antigua and Barbuda proudly showcased the depth, originality, and cultural richness of the nation's culinary talent.

Silver Medalists – Antigua and



Pastry Chef – Arielle Mills

Barbuda

Senior Chef – Eustace Cabral

Silver Medal Winner
 Chef Cabral impressed judges with an elevated celebration of Antiguan and Barbudan flavours.

- Pan-roasted beef

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Local News

- Sous vide Shrimp
- Fungi wrapped in Plantain
- Sorrel, Hibiscus and Watermelon reduction
- Antiguan and Barbudan chop-up salsa

His dish displayed innovation while preserving the authenticity of local culinary traditions.

Pastry Chef – Arielle Mills

Silver Medal Winner
 Chef Mills presented a sophisticated tropical dessert trio titled “Tropical Daisy”, featuring:

- Soursop cheesecake
- Passion fruit & mango crèmeux
- Lime mousse
- Mango–pineapple salsa
- Soursop sorbet on a ginger crumble

Her dessert was praised for its artistry, technique, and bold Caribbean flavours.

Bartender – Auslando Davis

Silver Medal Winner
 Bartender Davis captivated the judges with three innovative cocktails:

1. Ole Time Something
 - A nostalgic elevation of local Cocoa Tea
 - Topped with vanilla milk and whipped cream
 - Presented in a cyan cup as a nod to traditional Caribbean comfort
2. Soursop Martini
 - Featuring a crème brûlée top
 - Finished with toasted coconut chips
3. Amaro About You, his mystery basket round
 - A creative and skillful mystery basket cocktail, showcasing his versatility

Junior Chef – Azarie Crump

Junior Chef Crump demonstrated exceptional promise with a beautifully composed dish featuring:

- Caramelized breadfruit

- Pickled beets
- Herb-stuffed pork roulade
- Breadfruit and avocado sauce

The team was expertly guided by Team Manager, Chef Olvanah Richardson, with the support of Junior Chef Mentor, Jean Pierre Tuitt, and Logistics Manager, Jesse Thomas, ensuring a cohesive performance and excellence across all categories.

This year’s participation and success, which earned Antigua and Barbuda a Bronze Overall Team Award, were made possible through the coordination of the Antigua & Barbuda Hotels

and Tourism Association, which organized the national delegation to the competition.

The team extends sincere appreciation to its sponsors whose unwavering support made this achievement possible, including the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, Citizenship by Investment Unit (CIU), Blue Waters Resort & Spa, Galley Bay Resort & Spa, Jumby Bay Island, Curtain Bluff, and LIAT Air. Their contributions were invaluable in helping showcase Antigua and Barbuda’s culinary excellence on the regional stage.



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ANTIGUA CARNIVAL

Sickle Cell Unit Closer to Becoming Operational



The Ministry of Health, Wellness, Environment, and Civil Service Affairs is reporting significant progress on the development of the new Sickle Cell Unit.

A site inspection was conducted yesterday by Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph, Director of the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, Dr. Shivon Belle-Jarvis, Head of the Sickle Cell Association, Dr. Edda Hadeed, along with other officials.

During the visit, the delegation noted that the infrastructure is largely ready, with

major preparatory works nearing completion. The facility has been cleaned, the rooms have been freshly painted, and the beds are already installed.

In the initial stages, the facility will operate with a five-bed unit.

The Sickle Cell Unit is being designed to provide comprehensive support for individuals living with sickle cell disease, delivering acute clinical care as well as patient education and family counseling services.

Officials used the walkthrough to discuss

the remaining steps required before the unit becomes operational. These include finalizing essential equipment, completing staffing arrangements, and implementing specialized training to ensure that the clinical team is fully prepared to deliver high-quality care.

The Ministry of Health indicates that handing over of the facility is likely before the end of

the year. Preparations will continue throughout this period to ensure that staff are fully equipped to provide optimal and holistic care to all sickle cell patients.

Sir Molwyn Joseph stressed the importance of keeping the public updated and reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to strengthening care for individuals affected by chronic and inherited blood disorders.



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STILL ONGOING.**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Monday, 17th November 2025 – *St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda.....*
The Department of Creative Industries is reminding the public that registration for the Christmas Home and Business Lighting Competition 2025 is still ongoing.

The competition aims to evoke the spirit of the season through the creative, dazzling lighting displays of our 2025 competitors. The Department encourages all interested Home and Business owners to register for the competition by 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 in INET, or at the National Festivals Office, 1st Floor, Cecil George-John Building, Redcliffe Street and Corn Alley.

Pre-judging will commence on December 20th and 21st, 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 from 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, DutyFree concessions on Christmas Lights and or Decorations and a Cash component for the top three winners as outlined below.

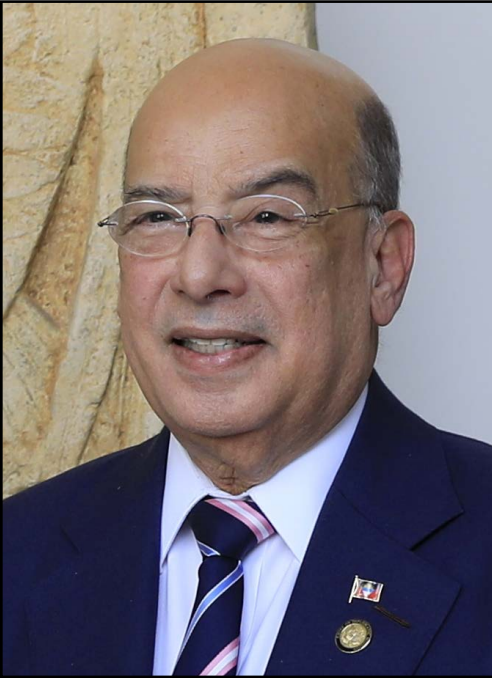
- **First Place - \$ 3,000.00 XCD**
- **Second Place - \$ 2,000.00 XCD**
- **Third Place - \$ 1,000.00 XCD**

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

END.

Commentary

HUNGER AND WAR: THE OLDEST CRIME THE WORLD STILL PERMITS



By Sir Ronald Sanders

The governments of the world's powerful nations have learned to live with disregard for human suffering. That is the bleak truth behind a new UN report whose numbers should shame every leader or diplomatic representative who speaks of global responsibility. According to the World Food Programme, ending hunger by 2030 would cost just US\$93 billion a year—less than one per cent of the US\$21.9 trillion that nations have poured into their militaries over the past decade.

Yet instead of falling, hunger is escalating. By 2026, 318 million people will face crisis-level hunger or worse. That is double the number seven years ago in 2019.

In wealthy nations, hunger is practically invisible. It is confined to small pockets easily managed. Citizens enjoy abundant supermarkets, stable food prices, and the luxury of never imagining what a mother feels when she cannot feed her child. But elsewhere in the world the poorest are paying dearly for wars, promoted either by local rivalry for power, or external ambition for control.

Nowhere is this clearer than Gaza. De-

spite the diplomatic fanfare surrounding a “ceasefire”, children continue to starve. At least 13 people were killed in drone attacks last Wednesday. Two years of Israeli bombardment, blockade, and forced displacement have exhausted families. UNICEF reports children sleeping in flooded tents, without warm clothing or dry bedding, immune systems shattered by years of malnutrition and trauma. High-energy biscuits—usually the last resort in humanitarian crises—now pass for sustenance.

Israeli forces still restrict access to over half the enclave, and even with new border openings, the flow of food and medicine is painfully inadequate. Winter rains turned makeshift shelters into shallow lakes. Parents, already broken by grief, now watch their children tremble through the cold. These images have disappeared from the coverage of television stations in most

rich nations.

But if suffering in Gaza is hardly mentioned in the mass media of rich nations, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo are almost completely ignored. Yet, in Sudan, the situation is grim. Twenty-one million people, nearly half the population, do not have enough to eat. The message is clear - war starves.

In eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, more than 25 million people are now hungry. Violence has destroyed farms, displaced millions, and turned rich agricultural lands into wastelands. For these families, hunger is now permanent.

In the Caribbean, hunger is mercifully rare—except in Haiti, where armed gangs now dominate much of the country. Violence has turned roads into killing grounds; markets remain shut; farmers abandon their fields. The result is predictable: rising hunger in



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Commentary

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a land already scarred by earthquakes, political instability, and economic collapse. Here, too, conflict is the chief architect of misery. The attempts to address the problem has been met with division in the U.N. Security Council. In the Organization of American States an ambitious road map laid out by the Secretary-General, Albert Ramdin, is yet to garner the support it needs. Meanwhile, the Haitian people suffer – the victims of gangs, and political gamesmanship with Haiti and by external players.

Thankfully, beyond Haiti, Latin America and the Caribbean tell a more hopeful story. Hunger declined for a second consecutive year in 2023, falling to about 41 million people—roughly 6.2 per cent of the region's population—nearly three million fewer than the year before. Food insecurity dropped below the global average for the first time in a decade, thanks to economic recoveries, social protection programmes, and targeted efforts to improve food access.

But this is not yet cause for celebration. The region is now the second-most exposed in the world to extreme weather, after Asia. Droughts, powerful hurricanes, unpredictable rainfall, and shifting seasons are already increasing hunger by 1.5 percentage points in the most climate-affected countries. Jamaica, after Melissa, can attest that Climate change is real and is relentless.

The world tends to imagine hunger as localised suffering. It is not. Hunger is a contagion carried through global markets, supply chains, trade flows, and political shocks. No country is immune. The war in Ukraine proved this with brutal clarity: grain exports stalled, prices spiked, and food riots broke out across the globe. When global food prices rise, social unrest follows—a documented pattern across continents. The Food and Agricultural Organization warns that when families cannot eat, “social contracts weaken.” The international system has never been more interconnected, nor more

fragile.

UN agencies, such as the World Food Programme and the UN Human Rights Office, are the first responders in these human tragedies. They work in mud, under fire, amid collapsing states. They do so with chronic underfunding, exposed by lack of adequate protection, and often unnoticed by the world they serve. They are the best expression of multilateralism.

But their heroism casts an even harsher light on the UN Security Council's failures. Conflict is now the primary driver of the world's worst hunger crises, yet the Security Council still treats hunger as a humanitarian footnote—not a geopolitical threat.

What is missing is not expertise or capacity—it is political will and the allocation of resources. Ending hunger by 2030 would cost less than one per cent of what has been spent on militaries over the last decade. The idea

that the international community can find US\$21.9 trillion for weapons but cannot mobilise US\$93 billion a year to prevent starvation exposes the gap between its stated values and its actual priorities.

The world must stop treating hunger as a humanitarian calamity that will always exist and recognise it as a preventable consequence of political decisions. As UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told the Security Council, “there can be neither peace where people are starving, nor security where hunger drives conflict.” That is a warning that should not be ignored.

(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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Commentary

Beyond the beach: Forging a blue and green partnership for the future



BY: H E Theon Ali. Ambassador-designate of Antigua and Barbuda to the State of Qatar and Deputy Head of Mission to the UAE

The recent UN Tourism General Assembly, the first to take place in the GCC, rightly placed a renewed focus on innovation, investment, and resilience. This global conversation resonates deeply with nations like mine, Antigua and Barbuda, where we see

tourism not merely as an industry of visitor numbers, but as the very foundation for building integrated, sustainable economies capable of withstanding 21st century pressures. For Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and visionary global hubs like Qatar, this moment presents a critical opportunity to move from discussion to co creation and together, actively design the future of travel, making it connected, intelligent, and sustainable by design.

The success of this vision hinges on a powerful enabler: air connectivity. As we have seen in the Maldives, a strategic partnership with global aviation can transform an economy. In the 1980s, the Maldives was one of the world's poorest nations; today, tourism contributes nearly a third of its GDP, a transformation catalysed by the arrival of international carriers [1]. In Antigua and Barbuda, we are building similar bridges for the 21st century. Our recent bilateral air services agreement with Qatar is more than a diplomatic formality; it is the first step in creating a direct link between the Caribbean and the Gulf. This is not merely about bringing tourists to our shores but about creating a dedicated corridor for the exchange of ideas, investment,

and innovation. It is the physical infrastructure upon which a deeper partnership can be built.

The true potential of this connectivity is unlocked when it is harnessed to address our most pressing shared challenge: building resilience in an era of climate change. SIDS are on the front lines, but our experience makes us ideal living laboratories for sustainable solutions. To this end, Antigua and Barbuda is proactively creating an investor ready environment. We have launched a robust digital transformation agenda to streamline business processes and enhance public service delivery. Furthermore, our government has established clear national renewable energy targets and is advancing supportive regulatory frameworks to de risk green investments. Our geographic isolation, often seen as a vulnerability, is in fact a strategic asset for testing integrated energy and environmental systems. The "SIDS Paradox" is stark: we are nations blessed with abundant sun and wind, yet we pay some of the world's highest electricity prices due to a near total reliance on imported diesel [2]. This very inefficiency, however, reveals the opportunity. An island's energy grid is



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Commentary

a closed system, a microcosm of the larger, more complex grids that continental nations are trying to decarbonize. Success here provides a powerful, tangible proof of concept for the world.

Imagine a partnership where Qatari expertise in project finance and technology deployment converges with Antigua and Barbuda's real world testing grounds. We could pioneer a "Green Gateway" initiative. This would involve a multi-faceted approach:

First, deploying computational intelligence for ecosystem stewardship. The goal is to move beyond merely counting visitors to orchestrating the nexus between visitor access and ecological preservation. Advanced computational models and predictive analytics from Qatar, such as those pioneered by the Qatar Computing Research Institute and the Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute (QEERI), could be applied to dynamically manage anthropogenic pressure on our fragile ecosystems, such as our coral reefs and protected rainforests [3]. For instance, these systems could generate adaptive visitor pathways to prevent site degradation, distribute footfall to enhance the visitor experience, and deliver continuous diagnostics on the vitality of our natural capital.

Second, establishing a Carbon Neutral Aviation Corridor. The aviation link itself must become a model of sustainability. We propose partnering with Qatari and regional carriers, which

are leaders in global connectivity, to develop and showcase Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) on routes between Doha and the Caribbean. Qatar is already making significant strides in this arena, and a collaborative effort could accelerate progress. By creating a dedicated "green corridor," our nations can position themselves at the forefront of the future of sustainable aviation, offering travellers a lower carbon choice and creating a powerful, market driven signal for the SAF industry. This aligns perfectly with the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) net zero by 2050 goals, to which the global aviation industry is committed, and provides a tangible pathway for the high value tourism market to support climate action [3].

Third, forging a public-private partnership with Qatar to establish SIDS as a proving ground for integrated energy systems. Our nations are not just victims of climate change but strategic partners in the energy transition. A successful pilot of a solar-storage microgrid powering a resort or community in Barbuda, developed through a joint Qatar-local initiative that combines Qatari financial capital and project management with our local expertise and commitment, becomes a powerful, exportable blueprint. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) emphasises that SIDS represent a massive untapped renewable resource, with some islands possessing a solar capacity factor significantly higher than the global aver-

age, and that their decarbonisation is both a necessity and an opportunity to create global models [4]. Our ongoing national efforts to create a clear and stable regulatory landscape for renewable energy projects ensure that such pioneering ventures are built on a solid foundation. By co-developing these projects, Qatari sovereign wealth and energy giants can diversify their portfolios, pilot new technologies in a manageable environment, and build a powerful Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) legacy, all while helping to solve a critical development challenge.

This is not a plea for aid, but a proposal for a strategic, commercial partnership. Qatar, with its vast investment power, technological ambition, and experience understands the value of building lasting, sustainable legacies. SIDS like Antigua and Barbuda, with our focused digitalization and regulatory modernization, offer the ideal, investor ready conditions to demonstrate that legacy on a global stage.

The UN Tourism Assembly provided the vision. Now, let us take the first step. By combining Qatar's global reach and technological vision with the innovative spirit and real world laboratories of SIDS, we can move beyond the traditional sun and sand model. Together, we can build a Blue and Green Partnership that does not just welcome tourists, but welcomes a more sustainable and prosperous future for all.



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Regional News

Secondary school student arrested on drugs and weapon-related charges in Trinidad



The police in Trinidad on Tuesday said that a 16-year-old secondary school student is due to appear in a magistrate's court on Wednesday after he was detained and discovered with cannabis and a concealed weapon in his possession.

The police said that the form-four student was detained after a police officer was conducting a routine foot patrol on the compound of the secondary school when he observed a student acting suspiciously.

"The behaviour aroused the officer's concern, and he alerted the school's safety officer and principal, requesting their presence as he carried out a search. While escorting the student to the principal's office to conduct the search in a private setting, the officer noticed the student handing a

rag to another pupil.

"The officer immediately intervened, retrieved the rag, and, upon checking it in the presence of the principal and safety officer, found a translucent plastic bag containing 15 packets of cannabis. The substance was later weighed in their presence and amounted to 10 grams."

The police said that a further search of the student revealed a concealed dangerous weapon, a pocketknife, approximately four inches in length.

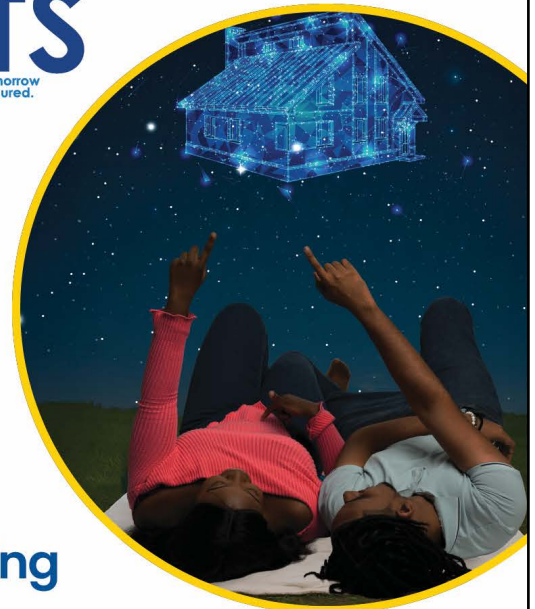
The police said that the student was taken to the Sangre Grande Police Station, where his mother later arrived.

The police said that charges are expected to be laid against the minor on Tuesday, with a court appearance scheduled for Wednesday. (Jamaica Gleaner)



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

Hurricane Melissa to adversely affect domestic GDP growth, but Jamaica's financial sector resilient, says BOJ

The Bank of Jamaica (BOJ) says Jamaica's financial sector is in a position to absorb the negative impact of Hurricane Melissa, which it says is expected to adversely affect domestic GDP growth over the coming quarters.

The BOJ, in a media release today, pointed out that tourism and agriculture are among the key sectors directly impacted by the hurricane.

It added that households in the affected sections of the country are expected to experience weakened debt servicing capacity, potentially leading to an uptick in non-performing loans.

The BOJ said, in assessing financial system resilience, it conducted stress tests and systemic risk evaluations to gauge the financial sector's ability to withstand credit, liquidity, and market risk shocks.

According to the central bank, the preliminary results indicated that the respective financial system sub-sectors possess sufficient capital and liquidity to absorb the negative impact of Hurricane Melissa and to support the uptick in cash demand as the recovery efforts commence.

It stated that while institution-specific factors, including internal policies and risk appetite, may result in varied approaches to the provision of customer relief, financial institutions are well-positioned to support the recovery effort.

"This includes currency supply, processing of verified insurance-related payments and, where appropriate, offering temporary deferral of credit-related facilities."

The BOJ said it stands ready to provide the necessary liquidity support



to deposit-taking institutions should the need arise and to maintain orderly conditions in the foreign exchange market.

"Notwithstanding the negative impact on credit quality, the deposit-taking sector remains well positioned to absorb this deterioration owing to historically low non-performing loans, high levels of provisioning and robust capital positions. While insurance claims are likely to increase, this should not significantly impair insurer solvency due to strong reinsurance coverage coupled with low property insurance penetration in some affected parishes."

The BOJ stated that the overall impact on the economy is anticipated to be mitigated by financial transfers and gifts in kind from several jurisdictions and agencies to aid the recovery and rehabilitation process as well as the activation of the Government's disaster risk financing framework, which

could provide significant budgetary support.

Meanwhile, the central bank noted that climate-related shocks will remain a significant risk to Jamaica.

It said to address this risk, the authorities have committed to measures aimed at strengthening the financial sector's climate resilience in the long term.

"Financial system supervisors will remain vigilant, actively monitoring the risks and evaluating appropriate policy responses to preserve financial stability in the context of the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters. Additionally, financial system supervisors will ensure that climate risk mitigation and resilience are effectively integrated into the business models of the financial sector. These efforts form part of a broader agenda to enhance systemic resilience and to protect vulnerable sectors." (Jamaica Gleaner)

UTech announces new graduation dates

The University of Technology, Jamaica, has announced new dates for the 2025 graduation ceremony which was postponed due to the passage of Hurricane Melissa.

It says two ceremonies will take place on Saturday, January 31, 2026, and one on Sunday, February 1, 2026 at the Alfred Sangster Auditorium.

“Given the immediate need for recovery and the ongoing challenges faced by our university community, the rescheduled dates took into consideration the need to provide everyone with adequate time to recover and to plan for their attendance,” Marion Brown, Vice President and University Registrar, said in a media release on Wednesday.

The first ceremony on January 31 will commence at 9



a.m. and will accommodate graduands from the College of Health Sciences, Faculty of Science and Sport and Faculty of Law.

The second ceremony will commence at 4 p.m. and will accommodate graduands from the Joint Colleges of

Medicine, Oral Health and Veterinary Sciences; Faculty of Engineering and Computing; Faculty of the Built Environment.

The ceremony on February 1 will commence at 10 a.m. and will accommodate graduands from the College

of Business and Management; Faculty of Education and Liberal Studies and UTechOpen – School of Lifelong Learning and Professional Development. (Jamaica Gleaner)



Two Miss Universe judges quit scandal-hit pageant, as one claims it's rigged



Two Miss Universe judges have resigned days before the annual beauty pageant, with one of them accusing organisers of rigging the selection process.

Lebanese-French musician Omar Harfouch, who announced his resignation from the eight-member jury on Instagram, alleged that an “impromptu jury” had pre-selected finalists ahead of the competition, set to be held on Friday in Thailand.

Hours later, French football manager Claude Makélélé also announced he’d pulled out, citing “unforeseen personal reasons”.

The resignations come two weeks after several Miss Universe contestants walked out of a pre-pageant event over controversial comments made by an official from host nation Thailand.

“An impromptu jury has been formed to select 30 finalists from among the

136 participating countries, without the presence of any of the real [eight] members of the jury, including me,” Mr Harfouch wrote in an Instagram post on Tuesday, saying he had discovered this via social media.

The unofficial jury comprises “individuals with a significant potential conflict of interest due to some personal relationships with some of the Miss Universe contestants”, he claimed.

Mr Harfouch did not elaborate on how this “impromptu jury” would function, or how it would override the official jury’s decision.

The Miss Universe Organisation on Tuesday put out a statement to rebuff Mr Harfouch’s claims, saying that “no external group has been authorised to evaluate delegates or select finalists”.

It suggested that Mr Harfouch may have been referring to the Beyond the

Crown programme: a “social impact initiative” that operates independently from the Miss Universe competition, and has a separate selection committee.

The Miss Universe Organisation announced the Beyond the Crown selection committee on Monday. In its statement on Tuesday, the organisation said that Mr Harfouch’s allegations had “mischaracterised” the programme.

Mr Makélélé, who also announced his resignation via Instagram, described it as a “difficult decision”.

“I hold Miss Universe in the highest regard. The platform represents empowerment, diversity, and excellence - values I have always championed throughout my career,” he wrote.

The beauty pageant drew backlash earlier this month after its Thailand director Nawat Itsaragrisil publicly berated Miss Mexico, Fatima Bosch, at a pre-pageant event for not posting promotional content on her social media platforms.

In videos that have since gone viral, Ms Bosch and several other contestants could be seen walking out of the event, and some could be heard shouting at Mr Nawat.

Mr Nawat later claimed that some of his words were misunderstood - but his conduct nevertheless prompted a stern rebuke from the Miss Universe Organisation, which has since sent a delegation of international executives to take over running the competition. (BBC)



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Children among 25 killed in one of Russia's deadliest strikes on western Ukraine

At least 25 people have been killed including three children in a Russian missile and drone attack that hit two blocks of flats in the western city of Ternopil, Ukrainian officials say.

They say another 73 people were wounded, 15 of them children, in the strike early on Wednesday - one of the deadliest in the region since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Ukraine's air force later said Russian X-101 cruise missiles had hit the residential flats.

The neighbouring Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions were also struck, and a drone attack on three districts of the north-eastern city of Kharkiv wounded more than 30 people. Photos posted online showed buildings and cars ablaze.

Ukraine's air force said it had shot down 442 of 476 drones and 41 of 48 missiles launched by Russia, including 10 missiles destroyed by F-16 and Mirage 2000 fighter jets supplied to Kyiv by its Western allies.

But in a reference to how stretched Ukraine's air defences currently are, the air force pleaded for "the uninterrupted and timely supply of aviation weapons from Western partners".

Ternopil, a city closer to the Polish border than the capital Kyiv, has rarely faced attacks since the full-scale invasion. Social media foot-



age of this strike shows missiles shooting across the sky towards the city, though very little sign of air defences reacting from the ground.

The devastation caused by the Russian strikes on Ternopil soon became clear. A video shared by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky showed one of the blocks of flats had completely caved in. Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said it had been destroyed between the third and ninth floors.

The attack had caused "significant destruction", said Zelensky, and many victims were reported to be in the rubble. Plumes of smoke poured from windows and small fires burned outside the tenement.

A giant smoke cloud rose in the distance behind the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Ternopil, as sirens blared throughout the

city.

With limited defence systems, and a vast country to defend every night, no matter how effective Ukraine becomes at shooting down Russian missiles and drones, there is always a risk some will get through – to devastating effect, as happened in Ternopil.

Energy facilities, transport and civil infrastructure were damaged elsewhere in western Ukraine.

The energy sector came under attack in Ivano-Frankivsk region where two of the three people reported wounded were children.

The head of Lviv region said an energy facility had been struck.

Russia has recently upped its attacks on Ukraine's energy grid - as the fourth winter of the war approaches - hoping to damage morale as well as

logistics and Ukraine's own defence industry.

Electrical supplies are already being rationed and, after the latest attacks, the energy ministry announced more power cuts across the country.

Russia's defence ministry said it had carried out its "massive strike using long-range precision weapons", claiming it had targeted Ukraine's "military-industrial complex and energy sector" in response to Ukrainian attacks on "civilian targets".

Ukraine's military said on Tuesday it had fired US-supplied longer-range Atacms missiles at military targets inside Russia, the first time they had admitted using Atacms on Russian soil.

Russia's defence ministry accused Ukraine of firing four of the missiles at the southern city of Voronezh but said they had all been

shot down by air defences.

Meanwhile, Zelensky has travelled to the Turkish capital Ankara, in an attempt to revive a US bid to end the war. He held talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan amid reports President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff has been working on a plan with Russian counterpart Kirill Dmitriev.

The Kremlin said earlier that no Russian representative would be joining the talks in Ankara.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman appeared to dismiss US media reports that Washington and Moscow had been working on a peace plan for Ukraine - without any involvement of Kyiv and its European

allies.

"In this case, we have no additional innovations to what we call 'the spirit of Anchorage'," Dmitry Peskov told Russia's state-run media, referring to the August summit between Putin and Trump in the US state Alaska.

Any agreements reached during the one-day meeting have not been made public.

Peskov's comments came as Zelensky was reportedly due to meet two top US army officials in Kyiv on Thursday. Army Secretary Dan Driscoll and Army Chief of Staff General Randy George are the most senior US military officials to visit the Ukrainian capital since President Donald Trump took office, Reuters

reports.

In a separate development, Romania's defence ministry said a Russian drone had flown about 8km (5 miles) through its airspace in the early hours of Wednesday. The drone then crossed into Ukraine and Moldova before returning to Romania, it said.

Romanian and German air force planes were scrambled in response to the incursion and the defence ministry said it was unclear where the drone had come down.

Poland also deployed jets early on Wednesday and temporarily closed two airports in the southeast in response to the strikes in western Ukraine.

As the fourth anniversary of the start of Russia's full-

scale invasion approaches next February, Moscow and Kyiv remain fundamentally opposed in their views of how to end the war.

Ukraine and its Western allies, including the US, have called for an immediate ceasefire along the vast front line - but Russia has repeatedly ruled that out, repeating demands that Ukraine says amount to its de facto capitulation.

Earlier this month, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Moscow's pre-conditions for a peace deal - including tough curbs on the size of Ukraine's military and the country's neutrality - had not changed since Putin laid them out two months before the full-scale invasion. (BBC)

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Congress votes to send Epstein files bill to Trump



The US Congress has passed a measure ordering the US justice department to release its files on late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The Senate sent the bill to President Donald Trump's desk to sign into law, a day after the House of Representatives approved it in a 427-1 vote.

Trump has said he will sign the measure, after abruptly reversing course on Sunday and urging fellow Republicans to support disclosure of the records as a backbench revolt brewed among rank-and-file members who demanded transparency.

The Epstein files are documents from criminal investigations into the financier, including transcripts of interviews with victims and witnesses, and items seized in raids of his properties.

US Attorney General Pam Bondi said on Wednesday morning when asked about the Epstein files during an un-

related news conference: "We'll continue to follow the law with maximum transparency, while protecting victims."

It came a day after survivors of Epstein spoke in support of the measure at the US Capitol. One of them said they had suffered "institutional betrayal" for years.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune told CNN that he expected the upper chamber to receive the bill from the lower one on Wednesday morning, after which the bill would be passed and then sent to Trump for the presidential signature.

Trump said the timing did not matter to him and has continued to cast the issue as a distraction. "I just don't want Republicans to take their eyes off all of the Victories that we've had," he wrote in a social media post late on Tuesday afternoon.

Trump's own historical relationship with Epstein has again been the subject of recent headlines after US lawmakers released more than 20,000 pages of documents from Epstein's estate - including some that mention Trump and other prominent figures, without indicating any wrongdoing by those individuals.

Trump's reversal at the weekend - from attacking those on Capitol Hill who wanted the files released to saying there was "nothing to hide" - surprised some in Washington.

The Republican congressional leadership was caught off guard after aligning their message with the president for the past few weeks and opposing the release of the files.

House Speaker Mike Johnson had repeatedly called the push to release the Epstein files a "Democrat hoax". But on Tuesday, he voted in support of release.

Republican Clay Higgins, of Louisiana, was the only lawmaker to vote against the bill and cited his concern about “innocent people being hurt” with the release of the information.

The measure had been expected to take a few days to reach the US Senate, but after the resounding afternoon vote in the House, the timeline quickly sped up.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer brought up the bill on the floor of the Senate under a procedure called unanimous consent. Because no one objected, there was no debate and no amendments added to the bill.

A congressional vote was not required to release the files - Trump could have ordered the release on his own.

The bill requires Attorney General Pam Bondi to release “all unclassified records, documents, communications, and investigative materials” related to Epstein and his co-conspirator Ghislaine Maxwell no later than 30 days after the law is enacted.

Those materials include internal justice department communications, flight logs and people and entities connected to Epstein.

But there are obstacles to the files being released even if Trump signs the bill as he has said he will do.

For example, the bill gives Bondi the power to withhold information that would jeopardise any active federal investigation or identifies any victims. Trump recently asked the justice department to investigate Epstein’s alleged links to major banks and several prominent Democrats.

Epstein was found dead in his New York prison cell in 2019 in what a coroner ruled was a suicide.

He was being held on charges of sex trafficking, having previously been convicted of soliciting prostitution from a minor in 2008.

During two criminal investigations into Epstein, thousands of documents

were gathered, including transcripts of interviews with victims and witnesses.

Trump and Epstein previously socialised in similar circles, but the president has repeatedly said he cut ties with Epstein many years ago, before Epstein’s 2008 conviction. The president also said he was unaware of Epstein’s criminal activity.

Last week, Democrats on the House Oversight Committee published three email chains, including correspondence between Epstein and Maxwell, who is currently serving a 20-year prison sentence for sex trafficking.

Some of those make mention of Trump and other prominent figures. In one email, sent in 2011, Epstein wrote to Maxwell: “I want you to realize that that dog that hasn’t barked is Trump.. [VICTIM] spent hours at my house with him.”

The White House said last week that the victim referenced in the email was prominent Epstein accuser Virginia Giuffre.

Giuffre, who died in April, said that she never saw Trump participate in any abuse and there is no implication of any wrongdoing by Trump or the other high-profile figures mentioned in the emails.

Speaking after the vote, Giuffre’s brother Sky Roberts praised her sister’s role in seeking justice for Epstein survivors.

“She did it, she paved the way... She paved the way for us to come forward as advocates, for her survivor sisters to come forward, and we won’t stop,” Roberts said.

Trump has consistently denied any wrongdoing in relation to Epstein. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said the emails were “selectively leaked” by House Democrats to “liberal media to create a fake narrative to smear President Trump”.

The push for the release of the investigative files held by the Department of

Justice was led by Republican Thomas Massie, a Kentucky congressman who sometimes dissents from his party, and Democrat Ro Khanna, a California congressman, both of whom introduced the legislation.

Massie has faced criticism from Trump for his push to release the files, but has stood firm.

“In 2030, he’s not going to be the president,” Massie said to ABC News over the weekend. He added that fellow Republicans who voted against release “will have voted to protect paedophiles”.

Another Republican who has pushed for the release of the files is House Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene. She had been a staunch supporter of Trump before the two fell out over the issue, with the president now calling her a “traitor”.

At a news conference earlier in the day on Tuesday, Greene said she was speaking up on behalf of Epstein’s survivors.

“Let me tell you what a traitor is. A traitor is an American that serves foreign countries and themselves; a patriot is an American that serves the United States of America and Americans like the women standing behind me,” Greene said.

She said that the row over Epstein has been one of the “most destructive things” to Trump’s Make America Great Again movement since his election in 2016.

Survivors of Epstein’s abuse also spoke at the news conference, urging lawmakers to release the files and pushing Trump to do the same.

Epstein survivor Annie Farmer said that keeping the files under wraps amounted to “institutional betrayal”.

“Because these crimes were not properly investigated, so many more girls and women were harmed,” Ms Farmer said. (BBC)

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Business Football League reaches knockout stage



Defending champs Hermitage Bay Strikers

Sixteen (16) teams have advanced to the knockout stage of the 2025 JOMA Caribbean Ministry of Sports Business Football League Championship.

The teams advanced from a preliminary round-robin competition that involved 34 teams that were divided into four groups.

Defending champions Hermitage Bay Strikers, last year's runners-up Ministry of Agriculture, and third-place finishers Sandals Resort have all qualified for the Round of 16 knockout stage.

Hermitage Bay Strikers advanced from Group 4 along with Villa Tech Enterprise, 2023 champions APUA Telecoms, and the Department of

Immigration.

Advancing from Group 2 are the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Tourism, the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, and Mackey Enterprise.

Sandals, the St. John's Development Corporation (SJDC), Blue Waters Hotel, and APUA Head Office qualified from Group 1.

The Postal Services, His Majesty's Prison (HMP) United, Keyonna Beach Resort, and the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHAPA) Warriors qualified from Group 3.

Hermitage Bay Strikers and Sandals will clash in the feature match in the Round of 16, which will com-

mence on Saturday.

In the other Round of 16 matches, the St. John's Development Corporation will face the Department of Immigration, and APUA Head Office will clash with APUA Telecoms.

Blue Waters Hotel will tackle Villa Tech Enterprise, and the Ministry of Agriculture will face Keyonna Beach Hotel.

The Sir Vivian Richards Stadium will oppose HMP United, Mackey Enterprise will meet CHAPA Warriors, and the Ministry of Tourism will tackle the Postal Services.

Each winner of their match in the Round of 16 will advance to the quarter-finals.

Curacao, Haiti and Panama qualify for World Cup

KINGSTON (Reuters) - Haiti defied the odds to book a place at next year's World Cup on Tuesday and they will be joined by both Panama and Curacao, who became the smallest country to ever win a berth at the finals.

The three clinched top spots in their respective groups to advance from the North and Central American and Caribbean (CONCACAF) region to the 48-team finals in Canada, Mexico and the USA.

Haiti beat Nicaragua 2-0 in Curacao, where they have been forced to play their home fixtures because of the strife in their country, to finish top of Group C, while Panama's 3-0 home win over El Salvador ensured they ended up as winners of Group A.

Curacao held Jamaica to a goalless draw away to stay one point ahead of their hosts at the top of Group B, despite being without veteran Dutch coach Dick Advocaat, who returned to Europe at the weekend for family reasons.

A self-governing part of the Netherlands with a population of 156,000, the Caribbean island nation is easily the least populous country to go to the World Cup, beating the previous record held by Iceland with its 350,000 inhabitants.

Curacao lived dangerously in Kingston, where Jamaica were awarded a last-



Curacao's Roshon Van Eijma, in the air, fights for the ball with Jamaica's Gregory Leigh, right, and Jonathan Russell during a World Cup 2026 qualifying soccer match in Kingston, Jamaica, Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025. (AP)

gasp penalty four minutes into stoppage time only for the referee to change his decision after consulting VAR.

Jamaica, coached by former England manager Steve McClaren, needed a win to qualify but hit the woodwork three times in the second half and Curacao's team, made up entirely of players born in the Netherlands with Antillean roots, held out to secure a World Cup debut.

Haiti's qualification was remarkable given that armed gangs have taken control of almost all of the capital, Port-au-Prince, in a conflict that has forced some 1.3 million people from their homes and fuelled famine-level hunger.

The levels of danger in

Haiti are such that their coach, Sébastien Migne, has not been there since being appointed 18 months ago but the Frenchman has nevertheless managed to engineer a fairytale qualification – their second after a first appearance in 1974.

Haiti started the final round of fixtures on Tuesday behind Honduras on goal difference, but goals from Louicious Deedson and Ruben Providence lifted them to 11 points, while Honduras drew 0-0 away at Costa Rica and finished on nine.

Panama romped through their game, ahead early after a thunderous strike from wingback Cesar Blackman, with their second coming from the penalty spot cour-

testy of Eric Davis, who was in the squad when Panama made their only previous World Cup appearance in 2018.

Substitute Jose Luis Rodriguez added a third late in the game. Suriname had been ahead of Panama on goal difference before the start of Tuesday's games but lost 3-1 in Guatemala.

However, a late own goal kept them in World Cup contention as they will go, along with Jamaica, to the inter-confederation playoff tournament in March.

There, the two CONCACAF teams will be matched against Bolivia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, and New Caledonia. The six teams will be vying for two spots at the finals.

New Zealand clinch ODI series against West Indies



New Zealand's captain Mitchell Santner took his team home with a rapid knock in the second One-Day International at McLean Park in Napier, New Zealand, on Wednesday, November 19, 2025. (Getty Images)

NAPIER (Reuters) - Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra's early attack helped New Zealand beat West Indies by five wickets with three balls to spare in a rain-curtailed second One-Day International in Napier to seal the three-game series 2-0 on Wednesday.

Chasing 248 for victory in a 34-overs-a-side contest, Conway and Ravindra powered the Black Caps with attacking half-centuries, putting on a 106-run opening stand that dismantled the Caribbean bowling attack early on.

After being put into bat, West Indies top order faltered, losing half their batters for only 86 in 15.3 overs, as Kyle Jamieson (3-44) dismissed John Campbell (4) and Keacy Carty (7) early on.

Wicketkeeper-batter and captain Shai Hope anchored the innings with a counterattacking century of 109 off 69 balls - his 19th in ODIs - featuring 13 fours and four sixes.

Late contributions from Justin Greaves (22) and Romario Shepherd (22) alongside Hope helped the visitors reach 247 for nine.

New Zealand started well but after Ravindra (56) fell in the 17th over, the hosts lost Will Young (11) and Mark Chapman (0) in quick succession. Conway (90) also departed in the 26th over, leaving them on shaky ground at 166 for four.

But unbeaten innings by Tom Latham (39 off 29) and captain Mitchell Santner (34 off 15) kept the pressure off

New Zealand even as the required run rate went above 10 at times.

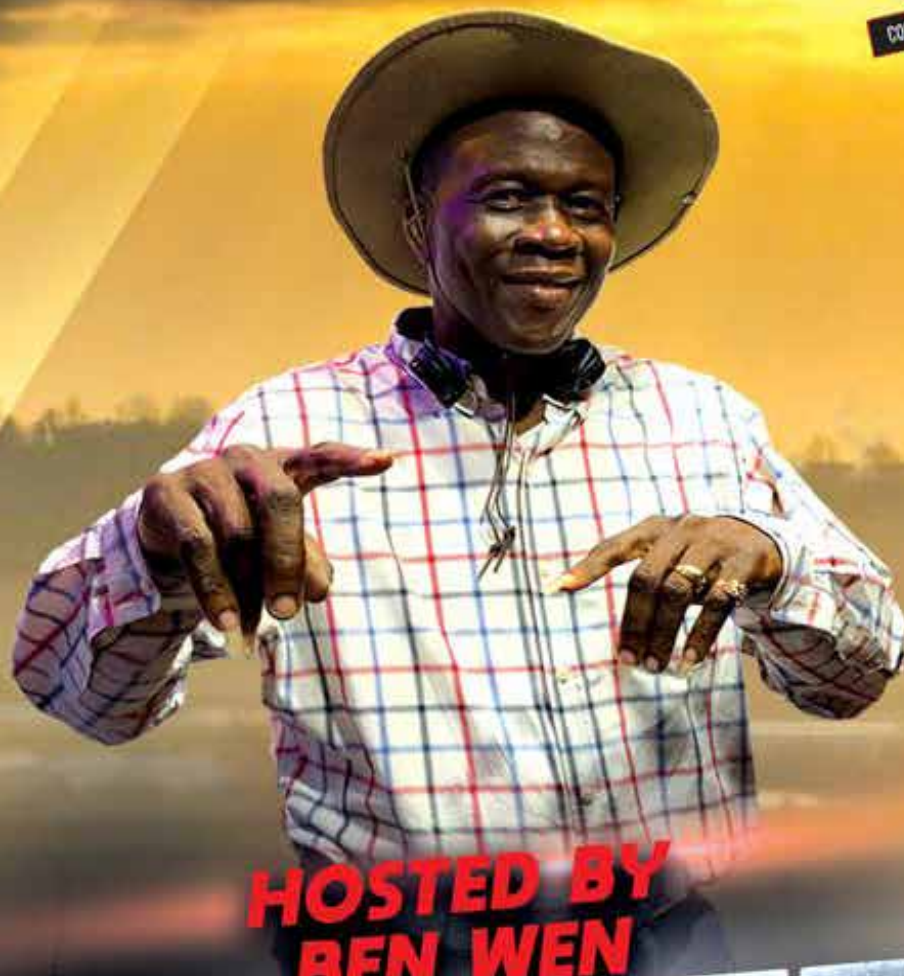
The hosts needed seven to win off the last five balls when Jayden Seales (1-51) bowled a no-ball that Latham hit for four, before Santner scored the winning run with a cover drive.

"The way we've been pushing the game to the back end, pretty much finishing in the last over, it's only a matter of time before we cross the line," said player-of-the-match Hope.

"We have to find a way to cross the line. To be a great team, you have to keep winning against the best."

New Zealand will play the third ODI against West Indies on Saturday, with a three-Test series to follow from December 2.

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LeBron James begins his record 23rd NBA season



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) holds the ball before the tip-off during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Utah Jazz Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025, in Los Angeles. (AP)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — LeBron James certainly didn't look like he had been away from an NBA court for nearly seven months when he began his unprecedented 23rd season Tuesday night — even if his burning lungs told him otherwise.

After reaching another landmark in what is now officially the longest career in league history, James was not at all surprised to return from his lengthy injury absence by fitting in seamlessly with the surging Los Angeles Lakers in yet another victory.

James had 11 points, 12 assists and three rebounds while starting and playing 29 minutes in the Lakers' 140-126 win over the Utah

Jazz, kicking off his new season with an impressive playmaking performance.

"The pace tested me, but I was happy with the way I was able to go with the guys," James said.

"As the game went on, my wind got a lot better. Caught my second wind, caught my third wind. Rhythm is still coming back, obviously. First game in almost seven months, so everything that happened tonight was to be expected."

That's because not much can surprise James at this point in his basketball odyssey — not even the work necessary to overcome injuries.

The 40-year-old James had been sidelined since

the start of training camp by sciatica, keeping him out of the preseason and the Lakers' first 14 games of the regular season.

James, who had never missed a season opener since he started playing organized basketball three decades ago, returned to contact basketball activity last week before participating in his first Lakers practice of the new season on Monday.

James realized that some observers wondered whether his presence would disrupt the Lakers, who got off to a 10-4 start without him. The four-time NBA champion could only laugh.

"I can fit in with anybody," James said. "I don't

even understand why that was even a question. I can fit in right away with anybody. Just watching the guys the first 14 games, I was putting myself (mentally) in position while I was watching the games of how I could help the team and how I could be successful to help those guys."

James is the first player ever to participate in 23 NBA seasons. Vince Carter played in 22 seasons in a career that concluded in 2020, while five players have made it through 21 seasons: Robert Parish, Kevin Willis, Kevin Garnett, Dirk Nowitzki and 40-year-old Chris Paul, who currently plays for the Los Angeles Clippers. Philadelphia guard Kyle Lowry is in his 20th season.

With this debut, James is now just 48 games behind Parish's NBA record for regular-season games played (1,611). James already holds another NBA record with 1,855 regular-season and playoff games combined — 58 more than Kareem Abdul-Jabbar — along with the record for most total minutes played.

James has repeatedly said he isn't assuming this season will be his last, but he also hasn't decided whether he'll play another year.

Antiguans lose to Guyana in CONCACAF Friendly Series



Players of the Antigua and Barbuda starting XI against Guyana. (Photo courtesy of the ABFA)

Host Antigua and Barbuda suffered a 4-1 defeat against Guyana in their second match in Group C of the CONCACAF Friendly Series on Tuesday night.

The Antiguan, who played to a goalless draw with Aruba in their opening match in the five-team group, were outclassed by the Guyanese at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Northsound.

Omari Glasgow scored twice for Guyana, opening the scoring with a 10-minute strike and doubling his team's lead by converting a penalty in the 23rd minute.

Antigua and Barbuda squandered a good chance to reduce the deficit when overseas-based midfielder

Thomas-James Bramble failed to convert a penalty kick just before the halftime break.

However, Antigua and Barbuda managed to get on the scoresheet when midfielder Quinton Griffith scored a consolation goal for the Benna Boys by converting a penalty kick in the 61st minute.

Guyana wrapped up the match by scoring two more goals, which were converted by Osaze De Rosario in the 71st minute and Stephen Duke-McKenna in the 76th minute.

It was the second win in as many games for the Guyanese after snatching a 2-1 victory against Bonaire in their opening game.

Stephen Duke-McKenna had a

fifth-minute conversion, and Osaze De Rosario struck the winner for Guyana in the 77th minute. Ronalchio Cljdesdale scored in the 16th minute for Bonaire, who suffered a 3-0 defeat against Barbados in their opening match.

Aruba secured their first win in the group by coasting to a 3-0 victory against Barbados in their second encounter.

The goals for Aruba were scored by Quilan Poulina in the third minute, Jaybrien Romano in the 59th, and Carolith Fermina in the 76th minute.

Meanwhile, the Antigua and Barbuda national women's senior team will take on Nicaragua at home in their first qualifier for the finals of the 2026 CONCACAF Women's Championship at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium on Thursday, November 27, at 4 pm.

The Antigua and Barbuda women's team is competing in five-team Group B alongside Jamaica, Guyana, Nicaragua, and Dominica.

At the conclusion of the CONCACAF Women's Qualifiers, the six group winners will join the United States and Canada (the two highest-ranked teams) in the eight-team CONCACAF Women's Championship.

The match schedule for the 2025/26 CONCACAF Women's Qualifiers will be announced at a later date.