

PM Browne makes six demands against US law firm in Alfa Nero matter



A sign of a bumper cruise tourism season 2025-26 is evidenced when five cruise ships docked at the St. John's Harbour on Tuesday

Photo courtesy Antigua Cruise Port

Local News

PM Browne makes six demands against US law firm in Alfa Nero matter



Attorneys for Prime Minister Gaston Browne has written to the principals of the US law firm representing Yulia Guryeva Motlokhova demanding retraction of all inflammatory statements made against him in the Alfa Nero matter.

Writing on behalf of the Prime Minister, Rika Bird of the law firm, RB & Associates, addressed her letter to David Boies, Partner, Jonathan Schiller, Managing Partner and Martin DeLuca, Attorney at the law firm Boies, Schiller, Flexner of New York City, which represented Yulia Guryeva Motlokhova, the Russian woman who entered a claimed for the superyacht just prior to its sale and after the government had lobbied to have US sanctions on the vessel lifted.

In her letter, Bird detailed a litany of

false statements that were made particularly by DeLuca, which she claimed had caused reputational and other damage to Prime Minister Browne, who was not only the head of government in Antigua and Barbuda but who had also developed a regional and international reputation as an outspoken advocate on climate change and other related matters.

“Our Client, therefore, believes that you intended or recklessly calculated that it would resound to your client’s and your personal benefit at the expense of our Client, by exposing him to hatred, contempt and public ridicule personally, and as the holder of the Office of Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and Minister of Finance and Corporate Governance.

“Your statements have caused our Cli-

ent severe financial and reputational harm. This is unacceptable to him,” Bird wrote.

“In the circumstances,” she continued, “our Client demands that you immediately:

1. Cease to have any of your false allegations published;
2. Cause the words complained of to be removed from all the above-mentioned publications;
3. Cease and desist from further publishing these or similar allegations concerning our Client in any forum or manner;
4. Issue an apology to our Client in terms to be approved by us, on and in all the abovementioned publications over the electronic/social media, and on the front page of The Daily Observer Newspaper and all other above-mentioned newspapers;
5. Compensate our Client in the appropriate sum of US\$10 million for the damage he has suffered.
6. Pay Attorneys’ fees and costs on an indemnity basis.

See full text of the letter starting from page 16.



Curry House

ANTIGUA

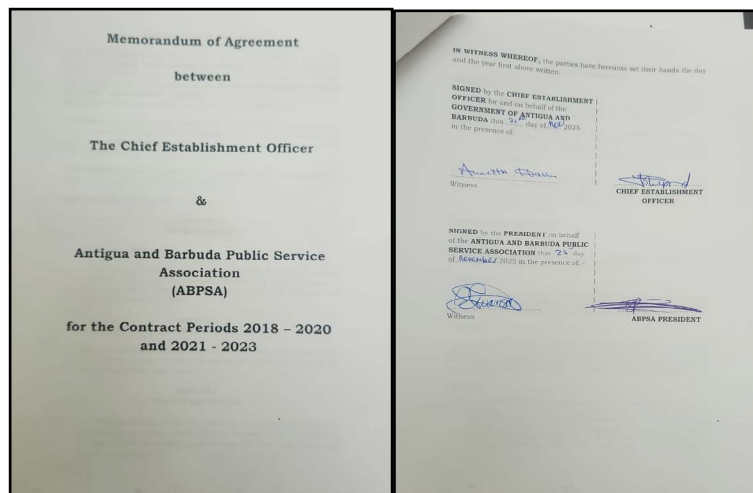
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ABPSA, Government ink retroactive agreement



(Seated) ABPSA President Joan Peters (left) and Chief Establishment Officer, Francia Sheppard (right)
(Standing) ABPSA General Secretary Janela Evanson (left) and Deputy Chief Establishment Officer, Annetta Harris (right)



The Antigua and Barbuda Public Service Association, the recognized trade union that represents established public servants, has signed a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with representatives of the government.

ABPSA General Secretary, Janela Evanson, said the agreement covers the period 2018 to 2023 with negotiations on a CBA for the period 2024-2026 expected to start in the new year.

“Over the life of this agreement, we were able to secure increases amounting to 14 percent for civil servants. For 2018, they received increases amounting to 5 percent, another 5 percent for 2019 and 4 percent for 2020. For 2021 to 2023 we forego increases

because the government indicated that revenues had declined because of the COVID19 pandemic. We agreed to zero percent increases for those years with the understanding that as of January 1, 2024, there would be reclassification of civil servants. That has not happened yet,” Evanson declared.

The ABPSA general secretary expressed disappointment that this aspect of the agreement has not been implemented, and hopes that it receives priority status early in the new year. She said her union is also lobbying the government to amend the Civil Service Act under which civil servants fall. She complained that while the law recognizes the ABPSA as the sole bargaining agent for civil

servants, it does not make provision for the union to receive negotiation fees from civil servants who benefit from its advocacy on their behalf.

“We want to receive a negotiation fee like the trade unions who negotiate for workers in other industries and who must pay the fee as long as they benefit from the agreements negotiated by the union. She said less than half of the civil servants who benefit from the union’s work are members of the union. The majority of civil servants who ben-

efit from the efforts of the union, pay nothing at all to the union,” she explained.

A date for the start of negotiations for the 2024-2026 contract is expected to be announced during the upcoming budget debate.

The 2018-2023 CBA was signed on behalf of the government by Chief Establishment Officer, Francia Sheppard, and her deputy, Annetta Harris with ABPSA President, Joan Peters and General Secretary, Evanson signing on behalf of the union.

Government Holds Interactive Stakeholder Consultation on Price of Goods Bill 2026



The ministries of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs along with the Ministry of Legal Affairs, this week hosted an interactive stakeholder consultation on the Price of Goods Bill, 2026. The session was led by Minister of Trade, E.P. Chet Greene, alongside Chief Parliamentary Counsel, Deniscia Thomas, and Director of the Prices and Consumer Affairs, Orrin Steele.

Over 120 stakeholders, including distributors, retailers and business leaders, attended the consultation at the Parliament Building and shared their feedback on the new Bill, which aims to regulate the distribution and pricing of goods, protect consumer interests, and achieve objectives such as equitable access to essential goods, fair and stable market pricing, and the prevention of hoarding, price gouging, and anti-consumer practices.

In his welcome remarks, Minister Greene stated that the central aim of the Price of Goods Bill, 2026, is to protect consumers.

“The bill is to safeguard consumers from exploitation, ensure price stability during normal and emergency conditions, while at the same time maintaining fair competition and supply chain accountability.”

Steele emphasized that the Bill intends to ensure goods are of high quality and available at fair, reasonable costs, particularly benefiting lower-income consumers. He further explained that the Bill, which is a modern legislation, aims to repeal and replace the outdated Distribution and Price of Goods Act, Cap. 138, which was written 67 years ago.

“There is a need for some level of change and updating” of our pricing and consumer protection frame-

work, and “also to curtail some (unacceptable) behaviours that we are seeing creeping into the market.”

During the discussion, business operators expressed several key concerns, particularly regarding sections of the Bill that grant the Minister the authority to set maximum prices for goods and services.

Before establishing a maximum price, the Department must conduct a market assessment. This includes analyzing service delivery costs, examining market structure, evaluating consumer impact, and consulting with relevant stakeholders. Steele noted that the market assessment will be conducted in collaboration with the Consumer Guidance Council, established under the recently enacted Consumer Protection Act.

Currently, the essential services encompassed by the Bill include utility services,

transportation services, waste management services, and funeral services. However, this list may be expanded by the Minister through an Order.

The issue of dual pricing was another concern raised by business representatives. The Bill stipulates that when multiple prices are displayed, consumers are entitled to pay the lowest price. Suppliers are required to honour this price, thereby eliminating any claims of mislabeling.

Steele explained that “it is the duty of suppliers to ensure the prices on the goods are correct” and noted recurring issues with incorrect pricing. However, stakeholders highlighted the need for allowances for genuine clerical errors or consumer misunderstandings, suggesting reasonable legislative provisions.

Business leaders also voiced concerns about the

Local News



licensing requirements for retailers selling price-controlled goods that are specified on an Order, citing that such provisions could result in additional operational expenses.

The Bill, which seeks to improve accountability and traceability across the supply chain, prohibits a supplier from operating a retail business for the sale of price-controlled goods without a retail licence.

Minister Greene explained that the Bill intends to reorganize business practices in the country, and stressed that “we have to become a more organized, responsible community.

“The Bill ensures that should

something happen within the food chain, for example, it can be traced back to the place of purchase and avoid further damage to our people.”

Referencing manufacturer recalls, Greene noted that “if we don’t have traceability within the system, it means that persons could literally die before we know who is trading the (affected) products.”

While stakeholders recognized the need for supplier accountability, they questioned the necessity of additional licenses and potential tax implications. Minister Greene responded by withdrawing the proposal for a minimal \$20 license fee,

stating that the Prices and Consumer Affairs Division would cover the costs.

Suppliers also expressed concerns about the requirement to provide records and invoices to authorized officers immediately during inspections. They noted that not all outlets may have immediate access to these records, as they are often maintained at headquarters or by personnel with the proper authorization. Recommendations for reasonable adjustments to this requirement were considered, and it was agreed that the timeframe for compliance would be modified to reflect a more reasonable period determined by the Division.

This change was well-received by the participants.

The Bill is part of the government’s comprehensive strategy to reduce the cost of living for the public. This includes the recently enacted Consumer Protection Act and the proposed Competition Bill, which is expected to be presented before the end of the current legislative year.

The public is invited to make recommendations to the Price of Goods Bill 2026, by emailing consumeraffairs@ab.gov.ag; deniscia.thomas@ab.gov.ag or ryan.johnson@ab.gov.ag on or before December 31st, 2025.



Claim Your Keys. Secure Your Land.






Apply today.






SLBMC calls for urgent public HIV awareness campaign to combat high infection rates and youth concerns

As Antigua and Barbuda observes World AIDS Day 2025 (December 1), the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) is urging renewed national attention to HIV awareness, HIV prevention as well as testing and treatment—key tools in reducing new infections and strengthening community health.

Over the past four years, data show a consistent 45–51 new HIV diagnoses annually—a trend that has remained unchanged for more than a decade.

“For a population of about 100,000, this is a concerning high number. We would have hoped to see a decline in new infections, but instead we’re roughly at the same level we were ten years ago,” said Dr. Margrethe Belle, Specialist in Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases and Administrative Head of the Infectious Diseases/Employee Health Division.

Adding to the concern is a notable rise in HIV cases among adolescents aged 15–19, with five cases recorded in 2024, an age group that in previous years saw almost no cases.

“As a nation, one of our greatest responsibilities is to lift the next generation. Seeing this increase among our adolescents is heartbreaking. We need to empower them to make wise decisions and ensure they’re equipped to take charge of their own health,” said Dr. Belle.

SLBMC also reports a rise in individuals admitted with advanced HIV/AIDS—an indication that many people are either not receiving optimal treatment or are being diagnosed late in the course of their illness. Importantly, advanced HIV/AIDS is preventable with early testing and timely, effective treatment.

“It is crucial that every person living with HIV knows they can expect to become virally suppressed within months



Dr. Margrethe Belle, Specialist in Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases and Administrative Head of the Infectious Diseases/Employee Health Division.

of starting treatment. This means the virus becomes very low or undetectable in their blood. When someone remains virally suppressed, they will not become sick or die from HIV, and they cannot transmit the virus sexually. Optimal treatment is essential not only for individuals to live long, healthy lives, but also to reduce new HIV infections in our population,” said Dr. Belle.

While calling for greater public engagement, SLBMC is also underscoring the importance of strong partnerships across the health sector—particularly the vital work of the AIDS Secretariat.

“The partnership with the AIDS Secretariat is essential. We collaborate closely on education and on addressing the challenges we encounter in HIV treatment and care,” said Dr. Belle.

She added that the Secretariat’s outreach programs play a critical role: “When people get tested early—when they understand their risk—that saves lives long before anyone needs a hos-

pital bed.”

Dr. Belle also encourages the public to participate in the AIDS Secretariat’s upcoming World AIDS Day activities. She highlighted the HIV Symposium for the general public at the Multipurpose Centre on October 26 as an excellent opportunity to learn about HIV prevention and the current situation in Antigua and Barbuda. She also urges parents, teachers, and principals to send representatives to Teen Talk on October 28—a daytime event designed specifically for adolescents, offering age-appropriate education and guidance.

Dr. Belle notes that the hospital’s message for World AIDS Day centers around prevention, early diagnosis, and empowerment—not fear.

“HIV is treatable. We should expect people with HIV to live long, full lives. But the only way to benefit from treatment is to know your status. That’s why we fully support the AIDS Secretariat’s continued push for accessible testing, accurate information, and open conversations. Testing regularly for HIV is crucial for persons of all ages, genders and sexual orientations. We should all make it a part of a regular health check.”

The hospital also reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with the Ministry of Health, the AIDS Secretariat, and other national partners to ensure a coordinated, evidence-based response that strengthens prevention, reduces stigma, and improves the quality of care for all people living with HIV.

World AIDS Day is observed annually on December 1. SLBMC extends gratitude to the community organizations, health professionals, and advocates who continue to push for awareness, access, and dignity for those affected.

Antigua Barbuda
**FESTIVALS
COMMISSION**

**11TH JAN
2026
NIGHT TWO**

**ONE
NATION
CARIBBEAN
MUSIC FESTIVAL**

ONE PEOPLE ONE L  VE

**NAOMI RAINE - SAMUEL MEDAS - JOHNMARK WIGGAN
RASHID WALKER - MINISTER BEVERLEY DANVERS - RICHIE PELLE
PSALMIST ROBYN - MADELYN & DUNAMIS WORSHIP - MELONNIE SADLER**

**ANTIGUA
RECREATION
GROUND**

**GEN \$100 | KINGDOM \$250 | TIME:
OF PRAISE ALL INCLUSIVE 5PM**

ticketing
TICKETS AVAILABLE

TICKET LOCATIONS:
**EXOTIC ANTIGUA | ROTI KING | COOL & SMOOTH
THE LARDER | QUINTESSENCE VARIETY PLUS**



ANTIGUAFESTIVALSOFFICIAL



ANTIGUA CARNIVAL

Antigua and Barbuda businesses invited to participate in CAF Business forum, 2026

The Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, CAF, will host more than 205 international buying companies from the United States, Europe, Asia, and Latin America which have already registered for CAF's Latin America and Caribbean Business Matchmaking Forum: Connection to the Global Market, which will take place on January 29 and 30, 2026, at the Panama Convention Centre, Panama City. Exporters from across the Caribbean are encouraged to participate, with the call remaining open until December 22, 2025.

Antigua and Barbuda business people are invited to participate in this unique opportunity to establish business relationships with exporters and suppliers from across the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe and Asia.

This high-level commercial gathering is part of CAF's flagship annual event, the International Economic Forum – Latin America and the Caribbean 2026, which will bring together more than 2,500 business leaders, investors, government authorities, innovators, global experts and international develop-



ment agencies to analyse the region's economic outlook and strategic opportunities and help strengthen its position on the global geopolitical map.

The confirmed buyers come from Germany, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and the Dominican Republic. They are actively seeking suppliers across a wide range of sectors, including agri-food, textiles and apparel, chemicals, manufacturing, cosmetics, software and technology, and construction materials.

CAF expects the forum will host more than 4,000 one-on-one meetings between buyers and 300 exporters from Latin America and the Caribbean. Each

participating entrepreneur will receive between 16 and 28 pre-scheduled meetings, condensing what would usually require several weeks of travel and individual prospecting into just a day and a half. This makes the Forum an especially valuable opportunity for Caribbean businesses seeking to scale exports, access new markets, or diversify trading partners.

"This Business Roundtable is a concrete opportunity for entrepreneurs from Latin America and the Caribbean," said Sergio Díaz-Granados, Executive President of CAF. "In addition to participating in the plenary sessions of the International Economic Forum on the challenges and opportunities of the region, companies will be able to establish commercial and business partnerships with buyers who are actively

looking for products and services from our region in strategic sectors such as agribusiness, manufacturing and technology."

By integrating the Business Roundtable into the International Economic Forum, CAF is ensuring that high-level dialogue leads to tangible business outcomes for participants. The Forum's agenda covers trade and investment flows, air connectivity and tourism, artificial intelligence, clean energy, sustainable mining, and the energy transition, topics that are particularly relevant for the region.

Registration and participation in the Business Matchmaking Forum are free for entrepreneurs, and all exporting companies that register will receive access to professional matchmaking services that align supply with demand, special discounts on airfare and hotel accommodation, and dedicated follow-up support to help advance the commercial opportunities generated during the event.

Exporting companies from across the Caribbean and Latin America can register at www.matchmaking-forum-caf.com until December 22, 2025. Space is limited.

Twenty-Eight Graduate from the Assistive Nursing Personnel Programme



Health Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph, and PS Ministry of Health, Stacey Gregg-Paige at Tuesday's graduation exercises

Twenty-eight individuals graduated on Tuesday evening from the Nursing Assisting Personnel Programme during a ceremony held at the Multi-Purpose Cultural and Exhibition Centre.

The Class of 2025 comprised twenty-one (21) females and seven (7) males. Miss Yannick O'Garro was named the Valedictorian for her outstanding academic performance during the six-month training programme.

Attendees heard remarks from Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph; featured speaker Dr. Karen Josiah; Programme Coordinator Elnora

Warner; and Permanent Secretary, Stacey Gregg-Paige.

Speakers commended the graduates on completing the programme and emphasized the important role Nursing Assisting Personnel play in supporting healthcare delivery.

The ceremony also featured a musical performance of "There Can Be Miracles" by local vocalist, Suzetta Hamilton. The Ministry of Health extends congratulations to all graduates and looks forward to their contribution to healthcare services across Antigua and Barbuda.



Senior nursing officials at the graduation exercises



Several young men were among the 28 new nursing assisting graduation class 2025



National Dialogue to Advance the Food System Transformation Pathway for Antigua and Barbuda



Government officials, UN partners, farmers, civil society, and private-sector stakeholders gathered at the Royalton Antigua Wednesday morning to assess progress and identify priority actions.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the United Nations Resident Coordinators Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean convened a National Dialogue to Advance the Foods System Transformation Pathway for Antigua and Barbuda on 26th November, 2025.

This initiative according to National Convener, Miss Joy-Marie King, Director of International Trade within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs engaged “a wide cross section of stakeholders including senior government officials, civil society, the private sector, farmers and fishers with a mandate to review the progress made thus far on a zero draft pathway document, identify the existing gaps therein, and collectively shape actionable steps that will strengthen our National Foods System Pathway”.

During the engagement's call to order, H.E Dr. Clarence Pilgrim, Permanent Secretary within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, underscored the importance of an inclusive and participatory process—one that reflects the needs,

voices, and aspirations of all who contribute to and depend on our food system leaving no one behind.

Welcome remarks were table by Honourable Anthony Smith, Minister of Agriculture, Land, Fisheries and the Blue Economy where he outlined the key outcomes of the National Food System Transformation Pathway to include:

- “To influence consumer behavior toward safe and healthy local food,
- Increase production of nutritious food in an environmentally sustainable manner,
- Improve livelihoods across the value chain, especially for women and youth,
- And strengthened resilience against climate change and other vulnerabilities.”

The featured remarks of the dialogue were given by the Hon. E.P Chet Greene, Minister of Foreign Affairs where he emphasized “the importance of the pathway under consideration aiding Antigua and Barbuda in align-

ing its national actions and priorities with the global Sustainable Developing Goals Agenda while tailoring workable solutions to the local realities including limited land space, climate risks, high import dependence, and the need for innovation and partnerships.”

He further added, “for small island developing states like Antigua and Barbuda, foods system transformation is crucial for promoting affordable foods and reducing vulnerability including to global price shocks, strengthening resilience to climate impacts, increasing local food production, improving health outcomes, creating sustainable livelihoods, lowering food import bills and advancing national development priorities.”

Minister Greene also hammered home the need to support, consume and safeguard local food produce including the Antigua Black Pineapple as it is always a healthier choice. He stressed that nutrition security is as important as food security.

Additionally, Greene added that our farmers and fishers are on the front-lines of climate change and gave the commitment of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to adequately equip them with the necessary tools, training and technologies necessary to adapt and thrive.

In closing, Minister Greene encouraged participants to engage in bold thinking, collaborative planning and outcomes that are actionable.

The outcomes of today's dialogue will be captured in the revised pathway document which will then seek the blessings of the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda prior to implementation.

Antigua Barbuda
**FESTIVALS
COMMISSION**

**10TH JAN
2026**
NIGHT ONE



ONE PEOPLE ONE L VE

MASICKA - CAPLETON - BURNING FLAMES
TIAN WINTER - CLAUDETTE PETERS - MR VEGAS - CHRISTOPHER MARTIN
GRAMPS MORGAN - SHELLY & SIGNAL BAND

**ANTIGUA
RECREATION
GROUND**

GEN \$100 | REGGAE KINGDOM \$375 | TIME: 8PM



TICKET LOCATIONS:
EXOTIC ANTIGUA | ROTI KING
COOL & SMOOTH | THE LARDER

ANTIGUAFESTIVALSOFFICIAL **ANTIGUA CARNIVAL**

Operators of the Victory Centre make appeal following a break-in

The operators of the Victory Centre located on Nugent Avenue are making an appeal for public support for assistance following a break-in at the facility last week.

In a media statement, the organisers say several essential items used in the education and care of their students were stolen during the break-in.

From an initial assessment, the items taken include:

- * Air conditioners from multiple classrooms
- * Two televisions
- * Two speakers
- * An ice maker
- * Seven tablets
- * Two 5-gallon water bottles
- * One transformer

“These items are vital to our daily operations, classroom environment, and the wellbeing of the students we serve. Their loss has placed an unexpected strain on our small school community.

“Since its inception in 2012, Victory Center has supported the education and development of more than 40 children with special needs, including students with Autism, Down Syndrome, ADHD, developmental delays, and various learning disabilities. Our model prioritizes small, ability-based classes, a holistic curriculum, and individualized support to ensure every child can learn, grow,



and thrive,” the statement revealed.

It said many of the students have remained with facility long-term, while others have successfully transitioned back into government schools after acquiring critical academic, social, and emotional skills. Every piece of equipment in the classrooms plays a direct role in helping these children access the learning environment they deserve.

“We are asking anyone who may have information about the stolen items to come forward, whether directly to the authorities or confidentially through the school. We also welcome anyone in the community

who may be willing to assist us in replacing the equipment, whether through donations of similar items, financial support, or partnerships.

“Acts of generosity, whether big or small, help ensure that our students are not further disadvantaged and that their learning journey continues uninterrupted,” the release indicated.

To learn more about The Victory Center or to assist them in recovering or replacing these items, please contact them through any of the following:

Facebook: The Victory Center Antigua



268 736 7165

Open Daily -
7:00am - 11:30pm



-  Thursdays, 7:30pm - Karaoke
-  Saturdays, 8pm - Live Band
-  Breakfast served from 7:30am
-  Games Night - COMING SOON!



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORTS AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

**THE DEPARTMENT OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES REMINDS EVERYONE THAT THE
CHRISTMAS HOME AND BUSINESS LIGHTING COMPETITION 2025 REGISTRATION IS
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.

Local News

Attempted break-in at ECAB Thames Street branch

Police are searching for the suspect (s) who attempted to break into the ECAB Branch on Thames Street early Tuesday morning.

Around 4:35 a.m., officers were alerted after the bank's security alarm was triggered, prompting security personnel to check the building. During the inspection, two masked men were seen exiting a southern push-up window, while a third suspect was observed standing outside.

Further examination revealed that the intruders



broke a glass window in an apparent attempt to gain access to other areas of the building, but were unsuccessful. Nothing was report-

ed stolen.

The suspects were all dressed in dark clothing with their faces concealed.

Two of the men are estimated to be approximately 5 ft. 9 in. in height, while the third is believed to be about 5 ft. 6 in.

It was further reported that the suspects fled the scene in a white Toyota Vitz motor car.

The police are appealing to anyone with information that may assist in the investigation to contact the Criminal Investigations Department at 462-3913 or call the Crimestoppers anonymous hotline at 800-TIPS (8477).



DAILY PROGRAMMING



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

THE RUSH HOUR SHOW 5PM-7PM MON. - FRI.
WITH ROGER LAKE 6AM-9AM SATURDAYS

TOUCHLINE 7PM-9PM MON. - THURS.
WITH EPILUS

BAD COMPANY 2PM-6PM THURS. 12PM-4PM SATURDAYS
LIVE FROM THE V.I. & 1PM-5PM ON SUNDAYS

REGGAE INSPIRATION 9PM-12AM MON. THURS. SUNDAY
WITH SELECTOR KEEGAN

JAH WADADLI 7PM-9PM FRIDAYS
WITH DJ JAH WADADLI

27th November

Happy Birthday



Caleb Gardiner

Have a fantastic birthday! May all
your dreams come true.



Rika Bird & Associates
Attorneys-At-Law & Notary Public

In Chambers
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November 26, 2025

By email and Certified mail

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Dear Sirs,

We act for and behalf of Mr. Gaston Browne personally and in his capacity as the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and Minister of Finance and Corporate Governance.

Our Client is a widely known regional leader and political figure who has championed many regional and international issues including, Climate Change, Reparations, Mental Health, Youth Development, and Reform of the International Financial architecture among others. He is the Chairman of the SIDS Commission on Climate Change and International Law that obtained a favorable advisory opinion on climate from the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. Our Client has chaired a United Nations expert group on the development of the Multi-dimensional Vulnerability Index.



Our Client is also currently a governor of the World Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank, and a member of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank Monetary Council. Presently, he is the Incoming Chair in office for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2026, which will be held in Antigua and Barbuda and the Chairman in office for Small Island States - Antigua & Barbuda Agenda for SIDS. Our client also currently serves as the Chairman of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. He is an international speaker in many regional, hemispheric and international bodies including: United Nations, Organization of American States, CELAC, CARICOM, and Conferences of the Parties (COP), among others.

Our client has instructed us that on or about March 11, 2025 and thereafter, in relation to the sale of the yacht styled *Alpha Nero* Attorney Martin DeLuca representing Yulia Guryeva-Motlokhova as an agent and employee of Boies, Schiller, Flexner made several statements that were directed towards our Client. Following are the statements made by Mr. DeLuca which are highly defamatory and the subject of this correspondence:

(1) On the Sale of *Alfa Nero* and Financial Transparency

“The disappearance of millions from the sale of the *Alfa Nero* is just the beginning.”

You made this statement in connection with a U.S. federal court filing seeking access to financial records of Antigua and Barbuda officials, including our Client, his wife, their son, the Accountant General, and the Ports Manager, as well as twelve (12) other entities. The filing alleges a lack of transparency in the US\$40 million sale of the *Alfa Nero* yacht, which was initially valued at US\$120 million. You added to the foregoing statement that the discovery seeks to uncover whether any alleged backroom deals for personal enrichment took place.¹ The clear imputation of this statement is that our Client is guilty of corruption, misappropriation of public funds, fraud, and/or misfeasance in public office.

(2) On the Alleged Sale Price of *Alfa Nero* (March, 2025)

“The question is simple: did the government really sell *Alfa Nero* for just \$40m when all bids in the public auction were much higher than that – or is that just what was officially recorded.”

¹ Sources: Associated Press (AP News), March 12, 2025; ABC News, March 11, 2025; Antigua Observer Newspaper, March 12, 2025; Newsweek, March 12, 2025. See following links: <https://apnews.com/article/antigua-russia-yacht-alfa-nero-guryev-bac7a1c879b9cf0814adacf39845658d>; <https://antiguaobserver.com/yulia-guryeva-motlokhov-turns-to-us-court-seeking-financial-disclosure-following-the-sale-of-alfa-nero/>



You made this statement in an email to the publication known as *Superyacht Investor*, questioning the reported US\$40 million sale price of the *Alfa Nero* yacht to a Turkish buyer in July 2024, especially since earlier bids, such as one from former Google CEO Eric Schmidt for \$67 million, were significantly higher.² Again, the clear imputation of this statement is that our Client is guilty of corruption, misappropriation of public funds, fraud, and/or misfeasance in public office.

(3) On Allegations of Lack of Transparency and Political Motivations (March 18, 2025)

“This isn’t about politics. It’s about following the money. Browne’s personal attacks won’t change the fact that real financial records — not his statements — will expose what happened to the Alfa Nero proceeds.”

You responded to our client’s dismissal of allegations that his administration lacked transparency in the sale of the *Alfa Nero*. This statement was made to the Associated Press following a New York federal judge’s decision on March 17, 2025, to grant permission for subpoenas to access financial records of our client and other officials.³ Once again, the clear imputation of this statement is that our Client is guilty of corruption, misappropriation of public funds, fraud, and/or misfeasance in public office.

The foregoing statements in their natural and ordinary meaning, and in context, are understood to mean and otherwise infer that our Client in the discharge of his public office as the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Corporate Governance dishonestly, corruptly and illegally appropriated millions of dollars from the sale of the vessel to and for his personal benefit, and therefore committed the criminal offences of corruption, breach of his fiduciary duties, fraud and misfeasance in public office contrary to law including the relevant anti-corruption Acts of Antigua and Barbuda.

These statements were made by Mr. DeLuca intentionally to harm the reputation of our Client and/or recklessly without first seeking comments from our Client or presenting the allegations upon which you purported to rely on, before making your baseless comments.

Further, your utterances and harm done to our Client were aggravated by the fact that you, as Counsel for a litigant, a member of a prestigious law firm, and an officer of the court, leveraged your professional standing to deliberately lend unwarranted credibility to these false and malicious allegations.

² Source: Superyacht Investor, March 20, 2025. See following link:
<https://www.superyachtinvestor.com/news/antigua-to-challenge-us-jurisdiction-over-alfa-nero-sale/>

³ Source: AP News, March 18, 2025; Newsday, March 18, 2025;
<https://www.newsday.com/news/nation/antigua-yacht-russia-browne-m27024;>



Further, our Client has noted your reliance on the without notice order made in relation to the subpoenas. However, you failed to mention that the subpoenas were subsequently discharged and set aside by the learned Judge. Any implication of wrongdoing based on that initial order is therefore null and void. We are further instructed that your multiple allegations that our Client appropriated millions of dollars from the sale of the *Alfa Nero* yacht as alleged or at all, are patently false and highly defamatory of our Client. More importantly, your defamatory statements were made, published and re-published internationally and in Antigua and Barbuda despite the repeated denials by our Client to include the following publications:

DEFAMATORY REPUBLICATION AND AMPLIFICATION

1. Associated Press (AP News)

March 11, 2025: Reported that attorneys for Yulia Guryeva-Motlokhov, including Martin De Luca, filed a U.S. federal court motion in Puerto Rico seeking financial records of our Client, his wife, son, and other officials, alleging a lack of transparency in the \$40 million *Alfa Nero* sale, initially valued at \$120 million. The article quotes you Mr. De Luca: *"The disappearance of millions from the sale of the Alfa Nero is just the beginning,"* implying that our Client and/or his administration may have misappropriated funds.

<https://antiguaobserver.com/pm-threatens-legal-action-over-alfa-nero-sale-allegations-one-media-entity-retracts-article/>

<https://financialpost.com/pm/us-attorneys-for-a-russian-woman-seeking-to-recover-a-megayacht-target-antigua>

March 18, 2025: Quoted you Mr. De Luca stating, *"This isn't about politics. It's about following the money. Browne's personal attacks won't change the fact that real financial records — not his statements — will expose what happened to the Alfa Nero proceeds,"* suggesting our Client's claims of transparency are unreliable and implying potential financial misconduct. <https://financialpost.com/pm/us-attorneys-for-a-russian-woman-seeking-to-recover-a-megayacht-target-antigua>

The AP articles report on the court filing and your statements, presenting them as part of Guryeva-Motlokhov's legal challenge. The allegations are amplified by quoting you Mr. De Luca and detailing the subpoena request targeting our Client's finances.

2. Antigua Observer Newspaper

March 12, 2025: Reported on the AP story, repeating your claim that *"the disappearance of millions from the sale of the Alfa Nero is just the beginning"* and noting the subpoena request targeting our Client and others, implying potential misconduct in the sale. <https://antiguaobserver.com/pm-threatens-legal-action-over-alfa-nero-sale-allegations-one-media-entity-retracts-article/>



July 26, 2024: Quoted [Government] Opposition Attorney, Leon Symister, expressing concern about the sale price (\$40 million vs. \$120 million valuation or Eric Schmidt’s \$67.6 million bid), stating, *“We have had a plethora of incidents, and mismanagement of our resources by this government,”* implying that our Client’s administration mishandled or undervalued the sale for improper reasons. <https://antiguaobserver.com/alfa-nero-proceeds-already-spent-on-debts-government-dubs-lawsuit-by-claimed-owner-frivolous/>

Undated (When Silence Speaks, Part III): Stated, *“Court filings exist—real ones—lodged in the United States, naming Gaston Browne directly in connection to the Alfa Nero sale,”* and criticized our Client for not resigning despite allegations, implying he is avoiding accountability for potential misconduct. The article questions the transparency of the sale and suggests our Client’s involvement in a scandal. <https://antiguaobserver.com/when-silence-speaks-part-iii-the-resignations-he-asked-for-and-the-one-he-wont-offer/>

The Antigua Observer covered the *Alfa Nero* case extensively, often quoting opposition figures or court filings that challenge our Client’s handling of the sale.

3. Yahoo News

March 11, 2025: Republished the AP article, including your statement, *“The disappearance of millions from the sale of the Alfa Nero is just the beginning,”* and details of the subpoena request targeting our Client’s financial records, implying potential financial misconduct. <https://financialpost.com/pmn/us-attorneys-for-a-russian-woman-seeking-to-recover-a-megayacht-target-antigua>

March 18, 2025: Our Client was quoted stating, *“She [Guryeva-Motlokhov] and her attorneys have made scandalous, malicious and entirely false accusations in order to further her illicit ends. The principal targets of her defamatory comments have been myself, and members of my family,”* acknowledging the allegations’ defamatory nature while repeating the context of the subpoena request, which implies our Client’s involvement in questionable dealings. Your damaging claims continued to be disseminated.

4. Newsweek

March 12, 2025: Reported on the U.S. court filing, stating that Guryeva-Motlokhov’s attorneys sought financial records of the Client and others, quoting your *“disappearance of millions”* statement, and noting the yacht’s \$120 million valuation versus the \$40 million sale price, thereby implying potential financial misconduct or corruption. Newsweek’s coverage presented your statements as reflecting credible claims in a high-profile case.



5. Antigua News Room

April 27, 2025: Reported our Client's defense against allegations that "US\$10 million went missing" from the *Alfa Nero* sale, quoting him dismissing the claims as "utter rubbish" and our Client accusing [Government] Opposition figures of colluding with foreign actors to fabricate corruption claims. The article's mention of the \$10 million allegation, even while quoting our Client's rebuttal, repeats the implication of financial misconduct. <https://antiguanewsroom.com/browne-defends-integrity-dismisses-10m-alfa-nero-allegations-as-fabricated-nonsense/>

July 21, 2024: Quoted our Client, "An entity plans to challenge the government in court next week to seize the \$40 million collected from the sale of the *Alfa Nero*," and included reader comments calling our Client a "dictator" and accusing him of "stealing" the yacht, implying greed or corruption. <https://antiguanewsroom.com/pm-says-an-entity-is-planning-to-go-to-court-to-seize-alfa-nero-40m-payment/>

Antigua News Room covers local reactions and our Client's statements, but by repeating allegations of missing funds and publishing inflammatory reader comments, it amplifies potentially defamatory claims.

We are further instructed that notwithstanding our Client's denials of your allegations, you continued to make false allegations against our Client, and therefore maliciously compounded the damage he has already suffered because of your intentional or reckless statements. Your continued and repeated publication of these demonstrably false allegations across numerous platforms (including publications in Antigua and Barbuda) evidences an intent to cause unwarranted professional and personal damage to our Client. You repeatedly posted malicious statements about our Client with the intent to cause maximum damage to him both personal and professionally in every possible forum you could find to repeat your baseless statements.

The statements are:

On or about March 11, 2025, you posted the following statement on the platform X (formerly known as Twitter), that is to say:

"Antiguan Prime Minister @gastonbrowne gov't seized a \$120M yacht, called it "abandoned," & sold it for pennies. Millions vanished.

Now, we seek to uncover the financial web behind this scandal & Browne's ties to foreign interests hostile to the U.S."



On or about March 14, 2025, you posted the following on the platform X (formerly known as Twitter), that is to say:

"@gastonbrowne won't show up in U.S. court-but he's ready to threaten defamation lawsuits against anyone questioning his secret below-market sale of a misappropriated \$120M yacht.

*Too bad for him, financial records don't lie.
Caribbean.loopnews.com/content/antigu..."*

On or about March 17, 2025, you posted the following on the platform X (formerly known as Twitter), that is to say:

"A leaked U.S. travel ban draft names Antigua over lack of transparency, the same issue of the Alfa Nero corruption scandal. Seems like @gastonbrowne corruption may drag every Antiguan passport holder down."

On or about March 17, 2025, you further posted the following on the platform X (formerly known as Twitter), that is to say:

"A U.S. federal judge has granted full discovery into the Alfa Nero scandal, forcing @gastonbrowne to face real scrutiny.

No more dodging, no more defamation threats-the evidence will speak for itself."

On or about April 1, 2025, you posted the following statement on the platform X (formerly known as Twitter), that is to say:

"For years, Antigua was sold to the highest bidder-passports, banking licences, diplomatic posts, all handed to criminals while its people were told to stay quiet.

*Now, Antiguanans are demanding better and the world should stand with them."
From antiguantrumpet.com"*

Our Client, therefore, believes that you intended or recklessly calculated that it would resound to your client's and your personal benefit at the expense of our Client, by exposing him to hatred, contempt and public ridicule personally, and as the holder of the Office of Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and Minister of Finance and Corporate Governance.



Your statements have caused our Client severe financial and reputational harm. This is unacceptable to him.

In the circumstances, our Client demands that you immediately:

1. Cease to have any of your false allegations published;
2. Cause the words complained of to be removed from all the above-mentioned publications;
3. Cease and desist from further publishing these or similar allegations concerning our Client in any forum or manner;
4. Issue an apology to our Client in terms to be approved by us, on and in all the above-mentioned publications over the electronic/social media, and on the front page of *The Daily Observer Newspaper* and all other above-mentioned newspapers;
5. Compensate our Client in the appropriate sum of US\$10 million for the damage he has suffered.
6. Pay Attorneys' fees and costs on an indemnity basis.

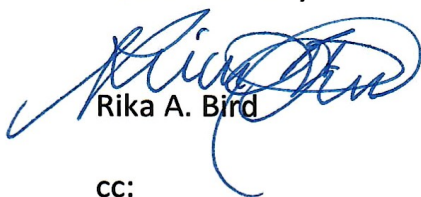
It must be clearly understood that it is not our intention to restrict or censor your legitimate right to defend your client. However, our Client simply cannot allow you to use, or continue to use allegations which are completely baseless, patently and absolutely false, and which he has consistently denied.

Please also note that given you were at all material times acting as an employee and agent of Boies Schiller Flexner LLP, our Client intends to hold Boies Schiller Flexner LLP vicariously liable for your actions. The said law firm shall, therefore, be made a co-party to any contemplated lawsuit.

Do be advised that should you fail to act as demanded our Client will institute proceedings to seek compensation on the footing of aggravated damages and costs against you, Boies Schiller Flexner LLP and every person or entity responsible for publishing the statements with the words complained of by our Client.

In the meantime, our client reserves all rights in respect of any further allegation which may be made by you.

Yours faithfully



Rika A. Bird

cc:

Honourable Gaston Browne, Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Corporate Governance



WISH joins 16 Days of Activism campaign

The Wadadli Initiative for Self-care and Healing (WISH) has joined the global community in launching the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, under this year's UNiTE campaign theme: "UNiTE to End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls."

As digital abuse rapidly becomes one of the most widespread and harmful forms of gender-based violence, 2025's theme emphasizes the urgent need to address online harassment, image-based abuse, cyberstalking, deepfake pornography, doxxing, and the growing manipulation of digital tools to harm women and girls.

The 16-day campaign, running from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day), is a powerful reminder that gender-based violence, online or offline, is not a "private matter" but a public health crisis, a human

rights issue, and a profound threat to mental wellbeing.

This year's theme underscores how digital violence disproportionately affects women with public visibility, including activists, journalists, women in politics,

creators, and young women navigating social media spaces. It also highlights that online abuse often leads to offline harm, including coercion, intimidation, physical violence, and long-term psychological trauma.



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Package Breakdown
Feature Details

- Spot Count** 66 total spots over 6 weeks (11 per week)
- Spot Length** 15 sec
- Air Time** Between 8 AM and 10 PM (prime listening hours)
- Rotation** Evenly distributed across weekdays and weekends
- Bonus Mentions** 6 festive shout-outs during Christmas week
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WISH's 2025 focus aligns with the global call to strengthen digital safety, challenge harmful online behaviours, and demand accountability from platforms, institutions, and systems that enable abuse.

"We cannot speak honestly about mental health in Antigua and Barbuda without confronting the reality of gender-based violence, especially the digital forms that are becoming harder to escape," said Chaneil Imhoff, Founder of WISH. "Every day, women and girls are navigating cyberbullying, threats, image-based abuse, and online humiliation that follow them everywhere they go. Digital violence leaves deep emotional scars and can lead to real-life harm. This year's 16 Days of Activism is a call to break that silence, centre survivors, and build systems that protect rather than punish."

Throughout the 16 Days, WISH will be using its platforms to amplify the voices of survivors, advocates, and digital rights champions working to create safer online spaces.

WISH is also encouraging workplaces, schools, parents, youth groups, faith-based institutions, and community leaders to take action by:

- ▶ Hosting digital-safety conversations and training sessions.
- ▶ Reviewing policies around online harassment, data protection, and reporting mechanisms.
- ▶ Supporting organizations that provide counselling, legal sup-

port, and psychosocial care to survivors of digital violence.

"Ending gender-based violence, whether online or offline, is not the responsibility of survivors but the responsibility of all of us," Imhoff added. "We need families who listen and believe, workplaces that protect, institutions that act, and communities that refuse to normalise online abuse. If we say we care about mental health, then we must also care about the digital environments that are causing harm. This is the moment for us to move from awareness to action."

WISH is urging the public to use the 16 Days to educate themselves, speak up safely, and stand

in solidarity with survivors, while remembering that digital safety is essential to gender equality.

"These 16 days are a catalyst, but our commitment must be year-round," said Imhoff. "Our vision is a society where no one has to choose between their safety, their sanity, and their survival. Antigua and Barbuda can be that place, but only if we decide together that violence has no home here."

Members of the public are invited to follow WISH's social media pages (<https://www.instagram.com/wishwadadli>) for resources, stories, and digital safety tools, as well as practical steps to support survivors and challenge harmful online norms.



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Tropical Shipping turns Storytime into a learning voyage



On Wednesday 26th November 2025 the Tropical Shipping Sales Team visited Foundation Mixed School to read 'Tropic Al's Orange' to a lively group of 3rd Grade Students. The session was designed to introduce students to the journey of goods from farm to table while highlighting the role of shipping and teamwork in connecting communities. The atmosphere was warm, energetic, and full of curiosity.

The session made logistics tangible and relatable. Children left with a clearer sense that everyday items trav-

el long distances and that people behind the scenes make those journeys possible. The story sparked questions about how goods reach different islands—conversations that can be extended into classroom lessons on geography, community helpers, and supply chains. "Seeing young learners connect the dots between farms, ports, and their own kitchens is exactly why we bring Tropical Shipping into schools."

The Tropical Shipping team described the visit as rewarding and informative.

They noted how effective simple storytelling and interactive moments are for explaining complex systems to young learners.

Today's reading session at Foundation Mixed School was a hands-on lesson in connection, care, and teamwork. Tropical Shipping's visit helped the children see how many people and steps are involved in bringing a single orange to someone's hands, and it planted seeds for future curiosity about how the world is linked by trade and transport.



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Regional News

Dominican Republic braces for tourist surge as Hurricane Melissa disrupts travel to Jamaica and other destinations

The Dominican Republic is set to see a surge in visitors as Hurricane Melissa's devastation across sections of Jamaica, The Bahamas, Cuba and Haiti has forced travellers to reroute to that country, according to chairman of the Civil Aviation Board, Héctor Porcella.

Porcella told Dominican media that his agency has authorised more than 800 emergency and regular charter flights to handle the unexpected demand, as travellers with bookings in storm-affected destinations are being rerouted to the Dominican Republic during the height of the tourist season.

"All that tourism is redirecting towards the Dominican Republic," Porcella said, noting that thousands of travellers can no longer be accommodated in their original destinations due to widespread hotel closures, infrastructure collapse and supply-chain delays affecting reconstruction efforts.

The shift comes as these Caribbean destinations struggle to recover from Melissa, which caused unprecedented damage.

Jamaica, in particular, has seen significant losses in service capacity, with some of the island's largest hotels not expected to reopen until between May and December 2026.



Among the properties facing extended delays are those operated by Decameron, which today confirmed that it has been forced to push its Jamaican reopening to January 31, 2026.

The company said it has been unable to secure the materials and equipment needed for reconstruction due to logistical constraints.

"As of today, we do not have official information that would allow us to confirm a projected reopening date," the hotel group stated.

"New travel dates may be rescheduled up to February 28, 2026."

Decameron guests are being offered full refund should they decide to cancel or the option of selecting a sister property in Mexico or Panama.

This re-routing of Decameron guests adds to the mounting pressure on Jamaica's recovering tourism sector, which is already grappling with reduced arrivals, disrupted airlift and the temporary month-long shutdown of several major resorts.

Tourism officials say the redirection of traffic to the Dominican Republic, one of the Caribbean's largest hotel markets, underscores

the competitive vulnerabilities Jamaica faces as it rebuilds.

While the country remains open for business and some attractions have resumed operations, airlift remains limited and recovery timelines vary widely across properties and parishes.

As the winter season approaches, the Dominican Republic is positioning itself as the primary alternative for displaced visitors, raising concerns about potential long-term market share shifts if Jamaica's recovery stalls. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Pregnant Haitian woman remanded on illegal entry charge, partner granted bail

A pregnant Haitian woman who reportedly entered Jamaica illegally and was arrested while seeking medical attention was remanded, while her partner, who is a Jamaican, was granted \$200,000 bail in the St Catherine Parish Court on Tuesday.

Twenty-three-year-old Sophania Guersaaint of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, was charged with illegal entry, while Sheldon Gordon is charged with aiding and abetting illegal entry.

When Guersaaint and Gordon appeared before Acting Senior Parish Court Judge Janelle Nelson-Gayle, lawyers told the court that Guersaaint would not enter a plea.

A legal representative for the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency told the court that it would take a while for the agency to confirm her identity through the Haitian Liaison Office, therefore, Guersaaint would be placed at the South Camp Adult Correctional Centre to facilitate the process.

The court was told that the accused's younger sister is in state care and that her mother is at the South Camp Road facility, therefore, it would be an easier process.

It is alleged that the accused illegally



landed in Portland and subsequently went to meet "friends" in Hellshire.

While in Hellshire, she met Gordon and their relationship resulted in her becoming pregnant. She was held as she sought medical attention.

Investigating Officer, Detective Constable Tanair Calder said members of the St Catherine South Proactive Investigation Unit were alerted by the

Greater Portmore Health Centre on November 14, 2025.

This was after it was revealed that Guersaaint couldn't communicate in English.

Investigations resulted in the arrest of Gordon.

Guersaaint was subsequently charged with illegal entry and Gordon with aiding and abetting. (Jamaica Gleaner)

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Holness announces funding for National Cleanup Programme

Prime Minister Dr Andrew Holness has announced a budgetary allocation of \$10 million has been approved for each constituency across Jamaica as part of the National Cleanup Programme, following the passage of Hurricane Melissa.

Holness says \$2 million of the total would be for drain cleaning and vector control, \$5 million for debushing and \$3 million for debris and waste removal.

He says additional funds will be allocated for the 16 most affected constituencies



across Westmoreland, Trelawny, Hanover, St James and St Elizabeth.

An allocation of \$150,000 has also been set aside for each councillor in the 63 constituencies.

Holness says between 100 and 200 people would be employed per constituency under the national cleanup effort, with the Social Development Commission set to organise and supervise these individuals.

Speaking in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, Holness noted that it is estimated that the hurricane left 4.8 million tonnes of debris across Jamaica. He said it was further estimated that it was equivalent to about 480,000 standard truck loads. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Thousands of Cubans struggle without power and water nearly a month after Hurricane Melissa

Thousands of Cubans remain without power, water or proper shelter almost a month after Hurricane Melissa pumelled the island's eastern region as one of the strongest Atlantic storms in history.

By day, families walk toward the nearest river to fill plastic containers with water and by night, they squeeze together to sleep under temporary shelters and tents.

"We lost everything in the flood," 80-year-old Lucía García said. "I am very depressed and very sad here."

García is living in a small classroom with her two sons, ages 45 and 55, and her ailing 81-year-old husband, who remains bedridden.

The school where they're staying in the town of Río Cauto serves as a shelter for 14 families and is providing daily meals to them and 25 other families living with relatives and neighbours. Water delivery trucks pass by every three or four days.

Many of the town's residents lived by

the river and lost their homes after Melissa cut through eastern Cuba, forcing nearby dams to release huge amounts of water.

More than 2,300 people were evacuated from the Río Cauto area, with more than 750 staying in private homes, according to a November 10 report published in the official newspaper, Granma.

It claimed that the return of residents to their homes "has been completed."

Major damage also was reported in the nearby town of Los Mangos, where residents said massive floods hit a day after the storm made landfall.

"By dawn, the entire village was underwater," recalled Anisleydis Hidalgo.

"We were evacuated before the hurricane hit," she said. "When we returned home, they came to tell us there would be flooding...but no one expected the water to reach the level it did."

She is living in a military-style tent with her 5-year-old daughter and two

other families.

Lianet Socarras, a social worker from Los Mangos, said that 58 people, including 30 children, are sharing 10 tents donated by the government of India.

"The most critical problem we have now is the supply of drinking water in the community," she said, noting that there is none.

Power outages are constant in Guamá, and officials from the National Electric Union warned that repairs could take until mid-December.

But patience is running out.

Residents in the town of El Carmen recently blocked a main highway with fallen trees and electrical posts, noting they had been without electricity — even before Melissa hit.

"Everyone wants electricity, and we are working tirelessly to achieve this," said Alfredo López, director general of the National Electric Union, in a heated discussion with residents in the middle of the blocked road. (AP)

Bolivia's new president plans to scrap taxes and borrow money to confront economic crisis

President Rodrigo Paz of Bolivia said Tuesday he planned to scrap a ream of taxes, in one of his first moves since becoming the nation's first conservative leader in nearly two decades in a bid to rescue a crisis-stricken economy.

Just over two weeks since taking office, Paz also announced his government would slash 30 per cent of total federal spending from Bolivia's 2026 budget to reverse years of populist economic measures taken under the long-ruling Movement Toward Socialism, or MAS, party. He did not give further details on how his government would make such deep cuts.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Paz said he was proposing to repeal Bolivia's national wealth tax, arguing that it had crippled growth and discouraged billions of dollars in investments since being imposed by his left-wing predecessor, former President Luis Arce.

Another levy on the chopping block is Bolivia's 0.3 per cent tax on everyday financial transactions, Paz said, something that long motivated Bolivians to keep clear of the formal banking system and instead stash their savings under mattresses and floorboards.

"We are giving the first signs of security that the country requires," Paz said. "We are paving the way for economic activity."

The bills to remove the taxes must be sent to Congress for approval before taking effect. Business leaders were already thrilled.

"The persecution of the private sector is ending," said Klaus Freking from the country's main agricultural chamber. "It is the beginning of legal certainty."

But Paz and his Economy Minister José Gabriel Espinoza said Tuesday that, for now, their government wouldn't touch the pillars of Bolivia's economic model under the MAS par-



ty — specifically, the country's fuel subsidies that keep its retail price of gasoline among the world's cheapest, as well as its fixed exchange rate that became distorted as the country's central bank ran out of US dollars.

"The president is starting off on the right foot, aiming to generate better investments," said Bolivian economic analyst Gonzalo Chávez. "But he's not addressing the core problems."

Paz is sticking to his campaign promise of deploying gradual measures — as opposed to a shock fiscal adjustment of the kind that Bolivians have known and feared since the 1990s — to dig Bolivia out of its worst financial crisis in four decades.

While major challenges remain and doubts linger, there are already signs that the medicine is taking effect. The endemic lines that snaked from fuel pumps across the country due to a severe shortage of gasoline have largely disappeared as Paz works to secure imports.

A friendly Congress has helped the government take on a \$3.1 billion loan from the Andean Development Corporation, \$550 million of which has

already been released. Espinoza on Tuesday said the government seeks to borrow up to \$9 billion to stabilize the economy and plug the deficit for the next three years.

He said he expected the package in 60 to 90 days, without naming the multilateral lenders involved in the deal.

The government has also repaired relations with Washington after years of anti-American hostility dating back to when ex-President Evo Morales, a charismatic coca-growing union leader, kicked out the US Drug Enforcement Administration in 2008 and cozied up to Russia, Iran and Venezuela.

The US State Department has already announced agreements on nuclear cooperation and security assistance, and Paz has said his administration will allow Elon Musk's Starlink to operate in Bolivia for the first time, after his predecessor refused to give it an operating license last year.

As Bolivia starts to regain credibility in the eyes of investors, sovereign bonds have risen in recent weeks and the chronically depreciating currency pared back some of its losses against the dollar in unofficial trading. (AP)

Fire engulfs high-rise housing estate, killing at least 13 in Hong Kong

A major fire tore through multiple high-rise towers at a housing estate in Hong Kong on Wednesday, killing at least 13 people, officials said.

Police received multiple reports of people trapped in the estate, where bamboo scaffolding had been erected outside several towers as they underwent renovation, local media reported.

15 others were injured in the fire at Wang Fuk Court in the northern district of Tai Po, the Fire Services Department said.

At least one firefighter was killed, Hong Kong's director of fire services Yeung Yan Kin told a news conference



Ho Wai-ho, 37, "sustained burns to his face," Yeung said, adding that he was rushed to a nearby hospital after first aid and CPR were administered. He later died, Yeung said.

"I would like to extend my deepest condolences to firefighter Ho's family," he said, adding that another firefighter was being treated

in hospital for heat exhaustion.

Civil Service Secretary Ingrid Yeung praised Ho's "gallantry and selfless devotion to duty" in a statement and said officials will "make every effort to help the family of Mr Ho during this sad and difficult period."

Firefighters were still bat-

ting the blaze several hours later as night fell. At 6:22 p.m. local time (5 a.m. ET), it was upgraded to the highest-level alarm in the Chinese territory

Massive flames and thick plumes of dark smoke could be seen coming from multiple towers at the housing complex, which has eight buildings and almost 2,000 residential units.

The transport department said a number of bus routes had been diverted and that sections of some nearby roads had been closed to all traffic.

Hong Kong has been under a red fire danger warning since Monday, which means there is an extremely high risk of fire. (NBC)



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
**2025
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28TH FEB 2026 | ROYALTON ANTIGUA

‘Once in 300 years’ rain hits Thai city as floods ravage South East Asia



Parts of Thailand are battling record floods, which have killed at least 33 people and prompted authorities to deploy military ships and helicopters to support relief efforts.

The deluge has hit 10 provinces across the country's south over the past week, with the city of Hat Yai, a business hub bordering Malaysia, recording its heaviest rainfall in 300 years - 335mm in a single day.

Photos show vehicles and houses submerged in the city, while desperate residents await rescue on their rooftops.

Relentless rains have also ravaged neighbouring countries. In Vietnam, the death toll has risen to 98 in a week, while in Malaysia, more than 19,000 people have been forced from their homes.

In Indonesia, at least 19 people have been killed and at least seven others remained buried under landslides in North Sumatra, according to the Indonesian National Search and Rescue Agency.

More than 2 million people in Thailand have been affected by the floods, but just 13,000 have been moved to shelters.

The vast majority are cut off and unable to get help, according to Reuters news agency.

The Thai military, which has been put in charge of tackling the crisis, said it is preparing to dispatch an aircraft carrier and a flotilla of 14 boats loaded with relief supplies, along with field kitchens that are said to be able to deliver 3,000 meals a day.

Medical teams on board the aircraft carrier will convert it into a "floating hospital" if required, the navy said.

Boats, high-clearance trucks, and jet skis have also been deployed to evacuate residents, said the governor of Songkhla province, where Hat Yai is located.

The cabinet on Tuesday declared Songkhla a disaster zone, freeing up funds for relief.

However, many people remain

stranded amid the rising waters.

A volunteer rescue group, the Matchima Rescue Center, told Reuters it had been inundated with thousands of calls in the last three days, with people asking to be evacuated.

People have also posted urgent calls for help on Matchima's Facebook page. "Many people are trapped... Please help," one user wrote. "It's very difficult right now. The water has reached the second floor, where there are children, the elderly, the sick, and the disabled!!!"

Another wrote that his household had been waiting for help for three days: "Every second is crucial now... Please help share. My [phone's] battery is at 40%. Thank you everyone."

Some also wrote about not having had any food and water for days.

A clip that has gone viral on social media shows three young boys hanging from power lines, trying to inch their way to safety while brown murky waters continue to rise below them.

In Malaysia, more than 19,000 people have been evacuated to safety, with 126 evacuation centres set up in the northern border areas.

In the states of Kelantan and Perlis, rescue teams waded through knee-deep floodwaters to evacuate residents in areas where rising waters had cut off access to roads.

Heavy seasonal rain is common around this time of year in South East Asia, but this year has seen exceptionally high levels of flooding in the region. (BBC)

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Antiguans kick off campaign in qualifiers for 2026 CONCACAF Women's Championship



Players, coaching, and managerial staff of the Antigua and Barbuda senior women's national team. (File photo)

The Antigua and Barbuda national senior team will launch their campaign in the qualifying round of the 2026 CONCACAF Women's Championship at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium on Thursday.

The Antiguan senior women's team will face Nicaragua at home in their first qualifier in Group B at 4 pm.

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

Antigua and Barbuda are among 29 CONCACAF member associations—

excluding the region's two highest-ranked nations (USA and Canada)—that will be competing in the preliminary stage of the competition, which will be played during the FIFA Women's International Match Windows in November 2025 and February and April 2026.

The 29 teams have been drawn into six groups in the preliminary qualifying stage. Group A comprised Mexico, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the United States Virgin Islands (USVI).

Contesting Group C are Costa Rica,

Guatemala, Bermuda, Grenada, and the Cayman Islands. Group D will feature Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Suriname, Belize, and Anguilla.

Competing in Group E are Panama, Cuba, St. Kitts and Nevis, Curacao, and Aruba, while Group F comprises Trinidad & Tobago, El Salvador, Honduras, and Barbados.

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 CONCACAF Women's Championship will be played in November 2026 and serve as the Confederation's qualifier for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup in Brazil and the 2028 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles, California.

The United States of America is the current champion of the CONCACAF Women's Championship, having secured the 2022 title with a 1–0 win over Canada in the final held in Monterrey, Mexico.

ABCAS remains top of Under-20 Boys Division League

The Antigua and Barbuda College of Advance Studies (ABCAS) has maintained their position at the top of the Under-20 Boys Division in the Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth, and Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup Secondary Schools' Football Competition.

ABCAS extended their unbeaten run by recording their fifth win in six matches with a 1-0 victory against Irene B. Williams Secondary School at the Antigua

Grammar School's playing field on Tuesday to remain at the top of the standings with 16 points.

Kavon Young scored the winner and only goal of the match with a strike in the 47th minute.

The result ensures Irene B. Williams Secondary remains without any points after suffering their third loss in as many games.

Defending champions Princess Margaret School

remain in second place by advancing to 15 points after securing their fifth win in six matches with a 1-0 victory against the Sir Novelle Richards Academy at the Antigua Grammar School's playing field.

Allan Henry converted the lone goal of the match in the 48th minute as the Sir Novelle Richards Academy slumped to their third defeat in six matches to remain on seven points.

Jennings Secondary

notched up their second win in six matches by snatching a 1-0 victory against Ottos Comprehensive School. Kymani Richards scored the only goal of the match in the 62nd minute.

The result allows Jennings Secondary School to advance to seven points, while Ottos Comprehensive School remains on seven points after suffering their fourth loss in seven matches.

Rain disrupts more matches in regional Super50 Cup



Officials examine the Sir Frank Worrell Memorial Ground in St Augustine during the Leeward Islands Hurricanes and Jamaica Scorpions match in the CG United Super50 Cup on Sunday, November 23, 2025.

The rainy weather in Trinidad and Tobago has continued to disrupt matches in this month's Cricket West Indies (CWI) CG United Super50 Cup.

All three fourth-round matches ended in no results after being forced to be abandoned due to rain on Tuesday.

Rain ruined the daytime fixture between the Guyana Harpy Eagles and the Leeward Islands Hurricanes at the Queen's Park Oval.

After a delayed start, the Leewards won the toss and elected to bowl in the reduced 25-over match, which was set to bowl off at 1.30 pm. However, the rain returned to scuttle the game.

It was the third time a match involving the Guyana Harpy Eagles has been abandoned due to rain. It was the second no result for the Leewards due to the rainy weather.

The Leewards are in fourth place with eight points, one more than the Guyana Harpy Eagles in fifth place.

The clash between Trinidad and Tobago Red Force and the Windward Islands Volcanoes at the Sir Frank Worrell Ground, UWI, was abandoned without a ball being bowled.

It was a frustrating halt to Red Force's momentum after Sunday night's DLS victory over Guyana in Tarouba, a result that captain Joshua Da Silva said had

lifted the mood in the camp.

Da Silva was hoping the hosts could extend their winning streak on Tuesday with another victory, most likely guaranteeing them a place in Saturday's final. The top two teams in the round-robin phase will advance to the final.

The latest abandonment means the Red Force remain in second place on 22 points with a record of two wins and two no results. The Windward Volcanoes remain in third place with 17 points after suffering their second no result due to rain.

Tuesday's day/night match between the Jamaica Scorpions and leaders Barbados Pride at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in

Tarouba was also washed out by rain.

It means Barbados remains at the top of the standings with 29 points after suffering their second washout, while the Jamaican Scorpions are in the cellar with six points. Three of the Scorpions' matches have been washed out by the rain.

The final round of matches in the group stage will take place on Thursday (today) with T&T up against the Leeward Islands at the Queen's Park Oval from 9 am.

Guyana will face Barbados at UWI from 9 am, while Jamaica takes on the Windwards at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba from 2 pm.

Reggae Girlz hoping for winning start in World Cup qualifiers



Jamaica's Reggae Girlz

KINGSTON, Jamaica – Reggae Girlz head coach Hubert Busby Jr. is hoping for victory against Dominica when they begin their Women's World Cup qualifying quest on Saturday.

The Jamaicans, who are seeking to qualify for their third successive FIFA Women's World Cup in 2027, will travel to the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground in St. Lucia for their Group B opener.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday after announcing his squad, Busby said it was important for them to pick up all three points against Dominica.

"It's important that we have a strong performance, and we're laying the foundation for strong

performances throughout this campaign.

"We want to get off to a great start, have a great week of training leading into the match, and we're approaching each and every match with the respect it deserves," Busby said.

"Our preparation this week will be thorough, to ensure that when we go out there, we're firing on all cylinders and to the best of our abilities."

The Reggae Girlz are on the hunt for their third consecutive appearance at the World Cup following back-to-back appearances in 2019 and 2023.

Jamaica will compete in Group B alongside Dominica, Guyana,

Nicaragua, and Antigua and Barbuda, with the winner of the group advancing to the CONCACAF Women's Championship.

The matches in the CONCACAF Women's Championship will serve as the region's qualification tournament for the 2027 World Cup and the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, California.

The top four teams from the CONCACAF Women's Championship will advance to the World Cup, while the top three teams will advance to the Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

The next best two teams will advance to the intercontinental play-offs for a second chance at World Cup qualification. (CMC)

Wins for Blackburn Palace and Bethesda in Second Division League

Blackburn Palace and Bethesda recorded convincing wins in their latest outings in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League.

Blackburn Palace notched up their second win in three matches with a 6-0 drubbing of the Young Warriors at the Fort Road playing field.

Michael Roberts and Tafari Looby both scored twice. Roberts scored in the first and 85th minutes, while Looby had conversions in the sixth and 10th minutes.

Tren'I Edwards of the Young Warriors converted an own goal in the 13th minute, and Demarre Swift scored the other goal for Blackburn Palace in the 44th minute.

The result carries Blackburn Palace to six points, while the Young Warriors remain without any points after crashing to their second loss in as many games.

Bethesda continued their successful start to their Second Division, maintaining their unbeaten run by securing their second win in three matches



Players of the Blackburn Palace football team

with a 3-0 victory against TAMO FC at the Bethesda playing field.

The result allows Bethesda to advance to seven points, while TAMO FC remains on three points after suffering their second defeat in three matches.

Meanwhile, Empire FC enjoyed success in the ABFA's First Division on Tuesday. Empire FC maintained their unbeaten run by claiming their second consecutive win in four matches with a 2-1 victory against English Harbour at the Keithley Sheppard

Recreational Park.

Joel Lynch and Darlon Jacobs were the goal scorers for Empire FC, while Clarence Marsh scored for English Harbour.

Empire advanced to eight points, while English Harbour remains on six points after slumping to their third defeat in five matches.

Five Islands and Bendals fought to a 1-1 draw at the Five Islands playing field. The result allows Five Islands to move on to eight points after securing

their second draw in five matches.

Bendals FC advanced to two points after salvaging their second draw in five matches.

Bolans and FC Masterballers played to a goalless draw at the Jennings playing field.

The result ensures that FC Masterballers advanced to five points after salvaging their first draw in four matches. Bolans FC moved on to three points after securing their third draw in four matches.