

‘Very positive’ response to setting up of Constitutional Review Commission

Story on page 2



MP for All Saints West Anthony Smith Jnr, held a successful Christmas party on Sunday

See Page 10 & 11

‘Very positive’ response to setting up of Constitutional Review Commission

Members of the legal fraternity and the general public have responded positively to the announcement of the establishment of a Constitutional Review Commission to undertake a comprehensive review of the Antigua and Barbuda Constitution and to make recommendation for the consideration of the Cabinet and the parliament.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Sir Steadroy Benjamin reported that letters of appointment have already been sent to the persons who have been identified as possible members and that they have all responded in the affirmative to the invitation to serve.

“Mr. Justin Simon, KC, has agreed to serve as the Deputy Chairman of the Commission as has the MP for St. John’s Rural West Constituency, Richard Lewis, thus ensuring that the views of the opposition are well represented throughout the discussions. The other mem-



Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin

bers of the Commission who have agreed to serve are; Dr. Lenworth Johnson, Carlton Knight, Fitzmore Harris, a lawyer representing the diaspora community, Ralph Bowen and Beverly Benjamin from the Antiguans and Barbudans for Constitutional Reform and Education (ABCRE), which is based in the United States, Debra Burnett, a representative from Barbuda with attorney in the Attorney General’s Chambers, Zachary Phillips as secretary,” Sir Steadroy announced.

The AG said he wants a broad-based representation on the Com-

mission with more appointments expected from Non-Government Organisations to be announced shortly. These will form the core members of the Commission. “I am very happy with the response that we have been receiving and the public support for some of the areas of the constitution that we wish to review and to make recommendations for change. Areas such as the Republican status and a possible recommendation for ministers of religion to be eligible to serve in elective politics have generated much positive reviews from the public thus far,” he revealed.

The Attorney General said he is confident that when next the nation holds a referendum on constitutional reform to include adopting the Caribbean Court of Justice as the final appellate court that with the support of both political parties, the measure should earn the support of the public.

Sir Steadroy praised ABCRE for the work that the organization has been doing over the last several years to educate Antiguans and Barbudans both at home and in the diaspora, about the need for Constitutional reform. That work, he emphasized, has made a significant difference regarding the public’s appetite for Constitutional reform.

Already, the parliament has adopted a measure to change the Oath from swearing to the British Monarch to swearing to Antigua and Barbuda. The legislation was signed into law by the governor General on December 18 and will be Gazetted by Wednesday December 24.

Police Warn Illegal Licence Plate Swappers Will Be Caught by New Detection System



Commissioner of Police Everton Jeffers

Motorists who illegally alter or swap licence plates have been warned they will be caught when police introduce new real-time detection technology next year.

Police Commissioner Everton Jeffers said the licence plate recognition system will allow officers on patrol to instantly identify vehicles whose plates do not match Transport Board records.

“Those of you who keep changing number plates and you’re not Transport Board, we will catch you,” he told state media, describing the technology as a major shift in road policing.

Police say the system will automatically scan passing vehicles and alert officers to irregularities, closing a loophole often used in vehicle theft and other crimes.

Commissioner Jeffers said the force would continue to adapt its strategies as new tools come on stream, stressing the need for flex-

ibility in tackling crime. He also appealed for public patience amid concerns about criminal activity, assuring residents that enforcement efforts are being strengthened.

The technology is part of a wider drive to modernise policing, improve detection times and boost public confidence through more effective and visible law enforcement.



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Local News

More than 7800 cruise passengers spent Monday in the country



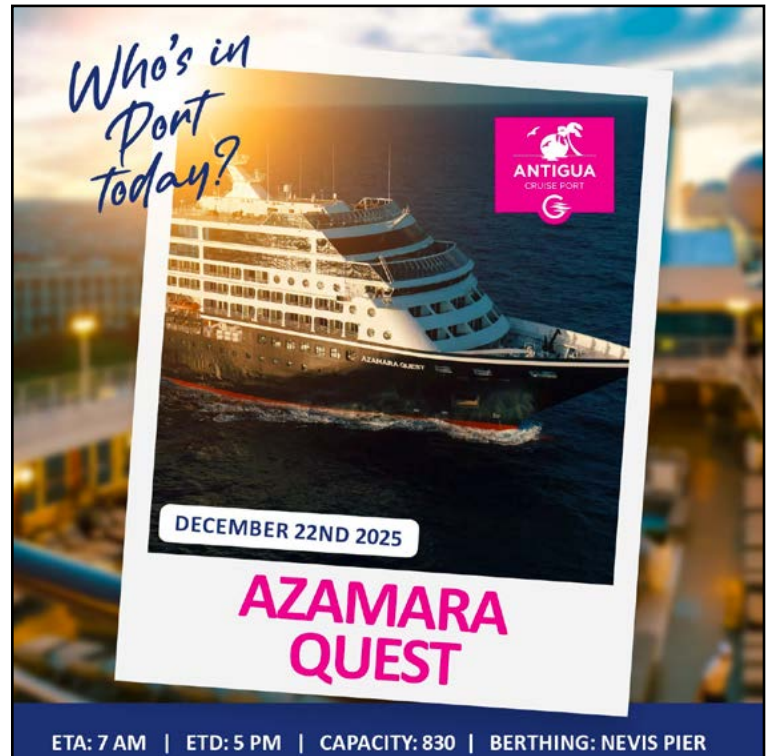
Who's in Port today?

ANTIGUA CRUISE PORT

DECEMBER 22ND 2025

MEIN SCHIFF 2

ETA: O/N | ETD: 7 PM | CAPACITY: 2894 | BERTHING: 5TH BERTH



Who's in Port today?

ANTIGUA CRUISE PORT

DECEMBER 22ND 2025

AZAMARA QUEST

ETA: 7 AM | ETD: 5 PM | CAPACITY: 830 | BERTHING: NEVIS PIER



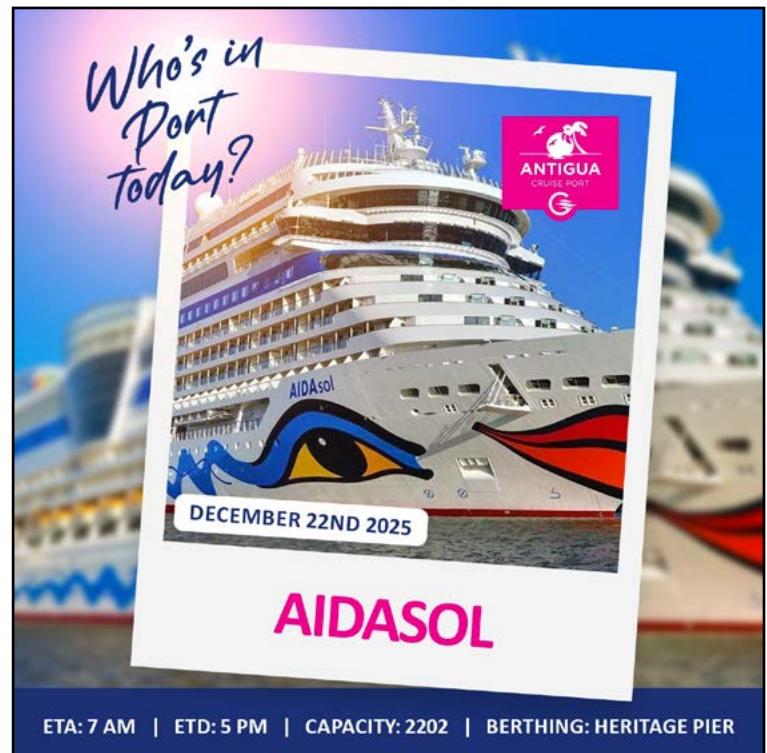
Who's in Port today?

ANTIGUA CRUISE PORT

DECEMBER 22ND 2025

QUEEN ELIZABETH

ETA: 7 AM | ETD: 5 PM | CAPACITY: 2080 | BERTHING: HERITAGE PIER



Who's in Port today?

ANTIGUA CRUISE PORT

DECEMBER 22ND 2025

AIDASOL

ETA: 7 AM | ETD: 5 PM | CAPACITY: 2202 | BERTHING: HERITAGE PIER

Antigua and Barbuda hosted more than 7,800 passengers who arrived aboard four cruise ships that docked at the St. John's Harbour on Monday.

The Antigua Cruise Port reported that the vessels are; the Mein Sshiff 2 of the Tui Cruises which brought 2,830 passengers, Aida Sol of the Aida Cruise Lines with 2,449 passengers, Queen Elizabeth of Cunard

Cruises with 1,954 passengers and Azamara Quest with 654 passengers.

The visitors brought brisk trade to those involved both directly and indirectly from the cruise industry.

There are a total of 98 cruise calls scheduled for the month of December, an increase from last year's total, according to ACP.

Pensioners Association celebrates its 25th anniversary



The Antigua and Barbuda Pensioners Association is this month celebrating the 25th anniversary of its coming into being with a formal recognition of those who contributed to the growth of the organization since its inception.

At a special anniversary luncheon held last Friday, current president Evans Bennett said the association had successfully negotiated for many of the benefits that pensioners enjoy today.

“Over the past twenty-five years, the association has negotiated benefits for pensioners and even today many pensioners are not aware that it was the association that secured these benefits which they are currently enjoying. The association is the bargaining agent for all pensioners whether its pension increases, the PVD electricity grants or food vouchers etc., they did not come by chance but through negotiation by the association over the last twenty-five years,” Bennett stated.

The ABPA president also welcomed the announcement that there will be an increase in the amount for food vouchers in the



coming year.

Bennett made an appeal to the members to continue to support the efforts of the association and to remain engaged in whatever it is doing as they will see direct benefits whenever improvements are negotiated with the government.

Certificates of appreciation were presented to those members of the association who had made outstanding contributions over the past twenty-years. These include the association's first president, Eddie Hunt, who was honoured posthumously. Winifred Roberts who also served as president, was also honoured posthumously. The full list of honourees is as follows; Mr. Eddie Hunte (deceased)



Mrs. Winifred Roberts (deceased)

Ms. Daffodil Lockhart

Ms. Joan Underwood

Mr. Theodore Francis

Ms. Gloria Dabrio

Ms. Arlene Francis

Ms. Lorraine Ashterman

Ms. Agneta Hazelwood

Mr. Frederick Charles

The association also expressed its appreciation to the several sponsors who helped to make the anniversary luncheon a success. These include; Christo's Wholesale, Goddard Catering, Anjo Wholesale, Hutchinson's, Chase Supermarket, Townhouse Megastore, Wheels Supermarket and PDV CAB.

Calvin Ayre Foundation Continues Holiday Outreach at Friends of the Care Project



In keeping with its long-standing tradition of giving back during the holiday season, the Calvin Ayre Foundation (CAF) brought festive joy to the Friends of the Care Project and Friends Developmental Centre during its annual Christmas outreach over the weekend.

The event, now a cherished tradition on the Centre's calendar, saw each special needs student receive a carefully selected gift, presented in an atmosphere filled with laughter, music, and holiday spirit. The Foundation's presence has become a highly anticipated part of the Centre's end-of-year celebrations, offering not only presents but a meaningful show of support to the children and staff.

The occasion, which was also attended by Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Williams, was marked by heartfelt moments, including a special gesture from one of the students, Kuba, who presented CAF's Manager and Media Relations Specialist of the Ayre Group, Jamilla Kirwan, with a framed, hand-drawn picture as a token of appreciation. The moment beautifully captured the connection built between the Foundation and the children since 2018.

"On behalf of Ambassador Calvin Ayre, we extend warm holiday wishes to the students, families, and dedicated staff of the Friends of the Care Project

and the Friends Developmental Centre," said Kirwan. "It is always a joy to return here each year, and we remain deeply committed to supporting the incredible work being done. The smiles on the children's faces make it clear that moments like this matter, and that is why we keep showing up."

Through initiatives like this, the Cal-

vin Ayre Foundation continues to reinforce its broader mission of community upliftment, inclusion, and compassion, particularly for vulnerable groups. The annual gift-giving event stands as a reminder that a little kindness can go a long way in creating joy and meaningful connection, especially during the festive season.



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Local News



West Indies Oil Company Gives Back Where It Matters This Christmas

The West Indies Oil Company (WIOC) is extending its engagement with residents beyond commercial and business interests with what it calls 'random acts of kindness' this holiday season.

A company spokesman said these acts of kindness take place as part of the company's programme of spreading joy and cheer across Antigua and Barbuda.

The company commenced its Christmas giving by supporting the Pediatric Ward at Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, where functional appliances were donated to assist both staff and patients. The donation was officially handed over by Brand and Commercial Manager, Shari Dickenson, to Dr. Shaleem Hughes, Head of Pediatrics and Unit Nurse Manager,



Nurse Zena Knight-Barnes.

Dickenson expressed her hope that the appliances would help improve day-to-day operations within the department while enhancing comfort for young patients. She also encouraged other corporate organizations to consider similar acts of giving, emphasizing the importance of collective support for national healthcare.

Continuing the festive

cheer, the WIOC team visited several service stations across its network, surprising customers with one gallon of free fuel when they purchased \$50 or more. Approximately 300 customers left with bright smiles, expressing gratitude to West Indies Oil for the thoughtful gesture.

WIOC further extended its collaborative efforts by partnering with the Salvation

Army, where a small team volunteered their time to ring the bell at First Choice Supermarket, supporting the organization's holiday fundraising efforts.

To close out the season of giving, WIOC carefully selected individuals within the community and gifted them with free LPG refills to help make their holidays a little brighter.

Corporate social responsibility remains a core priority for West Indies Oil Company. These initiatives not only strengthen the company's connection to its customers and community but also serve as a reminder of why WIOC remains an essential service in powering lives, supporting communities, and giving back where it matters most.

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- Medium Drink

The Caribbean Union Bank Hells Gate Steel Orchestra announces the names of the winners of its 80th anniversary raffle



Ché Barnes receives his winning single tenor pan

The Caribbean Union Bank Hells Gate Steel Orchestra in conjunction with Panzone Plus, held a raffle as part of the activities to mark its 80th anniversary.

1st Prize Winner - Chrome Single Tenor Pan - Ché Barnes

2nd Prize Winner - Painted Single Tenor Pan - Khloe Cordice

3rd Prize - Winner - Pair of Pan Sticks - Panache Steel Orchestra



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Photo Story

All Saints West annual Christmas Christmas Party



Photo Story



Regional News

Caribbean travel and cruise industry executives collaborate on strengthening resilience, recovery and shared growth

Following the impact of Hurricane Melissa in October, Caribbean tourism leaders—including ministers, directors, and executives—convened this month aboard Royal Caribbean's Icon of the Seas for the "Iconic Summit."

This gathering took place during the Caribbean Tourism Organization's (CTO) second annual Caribbean Weekend in Miami, with a focus on the cruise sector's crucial role in aiding recovery and fostering sustainable growth and resilience across the region, said a press release from CTO.

Royal Caribbean International's President and CEO, Michael Bayley, shared insights into his company's swift response to the disaster. He recounted how over 100 pallets of vital supplies—including generators, food, and water—were dispatched to Jamaica's Falmouth port. The company collaborated with various partners to facilitate distribution in severely affected areas and provided meals to local communities in need.

During an open discussion with CTO Secretary-General & CEO Dona Regis-Prosper, Bayley emphasized the company's connection to the Caribbean community: "I think over the years we've always tried to support the



Caribbean communities. Especially in times of crisis, we answer the phone, and we try our best."

Barbados' Minister of Tourism and International Transport, Ian Gooding-Edghill, who also serves as CTO Chairman, expressed gratitude towards Royal Caribbean and regional allies for their compassion and support, particularly for Jamaica and Haiti following Hurricane Melissa.

He underscored the importance of fostering partnerships between governments and private businesses, and between countries and sec-

tors. "The future of Caribbean tourism depends on our ability to reimagine together — to innovate, to collaborate and to believe in the boundless potential of our region," he stated.

His remarks highlighted the need for policies rooted in data, improved connectivity, and growth strategies that uplift local communities.

Bayley advocated for comprehensive "master planning" to enable destinations to develop sustainable tourism models. He pointed out opportunities for cruise lines and ports

to work more closely and to create pathways for employment among Caribbean youth. This includes engaging with Caribbean labor ministers and industry stakeholders to tackle longstanding workforce barriers. Additionally, he outlined Royal Caribbean Group's commitment to forward-looking sustainability measures, such as implementing environmental technologies, shore power systems, and resilient port infrastructure.

According to the release, despite setbacks, the Caribbean's cruise industry is projected to welcome millions of visitors in 2025, reinforcing the importance of tourism to regional economies and employment. The summit underscored that as storms intensify and become more frequent, resilience must be embedded in every aspect of planning and development.

The event also included cultural elements, such as a performance of "The Wizard of Oz" and a visit from Rover, the ship's "Chief Dog Officer." However, the overall tone reportedly remained focused and purposeful, emphasizing the collective effort needed—"all hands on deck"—and reaffirming that tourism is a shared responsibility that benefits everyone. (Dominica News Online)

Murder toll now 649, major crimes still down

With just nine days remaining in 2025, Jamaica has recorded a significant reduction in murders and other major crimes, according to the latest police crime statistics.

The latest numbers were published by the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) this morning.

As at December 20, Jamaica's murder toll stood at 649, representing a 43 per cent reduction when compared with the corresponding period last year.

Around this time last year, 1,136 people were killed.

Last week, the country was rocked by a domestic triple murder in Rocky Point, Clarendon, after a man chopped three members of his family in an area called Frazersfield.

The incident is currently under investigation.

The decline in murders, however, continues a trend that law enforcement officials and policymakers have credited to intensified policing strategies, targeted operations, and increased intelligence-driven interventions.

As at December 20, five of the 19 police divisions have recorded 50 or more murders.

These include St Andrew South 74, St Catherine North 63, St Ann 60, St James 52, and St Catherine South 50.

Also of note, 17 of the 19 divisions recorded a reduction in murders year on



year.

Only St Thomas and St Ann are showing year-on-year increases in homicides.

Data from the JCF also show that most major crime categories are down.

Murders, shootings, cases of injured persons and reported incidents of rape have all recorded decreases year-on-year.

However, the crime update indicates that robberies and break-ins remain areas of concern, as these are the only major crime categories showing eight and 19 per cent increases, respectively, for the period under review.

Police sources note that these offences continue to impact residential communities and commercial areas, particularly during the traditionally busy holiday season.

The JCF has maintained a heightened security posture across several divisions, including increased patrols, curfews in crime-prone communities, and ongoing operations targeting known offenders.

Senior police officials have repeatedly urged citizens to remain vigilant, secure their homes and businesses, and cooperate with law enforcement as the year draws to a close. (Jamaica Gleaner)


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Kamla rips into Gaston...fires back at Antiguan leader

Stopping short of declaring that Trinidad and Tobago was withdrawing from Caricom, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar yesterday said this country wants no part of the regional country grouping's "zone of peace fakery" and its alignment with the dictatorship of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

The Prime Minister also fired back at Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

The Express contacted the Prime Minister yesterday with several questions arising from a statement issued by Browne and his criticism of her assertion that Caricom was not a reliable partner.

Persad-Bissessar doubled down on her position, making it clear that Trinidad and Tobago came first.

She noted that since the country began facing sustained verbal attacks from Venezuela in June, Caricom has offered no support.

"Caricom has aligned itself with the Maduro narco-government headed by a dictator who has imprisoned or killed thousands of Venezuelans who oppose him. Trinidad and Tobago wants no part of that alignment, we don't support dictatorship and drug trafficking and we don't support Caricom in their zone of peace fakery," she said.

"Gaston and Ronald Sanders should worry less about my comments and spend more time explaining to their citizens as to why (Antiguan citizens') visas were restricted," she added.

The Prime Minister pointed to Ven-



ezuela's escalating aggression—first towards Guyana and now towards Trinidad and Tobago.

Said Persad-Bissessar, "Venezuela has been threatening to invade Guyana for years and since last June they began making similar threats that Trinidad and Tobago is a part of Venezuela. Yet Caricom has chosen to support the Maduro narco government through the fake zone of peace narrative which is clearly designed to get the American military to leave the Caribbean region and therefore enable Maduro to remain as dictator in Venezuela. My priority is the best interests of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago."

In her address to the 80th United Nations General Assembly in New York in September, the Prime Minister said the Caribbean was not a zone of peace.

Persad-Bissessar also voiced support for United States President Donald Trump and thanked him for the US military presence in the Caribbean, citing the violence in Trinidad and Tobago and the urgent challenge of illegal migration.

Barbados Prime Minister Mia

Mottley and then-St Vincent and the Grenadines prime minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves stated that the Caribbean was a zone of peace, using their UN addresses to emphasise the region's peaceful identity and to call for a de-escalation of military activity around Venezuela.

Over the past few months, Venezuela's conduct towards Trinidad and Tobago has included official denunciations using hostile language, the termination of key bilateral agreements, public threats linked to military cooperation with the United States, and explicit warnings of retaliation.

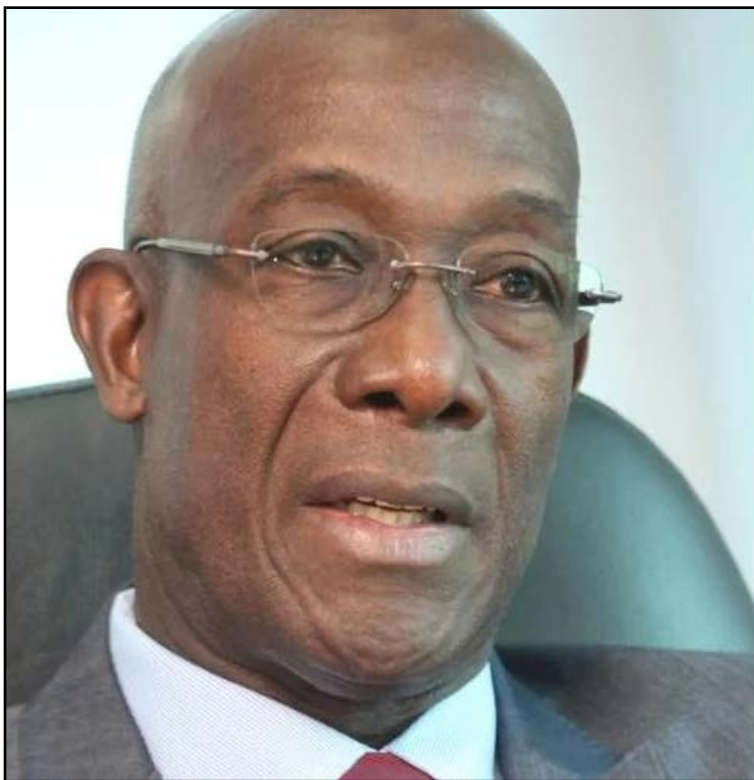
In October, Venezuela's National Assembly passed a resolution declaring Persad-Bissessar persona non grata and launched direct attacks on her government, accusing Trinidad and Tobago of acting as an "agent of aggression" against Venezuela.

In December, the Maduro regime terminated all energy cooperation and natural gas agreements with Trinidad and Tobago, accusing the country of being complicit in the US seizure of a Venezuelan oil tanker.

The Venezuelan government described this move as part of escalating "hostilities and serious aggressions" and blamed the Prime Minister for pursuing what it termed a hostile agenda.

Venezuela has also openly threatened retaliation against Trinidad and Tobago if it assists US military operations or hosts US forces in the region. (Trinidad Express)

Kamla's remarks reckless, says Opposition



lated from Caricom.

"At the end of the day it is not just about narco-trafficking...it's about everything, it's about tourism, it's about natural disasters...it's about music, it's about culture, it's about pan, it's about chutney. It's about every single thing when we think about Caricom," she explained.

She stressed that "we understand the importance of us being stronger as a region."

Referring to her own experience at the United Nations, Beckles said, "We know that when Caricom speaks we are always associated with punching above the weight, yes, you are a small country but the sovereignty issues is very important."

She noted that Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Antigua and Jamaica all had votes at the UN.

Beckles sought to reassure the public that the Opposition was responsible, saying, "Any impression that is being given that the we have some particular issue with the United States...is absolutely false."

She emphasised that Trinidad and Tobago was a democracy, just like the United States, and that from time to time there will be different views.

"I want to tell the Prime

Minister to be very careful saying to the people of Trinidad and Tobago to behave yourself, because when you start going down that road, clearly that is dictatorship," she said.

According to Beckles, citizens had the right to hold different views. She said because "you are in office doesn't mean you should threaten people...that is totally out of order."

She argued that democracy gives citizens the right to disagree with the Government and even the Opposition, and to ask questions and demand answers.

Persad-Bissessar was also criticised by former prime minister Dr Keith Rowley for her comments on Caricom.

Yesterday, Rowley also described the Prime Minister's statements as reckless.

He said: "In all the years that I have lived during the entire life of this nation, 1962 to the present, I have never seen a more unpatriotic and recklessly incompetent leader than Kamla Persad-Bissessar."

"I have also never witnessed a more offensive statement about ourselves and our sovereign rights to agree or disagree on matters of concern to us and our wider interests and responsibilities," he stated.

Rowley criticised the cur-

Reckless.

This is how Opposition Leader Penelope Beckles yesterday described statements made by Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar that Caricom was an unreliable partner.

Beckles was speaking to members of the media during the People's National Movement Annual Children's Christmas Party at Balisier House in Port of Spain.

She drew attention to the United Nations General Assembly in September, saying that since then the Prime Minister's position on Caricom has been concerning.

Beckles was responding to the Prime Minister's statements on Saturday during

which she described Caricom as an unreliable partner that is deteriorating rapidly.

"The issue of what is this Government's position of Caricom. Do they value Caricom? Are we a partner? And clearly from the statements from the Honourable Prime Minister, which I deem reckless, we are very concerned," she said.

Beckles opined that Caricom has always supported Trinidad and Tobago, adding, "It of course reminds us of the irresponsible statement whether Trinidad and Tobago is an ATM machine. We have to link the both."

She emphasised that the Prime Minister should not want the country to be iso-

Regional News

rent administration, claiming it was receiving secret instructions from another country.

“For the Prime Minister and her hapless Government to reduce us to a vassal state, taking secret instructions from another country and issuing dire warnings that we should ‘behave ourselves’ lest we offend the United States and lose our access to US visas is to have torn up our Constitution and declared that the very idea of our existence as a nation is not worthy of defence or vision,” he said.

He argued that to “so publicly withdraw from pertinent Caricom issues and decisions is as close to being a dangerous fifth-columnist as we could get”.

Rowley accused the Government of wearing the shame of that position “in the hope of reward and protection from the United States”, describing it as “as feckless and ignorant as one can be”.

“Our nation is now oblivious to history and the failings of others, to whom she now genuflects not in mutual respect but in obeisance and adoration,” he added.

Rowley continued: “This from a woman to whom a special majority was handed in a recent general election, who militarises our islands yet refuses to come before the nation to tell us what she has agreed to in her dealings with US au-

thorities, and who flatly refuses to stand before the local media to be questioned about her treacherous and defiant edicts. She even describes our urgent need to know as being ‘anti-American’.”

Expressing concern about the country, Rowley said, “We hope that this ends soon,” but cautioned that “it does not look too good.”

Senator Dr Amery Browne also accused the Prime Minister of continuously attacking Caricom’s zone of peace.

“This is the first time the country has had a Prime Minister who is overtly against the Caribbean Community and she has laid that foundation from very early after the general election,” he said yesterday, recalling that she refused to attend a Caricom heads of government meeting.

Speaking at the PNM’s children’s Christmas party, Browne recalled the Prime Minister describing Caricom as an unreliable partner and about Caricom imploding.

“The only thing imploding is the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago,” he said.

He described the public exchanges as unprecedented, stressing that “every prime minister we have ever had including Basdeo Panday has been regionalist, from Eric Williams right up to today.” (Trinidad Express)

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Husband and five other men charged with sex offences against ex-wife



A husband and five other men have been charged with a string of sexual offences against his ex-wife over a 13-year period.

Philip Young, formerly of Swindon but now living in Enfield, has been charged with 56 sexual offences, including rape and administering a substance with intent to stupefy/overpower to allow sexual activity.

The 49-year-old has also been charged with voyeurism, possession of indecent images of children and possession of extreme images.

Five other men have also been charged with offences against his ex-wife, 48-year-old Joanne Young, who has waived her right to anonymity.

All six men are due to appear at Swindon Magistrates' Court on Tuesday.

Mr Young, who police described as a white British national, has been remanded in custody.

The five other men are on bail.

Their names and charges are:

Norman Macksoni, 47, of Wood End Close, Sharnbrook. Police described

him as a black British national. He has been charged with one count of rape and possession of extreme images

Dean Hamilton, 47, of no fixed abode. Police said he was a white British national. He has been charged with one count of rape and sexual assault by penetration and two counts of sexual touching


Conner Sanderson Doyle, 31, of Crofton Road, Swindon. Police said he was a white British national who had been charged with sexual assault by penetration and sexual touching


Richard Wilkins, 61, of Tattershall, Toothill, Swindon. He was described by police as a white British national and he has been charged with one count of rape and sexual touching

Mohammed Hassan, 37, of Torun Way, Swindon. Police described him as a British Asian male. He has been charged with sexual touching

Det Supt Geoff Smith, of Wiltshire Police, described the charges as a significant update in a "complex and extensive" investigation.

He added that Ms Young was being supported by specially trained officers. (BBC)





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Passenger bus crash in Indonesia kills at least 16 people, official says

A passenger bus crash killed at least 16 people on Indonesia's main island of Java just after midnight Monday, officials said.

The bus carrying 34 people lost control on a toll road and struck a concrete barrier before rolling onto its side, said Budiono, a search and rescue agency chief who goes by single name like many Indonesians.

The inter-province bus was travelling from the capital Jakarta to the country's ancient royal city of Yogyakarta when it overturned while entering a curved exit ramp at the Krapyak toll way in Central Java's Semarang city, he said.

"The forceful impact threw several passengers and left them trapped against the bus



body," Budiono said.

Police and rescue teams arrived about 40 minutes after the accident and recovered the bodies of six passengers who died at the scene. Another 10 people died on the way to a hospital or while being treated, Budiono said. The 18 victims being treated

at two nearby hospitals included five people in critical condition and 13 in serious condition, he said.

Television news reports showed the yellow bus overturned on its side and surrounded by National Search and Rescue Agency personnel, police and passers-by

as ambulances transported victims and the dead away from the accident scene.

Witnesses told authorities the bus was travelling at high speed before the driver lost control, Central Java Police Chief Ribut Hari Wibowo said at Dr Karyadi General Hospital in Semarang where the bodies were being identified.

The driver was a substitute who sustained serious injuries but was able to communicate while under medical care, he said.

"We are still investigating the cause of the crash and questioning the injured substitute driver," Wibowo said, adding that police planned to test the driver for prohibited substances including drugs. (AP)



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Cyberattack disrupts France's postal service and banking during Christmas rush



A suspected cyberattack knocked France's national postal service and its banking arm offline Monday, blocking and delaying package deliveries and online payments at the height of the busy Christmas season.

The postal service, called La Poste, said in a statement that a distributed denial of service incident, or DDoS, "rendered its online services inaccessible." It said the incident had no impact on customer data, but disrupted package and mail delivery.

At a Paris post office decked out in holiday garlands and usually bustling this time of year, employees turned away frustrated customers lining up to send or retrieve packages, including Christmas gifts.

Customers of the company's banking arm, La Banque Postale, were blocked from using the application to approve payments or conduct other banking services.

The bank redirected approvals to text messages instead.

"Our teams are mobilized to resolve the situation quickly," the bank said in messages posted on social networks.

There was no immediate claim of re-

sponsibility.

It came a week after France's government was targeted by a cyberattack that disrupted the Interior Ministry, in


charge of national security.

In that incident, a suspected hacker extracted a few dozen sensitive files and obtained access to data relating to police records and wanted persons, Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said on broadcaster France-Info.

He blamed "imprudence" at the ministry for the incident. French media reported that a 22-year-old was detained.

Also last week, prosecutors said that France's counterespionage agency is investigating a suspected cyberattack plot involving software that would have allowed remote users to control computer systems of an international passenger ferry.

A Latvian crew member is in custody facing charges of having acted for an unidentified foreign power, officials said. (AP)



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Davis bemoans absence of female players at MDBA Basketball Camp



Camper Tajahron Davis, right, accepts an award from sponsor Kevin 'Mooners' Joseph during the 9th Annual MDBA Christmas Fiesta Basketball Camp at the JSC Sports Complex on Friday, December 19, 2025.

The absence of female players was a major disappointment for coach Mahijah Davis at the recent Christmas Fiesta Basketball Camp, which was hosted by the Mahijah Davis Basketball Academy (MDBA) last week at the JSC Sports Complex.

There were no females among the 20 players who participated in the ninth annual MDBA Christmas Camp from Monday, December 15, to Friday, December 19.

Davis, who is the creator of the MDBA, now in its 18th year, said despite the absence of the female players, this year's five-day camp, which utilized American sports agent and player development specialist TJ Cox and Rufus "Toughest" Thomas, was a successful venture.

"It was a very good camp. It was awesome. The guys who are hungry for basketball really came out to show

their skills to TJ Cox, and they did a very good job," Davis stated.

"I could tell that the guys have learned something new and have the drive and the passion to continue pursuing the development of their basketball game.

"I really loved what transpired at this Christmas Camp. However, the only thing that I was really disappointed with is that not even one girl participated to show her skill level or anything like that.

"It's like the female interest for basketball is not there, and we don't know what more we can do in order for the female players to come out or see if we can get the love back for the female

side in the sport of basketball.

"But overall, it was a great camp, and the participants had a lot of fun."

Davis also expressed gratitude to several sponsors who gave tangible support and helped to make this year's MDBA Christmas Fiesta Basketball Camp a successful event.

Among the sponsors are Bridget Supermarket, Kennedy's Club Limited, Cool and Smooth, Total Imports Limited, and Graphic Impact Prints.

The other sponsors are Sweet B's, Kevin "Mooners" Joseph, VCNG, KFC Antigua and Barbuda, Hadeed Motors Limited, and Kelvin "Shuggy" Simon.

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Sports News

New Zealand seal 2-0 series win against West Indies

MOUNT MAUNGANUI (Reuters) - Fast bowler Jacob Duffy and spinner Ajaz Patel routed the West Indies as New Zealand won the third and final test by 323 runs to complete a 2-0 series victory on the final day in Mount Maunganui on Monday.

The hosts were in the box seat since taking a first-innings lead of 155, and few expected West Indies to succeed in their pursuit of a record victory target of 462.

Duffy claimed five for 42 and Patel returned figures of three for 23 as New Zealand bundled out the West Indies for 138 in the final session of the Test match at Bay Oval.

Opener Brandon King made 67, but once he fell after his opening stand of 87 with John Campbell, it was a relentless procession of West Indies batsmen returning to the pavilion at Bay Oval. Campbell's laboured 16 was the next best score in a sorry-looking West Indies scorecard.

New Zealand jumped to second place, behind Australia, in the World Test Championship (WTC) standings following their victory.

"It was a clinical performance, really," New Zealand captain Tom Latham said at the presentation



New Zealand's Ajaz Patel, fourth right, celebrates with his teammate after picking up a wicket against the West Indies on the fifth and final day of the third cricket Test at Mount Maunganui in New Zealand on Monday, December 22, 2025. (Getty Images)

ceremony.

"Take away maybe 20-odd overs with the ball in that first innings and I thought throughout the rest of the game, we were exactly where we wanted to be. And obviously, being on the right side, is really pleasing."

It was a memorable match for the New Zealand captain, who followed his 137 in the first innings with 101 in the second. His opening partner Devon Conway's scores of 227 and 100 earned him the player-of-the-match award.

It was the first time in a Test match that a team's opening batters each hit centuries in both innings. Duffy walked away with the player-of-the-series award for his tally of 23 wickets.

The West Indies showed

Hodge's hundred powered them to a respectable 420.

"It has been a tough series. We played good in patches but not through long phases and it showed in the results," West Indies captain Roston Chase said.

"I think we need to firstly know when those moments are up for grabs, and then obviously, to nail those moments, to win those key moments in the game. I just think that's something that we have to learn to do."

some resistance in the first innings when Kavem

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Dated the 22nd day of December, 2025



Tia Dunnah
Attorney-at-Law for the Applicant

Tia Dunnah
 Attorney-at-Law

NBA and FIBA moving closer to new basketball league in Europe

NEW YORK (AP) - The NBA and FIBA said Monday they will start the process of engaging with teams and owners about joining their planned new league in Europe next month.

As has been expected, the league will offer both permanent spots and “a merit-based pathway” to qualifying on an annual basis through FIBA’s Basketball Champions League or an end-of-season tournament, the sides said. Every team in a FIBA-affiliated European league would have the chance to qualify.

“The format of the league respects European sport model principles by offering any ambitious club in the continent a fair pathway to the top,” FIBA secretary general Andreas Zagklis said.

Many details for the new league are yet to be formally finalized, including when it will start play, the working target has been October 2027, and how many teams will take part in that inaugural season. Among the models that the NBA and FIBA have explored is a 16-team league, with 12 “permanent” spots and the other four available through qualifying.

The sides have been discussing a European league for many years, and no shortage of the NBA’s biggest stars right now hail from that continent, such as Denver’s Nikola Jokic, Milwaukee’s Giannis Antetokounmpo, San Antonio’s Victor Wembanyama, the Los Angeles Lakers’ Luka Dončić and Utah’s Lauri Markkanen. About one in six NBA players are from Eu-



Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokić (15) drives past Orlando Magic center Goga Bitadze (35) in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Denver on Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025. (AP)

rope.

Efforts toward starting the new league seemed to begin intensifying around the time of the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Earlier this year, Zagklis and Silver sat side-by-side at a New York news conference to announce that the NBA and FIBA were moving forward with the project.

Things have moved quickly since, with JPMorgan and the Raine Group being brought on board this summer to advise on certain financial components.

“Our conversations with various stakeholders in Europe have rein-

forced our belief that an enormous opportunity exists around the creation of a new league on the continent,” NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said.

Current target countries for the NBA-FIBA endeavour are known to include Britain (with the potential host cities there being London and Manchester), France (Paris and Lyon), Spain (Madrid and Barcelona), Italy (Rome and Milan), Germany (Munich and Berlin), Greece (Athens), and Turkey (Istanbul).

The NBA has a pair of regular-season games in Europe in mid-January, with the Memphis Grizzlies and Orlando Magic going to Berlin and London for contests.



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England's McCullum wants to keep job despite Ashes defeat



Brendon McCullum

LONDON (Reuters) - England head coach Brendon McCullum says he wants to stay in his job despite a three-test defeat in the Ashes series but says his future is not in his hands.

The New Zealander has come in for criticism during the series with England's 82-run defeat in the third test at Adelaide giving Australia an unassailable 3-0 lead.

McCullum is contracted through to the end of the World Cup in 2027 so would get another opportunity to reclaim the Ashes in a home series that year if he stays in his post.

"It's a pretty good gig. It's good fun," McCullum was quoted as saying by the BBC. "You travel the world with the lads and try to play some exciting cricket and try to achieve some things."

"You want to try to get the best out of people. I don't do anything to protect the job. It's a matter of trying to just get the very best out of the people."


England's approach in Australia has fuelled criticism that the so-called "Bazball" tactics that have marked out McCullum's reign have

been largely discredited.

"I don't know. It's not really up to me, is it?" McCullum said when asked if he thought he would still be in charge for the next Ashes series.

"I'll just keep trying to do the job, trying to learn the lessons I haven't quite got right here and try to make some adjustments. Those questions are for someone else, not for me."

England are winless in 18 Test matches in Australia and will be looking to avoid a 5-0 whitewash. The fourth Ashes Test starts on December 26 in Melbourne.



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Sports News

Mekhi dominates, Tonge breaks through in ABTTA Nationals



Open Singles: (left to right)
3rd Place - Collins Abraham and Barrington Loague
1st Place - Mekhi Simmons
2nd Place - Sandra Joseph

The Antigua and Barbuda Table Tennis Association (ABTTA) served up a thrilling showcase of rising talent and competitive spirit at the recently concluded National Table Tennis Championships — and it was nothing short of electrifying.

Mekhi Simmons stood tall as the tournament's most decorated player, sweeping three titles — U19 Singles, Open Singles, and Open Doubles (with Barrington Loague). With blistering forehands and unmatched composure, Simmons solidified his place as Antigua and Barbuda's new table tennis kingpin.

In the youth ranks, Tiquan Tonge made his own headlines, clinching U17 Singles and Doubles (alongside Emmanuel Stoute), signalling the arrival of a new generation of contenders.

Other standout performances included:



U17 Singles: (left to right)
3rd Place: Nehjeann Thomas and Emmanuel Stoute
1st Place: Tiquan Tonge
2nd Place: Zlaton Baptiste

Sandra Joseph — battling her way to **2nd in Open Singles** and **U17 Doubles silver**, proving herself as one of the nation's hardest-working athletes.

Zlaton Baptiste and **Nathan Thomas** — impressive in **U17 Singles and Doubles** brackets, showing the depth of emerging youth talent.

Collins Abraham — earned bronze in the **Open Singles** and **Open Doubles silver** with ABTTA President **Charles Bellot**.

Final Results Snapshot

- **U17 Singles** □ Tiquan Tonge
 □ Zlaton Baptiste □ Nehjeann Thomas / Emmanuel Stoute
- **U17 Doubles** □ Tiquan Tonge / Emmanuel Stoute
 □ Sandra Joseph / Jaheim George □ Zlaton Baptiste / Nehjeann Thomas
- **U19 Singles** □ Mekhi Simmons
 □ Barrington Loague



U19 Singles
1st Place: Mekhi Simmons
2nd Place: Barrington Loague

- **Open Singles** □ Mekhi Simmons
 □ Sandra Joseph □ Collins Abraham / Barrington Loague
- **Open Doubles** □ Simmons / Loague
 □ Bellot / Abraham □ Tonge / Stoute & Duncan / Joseph

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Olympic Gold medalists return from high performance training

Antigua and Barbuda will once again play host to an elite group of internationally acclaimed Olympians as they visit the destination for off-season track and field training.

Leading the delegation is **Rai Benjamin**, affectionately known locally as “**King Ben**,” an **Olympic gold medalist, World Champion**, and widely regarded as one of the greatest 400-metre hurdlers in history. Benjamin, who captured Olympic gold as part of the men’s 4x400-metre relay team and has earned multiple global titles in the 400-metre hurdles, will host his teammates in Antigua from **December 26, 2025, to January 3, 2026**.

The visiting contingent of eleven elite athletes includes **Antiguans Cejhae Green** and Joella Lloyd, alongside fellow **Olympians and world-class competitors** such as **Vernon Norwood**, an **Olympic gold medalist and World Championship medalist** who has played a pivotal role on the **United States men’s 4x400-metre relay team**, and **Jasmine Jones**, an **elite American sprinter** and hurdler who recently won silver in the 400 m hurdles in Tokyo, Japan.

Also included in the group are Raevyn Rogers, Shae Anderson, Sammy Watson, Kendall Ellis, and Allie Jones, all accomplished athletes with extensive experience competing at the highest levels of international athletics. The team is led by **Joanna Hayes**, an **Olympic gold medalist and internationally renowned coach**, celebrated for both her championship career and her continued impact in developing world-class athletes.

A major highlight of the visit will be



a **meet-and-greet and training clinic** for local track and field hopefuls, scheduled for **December 29 at the YASCO Sports Complex**. The clinic will provide young Antiguan athletes with a rare opportunity to train alongside and learn directly from Olympic champions and seasoned professionals.

Newly elected President of the Antigua Athletics Association, Mrs. Shawnor Joseph is quite enthusiastic about the upcoming clinic as it presents a major opportunity for athletic development in core disciplines for both Antiguan coaches and aspiring athletes.

Mrs. Joseph stated that, “*The Antigua and Barbuda Athletics Association is extremely proud to welcome back Rai Benjamin and his Hayestack training team to Antigua and Barbuda. We view the clinic as an important in-*

vestment in athlete development and it will have a meaning full impact on our coaches and athletes, this also provides a rare opportunity for our coaches to learn directly from global competitors”.

Reflecting on last year’s inaugural activity, Coach Hayes shared, “*Our athletes thoroughly enjoyed interacting with local youth, who were clearly inspired by the Olympians’ stories, presence, and encouragement. The team also shared their experiences across social media platforms, highlighting the beauty of Antigua and Barbuda to a wide audience. I’ve personally heard from many people who were impressed and moved by what they saw of our travels and training experience.”*

As the **major sponsor of the visit**, the **Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation and Investment**, through its **Department of Sports Tourism**, emphasized the strategic value of hosting elite athletes in destination. Minister of Tourism, the Hon, Charles Fernandez notes that, “*Welcoming world-class Olympians to Antigua and Barbuda aligns squarely with our sports tourism strategy, which leverages high-performance sport to inspire our youth, elevate our international profile, and showcase the destination as an ideal environment for elite training. This visit demonstrates the powerful intersection of athletic excellence, community engagement, and destination marketing.”*

The visit further reinforces Antigua and Barbuda’s growing reputation as a preferred destination for high-performance sport, athlete development, and meaningful sports tourism engagement

All Saints United stay unbeaten and atop of Premier Division



A starting XI of the All Saints United football team

Back-to-back defending champions All Saints United maintained their unbeaten run and opened up a four-point lead in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday.

D'Andre Bishop struck a hat trick as All Saints United recorded a 3-1 victory against Aston Villa Lions FC in the last game of a triple-header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Deandre Bishop opened their scoring with a sixth-minute strike that gave All Saints United a one-nil lead at halftime. He completed his hat trick with

goals in the 46th and 65th minutes to give All Saints United a 3-0 lead.

Eroy Gonsalves reduced the deficit by scoring a consolation goal in the 90th minute for the Villa Lions, who remain on 15 points after slumping to their second loss in seven matches.

All Saints United remains at the top of the Premier Division standings by advancing to 24 points after recording their eighth win in as many games. Sandals and Inet Jennings Grenades are currently in second place with 20 points from eight matches.

Old Road FC and Green City FC also recorded wins in the other two matches on Sunday.

Keven Lucas scored twice as Old Road FC claimed their fifth win in seven matches with a 4-0 drubbing of John Hughes FC in the opening game of Sunday's triple-header.

Lucas had a conversion in the 27th and 87th minutes, while the other goals for Old Road were scored by Rakeem Joseph in the 34th minute and Shakore Simon in the 52nd minute.

The result carries Old Road FC to 16 points, while John

Hughes FC remains on three points after suffering their seventh defeat in eight matches.

Elijah Whyte also scored twice to propel Green City FC to their third win in eight matches with a 2-0 victory against the Attacking Saints in the second encounter on Sunday.

Whyte converted both goals with strikes in the third and 53rd minutes. The result allows Green City FC to advance to 10 points, while the Attacking Saints remain on nine points after crashing to their fifth loss in eight matches.