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Merry Christmas

*From the Management
and Staff of
Point Ville Communications Inc.*

Commissioner of Police Delivers Christmas and End-of-Year Message



Newly appointed Commissioner of Police, Everton Jeffers, delivered his inaugural Christmas and End-of-Year Message to a large gathering of police officers at the Multipurpose Cultural Center on Monday, December 22.

During his address, he reflected on the successes, plans, and programmes of the Police Administration as the organization prepares for the new year.

Commissioner Jeffers began by extending warm Christmas greetings to members of the Force and their families, while reflecting on the significance of the season as one of faith, gratitude, and renewal. He reaffirmed the Force's unwavering commitment to service, professionalism, and strong community partnerships.

He reminded members of the organization's Mission and Vision, emphasizing integrity, accountability, and community-oriented policing in an increasingly complex security environment marked by violent crime, illegal firearms, cyber threats, and transnational criminal activity. Despite these challenges, he noted that 2025 was a year of notable achievement and transformation.

Among the highlights were expanded training opportunities, modernized

investigative processes, strengthened data-driven policing, the establishment of a Cold Case Unit, enhancements to the Drone Team, expansion of the K-9 Unit with four new dogs, and upgrades to the St. John's Police Station.

The Fire Department also benefited from the acquisition of several new fire tenders, ongoing work at the Boleans Fire Station, and plans for the reconstruction of the St. John's Fire Station.

Commissioner Jeffers also highlighted crime-reduction efforts that yielded measurable results, with overall crime reduced by approximately ten (10) percent, alongside increases in arrests and convictions. These achievements were attributed to proactive policing strategies and greater cooperation from the public.

While acknowledging these successes, the Commissioner expressed concern over rising youth-related crime and reaffirmed the Police Administration's commitment to working with key stakeholders to address the issue. He commended the Youth Intervention Unit and its partners for the success of the "END IT HOW" Summer Camp, from which over fifty (50) students graduated in September.

Significant enforcement successes were also outlined. Joint operations involving the Narcotics Department, K-9 Unit, and Customs Task Force resulted in the seizure of approximately 600 pounds of cannabis valued at EC \$3.5 million.

Additionally, targeted operations led to the seizure of fifty-two (52) illegal firearms and over seven hundred and seventy (770) rounds of ammunition, exceeding recoveries made during the April National Gun Amnesty. He also spoke briefly on the staging of Police Week 2025 and thanked sponsors and partners for contributing to its success.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Commissioner urged officers to prepare for increased demands, including security responsibilities for the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), while remaining mentally and physically prepared to deliver professional service.

He recognized officers who achieved academic success and congratulated Mrs. Louisa Benjamin-Quashie on her recent appointment as Deputy Commissioner of Police, along with several other officers who were recently promoted within the organization. He reminded them that elevation in rank carries greater responsibility and an



increased dedication to duty.

The Commissioner also expressed concern for the families of missing... persons and unresolved cases, reaffirming the Force's commitment to pursuing justice and closure. He reassured families and the public that victims are not forgotten and encouraged continued patience as investigations proceed.

He further expressed gratitude to the Government of Antigua and Barbu-



da, the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force, regional and international law enforcement partners, retired officers, and the public for their continued support. He also paid tribute to the families of fallen officers and thanked his predecessor, Retired Commissioner Atlee Rodney, now Deputy Director of the Regional Security System (RSS), for his years of dedicated service to the nation.

During the event, presentations were made to several officers for exemplary performance. Recognition was also given to twelve (12) fifth-form students from the Ottos Comprehensive

School, who are currently assigned to the Police Force for a two-week period as part of their Business Sensitization Program.

As the nation approaches the new year, Commissioner Jeffers called on all members to recommit to the noble calling of law enforcement, uphold the public trust, and continue building safer communities through unity, faith, and partnership.

On behalf of his family, he extended best wishes to all members of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda and the wider community for a Merry Christmas and a safe, peaceful, and prosperous New Year 2026.



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Diplomatic Maturity Prevails: How Responsible Engagement Secured Antigua and Barbuda's Interests



By Hon. E.P. Chet Greene

In an era where international relations are often dominated by headlines of discord and unilateral action, the recent and successful engagement between Antigua and Barbuda and the United States over new security proclamations stands as a masterclass in mature, effective diplomacy. The outcome, which safeguards the interests of our citizens while respecting U.S. security imperatives, is not a matter of luck. It is the direct result of calm, professional and persistent diplomatic efforts, led with distinction by our Ambassador to the United States and the OAS, Sir Ronald Sanders.

Faced with the potential disruption caused by the U.S. proclamation of December 16, 2025, our government moved with swiftness and strategic clarity. Under the direct guidance of Prime Minister the Honourable Gaston Browne and my ministerial leadership at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Ambassador Sanders was instructed to engage immediately with the high-

est levels of the U.S. State Department. He did not go to Washington to protest or posture but to negotiate, clarify and secure the interests of every Antiguan and Barbudan citizen.

The results, as detailed in Ambassador Sanders' statement, are unequivocally positive. The U.S. has confirmed it will respect all existing visas, providing immediate certainty to our students, business travellers, tourists and families. It has guaranteed no revocation of pre 2025 visas, protecting the substantial investments and plans of our people.

This immediate clarity alleviated the foremost anxieties of our citizens, a testament to diplomacy that listens to and acts upon the concerns of the people.

For future arrangements, Ambassador Sanders, working in lockstep with the Cabinet, secured a cooperative path forward. The alignment of biometric systems is a practical measure of enhanced security cooperation and must not be seen as a punitive barrier. As he emphatically stated, the process for our citizens will be no different; only the technology will be harmonized. This was a key concession achieved through negotiation, ensuring our systems are compatible while preserving the dignity and ease of travel for our people.

Throughout this delicate process, Ambassador Sanders exemplified the highest standards of diplomatic service. He kept Prime Minister Browne, Attorney General Cutie Benjamin and myself continuously abreast of all developments, ensuring our leadership was fully informed and that our national strategy was executed with precision. His approach, combining unwavering advocacy for Antigua and Barbuda with a deep respect for the

U.S.'s security prerogatives, created the atmosphere of the mutual trust necessary for a rapid and fair resolution.

This successful outcome also speaks to the receptive and professional conduct of the officials within the United States Department of State. We express sincere appreciation for their expeditious and good-faith response to our request for engagement. Their willingness to listen and work constructively reflects the enduring strength of the bilateral relationship our nations have nurtured over decades.

This entire episode underscores the outstanding and effective leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From the strategic direction set at the political level to the expert execution by our ambassador in the field, our diplomatic machinery proved its worth. We demonstrated that a small state, when guided by principle and professional diplomacy, can engage with the world's largest power not from a position of weakness but from one of respect and reasoned partnership.

Antigua and Barbuda has reaffirmed our commitment to being a responsible international partner, pledged to security cooperation and steadfast in protecting the rights and interests of our citizens. This is what effective governance looks like. We have achieved clarity, preserved vital people-to-people ties while at the same time strengthening the framework of our cooperation with the United States. For this, the nation owes a debt of gratitude to the diplomatic team, led by Sir Ronald Sanders, whose skill and dedication turned a potential challenge into a demonstration of diplomatic excellence.

Trinidad and Tobago's PM's Assault on CARICOM: a Historic Betrayal of Regional Solidarity



By Aneka Lee

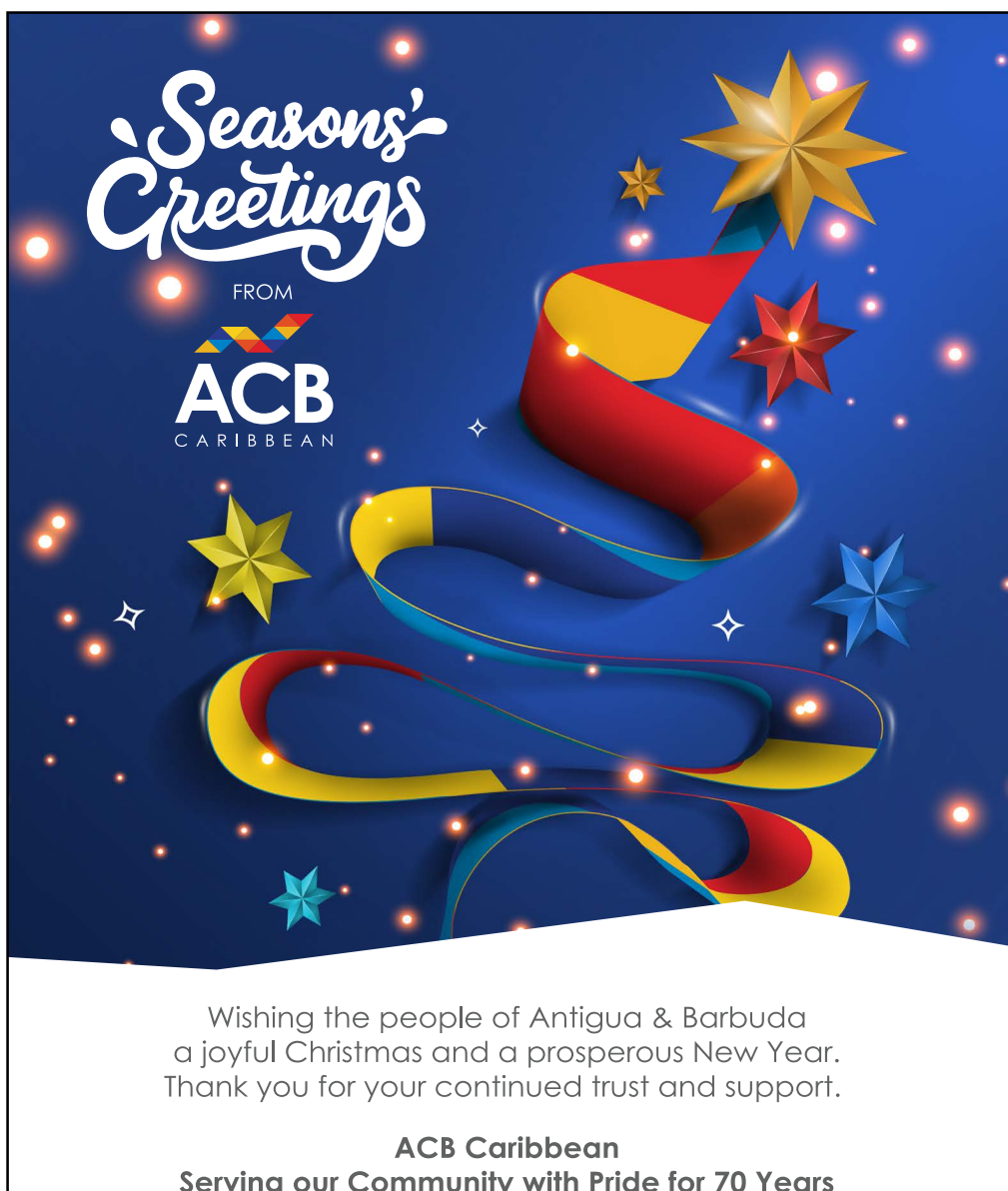
There is an old adage that states “a chain is only as strong as its weakest link”. In an atrocious deviation from the longstanding tradition of regional solidarity, Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar has positioned herself as the weak link in the movement towards regional integration and solidarity with a series of scathing attacks on CARICOM and select member states, deriding the regional bloc as “not a reliable trading partner”. This posture was foreshadowed as early as November 20, when the Prime Minister asserted in a post on X that “*if Caribbean prime ministers continue cavorting around the region and interfering in the affairs and elections of member states, it is only a matter of time before CARICOM implodes.*” A claim which was offered without substantiating evidence reads less as a warning rooted in fact and more as an early attempt to sow suspicion and discord within the very institution she is now publicly undermining.

The recent public assertions represent an unforgiveable betrayal to the Treaty of Chaguaramas. The irony that this betrayal comes at the hands of a daugh-

ter of the soil on which the treaty was signed is inescapable. These assertions run contrary to the established diplomatic norms, tenets and very spirit of the Treaty which commits member states to mutual respect, non-subversion, and collective responsibility. The Treaty of Chaguaramas was explicit in its intent to ensure that Caribbean states would not confront global powers in isolation, nor compete destructively among themselves for favour.

In distancing Trinidad and Tobago from a CARICOM communiqué which expressed concern about US travel re-

strictions while castigating the regional bloc's leadership as “*dysfunctional*,” plagued by “*poor management*” and “*factional divisions*”, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar seeks to isolate Trinidad and Tobago and effectively ostracize fellow member states. Such divisive language coming from a “seasoned” leader within our region is dangerously inflammatory. To dismiss CARICOM's relevance while continuing to benefit from the legal, economic, and diplomatic architecture created at Chaguaramas is a fundamental contradiction.



Seasons' Greetings

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The context in which the comments were made make them exponentially more problematic. At a moment when Caribbean states are grappling with global pressures on trade, climate vulnerability, and security threats, Persad-Bissessar has chosen to single out fellow CARICOM members.

In her remarks, Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar even chastised Caribbean leaders, implicitly targeting our very own Prime Minister, the Honourable Gaston Browne, and the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, Roosevelt Skerritt. In yet another unsubstantiated claim, she cautioned the populace of Trinidad and Tobago against criticizing the United States of America stating *"Careful you don't end up like Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica... bad-mouthing the U.S. and guess what happened... all their visas rescinded now."* There is significant danger in her unfounded

utterances. Not only does it undermine the legitimacy of CARICOM as an institution, it also cast aspersions on her colleague Heads of Government and unfortunately suggests a willingness to prioritise short-term favour with the USA over the long-term interests of Caribbean cooperation.

There is a critical distinction between strategic engagement with the United States and strategic dependence upon its approval. Persad-Bissessar's posture increasingly suggests the latter. By signaling that regional unity must yield when it conflicts with Washington's preferences, she diminishes the very leverage CARICOM was designed to create.

History cautions that a fragmented Caribbean does not gain influence by competing for favour; they lose it. CARICOM is a constantly evolving institution that requires continuous reform not abandonment by rhetoric that

delegitimises the institution.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated rhetorical lapse. It is the culmination of a sustained narrative in which CARICOM is framed as inefficient, unreliable, and strategically expendable. Such language is neither accidental nor harmless. It conditions the public to accept regional disengagement as pragmatism, rather than recognise it for what it is: a retreat from collective responsibility.

If the Treaty of Chaguaramas is to bear any significance at all, it must mean that Caribbean unity is not conditional, especially not based on the preferences of external powers. Trinidad and Tobago's leadership should be reinforcing that treaty's spirit, not diminishing it through divisive rhetoric.

The Caribbean deserves leadership that remembers where CARICOM was born and why.



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Who the Gods wish to Destroy, They First Make Mad



By Ariel Saunders

(An independent thinking young man)

There are moments when leadership is revealed not by what is said, but by what a leader cannot resist saying. Saturday evening, while the country's culture lovers (like myself) gathered around the beauty of pan, Trinidad and Tobago was reminded that restraint, proportion, and judgement are not universally valued qualities.

A statement issued from the Office of the Prime Minister, intemperate in tone and careless in implication, intruded upon the national consciousness with a recklessness that should trouble even her most devoted defenders. The comments directed at CARICOM and regional leaders were not only an ill-advised intervention into a sensitive diplomatic moment but a disclosure of incapacity.

The Prime Minister's language, posture, and chosen targets exposed a leader fundamentally unequal to the complexity of the geopolitical environment she is attempting to dominate. It was the language of someone mistaking provocation for strength

and certainty for wisdom, at precisely the moment when neither can be afforded. Trinidad and Tobago occupies no commanding height in the global order.

We sit, as we always have, at the intersection of competing interests, dependent on networks, alliances and a careful management of relationships that constrain the worst excesses of great power behaviour. CARICOM is central to that architecture. It is the primary market for Trinidad and Tobago's manufactured goods, petrochemical products, food and beverage exports, construction materials and professional services. Guyana, Jamaica, Barbados, Suriname, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and St Lucia absorb billions of dollars of our exports annually, providing foreign exchange, sustaining domestic manufacturing capacity and supporting thousands of jobs across the energy, logistics, retail

and services sectors.

CARICOM represents Trinidad and Tobago's most reliable external demand after the United States, and unlike larger markets, it is one in which Trinidad and Tobago enjoys structural advantage rather than permanent vulnerability. Our firms dominate shelves, supply chains and distribution networks across the region. Our banks, insurers and conglomerates operate profitably because CARICOM exists as a rules-based economic space rather than a collection of isolated markets. To casually disparage this ecosystem in public, at a moment of diplomatic strain, is to display a startling indifference to the economic foundations that sustain the very citizens the Prime Minister claims to prioritise. The attack on CARICOM's credibility, coupled with the derision directed at the Caribbean's long-standing commitment to the region as a Zone of Peace, exposes our



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Prime Minister as one who does not grasp why such doctrines exist in the first place.

The Zone of Peace was never designed to sanitise authoritarian behaviour or excuse internal repression. It was articulated as a collective assertion that Caribbean disputes should not become entry points for militarisation, proxy conflict, or the strategic ambitions of external powers whose interests are neither permanent nor benign. It reflects the historical memory of small societies that understand how quickly geopolitical contests can erase local agency.

By dismissing this posture as fakery, the Prime Minister signalled a willingness to trade long-term regional stability for short-term alignment. There is an arrogance in this posture that tells of a leader intoxicated by proximity to power rather than one conscious of its limits. The Prime Minister appears to believe that loudly affirming the sovereign prerogatives of a superpower will somehow insulate us from the consequences of that superpower's decisions. This is not how sovereignty works for small states. We survive by preserving ambiguity, by maintaining multiple lines of engagement and by refusing to foreclose future options through reckless speech.

What makes this whole thing particularly unsettling is that none of this

escalation was required. Trinidad and Tobago maintains diplomatic relations with the United States, Venezuela and every CARICOM member state. These relationships have coexisted for decades, even through periods of acute tension. There was no strategic imperative to publicly humiliate regional partners in order to articulate an independent position on United States visa restrictions. There was no national emergency that demanded rhetorical excess. The choice to antagonise was political and reveals a leader more invested in projecting dominance than in managing consequences. The defenders of this posture are revealing in their own way. Many are less concerned with the substance of what has been said than with who has said it. Party loyalty has replaced judgement. Access has replaced analysis. Contracts, proximity and relevance have dulled your instinct for caution.

In defending the indefensible, you now mistake noise for strength and applause for legitimacy, while failing to recognise the danger being manufactured in real time. There is also a temporal irresponsibility at work. A Prime Minister who is clearly in the latter chapter of her political life appears willing to gamble with institutions and relationships that will outlast her tenure by decades. Foreign policy is not a stage for settling scores or asserting ego. It is an inheritance passed forward which demands humility pre-

cisely because its consequences cannot be undone with a press release. The international environment offers little room for this kind of indulgence. Major powers are increasingly unilateral. Sanctions regimes, travel restrictions and economic pressure are deployed with speed and minimal consultation.

In this climate, coalition building is for us a means of survival. To weaken regional solidarity at such a moment is to misunderstand the age we are living in. The Prime Minister's statements did not project strength. They advertised recklessness. They did not protect sovereignty. They endangered it. They did not place Trinidad and Tobago first. They placed the country alone. History is indifferent to motive and merciless toward error. It does not preserve the explanations offered in moments of excitement, but the damage left behind when judgement failed. Power most often collapses not through malice, but through leaders who confuse confidence with competence and loud noise with strategy.

The warning in this title endures because it names a recurring condition of authority. Those whom the gods wish to destroy are rarely stripped of power abruptly. They are first relieved of restraint, and permitted to speak freely at the precise moment when silence, proportion and care are most required.

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Three Lessons This Christmas Can Guide Us Into a Brighter New Year

Christmas arrives each year with familiar traditions—twinkling lights, music drifting through communities, shared meals, and moments spent with family and friends. Yet beyond the celebrations, Christmas also brings something quieter but just as powerful: an opportunity for reflection. As the year comes to a close, we are invited to pause and consider not only what we have done, but how we have lived, worked, and contributed to the world around us. This season encourages us to slow down long enough to ask important questions. What have we learned this year? How have our choices shaped our communities? And as we prepare to enter a new year, what values will guide us forward? As we look ahead, three simple but transformative lessons stand out: lead with purpose, protect your energy, and commit to consistency over perfection. These lessons are not abstract ideas—they are practical principles that can shape how we build stronger, more inclusive, and more sustainable

communities in the year ahead. Choosing Purpose in a Pressured World- Pressure dominates modern life. We feel it in our workplaces, our institutions, and even in our personal lives. There is pressure to perform, to move faster, to deliver more, and to constantly keep up. Yet Christmas reminds us that meaningful change does not come from haste—it comes from purpose. Purpose gives direction. It helps us prioritize what truly matters and ensures that progress benefits people, not just numbers. When actions are rooted in purpose, they are more thoughtful, more inclusive, and more likely to create lasting impact. Purpose-driven action is essential to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, and SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. These goals remind us that development should strengthen communities, not strain them. When systems are designed with intention, they become more accessible, resilient, and responsive

to real needs. Purpose helps leaders, organizations, and communities move beyond reaction and toward long-term vision. It allows us to ask better questions and make better choices. We should pause and ask ourselves: Are we building for speed, or are we building for sustainability? Are our decisions driven by urgency, or guided by values? Energy Is a Resource—Use It Wisely - The Christmas season also encourages us to rest and reconnect. It reminds us of the importance of family, community, and balance. Yet many people approach the new year already depleted—physically, mentally, and emotionally. This is more than a personal challenge; it is a societal warning sign. Protecting energy is not about doing less—it is about doing better. Healthy individuals create healthy communities. When energy is protected, productivity improves, creativity flourishes, and relationships grow stronger. This principle reflects SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, recognizing

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that exhaustion disproportionately affects those with fewer resources, heavier responsibilities, and limited support systems. Burnout does not lead to progress. It weakens families, workplaces, and institutions. A society that values rest is one that understands that well-being is foundational to growth. Energy, once depleted, takes time to restore, and without it, even the best intentions fall short. This season invites us to reflect honestly: What boundaries must we establish to ensure that growth does not come at the cost of well-being? What would change if rest was treated as a necessity rather than an afterthought? Progress Comes From Showing Up - Too often, people delay action because conditions are not “perfect.” We wait for the right timing, the right resources, or the right circumstances. But perfection is rarely achievable—and often unnecessary. Progress is built through consistent effort, even when outcomes are uncertain. Every small choice contributes to a larger impact. This is especially true for environmental and social initiatives linked to SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 13: Climate Action. Sustainable futures depend on everyday actions repeated across households, businesses, schools, and communities. Consistency transforms values into habits and ideas into results. It is not about grand gestures; it is about commitment. Showing up—again and again—is what creates momentum and builds trust. Change happens when people refuse to give up simply because the journey is slow. So we must ask: Why wait for perfection when progress is already within reach? Why delay action when consistency can move us forward today?

As we celebrate Christmas and welcome the new year, let us commit to purpose, balance, and persistence. Let us show up—for our communities, our environment, and each other. Let us carry forward the lessons of this season and allow them to guide our actions long after the decorations come down. The future is not something we wait for. It is something we build—together, one

purposeful, balanced, and consistent step at a time.

Joshuanette Francis

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Christmas starts at the AYC!

Zoë Carlton

AYC members in English Harbour are still catching their breath after a weekend that delivered a heady mix of sailing, celebration and festive excess. The fun kicked off on Friday with the annual Christmas Dinner, a fitting and cheerful way to round off the year—made all the more impressive by how quickly it came together. Huge thanks go to newly appointed Social Director, Gigi Di Renzo, who worked wonders at short notice. Though smaller in scale, the evening was relaxed, friendly, and full of good conversation, helped along by a delicious sit-down buffet from Club Sushi and a generous flow of rum punch. Thanks to Angie and her team at Club Sushi.

The racing momentum had already begun the previous weekend with the warm-up series. Brown Skin Girl, sailed by Carrack Jones and his young crew on Saturday, backed up by Richard Fear and Tommy Paterson on the Wednesday, took top honours, followed by Whiplash with Ashley Rhodes and Bunglebird, sailed by Robbie Ferron, in third.

The Jol Byerley High Tide Trophy regatta proper burst into life on Saturday and Sunday, raising the annual question: what was more

competitive, the sailing or the after-party? Rear Commodore Sandy Mair, moving at full Santa-speed for weeks beforehand, ensured the event delivered for sailors and shore crew alike. After long, demanding days on the water, competitors were greeted by a splendid feast, with enormous thanks to Barbie and her team for keeping hungry sailors well fed and happy. Sailors and non-sailors joined an evening of flowing drinks and food and some spontaneous dancing and games! Unexpected award of the week goes to the impressive hula-hoop skills of a young sailor who joined the fun.

On the results board, Class A was dominated by Whiplash (Ashley Rhodes), with Danish Blue sailed by Poul Hoj-Jensen taking second. Class B honours went to Huey Too, sailed by Bernie Evan Wong, followed by Bunglebird (Robbie Ferron) and Cricket (Sandy Mair). It was great to welcome the Huey Too crew who joined the series and from Jolly Harbour with infectious enthusiasm for both racing and party

Overall, Whiplash claimed the top spot, with Bunglebird second and Danish Blue third. Cricket finished fourth, ahead of Huey Too in fifth, Brown Skin Girl in sixth, and Apache rounding out the fleet in seventh.



Seven boats competed across the full series, with many more members and guests joining the celebrations ashore. Thanks to sponsors Caribbean Alliance and Antigua Distilleries, no glass went unfilled, while sponsor and official AYC photographer Ed Gifford was on hand to capture the action and assist with prize-giving. Robyn Stout made some great photos from the committee boat. A cheer also went up for Race

Officer Dave Simpson and his hardworking team, Ray for creating the impressive trophies and Budget Marine for providing the marking buoys.

It was a weekend that captured the very spirit of AYC: members pulling it all together, spirited racing, great company and plenty of fun both on and off the water.

Official Tribute from the Leadership and Membership of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP)

Comrades, brothers and sisters....

A profound silence falls over our nation as we bid farewell to one of the last great pillars of our modern history. On behalf of Prime Minister, Gaston Browne, the leadership, membership and the countless generations who have walked the path he helped to pave, the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party extends our deepest condolences on the passing of Comrade Rufus Adolphus Lewis, OM.

Comrade Lewis was not just a man; he was a living chronicle of our 20th-century struggle, a tireless builder and the last of the heroic '39ers; those foundation stones upon which our nation's development continues to be built. His journey, beginning when he joined the Antigua Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU) at the age of 15 in 1939, became inextricably linked with our Party's own genesis.

The Party and the Union share a common root and Comrade Lewis was an essential part of that taproot. His principled and fierce advocacy for workers' rights, "regardless of which government was in office" stood as a powerful testament to the movement's integrity and independence, especially during the formative years of the ABLP itself. His life's work demonstrates that true Labour values are constant, serving as the nation's conscience and its reliably steady hand of progress.

Beyond the union halls and political meetings, Comrade Lewis was a master builder in the most literal sense. As a carpenter and supervisor with the Ministry of Works, his hands and his

oversight shaped the very infrastructure of our nation. He was responsible for constructing schools that educated generations, from Old Road to Parham and police stations that served



and protected our communities. For years, even after formal retirement, he served as the dedicated caretaker of the Swetes Government School (now the Irene B. Williams School), ensuring its doors remained open and its classrooms safe. His legacy is quite literally built into the foundations of Antigua and Barbuda.

I write this tribute not only as the Chairman of the Party but as someone who was privileged to know the man behind the legacy. I benefited from his wise counsel, witnessed firsthand the firm and loving leadership he exercised over his household and shared the classroom, cricket and football fields with his sons, Foster, Edward, Enoch, Ira, and Alvin.

Today, on his passing, we salute you all. To his other children, Rev. Algeron, GlenysJoy, Rowan, Hezekiah and Steadroy, and to his beloved wife of 57 years, Hildred Jerome Lewis and the entire family: we thank you for sharing your father, your husband, your patriarch with our nation. The love of cricket, his Family and Party for which he was known will forever be a part of his story.

In 2009, the nation rightly bestowed upon him The Order of Merit (OM) for his exceptional service. As the Governor General aptly stated, "Rufus Lewis was a builder in the truest sense of the word. He built roads and schools, institutions and movements, families and communities... We have lost a giant".

As the sun sets on the life of our dear Comrade, the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party pledges to honour his memory by upholding the principles he championed: solidarity, integrity, service and an unwavering commitment to the dignity of every Antiguan and Barbudan.

May his soul find Eternal Rest and may his memories live on, inspiring us forever. On that day of eternal crowning, we pray that his lifelong labour of love and his monumental contribution to the development of our people and country be justly rewarded.

Solidarity Forever.

Hon. E. P Chet Greene

Chairman

Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party

Four Clarendon families get new homes in time for Christmas

Four deserving residents from Clarendon are proud homeowners, just in time for Christmas.

Cynthia Johnson in Rock River, Maudlyn Simpson-Needham from Coxwain, Carlus Greyson from Four Paths, and Angella Boothe from Mocho, were presented with keys to housing units under the New Social Housing Programme (NSHP), by Prime Minister Dr Andrew Holness on Friday, December 19.

Speaking at the first handover in Rock River, Holness urged the recipients to maintain the houses in the good condition they received them or improve on the dwellings for the betterment of their families.

He noted that the beneficiaries are expected to conduct themselves as model citizens and serve as shining examples for other community members.

During an interview with JIS News, Johnson, who received a two-bedroom unit, said she is extremely grateful for the new, safe space.

She noted that she was living in a dilapidated dwelling in Mount Zion, and she had lost her pit latrine during the passage of Hurricane Melissa.

"I'm happy! I can't even tell you how I feel. The situation at the house I was living in was not good," she said, noting that "rat bat



lived in the ceiling".

"When it rains I have a lot of problems; it floods out, but thank God I have this; mi don't haffi fret when hurricane come again," said Johnson.

"I can't even explain. I pray; I thank God every day. I thank all the people who made it possible for me. I thank you very much because without the people, the government, the contributors, it wouldn't be possible," Johnson expressed.

Simpson-Needham is also thankful for the two-bedroom, which she will share with her daughter and granddaughter.

"I am happy for my house.

I would encourage others to just be with the Lord, no matter what you are going through. Just put it to the Lord and He will carry it through," she said.

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development with responsibility for Works Robert Nesta Morgan, who was on hand for handover of the housing units, said that the families are deserving.

The Member of Parliament for Clarendon North Central, who addressed the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Greyson family, said he is confident that the parents and four children will make the three-bedroom house a home.

"It's a large family and their children will be better off with good toilet facilities and rooms for them to be secure in, a roof over their heads where they'll be confident that when it is raining that the roof will not be leaking," he pointed out.

"On this occasion, I'm extremely proud that we're going to be investing in a future generation, empowering young babies and children to be proud of themselves," Morgan added.

Chair of the Oversight Committee for the NSHP, Judith Robb Walters, for her part, said that the programme is making a difference in the lives of families. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Prime Minister Skerrit: International airport on track, pray for its completion



Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit recently expressed what he sees as the importance of a collective will for the successful completion of Dominica's international airport project.

Though Skerrit said that as of December 12, 2025, construction progress reflects "steady and measurable advancement" across all major work streams, he also urged listeners, "This international airport should be wrapped with the national flag, and everyone should embrace it and pray to God that it will see a successful completion."

While delivering remarks during his end-of-year press conference held earlier this month, the prime minister stated that this international airport project has been promised by every government, "both before our independence, you go back to Frank Baron as Chief Minister and every government before and after independence promised this airport as a central pillar of the country's economic transformation and fortitude."

"I thank God that we know the cost

of realizing that elusive dream, for so many decades, and...by the grace of God, that when this airport project is completed, it will bring dramatic positive transformation and benefits to all Dominicans," he said.

Skerrit also explained that this year marked significant advancement in the ongoing construction, which he sees as essential to Dominica's development.

"We are building an international airport to unlock opportunities for trade, investment, education, and direct global access. We are building it so that our young people can dream bigger. We are building it so that Dominica can stand confidently among developing nations with first-class modern infrastructure," he said.

The Prime Minister emphasized that the project remains on schedule for completion at the end of 2027.

"As of December 12, 2025, construction progress reflects steady and measurable advancement across all major work streams. Total backfilling is 88.6 % complete. Total excavation stands at

83.4 % complete. Runway construction to formation level has reached 2,616 linear meters, representing 91.8 % completion. Building foundations are 85 % complete. Superstructure works have commenced and are 30 % complete," he specified.

Moreover, he claimed, even at this stage, the project continues to deliver strong local economic benefits and currently 405 Dominican workers are employed on site, "reinforcing our commitment to local labour and community participation."

Skerrit also noted that Dominica is the only developing country in the world that is building an airport without the burden of repaying it. With a projected cost of over XCD 1 billion, the construction is reportedly being funded largely by the Citizen by Investment (CBI) program.

"And so, my hope and prayer to this country is to look not to me, but look to the benefits of this airport to the country," he said. (Dominica News Online)

Regional News

Police in St Kitts issue warning after reports about women being targeted at social events



The police in St Kitts say they are investigating reports that women are being drugged at bars and social events and subsequently sexually assaulted.

In a statement, the police said that the Special Victims Unit is “actively” investigating the matter and that law enforcement officials take “these reports

seriously and are committed to identifying those responsible and ensuring that victims receive appropriate support and justice.

“Members of the public, particularly women, are urged to exercise heightened caution when attending social gatherings. Individuals should avoid accepting drinks from strangers, refrain from leaving drinks unattended, and consider watching drinks being prepared whenever possible.

“It is advisable to attend events with trusted friends, remain together where practicable, and look out for one another throughout the event. Persons should also be cautious of individuals who insist on isolating them or pressuring them to consume additional alcohol or substances.”

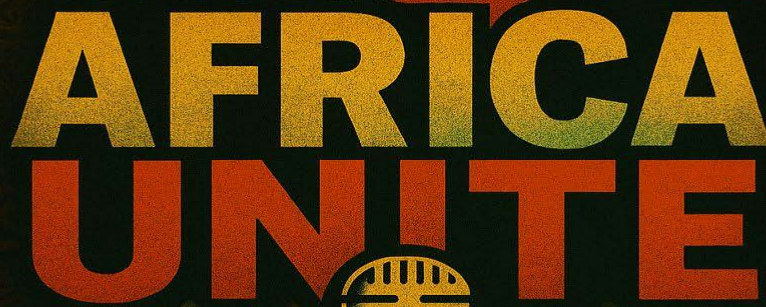
The police statement is advising people that if at any time they feel “unwell, disoriented, unusually intoxicated, or suspect their drink may have been tampered with, they should seek immediate assistance from trusted

friends, event staff, or security personnel, and contact the Police without delay.

“Where possible, do not leave alone, and avoid accepting transport from persons not known or trusted. Prompt medical attention should be sought, as this is important both for personal health and the preservation of evidence.”

The police said that while no one has yet been arrested as a result of the reports, they are also encouraging “anyone who believes they may have been a victim or who has information that may assist ongoing investigations to report the matter immediately to the nearest police station, a confidential hotline, or directly to the Special Victims Unit.

“All reports will be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality. Public cooperation remains vital in preventing these offences and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the community,” the police added. (CMC)



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Vince Zampella, video game pioneer behind 'Call of Duty' dies



Vince Zampella, one of the creators behind best-selling video games such as "Call of Duty," has died. He was 55.

Video game company Electronic Arts said Zampella died Sunday. The company did not disclose his cause of death.

In 2010, Zampella founded Respawn Entertainment, a subsidiary of EA, and he also was the former chief

executive of video game developer Infinity Ward, the studio behind the successful "Call of Duty" franchise.

A spokesperson for Electronic Arts said in a statement on Monday that Zampella's influence on the video game industry was "profound and far-reaching."

"A friend, colleague, leader and visionary creator, his work helped shape mod-

ern interactive entertainment and inspired millions of players and developers around the world. His legacy will continue to shape how games are made and how players connect for generations to come," a company spokesperson wrote.

One of Zampella's crowning achievements was the creation of the Call of Duty franchise, which has sold more than half a billion games worldwide.

The first person shooter game debuted in 2003 as a World War II simulation and has sold over 500 million copies globally. Subsequent versions have delved into modern warfare and there is a live-action movie based on the game in production with Paramount Pictures.

In recent years, Zampella has been at the helm of the creation of the action adven-

ture video games Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order and Star Wars Jedi: Survivor.

Geoff Keighley, video game journalist and co-creator of The Game Awards, said he was shocked to hear of Zampella's sudden death.

"Vince was an extraordinary person — a gamer at heart, but also a visionary executive with a rare ability to recognize talent and give people the freedom and confidence to create something truly great," Keighley wrote on social media on Monday.

"I'll miss our dinners and long conversations. And while he created some of the most influential games of our time, I always felt he still had his greatest one ahead of him. It's heart-breaking that we'll never get to play it," he added. (Jamaica Gleaner)



Festive Greetings

From the Antigua Barbuda Festivals Commission!

As we celebrate the spirit of Christmas and welcome a bright New Year, we extend heartfelt gratitude for your continued support. We look forward to creating even more moments of joy, creativity, and national pride together.

Cheers to new beginnings, strengthened partnerships, and an inspiring 2026 ahead.

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VACANCY NOTICE

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1. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Responsibilities

- Provide full secretarial support to the Management Team.
- Maintain accurate records of equipment and service contracts to include creating and maintaining a billing schedule.
- Develop, create and maintain service logs for the company's equipment, to include but not limited to vehicles and equipment.
- Demonstrate a high level of professionalism, discretion, and attention to detail.
- Have excellent organizational, communication, and interpersonal skills.

Qualifications

- A diploma or bachelor's degree in business administration. (having a degree in business administration is an advantage).
- A minimum of three (3) years' experience in a similar administrative or executive support role.
- Strong proficiency in Microsoft Office applications.
- Must be a holder of a valid driver's license.

2. WAREHOUSE SUPERVISOR

Responsibilities

- Oversee the overall operations of the warehouse, to include, but not limited to, receiving & dispatching goods, ensuring that orders are delivered according to the company's standards
- Supervise daily inventory operations
- Optimize warehouse layout, organization, maintaining a high level of cleanliness, safety and proper storage of goods.
- Demonstrate strong team management leadership abilities.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office applications.
- Proficiency with inventory and billing software (QuickBooks Enterprise is a plus)

Qualifications

- An associate or bachelor's degree (having a degree in business administration or any studies or experience in supply chain management, or a related field is advantageous).
- 3–5 years of experience in inventory control or warehouse operations with demonstrated supervisory or leadership roles, preferably in wholesale or distribution.
- Must be a holder of a valid class D3 driver's license or willing and able to upgrade to a D3.

Interested candidates should send their resume and cover letter to: **The Human Resource Manager, St John's, Antigua** by email: humanresources.ntw@gmail.com by December 29, 2025. Only those short-listed candidates will be contacted.

‘A miracle’: Officer shot in head during Bondi attack home from hospital



A young police officer who was shot in the head during the Bondi Beach attack has been released from hospital.

Probationary Constable Jack Hibbert - who is just four months into the job - was patrolling a Hanukkah event when two gunmen opened fire, injuring over 40 people and killing 15.

The 22-year-old, who was also hit in the shoulder, has lost vision in one of his eyes but is now recovering at home, his family confirmed in a statement.

“As a family, we couldn’t ask for anything more - having our Jack home, especially for Christmas, truly feels like a miracle.”

They thanked the public for their “overwhelming support” and praised medical staff for their “exceptional” care and dedication.

“While he is home, he is still recover-

ing and will need space, support, and continued positive thoughts during this time,” the statement added.

Even after he was shot during the attack, Constable Hibbert continued to help festival attendees until he physically couldn’t, his family previously said.

“Many of his colleagues who were present on the night of the incident have visited in hospital and given testimonials to Jack’s bravery during the incident... They described how Jack acted, he moved toward people in need, not away from danger,” they said.

He was one of two police officers injured in the shooting, with the second officer Constable Scott Dyson, 25, still recovering from his injuries in hospital, according to the last police update.

Last week, NSW Police Commis-

sioner Mal Lanyon visited Constable Hibbert in hospital, praising him as a “positive young man”.

Lanyon added that the force would rally around Constable Hibbert and find “appropriate duties for him” after his recovery.

Police have alleged the suspected gunmen were inspired by Islamic State ideology and targeted the Jewish festival in what has been declared a terror attack.

Naveed Akram, 24, has been charged with 59 offences, including 15 counts of murder and one of terror. A second gunman - his father, Sajid Akram - was shot dead by police at the scene.

On Monday, new court documents alleged the pair “meticulously” planned the attack for months, and two days prior to the shooting, visited Bondi for reconnaissance. (BBC)

Five dead after plane carrying child burns victim crashes in Texas



At least five people have been killed after a Mexican Navy plane crashed in foggy conditions near Galveston, Texas on Monday while transporting a child burns victim.

According to flight tracking website Flight Radar, the plane was last recorded at 15:01 local time (21:01 GMT) over Galveston Bay, near Scholes International Airport.

The aircraft was taking part in a medical mission on behalf of the Michou y Mau Foundation, which provides care to Mexican children with severe burns.

Mexico's Secretariat of the Navy said one person remains missing and two others were rescued alive.

Video footage shared with AP news agency showed the wreckage of the plane in the water, with witnesses and police officers seen entering the water to search the debris.

Sky Decker, a local yacht captain, said he took two police officers to the site of the nearly submerged plane, before jumping in and finding a badly injured woman trapped.

He said: "I couldn't believe. She had maybe three inches of air gap to breathe in.

"And there was jet fuel in there mixed with the water, fumes real bad. She was really fighting for her life."

Earlier the Mexican Navy Secretariat said search and rescue operations were under way in co-ordination with the US Coast Guard.

Video taken near Scholes International Airport in Galveston showed rescuers including a dive team working in dense fog.

In a statement shared on X, the Michou y Mau Foundation sent "our deepest condolences to the families of the victims of this tragedy". (BBC)

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Golden Grove FC continues to lead First Division League



Players of the Golden Grove football team

The Golden Grove FC dropped points for the second time but opened up a four-point gap over the Greenbay Hoppers at the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League.

Golden Grove FC recorded their first draw in eight matches with a 2-2 stalemate with Willikies FC at the Golden Grove playing field on Monday.

Adonijah Dyett converted a penalty kick in the 36th minute to give Golden Grove the lead, but Dejzmatch Christian also scored from the penalty spot in the 39th minute to equalize for Willikies.

Nyique Baptiste scored in the 42nd minute to give Golden Grove a 2-1 lead at halftime, but Willikies FC drew level once more via a 48th-minute equalizer by Jawarn Locker to salvage the draw.

Willikies FC moved on to four points after salvaging their first draw in seven matches.

The result allows Golden Grove FC to remain as leaders of the First Division

League by advancing to 19 points, four more than the Greenbay Hoppers, who have two games in hand.

The Greenbay Hoppers were unable to take the field in consecutive matches after Monday's encounter against the Cedar Grove Blue Jays wasn't played due to an unprepared Cedar Grove playing field. The match will be rescheduled for a later date.

The Hoppers' previous encounter against SAP FC was postponed to accommodate the funeral of a former SAP FC player. It means the Greenbay Hoppers currently remain in second place with 15 points from six matches.

Meanwhile, English Harbour FC and Parham FC also recorded wins during their latest matches in the First Division League.

English Harbour claimed their fourth win in nine matches by snatching a 2-1 victory against SAP FC at the Jennings playing field.

Following a goalless first half, goals by Delroy Simpson in the 61st minute and Akeem Weekes in the 73rd minute

gave English Harbour a two-nil lead.

Emerson Henry reduced the deficit by scoring for SAP FC with a strike in the 80th minute.

The result allows English Harbour FC to advance to 12 points, while SAP FC remains on eight points after suffering their first defeat in five matches.

Parham FC notched up their third win in eight matches by snatching a 2-1 victory against Five Islands FC at the Parham playing field.

Dale Gardner snatched the winner for Parham FC by converting a penalty kick in the third minute of added time.

Demario Roberts snatched an equalizer for Five Islands FC with an 18th-minute conversion after Trev-aughn Harriette opened the scoring with a strike in the fifth minute to give Parham FC a one-nil lead.

The result allows Parham FC to advance to 12 points, while Five Islands FC remains on 15 points after succumbing to their second loss in nine matches.



Antigua Barbuda Chess Federation

ANNUAL WINTER CHESS TOURNAMENT

SUNDAY

28

DECEMBER
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TG Welding among winners in Mandy Premier League



TG Welding softball team

Defending champions TG Welding and Buck and Sons Landscaping Services recorded wins in the latest round of matches, which were affected by rain, in the Mandy Premier League (MPL), Cool and Smooth, Poolside Villa Glendon and Arlene Air BNB, and Sherma Jackson Business Softball Cricket League.

TG Welding notched up their seventh win in 10 matches with a crushing 104-run victory against Long Island Lightning, who tumbled to their seventh defeat in as many games.

In a match reduced to six overs, TG Welding made 144 for two off their allotment. Male player of the game Essan Warner slammed 81 not out, including 12 sixes.

Deran Benta struck 26, and Demari Benta hit 15 not out. James Mackie captured two for 48.

In reply, Long Island Lightning were restricted to 40 for seven off their six overs. Malique Walsh scored 21.

Visual Gobin grabbed two wickets for eight runs, and Hughon Tonge took a wicket for four runs, while female player of the game Debra George and Deran Benta each picked up a wicket for five runs.

Buck and Sons Landscaping Services notched up their eighth win in nine matches with a six-wicket victory against Long Island Lightning, who lost for the eighth time in as many games.

In a game also reduced to six overs, Long Island Lightning made 90 for three off their allotment.

Malique Walsh cracked 32 not out, Michael Greaves hit 28, and K'Omah Telemaque scored 13. Andra Samuel claimed one for 11, and Charanlall

Ramjohn captured one for 12.

Buck and Sons achieved victory by scoring 91 for three in 4.3 overs. Their total included 18 penalty runs, which were awarded after the Long Island Lightning failed to include a female player in their team.

Male player of the match Steve Martin hammered 33 not out, and Kadeem Henry scored 15. James Mackie picked up two for 19, and Malique Walsh captured one for 13.

The other two scheduled matches were abandoned due to wet pitches, and the affected teams shared the points.

The affected matches involved the Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force (ABDF) and PEL Workers, and Construction Solutions versus the PEL Workers.

England to probe reports of excessive drinking during Ashes break



England team director Rob Key

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - England team director Rob Key said they would look into reports that players drank excessively during a break between the second and third Ashes Tests this month.

Australia wrapped up an 82-run win on day five of the third test in Adelaide on Sunday to take an unassailable 3-0 lead in the series and retain the urn.

Following eight-wicket defeats in Perth and Brisbane, the England camp took a break in Noosa, with reports in British and

Australian media saying the players were drinking throughout their time in the holiday hotspot.

“Headlines can be misleading at times, saying it’s a stag do and stuff like that. Stories of players drinking six days solid, that’s unacceptable,” Key told the BBC in an interview published on Tuesday.

“We’ll be looking into seeing what the facts are as opposed to the things that have been embellished or elaborated on ... When you see a picture of five or six guys sitting down for

lunch, a couple of them having drinks, you need to see what’s going on with that.

“If it’s true that it became a stag do and people are out drinking all the time excessively, that’s not acceptable. I don’t agree with a drinking culture. I don’t like a drinking culture.”

Prior to the Ashes series, Key had urged England’s squad to not “get caught doing stupid things.”

The fourth Test of the series begins on Friday in Melbourne. Australia coach Andrew McDonald said he expected his team to be

firing on all cylinders after celebrating their victory on Sunday.

“There’s no instructions from me, around that, they’re all adults,” McDonald told reporters on Tuesday.

“They know how they need to get ready for a Test match, and they’ll be ready to go come Boxing Day morning. I don’t think there’ll be any hangover. Maybe yesterday there was a hangover, and maybe today, I’m not sure.”

Senegal start Africa Cup campaign with victory over Botswana



Senegal's Nicolas Jackson celebrates after scoring during the Africa Cup of Nations group D soccer match between Senegal and Botswana in Tangier, Morocco, Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2025. (AP)

TANGIER, Morocco (Reuters) - Striker Nicolas Jackson scored twice as Senegal got their 2025 Africa Cup of Nations campaign off to a winning start with a comfortable 3-0 Group D victory over Botswana in Tangier on Tuesday.

Jackson converted Ismail Jakobs' low cross to give his side the lead after 40 minutes as they broke the resistance of a stubborn Botswana, before showing quick feet from Ismaila Sarr's pass to finish from close range just before the hour-mark.

Senegal, who won the 2021 edition of the Cup of Nations and are among the favourites again, overwhelmed their opponents with waves of attacks and added a third late on from Cherif Ndiaye, one of 28 efforts on the Botswana goal.

Senegal head Group D on goal difference from the Democratic Republic of Congo after the opening round of games. The Democratic Republic of Congo defeated Benin 1-0 on Tuesday.

Senegal missed several chances to claim a bigger victory, but were also thwarted by some excellent goal-keeping from Botswana's Goitseone Phoko.

Jackson, who is on loan at Bayern Munich from Chelsea this season, has now scored five goals in as many games for Senegal, having only netted one in his previous 20 before that.

Senegal took the game to Botswana from the kick-off, but as the rain fell in the first half, their opponents put up a stubborn defensive wall.

It was finally broken when Ja-

kobs' low cross from the left was perfect for Jackson to side-foot into the net, leaving the exposed Phoko with no chance.

It was more of the same in the second period as Senegal remained on the front foot and when Sarr picked out Jackson six yards from the goal, the forward showed good control under pressure from several challenges before providing a neat finish.

He should have had a hat-trick when he created space for a shot from 15 yards, but he blasted the ball over the crossbar.

Senegal did get a third goal in added time at the end of the game as substitute Ndiaye was fed in the box by Cheikh Sabaly and made no mistake with his finish.

ABCF to host Winter Chess Tournament

The Antigua and Barbuda Chess Federation (ABCF) will be hosting its Winter Chess Tournament at the Catamaran Hotel in Falmouth Harbour on Sunday, December 28, beginning at 8 am.

This premier national event will serve as a critical milestone in Antigua and Barbuda's competitive calendar as the national chess federation prepares players, officials, and programmes for the global chess cycle leading into the 46th FIDE Chess Olympiad.

According to a media release from the ABCF, the 46th FIDE Chess Olympiad will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from September 15 to September 28, 2026, at the Silk Road International Exhibition Center.

Preparations are already underway, with FIDE delegations conducting venue inspections and advancing global development initiatives that reinforce chess as a vehicle for education, inclusion, and excellence.

Against this international backdrop, the ABCF Winter Chess Tournament is designed to sharpen competitive readiness while strengthening Antigua and Barbuda's chess ecosystem.

The tournament will bring together players across divisions to compete in a full-



day classical format, emphasizing strategic depth, discipline, and performance under tournament conditions consistent with international standards.

The Winter Tournament also aligns with broader FIDE-supported development efforts, including initiatives such as the ChessMom Project, which promotes participation, inclusivity, and family-centered engagement in chess worldwide.

These global programmes complement ABCF's local priorities, most notably Chess in Schools, by reinforcing pathways for youth development, gender inclusion, and long-term athlete

growth.

"Our Winter Tournament is more than a national competition," said Dr. Hannibal M. Fleming, President of the Antigua and Barbuda Chess Federation.

"It is part of a deliberate progression toward international excellence. As the chess world prepares for Samarkand 2026, Antigua and Barbuda is positioning its players, administrators, and institutions to participate meaningfully in that global future."

The ABCF claims it is honoured that the Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Williams, have

tentatively placed the event on their calendar, underscoring the national significance of chess as both a sport and an educational instrument.

The ABCF Winter Chess Tournament represents a key preparatory step toward regional qualification events, international representation, and long-term participation in FIDE flagship competitions, including the 46th FIDE Chess Olympiad in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Through sustained competition, structured development, and institutional support, Antigua and Barbuda continues to strengthen its presence within the global chess community.