

# 2 Payments for Public Servants in December

Story on page 2



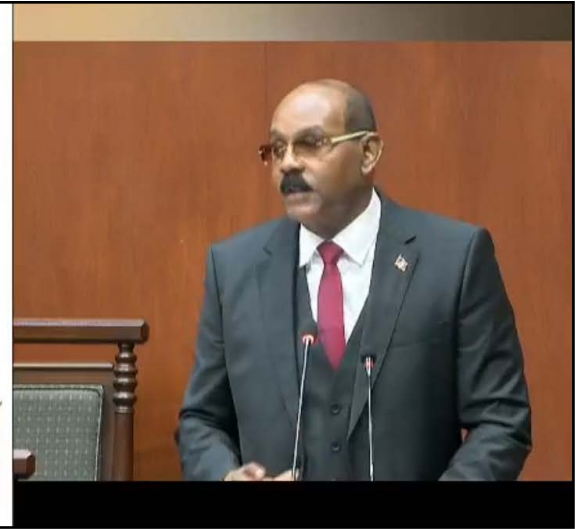
Prime Minister and Finance Minister Gaston Browne (inset) presented the People-Centred National Budget to the Antigua and Barbuda parliament on Thursday

## Public Servants are getting a second salary this month

### National Priorities for People-Centred Budget 2026 and beyond



Government of Antigua and Barbuda



Workers in the public sector are in line for what amounts to two salary payments this month; one represents their regular salary for December and then later in the month a second payment representing back-pay.

The announcement was made on Thursday by Prime Minister Gaston Browne during the National Budget presentation in parliament.

“Since 2022, this Administration has cleared nearly \$60 million in retroactive wages owed to public servants. “We did not hide from this responsibility; we faced it head-on.

“And later this month, we will make a further payment, ensuring that every eligible worker—including those who left the public service before December 2022—receives what is rightfully theirs,” the prime minister announced.

Civil servants will also benefit from a further upgrade in pay as a result of the reclassification which the prime minister said he wants completed by July, 2026.

According to the prime minister the government wants to avoid building up arrears in the future by restructuring the entire wage negotiation process.

PM Browne noted that unions have already been invited to submit their proposals, and the process is driving toward timely, disciplined bargaining so that new salary increases take effect by July 2026.

During 2024, the administration raised minimum Government and Social Security pensions to \$1,000 and \$500 respectively and increased all other Government pensions—except those of parliamentarians—by at least 7 per cent.

“Our Government honours

its obligations, respects its workers, and protects its pensioners. We do not postpone justice; we do not defer dignity.

“When we say we put people at the centre of development, we mean it—and

every payment made, every arrear cleared, every pension increased is proof of our commitment to empowering our people.

“That is the way of good governance,” PM Browne declared.



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## 4 Percent growth in GDP and best-ever budget surplus highlight 2024 economic performance

The Antigua and Barbuda economy continues to demonstrate strong growth and resilience with the outstanding performances recorded in 2024.

Presenting the People-Centred National Budget 2026 to parliament on Thursday, Prime Minister and Finance Minister Gaston Browne revealed that Antigua and Barbuda achieved an historic fiscal turnaround in 2024, recording a primary surplus of \$214.5 million (3.6% of GDP) and an overall surplus of \$76.2 million (1.3% of GDP)—the strongest in our nation's history.

“After decades of persistent deficits, this marks a decisive shift toward fiscal resilience. The outlook for 2025 is even stronger, with a projected primary surplus of \$254.9 million and an overall surplus of \$116.3 million,” he told legislators and a large crowd that packed the gallery in the parliament chambers.

PM Browne identified the areas of revenue growth in the economy that contributed to the overall budget surplus. He indicated that total revenue and grants are projected to rise to \$1.42 billion, driven by a \$129.3 million increase in tax revenue to \$1.1 billion. Key contributors to this performance include:

- Import Duties: \$128.9 million
- Revenue Recovery Charge: \$116.9 million
- Tourism Guest Levy: \$25.2 million
- Stamp Duties: \$66.3 million
- ABST: \$465.9 million
- Consumption Tax: \$61.2 million

Corporate tax revenue is expected to jump 30 per cent to \$146.6 million, while Property Tax collections rise 14 per cent to \$30.6 million.

Non-tax revenue totals \$289.7 million, including \$157 million from the Citizenship by Investment Programme



**Prime Minister Gaston Browne**

and \$48 million in dividends and surpluses.

The outstanding performances recorded by the Antigua and Barbuda are further solidified by the growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).


“Despite a challenging global environment, Antigua and Barbuda’s economy remained resilient in 2025.

“Preliminary projections by the Ministry of Finance indicate real GDP growth of 4.8 per cent in 2025 — outperforming many of our neighbours and exceeding earlier regional forecasts. This, followed a period of elevated growth as the economy rebounded strongly after the pandemic.

“We did not merely recover; we strengthened and expanded,” he remarked

PM Browne affirmed that the strength of the economy in 2025 was no accident.


“It was the result of strategic investment, policy coherence, and a deliberate commitment to keeping our people at the centre of development,” he declared.



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# Local News

## No more CXC fees for parents, students



The government is living up to its promise of making education accessible and affordable to students of Antigua and Barbuda as part of its commitment to have an educated society with at least one degree-holder in every home in the country.

In presenting the 2026 National Budget for Antigua and Barbuda on Thursday, dubbed: People-Centred Budget, 2026, Prime Minister and Finance Minister Gaston Browne outlined a number of initiatives aimed at fulfilling that commitment.

“As one of responses to reduce the cost of living, our Government has decided to introduce a tuition-free study programme at UWI Five Islands for eligible citizens. This will commence upon the expansion and upgrade of the physical campus to accommodate

more students. Effective from the 2026 school year, students at Antigua and Barbuda College of Continuing Studies (ABCAS) will enjoy tuition free study,” he declared.

Additionally, PM Browne announced that the government will cover all CXC exam fees for our students. He said the government’s mission is unwavering: to provide easy access to post-secondary and university education; to equip the next generation with the skills, confidence, and creativity to shape the Antigua and Barbuda of tomorrow.

According to the prime minister The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus is central to the government’s vision for education.

“As the newest member of the UWI

family, it has grown from 173 students in 2019 to 1,403 in 2025—clear proof of our commitment to expanding access to tertiary education, innovation, and regional leadership. Its growth will continue in the year ahead with new programmes, including a BSc in Software Engineering in partnership with Guangdong University in China; a Bachelor of Laws delivered with UWI Mona; and a Food and Agriculture Programme with UWI St. Augustine,” the country’s leader noted.

He explained that to widen access, the Government—through the Board of Education and the Prime Minister’s Scholarship Programme—will continue to provide scholarships to Antiguan and Barbudan students at UWI Five Islands, nurturing local talent and investing in our future leaders.

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## Kiz Johnson wins St. Phillip's South ABLP Primary

Former independent Senator Kiz Johnson has won the primary contest to select a candidate for the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party in the next general elections. The primary was held in the constituency on Thursday with four candidates competing. They are former representative, Lennox Weston, Malcolm Charles, Adrian Richardson and Kiz Johnson.

Following the vote count, Johnson emerged overall winner by amassing a total of 167 votes...Malcolm Charles got 112 votes, Adrian Richardson 49 votes and Lennox Weston, 44 votes. Johnson, who resigned her senatorial seat in order to contest the primary, was warmly congratulated by the other candidates.



Winner of the St. Phill's South ABLP Primary, Kiz Johnson (centre) with Malcolm Charles (left) and Adrian Richardson (right)



HOSTS:  
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## Delegation from the Center for Caribbean Studies at China's Hangzhou Normal University attends Budget Presentation

The visiting delegation from the Center for Caribbean Studies of Hangzhou Normal University of China, led by Professor Zhang Xingwei, Director of Hangzhou Normal University Affiliated Hospital, Dean of the School of Clinical Medicine, was invited to attend the presentation of the 2026 National Budget by Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

Antigua and Barbuda operates under a parliamentary system, with the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party currently in government. This year's Budget comprehensively outlines the nation's strategic priorities and fiscal framework for the coming year, reflecting the administration's firm commitment to enhancing public well-being and ensuring long-term prosperity.

During his Budget Statement, Prime Minister Browne made several references to the achievements of cooperation with the People's Republic of China. He highlighted that the seven medical cooperation agreements previously signed by Professor Zhang Xingwei and Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph have laid a strong foundation for bilateral collaboration in the health sector.

The Prime Minister formally announced: "In 2026, my government will also establish a Chest and Cardiac Centre in collaboration with the affiliated hospital of Hangzhou Normal Univer-



sity in the People's Republic of China." This marks the official inclusion of a key China–Antigua medical cooperation project into the country's national development agenda.

The presence of the delegation from the Center for Caribbean Studies at this parliamentary session allowed them to witness firsthand the unveiling of Antigua and Barbuda's national development strategy and to feel the government's strong commitment to deepening cooperation with China—particularly through practical initiatives advanced via the academic and cultural exchange platform provided by the Center for Caribbean Studies.

Both sides will seize this opportunity to continue promoting substantive co-operation in healthcare,

education, and cultural exchange, contributing to the advancement of China–An-

tigua friendly relations and the broader development of the region.



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# Local News

## Pensioners Association thanks the Department of Environment for assistance that benefits its members

The Antigua and Barbuda Pensioners Association has expressed sincere gratitude to the Department of Environment for a series of climate-resilience and community-support initiatives that have positively impacted pensioners throughout Antigua and Barbuda.

During a recent visit to the Department, representatives Winston Bennett and Clement Hughes met with the Director of the Department of Environment, Diann Black-Layne. They highlighted the broad benefits delivered through programmes implemented by the Department through the SIRF Fund.

Non-Governmental Organizations lack the fiduciary standards required to access available funding from international organizations. The Department of Environment, as a result, has been securing funds on behalf of the Pensioners Association, managing the resources and ensuring proper over-



**Winston Bennett (left) and Clement Hughes (right) of the Pensioners Association pose with Ambassador Diann Black-Layne of the Department of the Environment**

sight, accountability, and successful execution.

The Pensioners Association reported that pensioners across the country

have benefited from several interventions. Their farm received a solar-powered reverse osmosis system, improving water security and operations. The Hurricane Shutters Programme enhanced safety and resilience for older persons, while the Air Conditioning Programme improved comfort for pensioners in community spaces. These initiatives have strengthened the Association's outreach and contributed to increased engagement from pensioners nationwide.

The Association expressed deep appreciation to the Government and the Department of Environment for their ongoing support and encouraged the continuation of these impactful programmes for the benefit of all pensioners in Antigua and Barbuda.

In response, the Director Black-Layne thanked the Association for their visit and commended them for their commitment to serving the nation's senior citizens.


 An advertisement for Curry House Antigua. The top half features a collage of various Indian dishes including curries, rice, and bread. The text "Curry House" is written in a large, stylized red font, with "ANTIGUA" in a smaller, brown font below it. The bottom half of the ad has a dark background with the text "Open Daily - 12:00pm - 10:30pm" in white. At the very bottom, there are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, followed by the text "currytandoorihouseanu", "curryhouseanu", and the phone number "(268) 736-7165".

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# Local News

## DeVry University official says Antigua and Barbuda is a country serious about its future



The partnership agreement between DeVry University of the United States and the Antigua and Barbuda Chamber of Commerce and Industry will open up new pathways to learning for nationals of Antigua and Barbuda.

Vice President of Strategic Partnerships - DeVry University, Scarlett Howery, said she and her team have been quite pleased to meet with partners across the private and public sectors, including the police, the military and other key agencies.

“In every conversation, the commitment to strengthening this country’s workforce, advancing security and resilience, and expanding opportunity for the people of Antigua and Barbuda has been unmistakable. It is clear that this is a country that is serious about its future,” she observed.

Howery said the signing of



the agreement on Wednesday marks the beginning of a new chapter in this partnership; one shaped by collaboration, learning, and shared purpose. She noted that at DeVry University, they believe education should do more than help individuals earn credentials; it should unlock potential, power communities, and strengthen the connection between learning and the world of work.

“Through this collaboration, learners in Antigua and Barbuda will have access to a range of academic pathways at DeVry University and our Keller Graduate School of Management, including undergraduate certificates, associate degrees, bachelor’s degrees and master’s programs. These programs span business, technology and allied health, and are designed to be stackable—so a learner might begin with a certificate, continue

on to an associate or bachelor’s degree, and ultimately progress to graduate study as their goals and careers evolve,” the university’s Vice President for Strategic Partnerships explained.

Former President of the Chamber, Dr. Errol Samuel, also gave his full support to the partnership with DeVry University calling it ‘timely’.

“This partnership with DeVry University is timely. It will afford our membership and the citizens of Antigua and Barbuda another option to access to education and training that are critical to our Human Recourse Development that will prepare workers for a workforce driven by contemporary technologies, techniques and processes relevant to today and the future working environment,” he remarked.

## Germany, ITC support Antigua-based SIDS Centre of Excellence with trade intelligence, investment support



**Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Aubrey Webson**

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are set to unlock new export opportunities and attract greater investment with the establishment of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Centre of Excellence, headquartered in Antigua and Barbuda, with funding from Germany and technical support from the International Trade Centre (ITC).

At a signing ceremony held at ITC headquarters, Ambassador Antje Leendertse of Germany to the United Nations in Geneva and ITC Executive Director Pamela Coke-Hamilton formalized Germany's \$100,000 contribution to support the Centre's operations, as championed by Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Aubrey Webson. The contribution will strengthen the Centre's role in promoting sustainable, trade-led economic development across SIDS.

Small Island Developing States – a diverse group of 57 economies



**ITC Executive Director Pamela Coke-Hamilton**

across the Caribbean, the Pacific, and the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea – face a unique combination of social, economic and environmental challenges. Their geographic isolation often results in high import and export costs, while their limited resource bases leave many heavily dependent on external markets.

Expanding into new markets for priority goods and services will be key for SIDS to achieve sustainable, inclusive socioeconomic development.

Tapping into export potential, investment

In support of these efforts, ITC will provide a SIDS-customized version of its Export Potential Map, so businesses – big and small – can identify products with strong potential for increased exports as well as new markets and suppliers. Governments will be able to use the tool to find export diversification opportunities and more broadly, to develop



**Ambassador Antje Leendertse of Germany**

data-backed economic development strategies and policies.

Additionally, ITC will provide planning and programmatic support for the inaugural Island Investment Forum in 2026. The Island Investment Forum will serve as a key platform for facilitating strategic partnerships and attracting sustainable, mutually beneficial investment across SIDS.

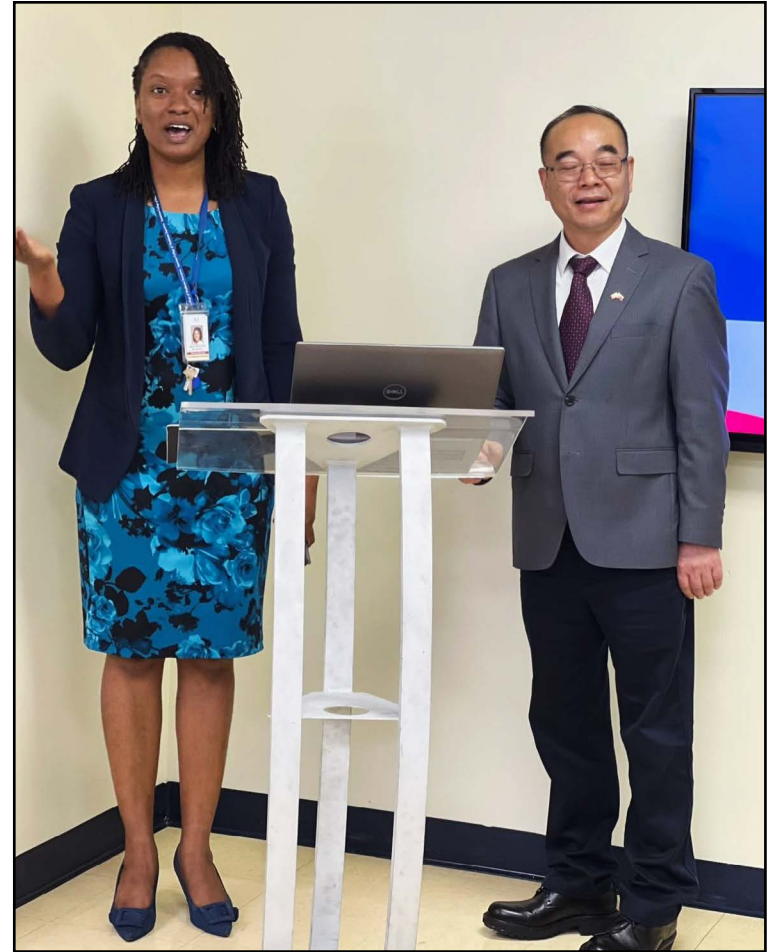
The SIDS Centre of Excellence, hosted in Antigua and Barbuda, serves as a flagship initiative under the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS. Key pillars of the Centre of Excellence include, among others, the SIDS Global Data Hub and the Island Investment Forum.

The Centre of Excellence is steadily taking shape at its headquarters in Antigua and Barbuda. The brand identity of the institution was recently unveiled during a video launch and preparations are well underway for its full activation as a flagship initiative under the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS.

## Hangzhou Normal University Professor delivers lecture at SLBMC on the construction and management of chest pain centres



partmental collaborative treatment model employed at the Chest Pain Center of the Hangzhou education and social collaboration. Professor Zhang also engaged the audience in lively discus-



Normal University Affiliated Hospital, and the practical experience in significantly reducing treatment times to improve survival rates for acute myocardial infarction (heart attack).

The lecture, enriched with real-life case studies, emphasized the importance of public

sions on topics such as pre-hospital electrocardiogram interpretation and the differentiation of atypical chest pain.

Senator Clement Antonio of Antigua and Barbuda and Lisa John-Weste, Director of the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, attended the lecture.

Professor Zhang Xinwei, the head of the delegation, Director of the Affiliated Hospital and Dean of the School of Clinical Medicine of Hangzhou Normal University, and a renowned cardiovascular expert, delivered a lecture at the Sir Lester Bird Medical

Centre in Antigua and Barbuda on the topic of The Construction and Management of Chest Pain Centres.

In his lecture, Professor Zhang systematically explained the achievements of Chest Pain Centers in China, the multi-de-

Sir Lester Bird Medical

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# Local News

## Liberty Caribbean Wins “Best Diversity & Inclusion Initiative” at the 2025 Global Connectivity Awards

Leading telecoms provider Liberty Caribbean, the operators of Flow, BTC and Liberty Business, has been announced as winner of the Best Diversity & Inclusion Initiative at the 2025 Global Connectivity Awards in London.

The award acknowledges the company’s practical, region-focused approach to workplace inclusion and community impact across its Caribbean markets.

The awards panel highlighted Liberty Caribbean’s “extremely far-reaching, multi-faceted and societally impactful initiatives” and noted the company’s programmes are already influencing public discourse and policy beyond the private sector. Judges credited the initiatives for delivering measurable benefit to employees and communities – an endorsement Liberty Caribbean described as a recognition for the wider region.

“Inclusion is central to how we operate. Our policies in this space are designed to protect people, remove barriers and create opportunities. Over the past year we have activated our Gender-Based Violence framework for affected employees on multiple occasions because safety cannot wait. We will continue to act quickly, share what



**Dominic Boon, Vice President, People, Liberty Caribbean.**

we learn, and work with partners to protect and empower our team members and communities,” said Dominic Boon, Vice President, People, Liberty Caribbean.

The award recognises several concrete measures implemented by Liberty Caribbean, including one of the region’s most progressive parental-leave policies, the introduction of paid safe leave under its Gender-Based Violence framework, and the JUMP digital-inclusion programme, which has supported more than 15,000 families by expanding access to devices and

connectivity.

Together, these initiatives form a practical Diversity & Inclusion agenda that links internal policy to community outcomes.

Boon said recognition of the company’s people-first policies comes at a time when many Caribbean governments and organisations are seeking practical models to promote workplace inclusion and social protection.

“We publish detailed outcomes from our diversity and inclusion programmes and proactively share the lessons learned with governments, industry and civil society across the Caribbean. Building on previous conversations with government and policy leaders across the Region, we will continue to advance a collaborative agenda. Transparency and partnership accelerate impact, and by putting evidence and best practice into the public domain, we can help others replicate what works and scale opportunities for our communities,” he said.

The company also noted the timing of the award coincides with the international 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, underscoring its ongoing commitment to prevention, survivor support and workplace safety.



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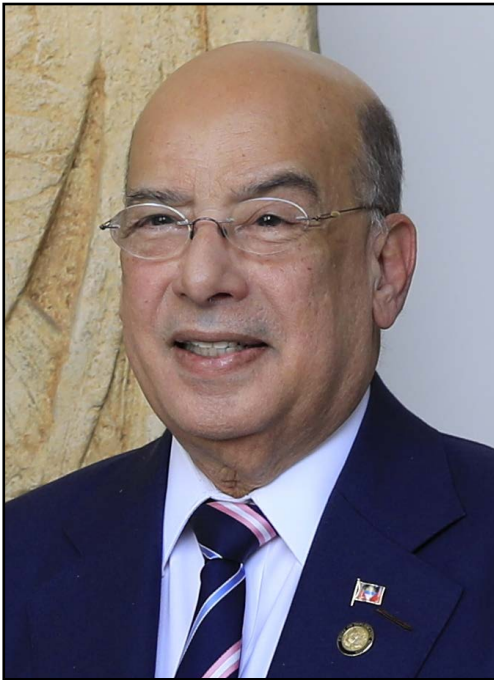


# **CELEBRATION CHURCH SERVICE HOLINESS MEETING**

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# The UN Is Fading — We Should Worry



*By Sir Ronald Sanders*

The United Nations is being starved quietly. This month in New York, the Secretary-General, António Guterres, warned the General Assembly's budget committee that the UN is entering a "race to bankruptcy."

The organisation ended 2024 with about US\$760 million in unpaid contributions from Member States—most of it still outstanding. A further US\$877 million due for 2025 had not yet been received. In all, Member States now owe the UN regular budget roughly US\$1.6 billion in arrears. Any institution asked to safeguard global peace, development, human rights, public health, and humanitarian relief would buckle under far less.

Faced with this shortfall, the Secretary-General had no choice but to propose painful cuts for 2026: a 15 per cent reduction—more than US\$577 million—and the elimination of 2,681 posts, almost one in five. Some of the steepest reductions fall on Special Political Missions, the very operations that help hold fragile peace processes

together.

Yet even these cuts will not repair the cash crisis, because while inefficiencies exist in every institution, the central cause is neither waste nor mismanagement. It is insufficient and unpredictable financing—a condition that the Organization of American States (OAS) knows all too well. For more than fifteen years, the OAS has also struggled with inadequate funding. Next year, its regular budget will be significantly lower in real terms than in 2010, even though mandates have multiplied.

Both organisations—global and hemispheric—are caught in the same bind: overreliance on a handful of countries to pay the lion's share and delayed or withheld payments from key contributors.

## Who is not paying—and why it matters

The UN's regular budget is apportioned according to national income. The United States is assessed at 22 per cent, the largest share. China is second at close to 20 per cent. When either of them pays late, the UN's financial circumstances immediately deteriorates.

In the United States, debates over federal spending—especially foreign expenditures—have led to repeated delays. The current administration has added another dimension: postponing payments while it reviews certain aspects of UN operations. China continues to meet its obligations but has in recent years tended to pay much later in the year, leaving the UN short of cash. Other Member States, including several middle-income countries, are also paying behind schedule.

But the impact is greatest when the largest contributors are late. A predictable budget cannot survive unpredict-

able cashflow.

## Small states: exposed and at risk

For the Caribbean and Latin America—regions of small, open economies and climate-exposed societies—the consequences are immediate and severe.

UN development and humanitarian programmes are already shrinking. Development financing—long the backbone of support for least developed and small island states—is eroding at the very moment climate impacts are accelerating.

For Small Island Developing States (SIDS), this is a survival issue. Every dollar removed from UN development and climate-adaptation programmes widens the gap between the threats faced and the ability to respond. As the impacts of climate change worsen, the loss of UN support will carry real human costs.

## Peacekeeping at a crossroads

The picture in peace and security is equally troubling. Peacekeeping is often the last buffer before catastrophe. When budgets shrink and reimbursements slow, missions are forced to operate with fewer resources, weaker mandates, and diminished capacity to protect civilians.

Some major capitals are now considering reducing or restructuring their contributions to peacekeeping. Such debates are understandable; taxpayers everywhere want accountability for money spent abroad. But if the UN retreats, the world will rely more heavily on ad hoc coalitions or regional deployments, often with fewer safeguards, less transparency, and less legitimacy.

As with the OAS, when resources dwindle, only the activities preferred by the richest countries survive. That

is not a recipe for balanced multilateralism.

## A narrowing United Nations

As budgets tighten, the UN is being reshaped—often unintentionally—into a narrower institution. It will still debate, negotiate, and set norms, but without adequate financing, its capacity for field operations, development support, and humanitarian action will decline.

That is not the UN that the world needs. In disaster recovery, health crises, climate resilience, arms control, and the defence of small-state sovereignty, we rely on the UN to deliver support.

If insolvency forces the UN into retreat, the weakest and smallest states will be the first to feel the vacuum. And vacuums rarely remain empty; they are filled by the interests of the powerful.

## What Must Change

The way forward requires only practical steps that Member States have already contemplated.

The UN's financial instability is fundamentally a problem of timing. Contributions that arrive late, especially from the largest economies, create liquidity shocks that no amount of internal belt-tightening can absorb. The organisation would be strengthened considerably if all Member States, large and small, regarded timely payment of assessed contributions as integral to the mandates they approve. Such predictability is essential not only at the UN but also within the OAS.

There is also an outstanding proposal before the General Assembly to suspend the automatic return of unspent budget credits when liquidity falls below a safe threshold. This is financially prudent. It makes little sense for the UN to refund credits while simultaneously cutting staff and scal-

ing back programmes due to lack of cash. A modest buffer could prevent unnecessary disruption. The OAS faces a similar anomaly: states receive a bonus for paying dues on time, while others incur no penalty for paying late or not at all.

## The UN is now needed more than ever

Small countries need the UN most. It is in their interest to lead by example—paying contributions on time, honouring obligations, and encouraging the richest nations to do the same. The alternative is a weakened, less ef-

fective international system and a drift toward a world governed less by law and more by power.

The UN is already in a race to bankruptcy. Should it stumble, the world will learn quickly that when multilateralism weakens, the strong grow stronger—and the small stand alone.

*(The author is the Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the United States and the OAS, and Dean of the OAS Ambassadors accredited to the OAS. Responses and previous commentaries: [www.sirronaldsanders.com](http://www.sirronaldsanders.com))*



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# Orange Fire, Orange Frame, Orange Strength, Orange Rhymes

*Sixteen Days, One Phrase: Protect Her All Ways*  
*Day eleven — December 5th : Teaching Tomorrow Peace*

Day Eleven dances like a gentle drum-beat, echoing through villages and valleys to honour the quiet champions — volunteers. They are not always seen on stages or printed on banners, yet their footprints mark every path toward justice. And we ask: **Who would answer the late-night hotline call if volunteers stayed home? Who would escort survivors to safety if no one showed up? Who would organise healing circles if empathy ran dry?**

The United Nations says clearly: **“Volunteering is an expression of solidarity that ignites community transformation.”** In Antigua and Barbuda, solidarity flows thick as sea salt in the breeze. Volunteers mentor youth, carry food to shelters, teach consent workshops in classrooms, assist women with disabilities, and stand quietly beside survivors during court proceedings.

Their service moves without spotlight — hands steady, hearts ready, burdens lightened quietly. They give time where money is scarce, and love where hope feels thin. But service is not easy. Trauma clings to the listener’s ears. Stories follow volunteers

home at night. Exhaustion creeps in after yet another crisis response. And still, they rise — because care beats comfort.

UNESCO reminds us that **“peace is not built by policies alone, but by people acting together.”** Volunteers build peace through small acts that ripple outward — one conversation, one ride to safety, one school workshop, one meal at a time. In Antigua and Barbuda, women volunteers carry special weight. Survivors trust those who look like them — who understand cultural barriers, family pressures, and fears of social backlash. Many volunteers themselves are survivors who transform pain into purpose. They show that healing can be shared.

But let us ask: **Who supports the ones who support everyone else?** Who checks if the volunteer is safe emotionally? Who provides counselling for compassion fatigue? Who covers transport costs when pockets are already thin? Service should not become sacrifice.

Imagine a nation where volunteers are funded, trained, and protected. Where service hours translate to scholarships.

Where corporate partners sponsor outreach programmes. Where government agencies integrate volunteers into national response strategies. Where volunteerism strengthens careers instead of stalling them. Day Eleven reminds us that hope rarely arrives alone — it arrives carried by volunteers.

Sixteen days, one mission: safety for women and girls — powered by community action. Volunteers show that prevention is grassroots. Protection is personal. Justice is shared. So today, Antigua and Barbuda, say thank you to the ones who show up unasked, uncelebrated, but unstoppable. The ones who answer the call when others turn off the phone. The ones who choose compassion over convenience.

Because when volunteers rise, communities heal — and violence loses another stronghold.

**Joshuanette Francis**

*Founder and President, Good Humans 268 Inc.*

*Mobile: +1 (268) 789 GOOD (4663)*

*Website: <https://goodhumans268.org/>*

*Tel 268 727 2120 or 268 463 5674*



# V.C.



## COMMEMORATION AND WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

V.C. BUST, MARKET STREET, ST. JOHN'S

TUESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2025 | 8:00 AM



## Abandoned Property for CIBC Caribbean Bank (Barbados) Limited, Antigua branch, as of October 31, 2025

In accordance with Section 168 of the Banking Act 2015, we now publish details of property which has been classified as abandoned. Account holders can claim ownership through visiting one of our convenient branch locations with some means of identification.

### Current - XCD

Branch	Account #	Name	Address
HIGH AND MARKET STREETS	106912290	DONYZIA ROYER	DONNOVANS ST JOHNS ANTIGUA
HIGH AND MARKET STREETS	1118589	GORTOY ENGINEERING CONTRACTORS (ANU) LTD	PAYNTERS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE P O BOX 2217 ST. JOHN'S ANTIGUA
OLD PARHAM ROAD	1005410	ADELIN ACTIVISTS	P O BOX W260 WOODS CENTRE ST JOHNS ANTIGUA
OLD PARHAM ROAD	10107078	SEAGLANS CENTRAL T/A SEAGLANS CENTRAL	SEVENTH DAY PO BOX 109 ST JOHNS ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

### Savings - XCD

Branch	Account #	Name	Address
HIGH AND MARKET STREETS	4227120	DOLLIS MAE RYNER-ROYER	HERBERTS ESTATE ST JOHNS ANTIGUA

### Managers Cheque

Issued Date	Amount	Payee	Serial Number	Country of Origin
6-Nov-09	81.18	Cheque Writer 0106350820	1079736	ANTIGUA
6-Nov-09	49.75	COMPTROLLER OF CUSTOMS	382260	ANTIGUA
13-Nov-09	82.00	ICAEC	1153582	GRENADA
25-Nov-09	414.00	CONCRETE & AGGREGATES (SVG) LTD	1158520	ST VINCENT
15-Dec-09	400.00	ICON DISTRIBUTORS (GRENADA) LTD	1156145	GRENADA
17-Dec-09	296.44	Cheque Writer 000106353650	1079739	ANTIGUA
4-Jan-10	91.61	Cheque Writer 000106358890	1079743	ANTIGUA
6-Jan-10	304.54	AGATHA CROPPER	1130888	ANTIGUA
11-Jan-10	241.90	CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT CO (ST.K	1082071	GRENADA
18-Jan-10	1,000.00	JOCELYN ROBERTS	1082559	GRENADA
21-Jan-10	1,000.00	BRYAN HURST	1082202	GRENADA
5-Feb-10	200.00	FAO	369131	ST VINCENT
5-Feb-10	200.00	MARCIA PENNYFEATHER	369132	ST VINCENT
3-Mar-10	600.00	BUILDERS MERCHANT	1117409	ANTIGUA
4-Mar-10	3,347.35	ANGELINA PHILIP	369692	ST VINCENT
11-Mar-10	38.13	IAN SMITH	1117432	ANTIGUA
19-Mar-10	5,000.00	ABDF WARRIORS	1123999	ANTIGUA
25-Mar-10	2,375.00	NIGEL D. STEWART	1155009	GRENADA
30-Mar-10	173.07	VENETA C BURTON	1117982	ANTIGUA

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## Managers Cheque

Issued Date	Amount	Payee	Serial Number	Country of Origin
31-Mar-10	67.50	INTIMATE TOUCH	1118092	ANTIGUA
23-Apr-10	21,323.56	VIOLET L & KURT H KRETSCHMA	1152282	ANGUILLA
26-Apr-10	2,000.00	ROLSTON ALLEN	1126614	ANTIGUA
30-Apr-10	72.00	NOC	1126677	ANTIGUA
20-May-10	713.00	SUN PRINTING & PUBLISHING LTD	1119460	ANTIGUA
27-May-10	67.50	INIZIO	383013	ANTIGUA
8-Jun-10	9.95	MINI WALLS	369602	ST VINCENT
23-Jun-10	270.00	NATIONAL INSURANCE SCHEME	1166327	GRENADA
25-Jun-10	347.70	THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT CO.	1166499	GRENADA
25-Jun-10	876.90	MARJORIE RYAN	1166501	GRENADA
25-Jun-10	68.40	GEORGE EZEKIEL ABBOTT	1166503	GRENADA
25-Jun-10	876.90	BERYL MARY FRANCISCA ALLYENE	1166504	GRENADA
25-Jun-10	141.90	BERNICE COOMBS	1166506	GRENADA
30-Jun-10	680.00	GGBL A/C#113000263	1166629	GRENADA
9-Jul-10	946.93	DIANFRANCO DOCCI	1121105	ANTIGUA
21-Jul-10	544.00	INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT	1163346	ANTIGUA
18-Aug-10	40.00	CARL BHOLA	1167282	GRENADA
13-Sep-10	129.00	Cheque Writer 106312367	1079750	ANTIGUA
14-Sep-10	2,613.92	ST KITTS, SUPPLY OFFICER	1177519	ANGUILLA
28-Sep-10	67.50	DIGICEL	1178032	ANTIGUA
5-Oct-10	3.23	MR LESLIE E WINTER	1073015	ANTIGUA
29-Oct-10	53.80	ALBERT LAKE	1175495	ANGUILLA

## BBD Drafts

Issued Date	Amount	Payee	Serial Number	Country of Origin
2010-01-14	30.00	UNIVERSITY OF THE WE	105408	ANTIGUA
2010-01-14	30.00	UNIVERSITY OF THE WE	105407	ANTIGUA
2010-02-05	360.90	MOORE PARAGON CARIBB	104707	ANGUILLA
2010-03-17	5.00	UWI CAVEHILL CAMPUS	105469	ANTIGUA
2010-04-09	30.00	UWI (CAVE HILL CAMPU	111046	ANTIGUA
2010-07-21	244.44	ANTHONY O'DOWD	111299	ANTIGUA

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### USD Drafts

Issued Date	Amount	Payee	Serial Number	Country of Origin
2009-11-04	30.00	GPC	479322	ANTIGUA
2009-11-04	30.00	LAO	479320	ANTIGUA
2009-11-04	30.00	GPC	479321	ANTIGUA
2009-11-13	40.00	PRIZEMASTERS	479363	ANTIGUA
2009-11-13	50.00	BRIANNA ROBERTSON	263138	ST VINCENT
2009-11-24	50.00	BANK OF AMERICA	478523	ANTIGUA
2009-11-24	121.46	KENNETH KING	480226	ANTIGUA
2009-11-25	20.00	UNIVERSITY OF THE WE	263236	ST VINCENT
2009-11-25	110.00	INTERNATIONAL SEGWAY	336843	ST VINCENT
2009-11-26	20.00	UNIVERSITY OF THE WE	263237	ST VINCENT
2009-11-26	50.00	LM	479380	ANTIGUA
2009-11-26	80.00	PRIZEMASTERS	479381	ANTIGUA
2009-11-27	48.00	SCMS	479389	ANTIGUA
2009-12-02	50.00	BHM	479394	ANTIGUA
2009-12-02	50.00	NEW ENGLAND CULINARY	272693	GRENADA
2009-12-02	50.00	(BREAKTHROUGH) ROD P	336859	ST VINCENT
2009-12-04	50.00	LM	479447	ANTIGUA
2009-12-04	441.68	ANDY NARELL	478528	ANTIGUA
2009-12-08	50.00	KIM BROWNE	272705	GRENADA
2009-12-08	100.00	LORNA BROWNE	272702	GRENADA
2009-12-09	100.00	WILLIAM DAVID	328745	GRENADA
2009-12-09	184.11	BANCO CENTRAL DE VEN	336911	ST VINCENT
2009-12-10	14.65	DR BARRY GLASSMAN	479616	ANTIGUA
2009-12-10	30.00	MORRIS CERULLO	479612	ANTIGUA
2009-12-29	92.00	STEVE BONAPARTE	273047	GRENADA
2009-12-29	100.00	MEGAN SETTLE	263153	ST VINCENT
2009-12-30	121.46	KENNETH KING	480911	ANTIGUA
2009-12-30	298.00	MERCURY TRAVEL AGENC	479532	ANTIGUA
2010-01-06	32.00	AMERICAN PROPERTY BU	479580	ANTIGUA
2010-01-06	40.00	PRIZEMASTERS	479582	ANTIGUA
2010-01-08	45.00	WJ	480336	ANTIGUA
2010-01-08	60.00	GPC	480337	ANTIGUA
2010-01-12	50.00	WJ	480343	ANTIGUA

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2010-01-14	50.00	KIRK RUSSELL	507611	ST VINCENT
2010-01-14	107.00	PAUL CAMPBELL	480376	ANTIGUA
2010-01-15	30.00	WJ	479793	ANTIGUA
2010-01-22	7.68	DESMOND DEGALE	273097	GRENADA
2010-01-22	200.00	MARY GODETTE	481014	ANTIGUA
2010-01-25	121.46	CARMEN MARTIN	481414	ANTIGUA
2010-01-25	121.46	LESROY LOOBY	481495	ANTIGUA
2010-02-03	30.00	LAO	481001	ANTIGUA
2010-02-03	40.00	PRIZEMASTERS	481000	ANTIGUA
2010-02-10	40.00	PRIZEMASTERS	481086	ANTIGUA
2010-02-10	50.00	LIFE OUTREACH MINIST	333474	ANTIGUA
2010-02-12	38.32	BOI BANK	481463	ANTIGUA
2010-02-15	630.00	INTERLINE INTERNATIO	481468	ANTIGUA
2010-02-16	60.00	CHOICES	481100	ANTIGUA
2010-02-19	121.46	LESROY LOOBY	481580	ANTIGUA
2010-03-01	165.00	HARVARD BUSINESS REV	480564	ANTIGUA
2010-03-18	700.00	TRINITY BROADCASTING	481187	ANTIGUA
2010-03-19	179.78	VERONICA SIMON	472430	ANTIGUA
2010-03-22	62.53	JANICE REESON	271848	GRENADA
2010-03-24	53.00	F I A CARD SERVICES	272467	GRENADA
2010-04-08	17.28	AUSTIN VOUZAN	471737	ANTIGUA
2010-04-09	10.00	MINISTRY OF NATIONAL	481268	ANTIGUA
2010-04-12	60.00	ANGELIQUE DE SUCCES	331417	ANGUILLA
2010-04-15	160.78	ADARSHSINGH BHOLAH	329480	GRENADA
2010-04-15	195.54	ROHAN A. PHILLIP	271918	GRENADA
2010-04-15	196.95	RICHARD G. HANSFORD	271913	GRENADA
2010-04-15	198.52	SARAH ANNE MIHALEK	271923	GRENADA
2010-04-15	201.62	KLEOLANI BRYAN	329468	GRENADA
2010-04-15	292.06	AUGUSTINE TEKA	271915	GRENADA
2010-04-15	384.50	SARA RANA BEG	271914	GRENADA
2010-04-19	35.00	MONROE COLLEGE	480629	ANTIGUA
2010-04-20	45.00	ADVANCED SOLUTIONS T	480756	ANTIGUA
2010-04-22	121.46	MORVEL SIMON	472703	ANTIGUA

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2010-04-27	30.00	DAA	480768	ANTIGUA
2010-04-27	171.87	EDRIS SILSTON	472633	ANTIGUA
2010-04-27	197.43	HAYDN R SOLOMON	472632	ANTIGUA
2010-04-27	256.63	JOYCE KENTISH	472631	ANTIGUA
2010-05-05	20.00	CL PAYMENTS	480804	ANTIGUA
2010-05-06	235.67	CONRAD FORTE	271995	GRENADA
2010-05-12	25.00	W. J.	481346	ANTIGUA
2010-05-20	50.00	E L G SERVICES	480732	ANTIGUA
2010-05-28	20.00	MONROE COMMUNITY COL	471313	ANTIGUA
2010-06-02	200.00	GARY C JOSEPH	471327	ANTIGUA
2010-06-10	200.00	CAPITAL ONE	472787	ANTIGUA
2010-06-21	57.05	ROQUEL HERNANDEZ	473169	ANTIGUA
2010-06-21	121.46	MILBURNE CLAXTON	473204	ANTIGUA
2010-06-21	209.92	FERDIE CARR	473865	ANTIGUA
2010-06-21	385.23	JOSEPH MORRIS	473190	ANTIGUA
2010-06-22	50.00	ELFRIEDA BISSEMBER	272542	GRENADA
2010-06-25	16.20	LEON A. B. WELLS	331155	GRENADA
2010-06-25	52.36	MARY BARTHOLOMEW	331153	GRENADA
2010-06-25	94.67	VERONICA MITCHELL	331158	GRENADA
2010-06-25	323.58	TITAN CHARLES THOMAS	331152	GRENADA
2010-06-29	200.00	SYLVIA V WILSON	263424	ST VINCENT
2010-07-07	544.00	CARIBBEAN HOTEL & TO	473339	ANTIGUA
2010-07-08	48.00	ANDREWS UNIVERSITY	472886	ANTIGUA
2010-07-22	121.46	MAUDELINE SHADRACH	481717	ANTIGUA
2010-07-29	121.46	ADELFA JARVIS- MENDE	473892	ANTIGUA
2010-08-25	15.00	UNIVERSITY OF TRINID	472998	ANTIGUA
2010-08-25	50.00	ELFRIEDA BISSEMBER	330674	ANTIGUA
2010-09-10	75.00	UWI SCHOOL OF NURSIN	473059	ANTIGUA
2010-09-13	27.28	THE ESTATE OF ROGER	473531	ANTIGUA
2010-09-15	52.97	FEDEX	330714	GRENADA
2010-09-20	121.46	ADELFA JARVIS- MENDE	540586	ANTIGUA
2010-09-20	209.92	FERDIE CARR	540525	ANTIGUA
2010-09-20	438.39	CORNEL HUGHES	540608	ANTIGUA

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### USD Drafts

Issued Date	Amount	Payee	Serial Number	Country of Origin
2010-10-11	100.00	ELIZABETH PROCTOR	395957	ST VINCENT
2010-10-18	50.00	MADISON SHULMAN	273275	ANTIGUA
2010-10-18	121.46	gweneth davis	540707	ANTIGUA
2010-10-18	438.39	cornel hughes	541015	ANTIGUA
2010-10-19	597.42	THOMSOM WEST	331542	GRENADA
2010-10-28	611.65	JIMMY ABOUD	331551	GRENADA

### EUR Drafts

Issued Date	Amount	Payee	Serial Number	Country of Origin
2010-03-30	40.00	UNIVERSITY COLLEGE C	105439	ANTIGUA

### GBP Drafts

Issued Date	Amount	Payee	Serial Number	Country of Origin
2009-11-12	1.19	BARCLAYCARD #4929480	97022	ST VINCENT
2009-12-14	32.00	EXETER FRIENDLY SOCI	117315	ST VINCENT
2010-03-22	6.18	ANN MARIE ALLAMBY TH	100953	GRENADA
2010-03-22	11.92	CATHERINE C. CHARLES	100949	GRENADA
2010-05-21	100.00	THELMA GAGE	104775	ANGUILLA
2010-06-07	50.00	HAROLD A THOMPSON	111064	ST VINCENT
2010-06-23	41.72	LENORE CRICHLow SYKE	108255	GRENADA
2010-06-23	517.98	FRANCES HETTA THOMAS	108259	GRENADA
2010-08-12	20.00	SUREYA STRATTON VASS	108132	GRENADA

### TTD Drafts

Issued Date	Amount	Payee	Serial Number	Country of Origin
2010-06-23	57.65	EST.ENA FLORENCE BLA	78487	GRENADA
2010-06-23	74.10	MAURICE EDGAR ANNESL	78492	GRENADA
2010-06-23	87.25	EST.MARJORIES JOSEPH	78500	GRENADA
2010-06-23	87.25	GLENN HACKSHAW	78493	GRENADA
2010-06-23	87.25	LEE HUNTE CARRINGTON	78488	GRENADA

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### TTD Drafts

Issued Date	Amount	Payee	Serial Number	Country of Origin
2010-06-23	153.03	MANNIE SOOKAR	78503	GRENADA
2010-06-23	185.91	WINIFRED JESSIE REMI	78501	GRENADA
2010-06-23	185.91	ARTHUR HUGH KNOX WIG	78506	GRENADA
2010-06-23	185.91	IVY PHYLLIS SPRINGER	78504	GRENADA
2010-06-23	251.69	MARY L THOMAS &/OR F	78483	GRENADA
2010-06-23	317.46	MARCUS A. MCLEAN	78474	GRENADA
2010-06-23	317.46	MEDEA SEBASTIAN	78480	GRENADA
2010-06-23	317.46	FREDA BRENNEN CHARBO	78489	GRENADA
2010-06-23	383.24	HORACE ERNEST HOBBS	78470	GRENADA
2010-06-23	383.24	EST. EDWARD DAVIDSON	78476	GRENADA
2010-06-23	383.24	FRANK COWIE	78466	GRENADA
2010-06-23	383.24	EDWIN LAVINGTON GEOR	78468	GRENADA
2010-06-23	383.24	ASHTON RANDOLPH CURV	78491	GRENADA
2010-06-23	566.31	VALMAI FARAH	78467	GRENADA
2010-06-23	580.57	OSCAR WILLIAMS	78505	GRENADA
2010-06-23	712.11	EST. LEON LAFOREST	78473	GRENADA
2010-06-23	975.21	PERCIVAL MERVYN HUSB	78471	GRENADA
2010-06-23	1,632.96	EST. STANLEY THEODOR	78479	GRENADA
2010-06-23	3,277.33	MARJORY RAMCHARAN	78478	GRENADA
2010-07-02	200.00	JAPANESE EMBASSY	78775	GRENADA
2010-09-01	448.27	ANTON GEORGE	122991	ST VINCENT
2010-09-10	464.20	AILENE PRINCE	123004	ST VINCENT

### CAD Drafts

Issued Date	Amount	Payee	Serial Number	Country of Origin
2009-11-12	125.00	JOHNNY BULLEN	96840	GRENADA
2009-12-14	90.00	NIALI SADLER	68697	GRENADA
2010-06-22	16.17	JASON MILNE	85531	GRENADA
2010-07-23	100.00	CIBC VISA 4502 2295	113020	ST VINCENT

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORTS AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Monday, 17th November 2025 – *St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda.....***

The Department of Creative Industries is reminding the public that registration for the Christmas Home and Business Lighting Competition 2025 is still ongoing.

The competition aims to evoke the spirit of the season through the creative, dazzling lighting displays of our 2025 competitors. The Department encourages all interested Home and Business owners to register for the competition by Wednesday, December 17, 2025.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**END.**

# Regional News

## Trinidad PM slams Opposition for questions on Tobago's US radar system

By Jovani Davis

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar has launched a blistering defence of Tobago's new radar system, accusing the opposition People's National Movement of trying to undermine national security and acting under the influence of criminal networks tied to Venezuela's sanctions-evading oil trade.

At the heart of the row are questions raised by Opposition Leader Penelope Beckles, who demanded transparency on the radar's cost, operators, and data controls during a press conference earlier Wednesday.

In an official statement the same day, Persad-Bissessar blamed rising violent crime on the "local drug mafia" and "sanction-busting Venezuelan criminal collaborators," saying the new radar gives the ability to spot threats—especially illegal Venezuelan crude transfers and trafficking of narcotics, weapons, ammunition, and migrants—in ways the country never could before.

Persad-Bissessar publicly challenged the opposition party to disclose sensitive details she suggested they had long avoided admitting.

"Disclose to the citizens how long the PNM has known that the previous radar system has been compromised."

She then escalated her call,



pushing for exposure of alleged links between political figures, private interests, and criminal access.

"Make public the names of the local business people affiliated with the PNM and local drug mafia who have had illegal access to classified radar surveillance information."

The Prime Minister also demanded the opposition explain operational failures under the previous administration, particularly regarding sanctioned Venezuelan oil movements.

"Explain why the existing radar system operated under the PNM government for years, did not detect oil tankers engaged in the ship-to-ship transfer of sanctioned Venezuelan oil within Trinidadian waters..."

She further questioned the motivation behind the party's earlier criticism of U.S.-supplied radar assets.

"Explain to the country whether the PNM's anti-American narrative to remove the American-supplied radar system is really due to pressure or blackmail from the local drug mafia..."

Beckles, for her part, dismissed the claims and accused the Prime Minister of recklessly politicising national security for optics, denying any political-mafia ties or drug trafficking involvement.

"We will not accept this Honorable Prime Minister causing distractions and creating mischief by accusing us... of drug trafficking," she said.

Beckles repeatedly called on Persad-Bissessar to hand over any evidence to authorities, closing her remarks twice with:

"I close by saying to the Prime Minister if you have

the information take it to the police."

During her press briefing, Beckles demanded clarity on system funding and training, including who runs the radar, how it works, and how its data is handled or secured.

"The population of Trinidad and Tobago is entitled to know what did that radar cost? Who installed that radar? Whether any Trinidadian or Tobagonian has been trained to operate that radar?" Beckles said. "The people... are entitled to know what is happening to the data that is collected..."

She also queried recent U.S. defence engagements and the timing of a U.S. military aircraft landing in Tobago just days after the Prime Minister denied discussing Venezuelan sanctions issues with American defence officials.

The Department of Public Information confirmed the radar project followed consultations with disability groups and civil society advocates and is a key plank of the administration's broader national security modernisation strategy.

Government insiders warn the dispute could intensify as Tobago's radar rollout intersects geopolitical pressure over crude oil sanctions, trafficking routes through the Caribbean, and domestic political trust.

## Guyana to issue \$50,000 grant to every citizen living with a disability

By Joanne Clark

Guyana's head of state on Wednesday unveiled what he called a defining national moment for disability support. President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced that every citizen living with a disability will receive a one-off GYD\$50,000 cash grant before this month ends.

The intervention, which totals \$1.4 billion, will support more than 27,000 individuals nationwide. The announcement was made at the Railway Courtyard in Georgetown during a national observance focused on dignity and inclusion, organised by the Office of the President in partnership with the Office of the First Lady.

President Ali opened his remarks by reframing disability as a shared human experience rather than a limitation. He acknowledged that conditions can be congenital, acquired, temporary, or lifelong, adding that disabilities "touch families in every community." With empathy as his throughline, he told attendees that another dimension of ability is "another dimension of human knowledge."

Guyanese, he said, must carry disability support not as charity but as responsibility. As a society grounded in faith and compassion, citizens must "bear one another's burdens," he echoed, stressing that national prog-



ress must include everyone. "Regardless of where you sit, in public or private life, we must make it a collective responsibility to uplift those who are mourning, struggling or underserved," Ali said.

The observance also served as the stage for a long-term employment pledge. President Ali announced an ambitious target to generate at least 5,000 jobs for persons living with disabilities (PWDs) over the next five years. He specifically referenced employment pilot programmes in Regions Five and Six, developed with private-sector collaboration, calling them proof that scalable models already exist within the country.

The president believes national momentum can shift quickly if disability-inclusive hiring becomes the norm across public projects and business sectors.

"If we replicate this model across sectors — government, private enterprise, community spaces — we

can easily turn the tide," Ali said. "If we replicate, we can turn the tide."

He also introduced a new mandate for government-subsidised infrastructure. Moving forward, every new government initiative — from parks and sports complexes to civic facilities — must allocate at least 10% of floor or service space for disability-centered use.

These requirements are part of what Ali described as a broader roadmap shaped through consultations with advocacy groups and members of the disability community. He shared eight priority areas guiding the government's strategy: caregiver support, education access, community empowerment, transportation, healthcare, housing, project accessibility, and skills and income development.

Alongside the roadmap, Ali highlighted existing legislative and structural achievements, including the Prevention of Discrimination Act and the Persons with

Disabilities Act, and confirmed systems like online benefit applications and the creation of the first national Learning Lab for PWD digital and academic access.

He pointed to scaled national investments such as assistive mobility devices, digital learning tools, an expanded national database for children with disabilities, and the Empower Guyana Centre — the region's first employment and training facility of its kind, supporting over 120 workers.

Among the new interventions promised are caregiver training grants, tax incentives for families, new PWD business centres, interest-free startup loans through the National Development Bank, and collateral-free financing windows through the National Development Bank to encourage economic independence.

President Ali closed his speech by tying the individual grant to a national shift toward inclusion-based development. Economic growth and social equity, he signalled, must rise together.

"Our mission is to create an environment where persons with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of national life and contribute meaningfully to our nation's growth," Ali said. "Let us embrace this community with love, understanding and dignity, and let us continue to build a Guyana where no one is left behind."

## Pentagon announces it has killed four men in another boat strike in Pacific

*Strike comes amid congressional turmoil over legality of US attacks on suspected drug smugglers*

The Pentagon announced on Thursday that the US military had conducted another deadly strike on a boat suspected of carrying illegal narcotics, killing four men in the eastern Pacific, as questions mount over the legality of the attacks.

Video of the new strike was posted on social media by the US southern command, based in Florida, with a statement saying that, at the direction of Pete Hegseth, the defense secretary, "Joint Task Force Southern Spear conducted a lethal kinetic strike on a vessel in international waters operated by a Designated Terrorist Organization".

"Intelligence confirmed that the vessel was carrying illicit narcotics and transiting along a known narco-trafficking route in the Eastern Pacific. Four male narco-terrorists aboard the vessel were killed," the statement added.

The footage showed a large explosion suddenly overtaking a small boat as it moved through the water, followed by an image of a vessel in flames and dark smoke streaming overhead.

The latest strike was the first in nearly three weeks. It comes as the Pentagon and the White House have struggled to answer questions about the legal basis for the campaign to kill suspected drug smugglers



with military strikes, with US lawmakers promising to investigate the first such attack, in September, in which two survivors clinging to wreckage were killed in a follow-on strike.

Hegseth has faced increasing scrutiny over the 2 September strike following a report from the Washington Post that the defense secretary had verbally directed the military to "kill them all". On Thursday, a Democratic lawmaker introduced articles of impeachment against Hegseth, pointing to the boat strike and a report that found he broke rules by sharing information about an attack on Signal, but such an effort is unlikely to succeed.

The US admiral who commanded the attack told lawmakers on Thursday that there was no such order to kill everyone aboard. Still, Jim Himes, a Democratic

congressman from Connecticut, described the footage of the September strike, which reportedly showed two survivors clinging to the wreckage, as "one of the most troubling things I've seen in my time in public service".

"You have two individuals in clear distress, without any means of locomotion, with a destroyed vessel," Himes said.

Tom Cotton, a Republican senator from Arkansas, disagreed, saying the footage showed "two survivors trying to flip a boat loaded with drugs, bound for the United States, back over so they could stay in the fight" and that nearby "narco terrorists" may have been coming to rescue them.

Ryan Goodman, a New York University law professor and former Pentagon lawyer, scoffed at Cotton's interpretation. "I'd love to

know how Senator Cotton ... was able to detect these shipwrecked people were trying to 'stay in the fight' versus clinging to dear life in an effort to survive," Goodman wrote on Bluesky.

"Even if you buy all the legal falsehoods (that this is an 'armed conflict', that drugs are war-sustaining objects), the two shipwrecked were in no way, shape or form engaged in 'active combat activities' (the actual legal test)," Goodman added.

Since September, the US military says it has conducted 22 strikes on boats suspected of carrying drugs, and killed almost 86 people. The administration has argued the US is at war with drug traffickers and that such strikes are legal under the rules of war, but most legal experts reject that rationale.

"Even if we buy into their framing that the individuals on these vessels are combatants, it would still be unlawful to kill them if they are hors de combat, which means they're incapacitated," Rebecca Ingber, a professor at Cardozo law school and a former legal adviser to the state department, told the Guardian this week.

"It is manifestly unlawful to kill someone who's been shipwrecked."

## Patient police say they have recovered Fabergé pendant from man accused of swallowing it

*Six days after alleged incident, evidence emerges without requiring medical intervention, New Zealand police say*

Police say they have recovered a Fabergé egg pendant from a man accused of swallowing the item in a jewellery story.

New Zealand police have spent six days monitoring every bowel movement of the suspect, a spokesperson said, and the NZ\$33,000 (\$19,000) James Bond Octopussy pendant was recovered from his gastrointestinal tract on Thursday night by natural means, without requiring medical intervention.

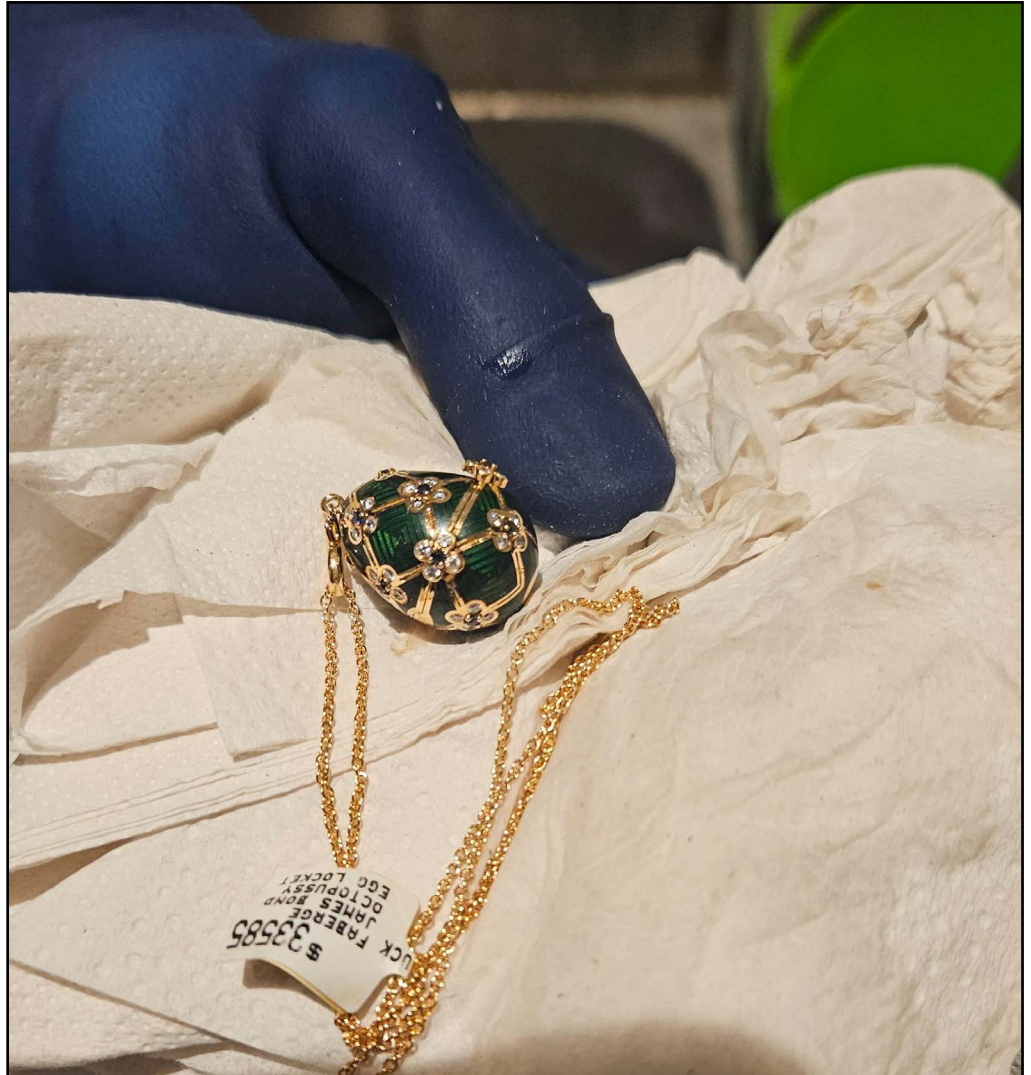
The 32-year-old man, who has not been named by police, has been in custody since he allegedly swallowed the ornate pendant at Partridge Jewelers in the city of Auckland on 28 November. He was arrested inside the store minutes after the alleged theft.

A photo supplied by police on Friday showed a gloved hand holding the recovered pendant, which was still attached to a long, gold chain with an intact price tag. A spokesperson said the necklace and the man would remain in police custody.

The piece was a limited-edition, Fabergé egg pendant inspired by the 1983 James Bond film Octopussy. Central to the film's plot is a jewel-smuggling operation that involves a fake Fabergé egg.

The suspect is due to appear in the Auckland district court on 8 December. At a first appearance on 29 November he didn't enter a plea to a charge of theft.

Since then, officers had been stationed round the clock with the man to wait for the evidence to emerge.



On Wednesday, Inspector Grae Anderson said in a statement: "Given this man is in police custody, we have a duty of care to continue monitoring him given the circumstances of what has occurred."

The store's website says the egg, one of only 50 made, is crafted from gold, painted with green enamel and encrusted with 183 diamonds and

two sapphires. The pendant is 8.4cm (3.3in) tall and is mounted on a stand. "The egg opens to reveal an 18ct yellow gold octopus nestled inside, adorned with white diamond suckers and black diamond eyes," an item description said. "The octopus surprise pays homage to the eponymous antagonist at the centre of the Octopussy film."

  
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## Guydadli Jets continue to dominate Second Division League

Guydadli Jets maintained their perfect winning start to their campaigns in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division on Wednesday.

Terroy Allen Ponde struck a hat trick as Guydadli notched up their fourth win in as many games with a 12-0 drubbing of JSC Progressors at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

Ponde had conversions in the 27th, 79th, and 82nd minutes, while Samuel Brazier, Jaiden Wray, and Nicholas Clarke each scored twice.

Brazier scored in the eighth and 12th minutes, Wray had goals in the ninth and 49th minutes, and Clarke converted strikes in the 61st and 68th minutes.

The other goals for Guydadli were scored by Imani Joyce in the 22nd minute, Tajjah Christian in the 46th minute, and Mickel Sterling in the 55th minute.

JSC Progressors remain on one point after slumping to their third defeat in four matches.

There was success as well for Fort Road FC. After losing their first two matches, Fort Road FC recorded their second successive win with a 2-0 victory against Belmont FC at the Cashed Hill playing field.

Shaquille Perry converted a penalty kick in the 27th minute to give Fort Road a one-nil lead at halftime, and Kadane Simon sealed the win by adding a second goal with a strike in the 61st minute.

The result allows Fort Road FC to move on to six points from four matches, while Belmont FC remains winless and without any points after suffering their second defeat in as many games.

The Second Division League will continue with four matches on Friday at 4:15 pm.



*The Guydadli Jets football team*

Real Blizzard will face Police at the New Winthorpes playing field, and the Urlings Golden Stars will tackle the North Coast Academy at the Urlings playing field.

Point West Ham will take on Glanvilles FC at the Princess Margaret School's playing field, and the Young Lions will host the Liberta Blackhawks at the Old Road playing field.



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# Big hundreds by Ravindra and Latham flatten West Indies



**New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra celebrates after reaching his century against the West Indies on the third day of the first cricket Test match in Christchurch, New Zealand, Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025. (AP)**

CHRISTCHURCH (Reuters) - Rachin Ravindra smashed 176, while skipper Tom Latham ended his three-year wait for a Test hundred as the New Zealanders combined for a 279-run stand to effectively bat West Indies out of the opening Test at Christchurch's Hagley Oval on Thursday.

Thanks to their batting exploits, the home side finished Day 3 on a commanding 417 for four, an overall lead of 481 runs, and looked on course for a comprehensive victory.

Will Young was not out on 21 at stumps with Michael Bracewell on six at the other end.

"Obviously a little bit of

luck early, but I think the way he played was fantastic," Latham said of Ravindra's knock.

"Driving on the up, driving down the ground, pull shots - (he played) every shot in the book, and he certainly deserves the 100 that he got today."

The hosts have been on the ascent since claiming a handy first-innings lead of 64 and they decided to tighten the screws when play resumed on Thursday.

The West Indies prised out two wickets in the morning session after debutant pacer Ojay Shields removed Devon Conway for 37 and Kemar Roach dismissed Kane Williamson, caught behind

for nine, with the final delivery before the lunch break.

The touring side could not maintain the pressure, though, and their sloppy catching did not help their cause either. Ravindra was dropped twice - on eight and 13 - off the bowling of Justin Greaves, which proved costly.

Roach made a valiant effort at midwicket but the ball popped out of his hand, while substitute fielder Kavem Hodge floored a regulation catch at slip to let Ravindra off the hook.

The curly-haired all-rounder duly brought up his 50 and pulled Johann Layne for a boundary to bring up a fluent 108-ball

hundred, his fourth in Test cricket.

Latham, having completed his 14th Test hundred, was happy to let Ravindra dominate their partnership with fluent shot-making on all sides of the wicket.

Roach returned to dismiss Latham caught behind for 145, which included 12 fours.

The West Indies struck with the second new ball again when Shields clean bowled Ravindra with a searing yorker.

Ravindra, who hit 27 fours and a six, had done enough damage by then, and Shields did not even bother to celebrate the dismissal.

## FIFA ruling on players' release date upsets Cup of Nations preparations

CAPE TOWN (Reuters) - African countries were left scrambling to change their preparation plans after a surprise FIFA decision to cut down the time players must be released to their national teams ahead of this month's Africa Cup of Nations finals.

With less than three weeks to the tournament in Morocco, which runs from December 21 to January 18, soccer's world governing body announced on Wednesday that clubs need only release players from December 15 instead of a fortnight before the start of a continental championship, as is the FIFA regulation.

Senegal have cancelled their planned training camp in Tunisia, sources said, while Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique and defending champions Ivory Coast are having to rethink plans for preparations in Portugal and Spain.

"What's frustrating and exhausting is that since the last international window, we've been finalising the preparations," said Angola's French coach Patrice Beaumelle.

"We wanted to start the camp on December 8 in the Algarve region of southern Portugal. I've been travelling to the site for a month and a half now. We've prepared everything, worked on the content of the training sessions, the venues for the friendly matches. Now everything is at risk.

"We have to be in Morocco on the



FIFA logo and flags at its headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland.

18th to play on the 22nd. So we can no longer call it a training camp," he added.

Several planned friendly internationals to warm up for the tournament also face being cancelled.


"We initially wanted to play two friendly matches, on December 14 and 18, but we should only play one, against an opponent yet to be determined," said Gabon coach Thierry Mouyouma.

The majority of the 24 countries competing at the Cup of Nations finals draw their players from clubs in Europe, who would ordinarily have had to release them after this weekend.

FIFA said the shortened release period, the same approach used for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, was agreed after consultations with the Confederation of African Football and other stakeholders to "reduce the impact on various parties", without elaborating.



Mali coach Tom Saintfiet, however, said it showed a lack of respect for African football and that European clubs were given a higher priority by FIFA.

The late notification was also criticised by the coaches, given the dates for the Cup of Nations finals were announced in June last year, giving FIFA ample time to make its ruling.



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## Australia's Lyon angry at being dropped for second Ashes Test



**Nathan Lyon**

BRISBANE (Reuters) - Australia spinner Nathan Lyon made no secret of his disappointment with being dropped for the second Ashes Test in Brisbane, saying he had not yet been able to bring himself to speak to selectors about the decision.

One of Australia's most successful bowlers with 562 wickets, Lyon was dropped for his first home Test since 2012, with Michael Neser

picked ahead of him in an all-pace attack.

The move wrong-footed fans and cricket pundits but captain Steve Smith suggested an additional seamer might get more out of the pink ball and the evening conditions in the day-night Test.

As it happened, England's batters had the better of Australia on day one, with a Joe Root century pushing them

to 325 for nine at stumps.

Lyon, who was also dropped for the day-night test in the West Indies in July, told host broadcaster Seven Network he was gutted when informed by selectors chair George Bailey about his Brisbane omission.

"Absolutely filthy," he said, using local slang for angry. "But yeah, can't do anything about it. So, I hope

I can play my role in making sure I get the guys ready and do whatever I can to make sure that we get the right result here."

Off-spinner Lyon has a stellar record in pink ball tests, with 43 wickets from 13 matches at an average of 25.62 compared to his career average of 30.16. He averages 28.82 in tests at the Gabba.

He said he had yet to discuss the decision at depth with selectors, who include head coach Andrew McDonald.

"I just hadn't had it in me to sit down with the coach and George at the moment," he added.

"So that will happen. I'm not the first player to miss a Test match and I won't be the last.

"But, yeah, obviously pretty gutted because I know the role that I can play within Australian cricket and especially at a venue like this."



## Telecoms and Agriculture to clash for Business Football League title



**The Ministry of Agriculture football team**

The 2023 champions, APUA Telecoms, and the Ministry of Agriculture will battle for the title in the 2025 JOMA Caribbean Ministry of Sports Business Football League Championship.

APUA Telecoms and the Ministry of Agriculture, which captured the runners-up position in last year's competition, booked their spots in the final by winning their respective semi-finals at the Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) on Wednesday evening.

Rakeem Joseph scored twice to lead APUA Telecoms to a 3-0 victory against last year's champions, Hermitage Bay Strikers, in the

second semi-final.

Joseph had conversions in the 13th and 50th minutes, while Tariq Highland scored the other goal in the 52nd minute.

A goal in the fifth minute was sufficient for the Ministry of Agriculture to snatch a one-nil victory against the Postal Services in the first semi-final and return to the final for a second straight year.

APUA Telecoms and the Ministry of Agriculture will clash in the final at the Antigua Recreation Grounds on Saturday at 7:30 pm.

It will be preceded by a playoff for third place be-

tween losing semi-finalists, the Hermitage Bay Strikers and the Postal Services, at 6 pm.

His Majesty's Prison (HMP) United will take on TAMO FC in an exhibition match at the same venue at 5 pm.

The four teams advanced to the business league semi-finals after securing wins in the quarter-finals, which were contested at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park and the Fort Road playing field.

APUA Telecoms ousted the Department of Immigration, and the Ministry of Agriculture knocked out the Sir Vivian Richards Stadi-

um.

The Postal Services prevailed against the CHAPA Warriors, and the Hermitage Bay Strikers defeated Blue Waters Hotel.

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

The top four teams in each group qualified for the knockout stage of the competition, which commenced with the Round of 16 matches and continued with the quarter-finals and semi-finals.