

# Sen. Kiz Johnson lays out her plans

Story on page 2



Senator Kiz Johnson (left) and Governor General Sir Rodney Williams (right) moments after she was sworn in as a government senator on Friday

# Sen. Kiz Johnson lays out her plans



The newly appointed Senator Kiz Johnson, who is also the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party's caretaker in the St. Phillip's South constituency, says her focus for the constituency will be education, youth development, women's empowerment and infrastructural development.

Senator Johnson was sworn in as the newest government senator at a ceremony held at Government House on Friday afternoon. This happened just hours after she won the primary held in the constituency to select a candidate for the ABLP for the next general elections.

"I am thrilled to be back in the Senate where I served for over two years as the Independent Senator appointed by the Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams. Now that I am back, and sitting on the government's side, the people of Antigua and Barbuda can expect the same level of discourse that I presented during my tenure as the Independent Candidate.

My presentations will be well-researched as I join my team of government senators in contributing to a high level of debate in the Upper House," she declared.

Turning to her plans for the constituency, Senator Johnson said she is a strong believer in the power of education and that she is happy to see that in the People-Centred National Budget for 2026, the prime minister laid out a comprehensive plan to take education to the next level.

"I certainly support the prime minister's push for education, including a waiver of fees for CXC starting from the next academic year and tuition free studies at tertiary level studies for some students.

"Additionally, I want to ensure that I pursue youth-centred initiatives in the constituency to advance to development of our youth population. These include among other things, supporting sporting clubs and the rehabilitation of sport-



ing facilities in the constituency," she indicated.

As a young woman entering elective politics, Senator Johnson said she has to be

a role model for young girls and women and her plans include pursuing opportunities to empower women not only in the St. Phillip South



constituency, but throughout Antigua and Barbuda.

Another area of concern for the senator is the notion of

fostering a stronger community spirit in the area. She stated that she is proud to be from the Freetown community and that it is her desire

to see a return or strengthening of that spirit of camaraderie among the people of Freetown, St. Phillips, Bethesda, Lion Hill and the other areas comprising the constituency.

She noted that two of the

defeated candidates in Thursday's primary have already signaled their support for her candidacy and they have pledged to rally their supporters behind her.

# Local News

## PM Browne: Barbuda is a major part of our planning for 2026

More developments are coming to Barbuda in the new year including both public sector and private sector investments in infrastructure and tourism.

This was outlined on Thursday by Prime Minister Gaston Browne when he delivered the 2026 National Budget to the Antigua and Barbuda parliament. The budget is entitled; The People-Centred Growth and Development Budget.

The prime minister announced that one of the developments that is coming to Barbuda is the \$300 million MurBee development which is expected to begin construction in the first half of 2026. He added that Nobu has already invested US\$70 million, with another US\$40 million committed for 2026. This is in addition to the developments taking place as part of the PLH Development.



**Prime Minister Gaston Browne**

“Mr. Speaker, the Barbuda Ocean Club (PLH Development) remains central to national growth and development. In 2026 alone, PLH will generate more than US\$100 million in direct expenditure and support 800 jobs, over 80 per cent held by Barbudans. ABST rev-

enue to the Barbuda Council now exceeds \$5 million yearly and growing.

“With the opening of the Burton-Nibbs International Airport, tourism on Barbuda has surged: more than 200 international flights arrived in 2025, and over 300

are expected in 2026,” PM Browne revealed.

He announced that Barbuda will benefit with a planned \$50 million road project, a new \$14 million cargo and tourism port, a primary school funded by the Dominican Republic, and continued expansion of the Burton-Nibbs International Airport.

These investments, he explained, are structured to empower local contractors and strengthen the island’s long-term development.

Additionally, Barbuda will share in another housing development project that will be funded by the Chinese government. According to PM Browne, the Chinese government has agreed to fund 100 condominium-style homes in Antigua and Barbuda; 50 have been earmarked for Barbuda and the other 50 for Bolans.



**HOSTS:**  
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## Antigua and Barbuda Government Elevates Women to Key Diplomatic and Political Posts



**MarieLouise Francis**



**Zeina Hechme**



**Kiz L. K. Johnson**

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has reaffirmed his government's commitment to gender equality and empowerment through a series of strategic appointments to top diplomatic and legislative positions. The new appointments reflect a deliberate effort to strengthen representation, harness legal and foreign-service expertise, and draw on the unique talents women bring to national and international service.

Among the new appointments:

MarieLouise Francis has been named Senior Trade, Investment and Diaspora Officer at the Consulate General of Antigua and Barbuda in Miami, Florida, with government intentions to appoint her as Consul General within the New Year. Ms. Francis is an attorney-at-law who has practiced in the United States.

Zeina Hechme has been appointed Vice Consul at the Antigua and Barbuda Consulate General in To-

ronto, Canada. Ms. Hechme brings over nine years of experience in the Foreign Service as a senior Foreign Service officer.

Kiz L. K. Johnson, former Independent Senator and recently elected Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party candidate for St. Philip's South constituency, will now be appointed to the Senate on the government's benches, strengthening female representation in national governance.

These appointments come within a broader context of the Prime Minister Browne Administration's dedication to advancing women into leadership roles. In recent addresses, Prime Minister Browne has called for greater female political participation and underscored the need for balanced gender representation in public office.

Globally, increased representation of women in diplomacy and foreign

policy enhances decision-making, strengthens peace-building efforts, and brings diverse perspectives to international relations. By making these appointments, Antigua and Barbuda join a growing number of nations proactively promoting gender parity in diplomacy and governance.

Prime Minister Browne and his Cabinet believe these appointments mark an important step toward transforming the promise of gender equity into concrete action. The Government remains committed to empowering women, nurturing talent, and ensuring that leadership reflects the full diversity of Antiguan and Barbudan society. As noted in recent national statements, the Government sees gender equality not only as a matter of justice but as essential to sustainable development—and vital for strengthening institutions and national resilience.

## Training for those involved in CHOGM planning starts today

A two-week workshop on security and other issues for those individuals who are involved in planning all aspects of the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) opens today at the headquarters of the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force at Camp Blizzard.

Captain Travis Pennyfeather, who is assisting with co-ordinating the training, said more than forty persons are expected to attend the training which will focus on operational planning.

“The training will emphasise how each sub-committee involved with the planning and implementation of those plans interface with each other and the role of security in all of this. Essentially, we want to ensure that security is central



**Captain Travis Pennyfeather**

to all planning in every aspect of the preparations for CHOGM,” he declared.

He noted that security will be a top priority for all those delegates who intend to travel to Antigua and Barbuda for CHOGM and this will be a main factor on whether or not they attend. “Nobody will come to Antigua and Barbuda unless they are reassured that in coming here that they will be safe,” Capt. Pennyfeather stated.

Against this background, the security apparatus of the country is taking the proactive steps to ensure that from the outset, everyone thinks security as part of their overall planning.

The ABDF is serving as coordinators of the event, but the actual training will be conducted by a team of experts from Canada.

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Caribbean Union Bank

## Caribbean Union Bank Unveils Credit Centre, Reinforcing Two Decades of Customer-Centric Excellence

**St. John's, Antigua—December 8, 2025** – Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) marked a major milestone on December 3, 2025, with the official launch and blessing of its brand-new Credit Centre at Starlings. This event was one of several special activities that took place during a week-long celebration of the bank's 20th anniversary, all designed to honor our valued customers and the communities we serve.

The event brought together distinguished guests, members of the Board, management, and staff, who gathered to witness the unveiling of a facility designed to further the bank's mission of financial inclusion and community empowerment.

In her opening remarks, General Manager Karen Richardson reflected on CUB's journey from its humble beginnings to becoming a vibrant institution at the heart of Antigua and Barbuda's economic progress.

"Two decades ago, we opened our doors with a simple yet powerful mission—to serve and empower our community," she said. "Our new Credit Centre is not just a building; it is a symbol of our continued commitment to providing accessible financial resources and guidance. Here, our customers will find tailored advice, flexible credit options, and the support needed to turn aspirations into reality."

Chairman Professor Justin Robinson echoed these sentiments, noting the resilience and dedication that have defined Caribbean Union Bank's legacy. "Twenty years of serving the people of Antigua and Barbuda is a remarkable milestone," he stated. "Through economic challenges, natural disasters, and a global pandemic, CUB has stood tall, continuing to expand opportunity for all. By expanding your credit services, CUB is democratizing opportunity—transforming aspiring entrepreneurs into business owners and first-time homeowners into stakeholders in our nation's prosperity."

The new Credit Centre will provide customers with enhanced access to credit products and personalized financial guidance, supporting a broad range of needs—from business development to home ownership and education.

As CUB looks to the future, both executives emphasized the bank's unwavering commitment to innovation, excellence, and community-driven growth. "This launch is not just an endpoint, but the dawn of a new era," the General Manager concluded. "With renewed purpose and unity, Caribbean Union Bank stands ready to champion the dreams and ambitions of Antigua and Barbuda—today, tomorrow, and for generations to come."



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## Tourism industry toasts top travel advisors in 'black-tie' affair



Top travel advisors from Antigua and Barbuda main source markets for tourism – the United States, Canada, the UK and Europe and the Caribbean – were celebrated at a ‘black-tie’ gala and presentation ceremony held at Sandals Grande Resort on Friday night.

In attendance to say ‘thank you’ to the 70-plus travel advisors were senior officials of government, including the Governor General, Sir Rodney and Lady Williams and

senior representatives from the Ministry of Tourism, the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) and the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA).

The occasion was the 2nd annual Black Pineapple Awards, hosted jointly by the Ministry of Tourism and the ABTA.

Director of Policy and Planning, St. Clair Soleyn, who spoke on be-

half of Tourism Minister Charles Max Fernandez, who was unavoidably absent, underscored the significance of naming the awards, the Black Pineapple Awards.

“As you know, the black pineapple is more than a fruit. It is a symbol of our heritage, our hospitality, and the unique authenticity of Antigua and Barbuda. This Awards Gala takes its name from a national treasure—something nurtured with care, shaped by our environ-

# Local News

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ment, and renowned throughout that tourism was not just an eco-periences, and our hospitality. In



the world for its exceptional quality. And so, it is fitting that we use this symbol to honour those whose work embodies the same spirit of distinction,” he explained.

Soleyn noted that tourism remains one of the world’s most dynamic forces for development—creating jobs, building bridges between cultures, and opening opportunities that transform communities.

“Here in Antigua and Barbuda, we see this every day. Our twin-island nation continues to rise as a premier destination, driven by the strength of our partnerships: with airlines and cruise lines, with travel advisors and digital creators, with investors, innovators, and industry champions like the awardees in this room,” he remarked.

For Chief Executive Officer of the ABTA, Colin C. James, the evening’s festivities centred on one word – that is gratitude. He noted



conomic pillar, as it represented the heartbeat of the people, the communities and the dreams of the future.

“When you champion this country’s tourism and send visitors to our shores, do you know what you’re actually doing? You’re championing our culture, our ex-

doing so you help support families, empower small businesses, and uplift an entire country,” James stated.

He told the travel advisors that their work doesn’t just bring travellers to Antigua and Barbuda, it brings opportunity, it brings hope and it brings progress.

## Central Youth for Labour Praises People-Centred Budget with Strong Focus on Education

The Central Youth for Labour (CYFL), the youth arm of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, proudly commends Prime Minister Gaston Browne and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for delivering a truly people-centred 2026 Budget, one that places education at the heart of national development.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 calls for “inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.” Some may say it is by coincidence that this Budget aligns so closely with that mandate. But the CYFL knows better. This is not by chance; it is a direct manifestation of Prime Minister Browne’s long-standing vision for the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

With \$220.1 million allocated to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries, the largest allocation of any ministry, his Budget confirms that education is not only a priority, but a central pillar of the Government’s agenda for “People-Centred Growth and Development.” Education is, and has always been, a catalyst for social mobility, empowerment, and national progress.

The results of this commit-



ment are already visible. The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus has expanded from 173 students in 2019 to 1,403 in 2025, demonstrating the increasing demand for accessible, high-quality tertiary education at home. Every year, more young people excel academically, earning 18, 20, even 23 CSEC subjects. Yet the reality remains that many families struggle to meet the rising cost of educational advancement.

This is why the CYFL welcomes, with great enthusiasm, the Prime Minister’s landmark announcements: Effective 2026, all students at the Antigua & Barbuda College of Continuing Studies (ABCAS) will enjoy tuition-free study.

The Government will cover all CXC exam fees for students nationwide.

A tuition-free programme

at UWI Five Islands will be introduced for eligible citizens, to take effect upon completion of the campus expansion.

These measures underscore the Government’s responsiveness, the willingness to listen, act, and remove barriers that stand between young people and their dreams.

In addition, the CYFL applauds the significant transformation underway at UWI Five Islands. The introduction of new programmes; including a BSc in Software Engineering, a Bachelor of Laws, and a Food and Agriculture Programme, positions Antigua and Barbuda as an emerging hub for regional higher education. Combined with a \$200 million campus expansion, featuring new laboratories, classrooms, a modern gym, a sporting complex, a multipurpose

auditorium, and expanded student housing, our nation is poised to attract students from across the Caribbean and beyond.

Importantly, the Budget’s focus on education extends beyond tertiary learning. The CYFL celebrates the Government’s investment in the next generation through the construction of the new Five Islands Primary School, scheduled for completion in January 2027. This initiative provides modern, inclusive learning spaces for young children in surrounding communities, and stands as a testament to the Government’s holistic approach to education, from early childhood to university.

As Prime Minister Browne eloquently stated: “Our 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.” For this vision, and the concrete policies driving it forward, the Central Youth for Labour offers the highest commendation. We encourage citizens at home and across the diaspora to seize these opportunities and continue building a brighter future for our beloved nation.

Antigua Barbuda  
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## The Halo Foundation donates to The Blue Dragonfly Foundation's Transformative Initiative

A newly formed partnership between The Blue Dragonfly Foundation and The Diocese of St. John's-Basseterre ushers in an era of empowerment at The Mount Tabor Retreat in the heart of Antigua's rainforest.

As part of its commitment to this project, the Halo Foundation presented The Blue Dragonfly Foundation with a cheque for \$10,000. This contribution will be used to purchase a vital piece of assistive technology equipment, an Interactive White Board, helping to drive the program forward and ensure its continued success and impact.

The Interactive White Board is a large, touch-sensitive screen that turns digital content into an engaging, multi-sensory experience. Its features can be customized to support diverse learning needs, helping students with disabilities access information, stay engaged, and express themselves through tools like text-to-speech, enlarged visuals, alternative input methods and handwriting-to-text conversion, promoting inclusion and better performance for those with learning disabilities, visual/hearing impairments, and fine motor challenges.

The Mount Tabor Retreat, with its breathtaking panoramic views and tranquil atmosphere, promises to be a life-changing environment for those who often experience heightened anxiety due to sensory processing challenges. Building on this transformative setting, The Blue Dragonfly Foundation has announced the development of an on-site restaurant and hydroponic farm at the retreat,



designed to offer farm-to-table dining while providing autistic teens and young adults with hands-on training and valuable work experience. This initiative aims to open doors to employment opportunities that may otherwise be inaccessible to many individuals with autism and developmental disabilities.

In addition to the restaurant and farm, the retreat will feature an on-site classroom and a dedicated sensory room. These spaces will be essential for delivering sensory therapies and specialized learning programs, with a focus on fostering communication skills for those who are non-verbal or face challenges in effective communication. By providing tailored resources and support, The Blue Dragonfly Foundation is empowering participants to reach their fullest potential in a nurturing, inclusive en-

vironment.

The Halo Foundation stands firmly behind The Blue Dragonfly Foundation's commitment to fostering empowerment, acceptance, and holistic wellbeing. This project marks an important milestone for Antigua and Barbuda, setting a high standard for inclusive care and innovation.

"We believe that every person deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential," stated Lady Williams, President and Founder of The Halo Foundation. "The Blue Dragonfly Foundation's vision aligns perfectly with our commitment to inclusion, compassion, and transformative change. We are thrilled to see this initiative unfold in such an inspiring natural setting, and we commend all partners for their dedication and forward-thinking approach."



Caribbean Union Bank



*Year Anniversary*

STRONG FOUNDATIONS.  
BOLD FUTURE.

# Local News

## Antigua and Barbuda selects a representative for next year's Miss International Elegant Mothers Pageant



**Charity Henry**

Antigua and Barbuda has agreed to send a representative to the BTA 8th Annual Miss International Elegant Mothers Pageant 2026 taking place in St Maarten/St Martin next year.

Charity Henry, the mother of two beautiful girls, and a former Miss Labour Queen Pageant winner, has been selected to be Antigua and Barbuda's representative at the pageant slated for March 14 next year. Henry describes herself as a woman driven by purpose, passion, and possibility. Her life's mission extends far beyond her own dreams.

According to her bio...she strives to stand as a powerful example of strength, grace, and ambition for young girls everywhere. Charity believes deeply that every child, no

matter their circumstances, deserves to see their own potential and feel empowered to pursue excellence.

Charity is a former Head Girl of the All Saints Secondary School. Even from an early age, her leadership, determination, and creative spirit set her apart.

A true multi-talent, Charity stepped into the beauty industry at just 13 years old, beginning a journey that has grown into more than a decade of artistry, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Today, she is not only expanding her makeup brand, both in services and cosmetics, but is also known across the Caribbean for her

carnival makeup, traveling to regional carnivals to transform revelers with her signature style.

Her love for beauty is matched by her passion for pageantry. Charity proudly earned the title of Miss Teenage 2017, representing the All Saints Secondary School, and later went on to be crowned Miss Labour Queen 2022, representing the Prime Minister, Gaston Browne, and the St. John's City West constituency.

Currently, she serves as the makeup artist for Fenty Beauty at Lipstick Antigua, while continuing to thrive as a respected professional makeup artist and brand developer.

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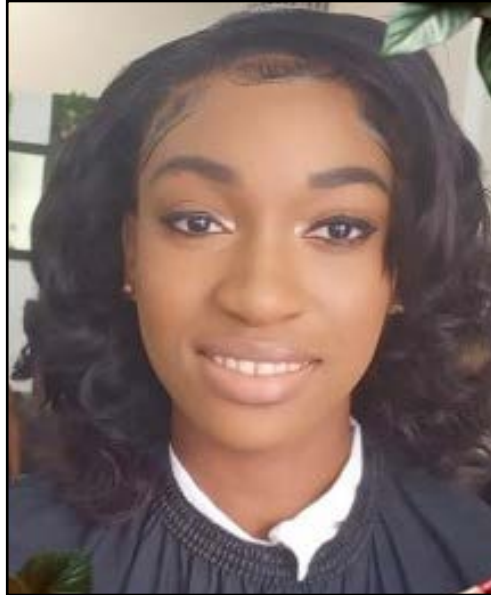
ANTIGUA CARNIVAL

# A community celebrates Axleigh A. D. Akez

The Ottos Comprehensive School (OCS) beamed with pride to celebrate the accomplishments of one of its brightest star Axleigh A. D. Akez, who graduated as the top CSEC student of this year's class. She sat and passed all nine (9) CSEC subjects with flying colours in one sitting.

Akez is mostly an 'A' student, who is driven by her scholarly abilities to strive for excellence in all she does. She was awarded the badge of Perfect and maintained high academics throughout her tenure in school.

Axleigh was awarded the Salutatorian, an honour bestowed on a student whose "Academics" out shun her peers in the entire graduating class of 2025, as she walked away with a host



of trophies, gifts, and monetary awards

for her outstanding achievements in all subject areas for the CSEC Examinations.

Congratulations are in order to a beautiful, intelligent, and dedicated young lady, who has proven that her aspirations are to soar to the top, and she has already matriculated as a freshman in Business Studies at the newly formed Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS).

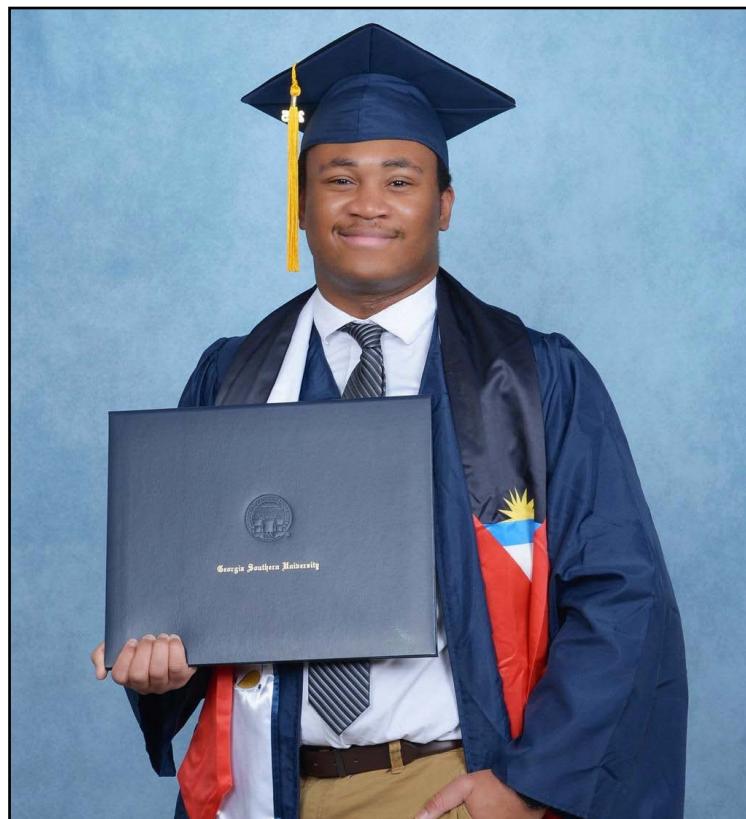
Axleigh hails from Tindale Road in Ottos to proud parents Dr. Desrie Marisa Southwell, Asc, BBA, MBA, DBA, and Makinya A. Akez of Willikies Village who is also a proud graduate with an Associate Degree from the Antigua State College's Engineering Department.

# Congratulations to Keion Liburd

The family of Keion Liburd extends warm congratulations to him for his remarkable achievements of graduating from one of the most prestigious universities in Georgia.

Liburd started from humble beginnings as the only child for his mother Jell Webson, and his father Robert 'Bobby' Liburd. He was raised in the Golden Grove (new extension) Village. His grandmother is Sybil 'Edna' Parker.

After graduating with honours from the Adventist Primary School he was awarded a scholarship to attend the Island Academy, where he also



excelled in all his subjects graduate. His good academics and was an honourable

earned him a scholarship to the Georgia Southern University in the United States of America, where he later graduated with a Degree in Pharmaceutical Studies. Liburd honoured the nation of Antigua and Barbuda on his graduation day earlier this year, by proudly wearing his stash featuring the beautiful flag, a true symbol of his national pride.

Liburd, your family and friends are extremely proud of your accomplishments, and they pray you would continue to soar like an eagle, and excel in all your future endeavours.

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# Photo Story

## *V.C Bird Day Celebration Church Service*



# Photo Story



# SLP Secures Historic Second Term in a Manifesto Foreshadowing Success



By Aneka Lee

Just days following the historic election result coming out of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia followed with a landmark victory of its own. On December 1st, 2025, Saint Lucian voters sent a message that could not be mistaken or softened. They communicated an emphatic reaffirmation of confidence in the Saint Lucia Labour Party led by Philip J. Pierre. The SLP was handed a strengthened second term, successfully attaining 14 of their 15 contested seats, reducing the United Workers Party to a solitary seat held by former Prime Minister Allen Chastanet.

This was no run of the mill re-election. It shattered nearly a quarter-century of political volatility defined by one-term governments, a first since 2001 under the leadership of Dr. Kenny Anthony. The SLP didn't just survive the incumbency curse, they conquered it. Their expanded majority and more than 5% increase in the popularity vote mark one of the most decisive victories in modern Saint Lucian politics, transforming what was already a lead into a near-total political sweep. A feat once unheard-of making this result expo-

nentially more significant.

The UWP by contrast has suffered its worst performance in decades. Reduced to a single seat, the party matched the lowest ever seat count attained in a general Elections held in Saint Lucia. An ignominious record belonging solely to the UWP. This outcome raised the unavoidable question as to whether UWP, as currently constituted, can serve as a serious alternative to the SLP.

If election campaigns are a form of political storytelling, then the manifesto covers of both major parties offered striking narrative clues long before voters headed to the polls. The imagery communicated a foreshadowing of the would-be results.

The Saint Lucia Labour Party's manifesto cover featured a collage of the entire slate of candidates presented as a unified team alongside everyday citizens. This visual messaging reinforces the party's core campaign theme and aptly titled manifesto "Moving Forward Together". It communicated teamwork, shared responsibility, and citizen-centric governance.

In stark contrast, the UWP's manifesto showcased only one figure: Former Prime Minister, Allen Chastanet. In what might have been an attempt to leverage his national profile instead came to symbolize the narrowing identity of the party and, as the results suggest, the narrowing of its electoral appeal. In what feels like poetic, yet



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# Feature

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prophetic, imagery becoming reality, Allen Chastanet did emerge as the sole elected UWP member. The party's campaign branding, whether intentional or not, perfectly foreshadowed its final standing: one man, one seat.

The UWP was dealt a momentous blow heading into this election cycle. The internal party dissension was put on full display when two former UWP candidates contested their respective constituencies as independent candidates after parting ways with the party. In a move that can only be described as masterfully strategic, the SLP opted not to field candidates in those constituencies. In what one can reasonably assume was an effort to avoid a split vote and allow the independents to siphon support away from an already weakened UWP. These independent bids, while successful at the polls, did not pose a major challenge to the SLP's dominance elsewhere, they convincingly illustrated the fragmentation within the UWP and may have contributed to the opposition's perceived enfeebled island-wide momentum.

The results of this election have significant implications for governance in Saint Lucia. With 14 of 17 seats in the House of Assembly, the SLP now wields one of the strongest mandates in recent history. This win offers both an opportunity and a challenge. It ushers in a rare moment of political stability, enabling the administration to advance existing policies, pursue long-term initiatives, and maintain a semblance of institutional stability without the typical fear of immediate electoral backlash. It also potentially marks the beginning of a new era in which Saint Lucian politics evolves past episodic cycles of upheaval and turnover, embracing continuity and strategic governance.

However, given the unmistakable mandate placed upon the SLP by the public, expectations will inevitably soar, with citizens closely monitoring the administration's performance on key issues, including economic stability, crime management, public service delivery, and transparency particularly in sensitive areas of contention. A landslide victory eliminates excuses,

not accountability.

For the UWP, the path ahead may be uncertain and unforgiving but the outcome necessitates a period of introspection. The party must decide whether to overhaul the current vision, rebuild around a broader bench to include greater succession planning, or risk continuing decline.

Regionally, the vote may be seen as part of a broader recalibration across the Caribbean; what we have long understood about our politics has been contradicted by the outcomes of the past two elections. Whether nations are shedding long-standing governments or, as in Saint Lucia's case, choosing continuity, the results have been especially noteworthy. As a regional politics enthusiast, watching history unfold back-to-back in real time has been exhilarating. Whether these trends endure is a story for future elections but for now, the Caribbean political landscape has never been more dynamic, more fascinating, or more hopeful for those who have a vested interest in the region's future.



Antigua Barbuda  
**FESTIVALS COMMISSION**

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

**Sixteen Days, One Phrase: Protect Her All Ways.  
Day fourteen — December 8th : Real Strength Knows Peace**

Day Fourteen rises like drumbeats from the village yard — calling men forward, calling boys into purpose. Today we speak of allies — men who choose courage over cruelty, presence over silence, partnership over power. And we ask: What makes a man mighty? Is it fists clenched tight, or hands reaching out? Is it never bending — or knowing when to bow to peace? The United Nations reminds us plainly: change grows when men step forward to challenge harmful norms. UNESCO adds that education is where respect is built and emotional skills are born. So let us teach boys not merely to be strong — but to be kind.

Too often, boys hear, “Be tough.” They learn to mask the tears. They pack their fears inside their fists and wear emotional armour for years. When feelings find no voice, anger fills the space. When pressure finds no outlet, violence shows its face. But true Caribbean men carry gentler might — they guide, protect, mentor, and listen. Fathers teaching sons not by shouting but showing. Coaches shaping character before athletes. Youth leaders encouraging expression without shame. Faith communities modeling compassion instead of condemnation.

Yet we must ask: Are we creating enough spaces for boys to unlearn harmful patterns? Are male leaders brave enough to discuss consent openly? Are emotions treated as human — not forbidden? The UN Secretary-General speaks truth: “Men must hold one another accountable.” Accountability doesn’t punish — it uplifts. It’s a brother saying, “That joke isn’t okay.” It’s a friend checking rage instead of cheering it. It’s a co-worker intervening when disrespect tries to pass unnoticed. Accountability builds courage. Courage builds trust. And trust builds peace.

Education must light the way. UNESCO shows that schools nurturing emotional literacy and gender respect reduce long-term violence risks. Teach boys to listen before leading. Teach them that “no” needs no explanation. Teach them that caring is cool. But education leaves the classroom and follows the beat of our culture. Songs, social media, sports fields — all echo definitions of manhood. Do our lyrics lift women — or wound them? Do our jokes teach respect — or tolerate harm? Do our heroes show empathy — or entitlement?

Real strength doesn’t shout. It shel-

ters. Real courage doesn’t control. It connects. Real manhood does not dominate — it dignifies. In Antigua and Barbuda, when men rise as allies, families grow safer. Girls walk with less fear. Boys breathe with less pressure. Communities thrive with more harmony. Imagine our islands alive with men teaching boys peaceful power — power to protect, to speak gentle truths, and to choose partnership over pride. That is masculinity’s evolution — and our nation’s salvation.

Day Fourteen reminds us: Peace is taught by men who model it. Safety is secured by men who defend dignity. Equality is built by men who walk beside women. So Caribbean brothers — rise as allies, not rulers. Rise as mentors, not masters. Rise in strength — the kind that heals.

Joshuanette Francis

Founder and President, Good Humans 268 Inc.

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

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

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# V.C.



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

# Regional News

## BVI Government Communications Director Karia Christopher dies suddenly



Karia Christopher, Director of Communications in the British Virgin Islands Premier's Office, died suddenly on Friday, December 5. She was found at her home, though officials have not yet released details on the circumstances surrounding her passing.

Christopher had reportedly been battling an illness, but the nature of her condition and the events leading up to her death remain unclear.

A widely respected and longtime public servant, Christopher held several senior roles across the Virgin Islands government. Her previous positions included Director of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs; Sister Islands Programme Coordinator; and Chief Administrative Officer at the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission.

Premier Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley issued a statement expressing shock and deep sadness at her sudden passing.

"The government of the Virgin Islands is deeply shocked and saddened to

learn of the overnight passing of Karia Christopher, our Director of Communications. Ms. Christopher was a highly respected and accomplished communication specialist, a trusted and valued colleague and a strong contributor to the effective delivery of the government's communications agenda," he said.

"She will be terribly missed by all of us both professionally and personally. Her warmth, integrity and positive energy would always shine through, regardless of the situation."

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The Premier extended condolences to her husband, Rory; her two children, Hunter and Dakota; her mother, Delrice; and her extended family and friends.

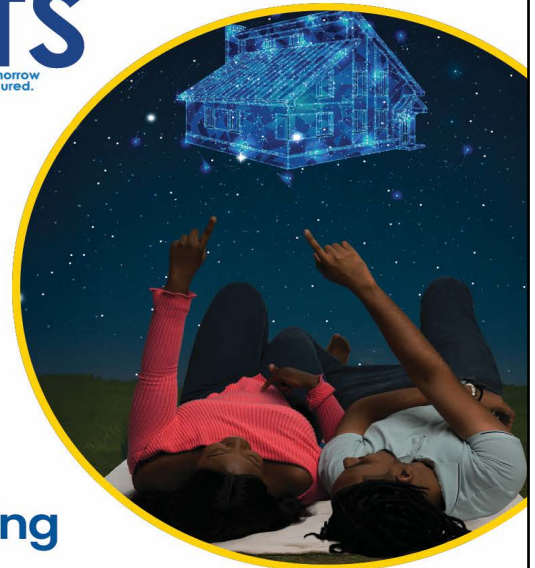
The government is in close contact with the Christopher family and is offering support as they navigate "this profound loss of their beloved wife, mother, daughter and family member," the statement said.

"May her soul rest in eternal peace," the Premier added.



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

## Pierre sworn in for second term as St. Lucia's Prime Minister

Phillip Joseph Pierre was sworn in on Friday as St. Lucia's 12th prime minister since the island gained independence from Britain in 1979, pledging to continue the policies of his previous administration that resonated with the majority of voters in Monday's general election.

"I am excited and optimistic about the future of St. Lucia. I pledge to do my best for the development of my country. It is with humility and honour that I accept the mantle of Prime Minister for a second term," Pierre said after being sworn in by Governor General Sir Errol Charles at the official residence on the Morne, overlooking Castries.

Prime ministers from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, and St. Kitts-Nevis attended the ceremony, along with former St. Vincent and the Grenadines prime minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves.

In his address, the 71-year-old Pierre — the ninth person to serve as head of government since independence — said he was happy to be speaking "in the right mood" after guiding the St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) to a convincing victory. The SLP secured 14 of the 17 seats in Parliament, while two seats went to independents who were part of Pierre's first administration. The main opposition United Workers Party (UWP) will be represented only by Allen Chastanet, who on Friday announced his resignation as party leader.

"I am overjoyed and grateful to the people of St. Lucia for electing the party that I have the honour to lead," Pierre said, adding that "today marks a historic achievement for the St. Lucia Labour Party being the only party in St. Lucia to have won a second consecutive term in the last 20 years".



He noted that the SLP had increased both its share of the popular vote and its parliamentary majority. Pierre said the electorate's support signalled approval of his first-term policies, and he promised continued focus on the vulnerable and on measures to deter youth from joining gangs.

"WE cannot speak of preserving human dignity and a more equitable society if we are not prepared to address the basic needs of the vulnerable and the differently abled so that everyone can have a dignified existence," he said.

"In our new term, we will continue to target interventions to those most in need. We cannot develop a dual society where any demographic is allowed to go adrift. I speak to the disenchantment of our young males, who are disengaged from the developmental process."

Pierre said his administration would allocate resources to support young men, stressing that "gang membership and unlawful codes of behaviour should not be a desirable alternative for our young men. We call for zero tolerance towards all forms of deviant behaviour that is likely to destroy our

society".

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The new Cabinet will be announced and sworn in next week. Pierre said his government will pursue new policies aimed at countering what he described as the "weight" of negativity affecting the country.

If we are not careful, we will pay a heavy price. My government will therefore do all it can to help reverse this trend of negativity," he said, urging citizens not to normalise division and hate.

Pierre said the administration will have a mandate to deliver on its promises, including "an impactful public sector investment programme" featuring upgrades to Hewanorra International Airport, improvements to water infrastructure, and investment in citizen security.

On foreign policy, he said St. Lucia will continue active participation in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), while upholding "the principle of sovereignty and peace in our region".

# Regional News

## China's navy hospital ship arrives in Jamaica to boost post-hurricane health services

Jamaica's health sector has received a major boost following the arrival of the People's Republic of China's advanced navy hospital ship, the Silk Road Ark, which docked at the Montego Bay Freeport in St. James on Thursday, December 4.

The vessel will deliver outpatient care, diagnostic services, and elective surgeries, strengthening Jamaica's national recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Melissa.

Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, who toured the vessel with a Jamaican delegation, expressed appreciation for China's swift support.

"We have, in the true spirit of friendship and cooperation, [seen that] the people and the Government of China have dispatched and have adjusted their schedule to be here in Jamaica earlier than was originally planned," he said.

Dr. Tufton described the Silk Road Ark as "ultra-modern", noting that "it is [the] newest [vessel] in [China's] fleet of hospital ships, and its [presence is timely, given] the challenges we face".

He highlighted that the vessel is staffed by more



than 100 clinicians and support personnel and equipped with multiple operating theatres, advanced diagnostic technology, and a wide range of medical specialties. The team will perform elective procedures, including hernia repairs, and host outpatient clinics in Montego Bay, Kingston, and Falmouth in the coming days.

"This is a full-service hospital on the seas. It has 300 beds... [so, accommodating] 600 patients a day would not be impossible, based on their capacity and the personnel that they have," Dr. Tufton explained, adding that the ship's services will ease pressure on the national health system during the recovery period.

"The Chinese vessel and team are helping us to fill a gap... while we are... building back our system

so that we can assume the arrangement. The benefits are many, and we will only be better for it," he said.

China's Ambassador to Jamaica, His Excellency Wang Jinfeng, offered condolences to those affected by Hurricane Melissa and reaffirmed the strength of the bilateral partnership.

"As emphasised by Chinese President, Xi Jinping, Jamaica is China's strategic partner, and our peoples have deepened our friendship. The latest medical ship... has brought the assistance of the Chinese Government. They will provide humanitarian medical service for the Jamaican people," he said.

Ambassador Wang noted that after its three-day stop in Montego Bay, the vessel will continue to Kingston and Falmouth, expressing

confidence that Jamaica will "rebuild stronger and more resilient".

Chief Medical Officer Dr. Jacqueline Bisasor-McKenzie said the support is especially timely, with several hospitals facing disruptions after Hurricane Melissa.

"This ship being here at this time [presents] an opportunity for us to get some of our elective surgical cases done and some of our eye cases done," she said.

She added that the extended mission will also aid Kingston-based hospitals, which have been managing increased patient loads due to self-referrals and transfers from the western region.

"We're really hoping to take full advantage of this opportunity to get as much done as possible," Dr. Bisasor-McKenzie said, adding that Jamaican health officials look forward to future collaboration with China.

The Silk Road Ark continues China's humanitarian outreach in the region and builds on years of cooperation with Jamaica, including medical missions and support provided during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Benin's interior minister says a coup announced earlier has been foiled



COTONOU, Benin — A coup that was announced in Benin on Sunday has been “foiled,” the interior minister said in a video on Facebook.

“In the early morning of Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025, a small group of soldiers launched a mutiny with the aim of destabilizing the state and its institutions,” Alassane Seidou said.

“Faced with this situation, the Beninese Armed Forces and their leadership, true to their oath, remained committed to the republic.”

Earlier, a group of soldiers had appeared on Benin’s state TV Sunday to announce the dissolution of the government in an apparent coup, the latest of many in West Africa.

The group, which called itself the Military Committee for Refoundation, announced the removal of the president and all state institutions. Lt. Col. Pascal Tigri has been appointed president of the military committee, the soldiers said.

Following its independence from France in

1960, the West African nation witnessed multiple coups, especially in the decades following its independence. Since 1991, the country has been politically stable following the two-decade rule of Marxist-Leninist Mathieu Kérékou.

There has been no official news about President Patrice Talon since gunshots were heard around the presidential residence. The signal to state television and public radio was cut off after the military announcement.

Talon had been in pow-

er since 2016 and was due to step down next April after the presidential election.

Talon’s party pick, former Finance Minister Romuald Wadagni, was the favorite to win the election. Opposition candidate Renaud Agbodjo was rejected by the electoral commission on the grounds that he did not have sufficient sponsors.

In January, two associates of Talon were sentenced to 20 years in prison for an alleged 2024 coup plot.

Last month, the country’s legislature extended the presidential term of office from five to seven years, keeping the term limit at two.

The coup is the latest in a string of military takeovers that have rocked West Africa. Last month, a military coup in Guinea-Bissau removed former President Umaro Embalo after a contested election in which both he and the opposition candidate declared themselves winners.

## New US security strategy aligns with Russia's vision, Moscow says

Russia has welcomed US President Donald Trump's new National Security Strategy, calling it "largely consistent" with Moscow's vision.

The 33-page document, unveiled by the US administration this week, suggests Europe is facing "civilisational erasure" and does not cast Russia as a threat to the US.

Combatting foreign influence, ending mass migration, and rejecting the EU's perceived practice of "censorship" are mentioned as other priorities in the report.

Several EU officials and analysts had pushed back on the strategy, questioning its focus on freedom of expression and likening it to language used by the Kremlin.

"The adjustments we're seeing... are largely consistent with our vision," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said in an interview published by Russia's state news agency Tass on Sunday.

"We consider this a positive step," he said, adding that Moscow would continue to analyse the document before drawing strong conclusions.

The strategy adopts a softer language towards Russia, which EU officials worry could weaken its stance towards Moscow as it pushes for an end to the war in Ukraine.



In the document, the EU is blamed for blocking US efforts to end the conflict and says that the US must "re-establish strategic stability to Russia" which would "stabilise European economies".

It appears to endorse efforts to influence policy on the continent, noting that US policy should prioritise "resistance to Europe's current trajectory within European nations".

The new report also calls for the restoration of "Western identity", and claims that Europe will be "unrecognisable in 20 years or less" and its economic issues are "eclipsed by the real and more stark prospect of civilisational erasure".

"It is far from obvious whether certain European countries will have economies and militaries strong enough to remain reliable allies," the document states.

In stark contrast, the document celebrates the influence of "patriotic European parties" and says "America

encourages its political allies in Europe to promote this revival of spirit".

As the EU engages in ongoing talks with the Trump administration to set out a peace deal in Ukraine, some officials emphasised their lasting relationship with the US, while raising "questions" over the document.

"The US will remain our most important ally in the [Nato] alliance. This alliance, however, is focused on addressing security policy issues," German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said on Friday.

"I believe questions of freedom of expression or the organisation of our free societies do not belong [in the strategy], in any case at least when it comes to Germany."

In a social media post addressed to his "American friends", Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said that "Europe is your closest ally, not your problem" and noted their "common enemies".

"This is the only reason-

able strategy of our common security. Unless something has changed."

Meanwhile, former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt wrote that the document "places itself to the right of the extreme right".

The Trump administration has fostered links with the far-right AfD party in Germany, which has been classified as extreme right by German intelligence.

Promoting an "America First" message, the strategy says the US intends to target alleged drug-trafficking boats in the Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific Ocean, considering possible military action in Venezuela.

The US also calls on an increased defence spending from Japan, South Korea, Australia and Taiwan.

Democrats in Congress warned that the document could shatter US foreign relations.

Representative Jason Crow of Colorado, who sits on House committees overseeing intelligence and the armed forces, called the strategy "catastrophic to America's standing in the world".

New York Representative Gregory Meeks said it "discards decades of value-based, US leadership".

## Warning against mushroom foraging in California after fatal poisoning

Officials in California are urging The confirmed cases happened be- rooms, we advise the public not to



people not to forage for wild mushrooms after a rise in poisoning cases caused at least one death.

The California Poison Control System has identified 21 cases of amatoxin poisoning clustered in northern California, likely resulting from death cap mushrooms, the state's department of public health said.

The poisoning resulted in severe liver damage in several people, including children, and at least one of the patients may need a liver transplant, the department said.

Death cap mushrooms can easily be mistaken for safe, edible mushrooms because of their similar taste, smell, and appearance.

tween mid-November and early December, a rainy season in the region that creates ideal conditions for the deadly variety to grow, mostly near oaks and hardwood trees like pine trees, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) said.

Though the cases are mostly in the Monterey and San Francisco Bay area of Northern California, the risk is statewide, the department warned.

"Death cap mushrooms contain potentially deadly toxins that can lead to liver failure," Dr Erica Pan, CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer, said in a statement. "Because the death cap can easily be mistaken for edible safe mush-

rooms at all during this high-risk season."

The death cap mushroom is never safe to eat, even if it is boiled, dried, frozen or cooked.

Eating the deadly mushrooms can cause watery diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and dehydration within six to 24 hours - and although symptoms may initially wane, severe or fatal liver damage can still occur up to eight days later.

"Only people with extensive training and experience should eat wild mushrooms that they have picked themselves," Dr Edward Moreno, County of Monterey Health Officer, said in a statement.



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## Hoppers end Golden Grove's perfect start to First Division League



*Players of the Greenbay Hoppers football team*

The Greenbay Hoppers have ended Golden Grove FC's perfect start to their campaign in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division.

The Greenbay Hoppers claimed their fourth win in five matches with a 5-1 drubbing of Golden Grove FC at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park in the latest round of matches.

The goals for the Greenbay Hoppers were scored by Ammiel Greenaway in the 12th minute, Jomo Andrew in the 21st, Yakira Hughes in the 33rd, Jari Jackson in the 51st, and Tamorley Thomas in the 61st minute.

Stephen Hughes scored a consolation goal in the 19th minute for Golden Grove FC.

The result allows the Greenbay Hoppers to join Golden Grove at the top of

the standings with 12 points apiece. It was the first defeat in five games for Golden Grove FC, which started their First Division campaign by winning their first four matches.

Parham claimed their second win in five matches by snatching a 1-0 victory against Willikies FC at the ABFA Technical Center.

Parham FC advanced to eight points, while Willikies FC remains on three points after slumping to their third loss in four games.

Darius Hector scored all four goals as the Freemans Village Scorpions also recorded their second win in three matches with a 4-0 drubbing of English Harbour FC at the English Harbour playing field.

Hector converted penalty kicks in the 24th and 67th minutes and also scored

with strikes in the 21st and 71st minutes.

The result carries the Freemans Village Scorpions to seven points, while English Harbour FC remains on six points after suffering their fourth loss in six matches.

SAP FC claimed their first win in three matches with a 3-0 victory against Cedar Grove Blue Jays FC at the Cedar Grove playing field.

The goals were scored by Emerson Henry in the 25th minute, Do-Quane Lewis in the 38th, and Devlyn Williams in the 58th minute.

SAP FC advanced to five points, while the result left the Cedar Grove Blue Jays on three points after slumping to their fourth loss in five matches.

## AGHS beat PMS to move to top of Under-20 Girls Division League

Antigua Girls High School (AGHS) has ended the unbeaten run of defending champions, Princess Margaret School (PMS), to surge to the top of the standings in the Under-20 Girls Division in the Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth, and Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup Secondary Schools' Football Competition.

The Antigua Girls High School moved from third to first place in the Under-20 Girls Division by snatching a 1-0 victory against Princess Margaret School. Kendra Aska struck the winner with a 55th-minute conversion.

Their fifth win in six matches propelled the Antigua Girls High School to 15 points, two ahead of Princess Margaret School, which dropped from first to second place with 13 points after suffering their first defeat in six games.

In their previous encounter, the Antigua Girls High School romped to a 4-1 victory against Ottos Comprehensive School.

Nafisa Quashie had a double conversion with strikes in the 16th and 39th minutes. The other goals for the Antigua Girls High School were scored by Skii Hazelwood in the 11th minute and Kendra Aska in the 53rd minute.

Kengenique Armstrong scored a consolation goal in the 48th minute for the Ottos Comprehensive School, which remains in the cellar without any points after succumbing to their fifth loss in



**Antigua Girls High School under-20 girls football team**

as many games.

Clare Hall Secondary School claimed their third win in six matches by snatching a 1-0 victory against Jennings Secondary School. Shanique Henry scored the only goal of the match in the 19th minute to allow Clare Hall Secondary School to advance to nine points.

Jennings Secondary School dropped from second to third place with 10 points after suffering their third defeat in seven matches.

The Sir Novelle Richards Academy and Ottos Comprehensive School recorded wins in the Under-16 Boys Division of the Patrick C. Whyte Cup Secondary Schools' Football Competition.

The Sir Novelle Richards Academy claimed their seventh win in nine matches with a 2-0 victory against Irene B. Williams Secondary. D'Nic Hadaway had a 16th-minute conversion,

and Ajay Barthley scored in the 35th minute.

The result allows the Sir Novelle Richards Academy to remain in fourth place by advancing to 22 points, while Irene B. Williams Secondary remains on nine points after suffering their sixth defeat in nine matches.

The Ottos Comprehensive School wrapped up their campaign in the round-robin and preliminary stage of the competition with a 5-0 drubbing of Pares Secondary.

Robert Jeffery scored four times with conversions in the fourth, 17th, 23rd, and 56th minutes. Thaddeus Christian scored the other goal in the 58th minute.

Their eighth win from their quota of 11 matches allows the Ottos Comprehensive School to finish with 25 points. Pares Secondary School remains on one point after suffering their seventh loss in eight games.

Defending champions,

Princess Margaret School consolidated their second-place position in the Under-20 Boys Division by claiming their sixth win in seven matches with a 4-1 victory against the Harrison Center Antigua and Barbuda School of Continuing Education (HCABSCE).

Dahvia Hughes had a double conversion with strikes in the 31st and 70th minutes, while the other goals for Princess Margaret School were scored by Mario Lewis in the 17th minute and Shumba Thomas in the 50th minute.

Kayonzea Gafford scored a consolation goal in the ninth minute for HCABSCE, which remains on 12 points after suffering their second defeat in six matches.

Princess Margaret School advanced to 18 points, one adrift of unbeaten leaders the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advance Studies (ABCAS).

## Island Academy among winners in Under-13 basketball competition

Island Academy was among the winners in the latest round of matches in the inaugural Inter-Private Schools Under-13 Basketball Tournament, which got underway at the YMCA Sports Complex on Saturday.

Island Academy trounced St. John's Lutheran 25-8 in the second game of a triple-header in the round-robin competition.

Logan Munn and Elijah Peters each sank 10 points for Island Academy. Munn also contributed two steals, while Peters claimed seven rebounds.

Jaylen Duberry sank four points, while Jalique Sargeant produced two points and three steals for St. John's Lutheran.

St. John's Lutheran rebounded by pulling off a 13-5 victory against Grace Christian Academy in the first Saturday morning game, which was a rescheduled encounter from a rain-affected match-up at the same venue on Friday.

Jace Sam and Jalique Sargeant each scored four points, while Zadane Wyre collected three steals for St. John's Lutheran. Sheyonne Roberts and Mateo Jallow each scored two points, and Rivaldo Carbon contributed five steals



*Island Academy team*

for Grace Christian Academy.

Grace Christian Academy hit back to prevail 27-20 over St. John's Catholic in a nail-biting encounter in the third game on Saturday.

Aric Adams shot a game-high 16 points and had three rebounds and two steals for Grace Christian Academy.

Darield Perez converted 12 points, while Jasiel Henry's aggressive effort

earned him six points, four rebounds, and four steals for St. John's Catholic.

The inaugural Inter-Private Schools Under-13 Basketball Tournament will conclude at the YMCA on Tuesday, with games starting at 9 am.

The competition is organized by the Youth Basketball Unit of the CPTSA Wings Sports Club.



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## West Indies snatch thrilling draw after epic Greaves double hundred

CHRISTCHURCH (Reuters) - Justin Greaves produced an epic unbeaten 202 in a remarkable fourth innings display to help West Indies thwart an injury-depleted New Zealand attack and snatch a thrilling draw in the opening Test in Christchurch on Saturday.

Chasing an improbable 531, West Indies, who were bundled out for 167 in their first innings, displayed remarkable character to reach 457 for six, the second highest fourth-innings total in Test match history, when players shook hands at Hagley Oval.

Player-of-the-match Greaves led their remarkable fightback, first with a 196-run stand with Shai Hope (140) and then a 180-run partnership for the unbroken seventh wicket with Kemar Roach, who made 58 not out.

“Obviously, a Herculean effort by Justin Greaves,” West Indies captain Roston Chase said.

“He’s someone that I grew up playing cricket with, so I’m very proud for this moment, for him, and obviously for Kemar Roach ... He’s a modern day legend, and I’m happy for these guys, and happy that we could achieve what we did.”

Having set the West Indies a mammoth victory target,



**West Indies' Justin Greaves raises his bat after scoring 200 runs against New Zealand on Day 5 of the first cricket Test match in Christchurch, New Zealand, Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025. (AP)**

New Zealand would have been justified in believing their victory was just a matter of time but they could not get the job done with their thin bowling resources.

Having lost the services of Nathan Smith (side strain) and Matt Henry (calf) through mid-match injuries, they relied heavily on the part-time spin of Michael Bracewell and

Rachin Ravindra but it could not compensate for the absence of two front-line bowlers.

To make things worse, New Zealand ran out of reviews and could not challenge a couple of close calls that went against them on the final day.

After West Indies resumed on 212 for four, New Zealand prised out two wickets in the morning session to

stay in the hunt for a victory.

Jacob Duffy, who bowled 60 overs in the match, ended Hope’s stellar knock when he bounced out the batter, and Zak Foulkes dismissed Tevin Imlach for four.

Greaves and Roach batted resolutely to deny New Zealand any wicket in the second session, and continued their fightback after the tea break.

Greaves looked rock solid while Roach had an eventful stay at the other end, where the lower-order batter survived two dropped catches, one run out chance, and a couple of strong lbw calls. Greaves hit Duffy for a four to bring up his maiden test double hundred.

“It was a Test match that had it all,” New Zealand captain Tom Latham said.

“It was a great test match to be involved in, but unfortunately, we weren’t able to get the breakthroughs that we wanted to put some pressure on that lower order.

“When you have two of your seamers go down during a Test match, it’s never ideal.”

The second Test is scheduled to start in Wellington on Tuesday.

## Old Road, Potters, and Villa win in Premier Division League



*The Starting XI of the Old Road FC*



*The starting XI of the Potters Tigers*

Old Road FC, the Potters Tigers, and the Aston Villa Lions all recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Saturday.

Kevon Lucas struck a hat trick, while Shackwon Simon and Rakeem Joseph each scored twice as Old Road claimed their third win in five matches with an 8-0 drubbing of struggling Sir Molwyn Joseph Jennings United in the first game of a triple-header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Lucas had conversions

in the 11th, 24th, and 45th minutes; Simon scored in the fourth and 28th minutes; and Rakeem Joseph converted his goals in the 42nd and 73rd minutes. Gisser Joseph scored the other goal for Old Road in the 77th minute.

The result carries Old Road FC to 10 points, while Jennings United remains without any points after suffering their sixth defeat in as many games.

The Potters Tigers claimed their second win in six matches by snatching a one-nil victory against the Pigotts Bullets in Saturday's

second game.

Keon Greene scored the only goal of the match in the 12th minute for the Potters Tigers, who advanced to seven points. The Pigotts Bullets remain on nine points after slumping to their second loss in five matches.

Kwame "Munchie" Kirby and Orel Edwards each scored twice as the Villa Lions notched up their fourth win in five matches by surging to a 5-1 victory against Green City FC in Saturday's third encounter.

Kirby scored in the 17th minute and the first

minute of added time in the first half, while Edwards had conversions in the 70th and 83rd minutes.

Forward Eroy Gonsalves converted the other goal for the Villa Lions with a strike in the 77th minute. Tev Lawrence scored a consolation goal in the 39th minute for Green City FC.

The result allows the Villa Lions to move on to 12 points, while Green City FC remains on seven points after crashing to their third defeat in six matches.