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Minister Maria Browne calls out opposition for 'laziness and lies'

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A defiant Minister Maria Browne took on the opposition for making her a target over the past few months

Local News



Minister Maria Browne calls out opposition for 'laziness and lies'



Minister of Housing and Works, Maria Browne

A defiant Minister of Housing and Works, Maria Browne, called out the leader of the Opposition in parliament on Monday for what she described as both his and his party's campaign over the past several weeks/months aimed at besmirching her name and her character.

In her contributions to the debate on the 2026, Minister Browne was critical of the opposition leader's contributions to the debate, noting that it was time 'to raise the level of debate' in the parliament. She said the opposition leader's contribution was a rehashing of past debates and that it lacked

vision, a plan of action and thus was simply 'tiring'.

Turning to a topical issue of today, Minister Browne noted that in recent weeks, she had become the target of attacks from opposition sources over the vehicle procurement issue.

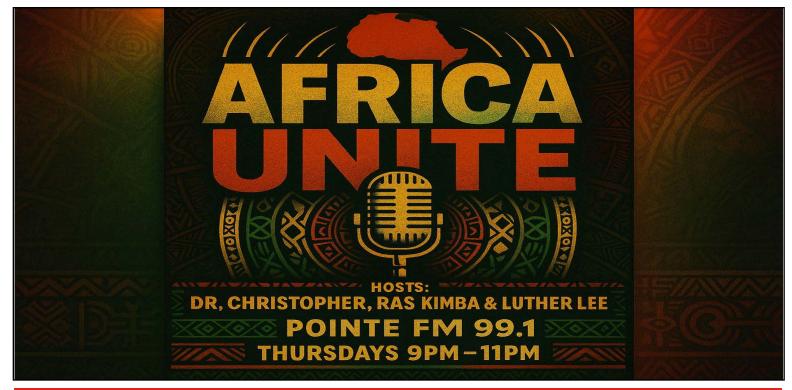
"His (the opposition leader) presentation was all over the place, but I wish to address some of his lies today. Mr. Speaker, he spoke about this vehicle scandal and I was waiting for it today because over and over again, over the past several months, the leader of the opposition, his colleagues on that side and his friends on the outside have been spewing a lot of lies about me. Mr. Speaker, it was I who saw the vehicles. It was I who asked about the vehicles. It was I who asked in October 2023 for a centralized approach for the procurement of vehicles. How could it be then that I would have interest outside of the policy," she queried.

She stated that she saw the vehicles, asked questions and got answers that led to corrective actions by the government.

According to Minister Browne, the vehicles were recorded by the Ministry of Works and sent back to the dealers because they were previously informed by letters not to accept the sale of vehicles without supporting documentation of a Cabinet decision.

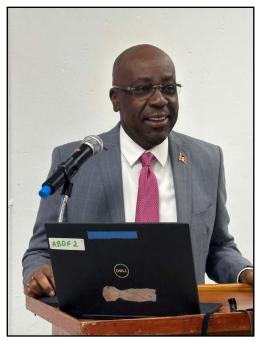
"They (the dealers) took them back and this has not resulted in a cost to the people of Antigua and Barbuda," She declared.

The Works Minister also accused the opposition of leading the people of Antigua and Barbuda 'down the wrong road' with the vehicle situation.





FA Minister Greene: The size and level of guests expected for CHOGM underscores the importance of security



Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene

Antigua and Barbuda's hosting of next year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), will certainly be the biggest and perhaps the most important event of its kind ever to be held in the country.

That's the view of Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene in brief remarks at the opening of a two-week security training session for individuals involved in the planning of the event that is taking place at Camp Blizzard, headquarters of the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force.

Greene said the size of the delegations and the level of guests will be the first time that Antigua and Barbuda will have in a single space several monarchs, presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers and other high level guests all at the same time.

This in his view places greater emphasis on the significance that security should be fully incorporated in all aspects of the planning from the initial stages.

"Some may wonder why we talking so much about security as it relates to next year's CHOGM; it is simple; it is the single largest gathering that



Canadian facilitator Clayton Purvis



Ambassador Dr. Clarence Pilgrim



we will be hosting in our history. The level of dignitaries we have never had before in a single space and given to-day's global realities, security is certainly a major feature in any meeting of this nature," he remarked.

The minister expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Government of Canada for agreeing to assist with the security training by providing the personnel who are conducting the sessions.

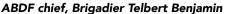
Minister Greene also noted that that

the training is focusing on operational planning which forms a common thread through finance, entertainment accommodation and related areas, into one grand operation intended to make Antigua and Barbuda proud and to project the country to the world in a positive light.

Commenting on the training programme, Head of the National CHOGM Task Force, Ambassador Dr. Clarence Pilgrim welcomed the sessions as critical to the successful host-











Captain Travis Pennyfeather

ing of next year's event.

"This critical Operational Planning Seminar is an important pathway towards advancing preparations for the upcoming CHOGM. The programme before us over the next several days is deliberately structured to sharpen our national readiness—from leadership orientation, to detailed intelligence preparation, to the refinement of our operational framework.

"The seminar brings together the expertise we need to ensure that every pillar of CHOGM 2026 is executed



to the highest international standard. I encourage each participant to fully engage in the exercises, discussions, and planning sessions outlined in the timetable. The quality of our collective input over the coming days will directly shape the strength of our national posture for this major global event," Dr. Pilgrim stated.

ABDF chief, Brigadier Telbert Benjamin also addressed the need for all the various sub-committees to work together as a single unit in both the planning and the execution of those plans.

"Synchronization is what I am looking for at these sessions; how well we are able to bring our various parts together to work as a team," he indicated.

Captain Travis Pennyfeather of the ABDF is the lead local coordinator of the training session, with the facilitator provided by the Canadian government, Clayton Purvis along with several members of the Canadian Armed Forces lead by Lt Col Paul Simpson, the Canadian Lead CHOGM Planner.





Celebrating the Life of Father of the Nation: Sir Vere Cornwall Bird





The nation of Antigua and Barbuda will take time out to celebrate he Life and Times of the Father of the Nation, Sir Vere Cornwall Bird, today, December 9, the anniversary of his birth. It is a national public holiday.

As is customary, there will be a wreath-laying ceremony at the Bust of Sir VC Bird on Lower All Saints Road with participation from members of the government, a representative of the Bird Family, the Antigua Trades and Labour Union, members of the Diplomatic Corps all participating.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne will deliver the feature address during which he is expected to extol the virtues of the Father of the





Father and the dynamic manner in which he led the country from squalor and hardship to a progressive society and political Independence.

Sir Vere's grandson, Sean Bird, will speak on behalf of the family, while President of the AT&LU, Bernard de Nully will speak on behalf of the union.

Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, E.P Chet Greene will also address the gathering along with Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Carmen Velasquez, the Ambassador of Venezuela to Antigua and Barbuda. Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams will lead the wreath laying portion of the ceremony followed by Prime Minister Browne and then members of the Cabinet, including senior statesman, Sir Robin Yearwood.



Local News



Everton Jeffers Confirmed as Commissioner of Police

Everton Jeffers has been officially confirmed as Commissioner of Police of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda.

His appointment took effect on November 21, 2025. Commissioner Jeffers, who had been serving in an acting capacity, succeeds Retired Commissioner Atlee Rodney, who proceeded on retirement earlier this year. Rodney, who now serves as Deputy Director of the Regional Security System (RSS), was appointed Commissioner of Police on November 25, 2019. He dedicated over forty years of distinguished service to the organization, including six years as Commissioner of Police.

Commissioner Jeffers, the 11th person to be appointed Commissioner of Police, also brings over four decades of experience within the Force. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated unwavering commitment, professionalism, and dedication to national security and public service.

In accepting his appointment, Commissioner Jeffers stated, "I am truly humbled to be given this task to lead this noble organization, and I can assure the people of this nation that I am committed to continue giving my best service to the nation of Antigua and Barbuda."

He extended heartfelt thanks to his family, colleagues, friends, and well-wishers for their continued support during his tenure as Acting Commissioner. He also expressed deep appreciation to Retired Commissioner Rodney for his exemplary service to the nation and wished him every success in his new regional role.

Following Commissioner Jeffers' appointment, Superintendent Louisa Benjamin Quashie was elevated to the rank of Deputy Commissioner of Police, effective November 21, 2025. Additional senior officers were also promoted as part of the organizational adjustments accompanying these leadership appointments.



Commissioner of Police Everton Jeffers

The Police Administration congratulates Commissioner Jeffers, Deputy Commissioner Benjamin Quashie, and all newly promoted officers, and extends best wishes as they assume their new responsibilities in service to Antigua and Barbuda.





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Local News



ABAA enforces ground transportation regulations at VC Bird International Airport



In keeping with its commitment to passenger safety and consumer protection within the ground transportation operations at V. C. Bird International Airport, please be advised that, effective December 1st, 2025, all unauthorized vehicles for hire are prohibited from collecting passengers at the Airport.

This enforcement applies exclusively to vehicles operating for hire, including, but not limited to, taxis, limousines, shuttles, and rental cars. Meeters and greeters collecting friends, family members, or known business associates may continue to do so without restriction.

Please note that Airbnb hosts and similar accommodation operators are not authorized to pick up guests at V. C. Bird International Airport.

All taxis, limousines, shuttles, rental car agencies, and any other transportation services operating for hire must be authorized by the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority (ABAA) to



ensure the safety and protection of our passengers and guests. Passenger drop-off remains permitted for all vehicles, and hotels registered and approved through the ABAA Fast Track Program may continue to collect their arriving guests.

Currently, V. C. Bird International Airport is served by a robust network of transportation providers authorized to accommodate the nearly 500,000 guests who arrive each year. These include 70 taxis, 19 car rental agencies, 9 tour operators, and 3 limousine companies.

A limited number of additional permits may be issued on a first-come, first-served basis. Interested applicants are encouraged to contact Ms. Geneva George at gh. george@abairportauthority. com or 268-484-2303 for further information. Please note that successful applicants must satisfy several requirements, including background checks, minimum vehicle-condition standards, recurring customer-service training, and strict adherence to established fares.





Chinese university seeks closer ties with the Five Islands Campus of the University of the West Indies



The delegation from the Center for Caribbean Studies at Hangzhou Normal University that is visiting Antigua and Barbuda has held formal discussions with the Principal of the UWI FIC, Prof. C Justin Robinson.

Led by Professor Zhang Xingwei, Director of Hangzhou Normal University Affiliated Hospital, Dean of the School of Clinical Medicine, and renowned cardiovascular specialist, visited the UWI FIC when both sides held in-depth exchanges on higher education cooperation, talent development, and joint academic initiatives.

During the meeting, the delegation first introduced the profile of Hangzhou

Normal University and the Center for Caribbean Studies. As one of China's leading platforms dedicated to Caribbean studies, the Center has published multiple academic works, developed a Caribbean studies large language model, and carried out interdisciplinary research across the humanities, education, and healthcare. The delegation expressed the hope to build on existing foundations to further expand multi-level cooperation in student and faculty exchanges, joint research, and collaborative training programs.

Principal Robinson warmly welcomed the delegation and introduced the development orientation and disciplinary strengths of UWI Five Islands Campus. He highlighted the university's experience in training professionals in nursing, pharmacy, and teacher education, and noted that the campus is currently undertaking an expansion project, presenting promising prospects for future cooperation.

Robinson emphasized UWI's strong commitment to developing partnerships with China, welcomed more Chinese scholars to visit and engage in academic exchange, and expressed hopes to advance curriculum co-development, student mobility, and collaborative research with Hangzhou Normal University.



Local News



Three Antigua and Barbuda trade unionists elected to senior positions within the CCL

Three Antigua and Barbuda trade unionists have been elected to senior positions within the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) at its just concluded meeting in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Antigua & Barbuda Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU) President, Bernard de Nully and General Secretary of the Antigua and Barbuda Public Service Association, Janela Evanson, have been elected to the General Council of the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL). President of the Antigua and Barbuda Workers Union, Kem Riley was elected as CCL's 3rd Vice President. The General Council serves as an advisory body to the CCL's executive committee.

De Nully says this election marks a significant milestone for the AT&LU, following a prolonged hiatus from regional representation at CCL. It is also seen as an attempt by the union to enhance and extend its influence on the regional stage.

The Caribbean Congress of Labour Conference featured President de Nully as a panel speaker, emphasizing the AT&LU's commitment to upholding global labour standards and practices. His participation underscored the vital role that worker organizations play in shaping policies and addressing key issues within the Caribbean labour landscape, consistent with the principles set forth by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The AT&LU delegation which included 1st Vice President Lisa-Ann Yearwood, and Executive Member Jaquis Browne. For the ABWU, along with President Riley the other members of the delegation comprised executive member Chenice Lewis and young worker representative, Joshua Pigott. Evanson was the sole representative of the ABPSA at the meeting.







Local News



Dequan George pleads guilty to multiple firearms and ammunition charges

Dequan George of Sutherlands who police found with a cache of arms and ammunition at his home during the execution of a search warrant on July 31, 2025, has pleaded guilty to the charges in the magistrate's court.

During the search, the police found that George had in his possession several firearms magazines — three Smith and Wesson magazines; one AK 47 magazine; one Glock magazine; and one Sigsauer magazine.

In addition, George was found with a .22 firearm without any serial number. He also had a total of



140 rounds of ammunition for a variety of weapons. These include twenty-three .45 rounds; thirty-six 7.62 mm rounds; seventeen .25

mm rounds; eighteen .44 mm rounds; eight .38 mm rounds; seven .9 mm rounds; twenty .223 mm rounds and eleven shotgun cartridges.

The police arrested and charged George for having in his possession these firearms and ammunition without being the holder of a firearms user's licence contrary to Section 6(1) of the Firearms Act (Chapter 171) of the Revised Laws of Antigua and Barbuda.

George pleaded guilty to the charges and the magistrate has ordered that the case should be brought to the High Court for sentencing on the basis that he had several rounds of ammunition. This decision is based on the provisions of the recent amendments to the Firearms Act.

Five persons who were in the country illegally have been ordered to be removed from the state

Five persons who overstayed their time in the country in contravention of the Immigration and Passport Act, have been ordered by a magistrate to be removed from the state.

The all appeared before the magistrate on Monday to answer the charge of overstaying their time in the country. The all pleaded guilty to the charge.

The Immigration department sought the removal order which was granted by the magistrate. The five individuals will remain in the country until the first available flights back to their



native country. They will be detained at the immigration detention center pending their departure.

The five are Cornelius Thomas – 39-

year old Trinidadian - assistant manager of Boardroom Club living on Nevis Street; Marcel Parker – 34-year old Jamaican – self-employed contractor - Perry Bay; Kizzy Johnson – 36-year old Jamaican. St. John's Street – cosmetologist; Javon Keroy Watson – 28-year old Jamaican – self-employed as carpenter of Bendals and Luckicy Andra McDermott – 34-year old Jamaican - barber living in Yorks Village All five were guilty of remaining in the country even after their time had expired.

Suspect in Police Custody for Building Breaking and Larceny

Police have arrested Koeci Francis of Swetes, following a building breaking and larceny at the Oriental Choice Supermarket located on Lower All Saints Road.

Around 10:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 7, police of-

ficers responded to a report of a breaking in progress, which had triggered the supermarket's security alarm.

Upon arrival at the scene, police met Francis inside the building with a bag containing a quantity of groceries, a cellphone, and an undisclosed sum of money.

The items were seized and Francis was taken into custody at the St. John's Police Station for further investigation. Investigations into the incident remain ongoing.

The Police Administration continues to urge the public to report suspicious activities by contacting the Criminal Investigations Department at 462-3913 or Crimestoppers at 800-TIPS (8477).











ANNUAL WINTER CHESS TOURNAMENT



28

DECEMBER 2025

CATAMARAN HOTEL

FALMOUTH HARBOUR

9AM TO 5PM



SCAN TO REGISTER

or

REGISTRATION FORM

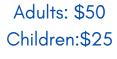




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9th December

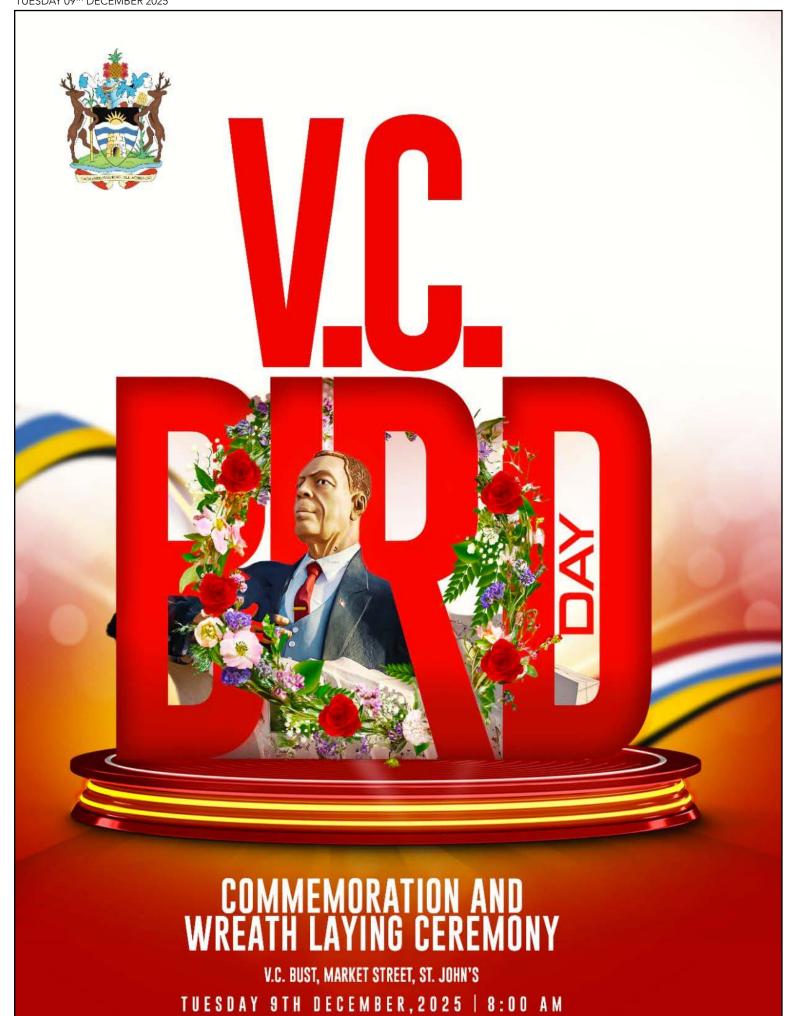
HAPPYBIRTHDAY



ARLENY GARCIA EMANUEL

May your birthday be as amazing as you are. Have a great one!





Regional News



Grenada: Neilon Franklyn poisoned with ethylene glycol



Ethylene glycol.

That is the substance that was found by renowned regional Pathologist Professor Hubert Daisley in the body of late opposition Senator Neilon Franklyn who died at the General Hospital on August 24 amidst national outpouring of grief and sorrow.

Well-placed sources told THE NEW TODAY that the Trinidad-based Daisley submitted his findings several weeks ago and a copy was made available to the Royal Grenada Police Force (RGPF) to open a possible murder investigation into the Franklyn case. Ethylene glycol is a toxic that has been described as a sweet-tasting liquid primarily used as an automo-

tive antifreeze and coolant.

it is highly poisonous if ingested by humans or animals and can cause serious health issues, including kidney failure."

The initial autopsy done by Professor Daisley only reached a preliminary conclusion that Franklyn died from anti-freeze poisoning.

However, due to the lack of facilities on the island, Professor Daisley took samples from the body to a Laboratory in Port-of-Spain to determine the exact substance that was used to cause the death of the young Customs Officer.

According to a source who reached the rank of Superintendent of Police in RGPF, after Daisley hand-

ed in his finding, the Police requested him not to divulge it to anyone based on "certain investigation they were carrying out" into the death of the ex-Senator.

He said the death of the ex-public officer calls for "real police investigation" to get at the bottom of the matter.

He pointed out that the police investigators assigned to the case will first need to find out who is importing the substance in the country and whether that type of anti-freeze is common in Grenada.

Sources told THE NEW TODAY that when the ex-Senator was brought to the hospital there were already signs that some of his vital organs were failing

The retired police Superintendent pointed out that a proper probe into the death of Franklyn would also help the police find out "if those drinks (consumed by Franklyn) were pirated drinks" made in places like some countries in the Fareast.

"Could that have been one of them? All those things you have to look at. What drink he was drinking – I know it has pirate drinks like that but did it come into Grenada? Did they take it in drinks that they (seize from) them people (importing) drinks on the port? All these things you have to look at. Those are the questions that have to be asked.

According to the retired ace crime fighter, the investigating CID team needs to pay particular attention to "the friends, and associates" of Franklyn and find out "whether these people have the contacts and wherewithal (to get that material or chemical."

He wondered whether the Police investigators are looking in that direction and have already checked out those things as part of their probe into the Franklyn case.

Regional News



Jamaica welcomes new WestJet route From Québec City to Montego Bay



WestJet touches down on Saturday December 6, 2025, from Québec to Montego Bay as part of the airlines newest route to Jamaica.

By Sheri-kae McLeod

Jamaica's tourism sector marked another step in its post—Hurricane Melissa recovery on Saturday with the launch of WestJet's new direct flight from Québec City to Montego Bay. The weekly service, which began December 6, is being welcomed as both an expansion of Canada—Jamaica connectivity and a signal of renewed confidence in the island's resilience.

Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett said the route's debut comes at a pivotal time for the sector, which has been working to restore key infrastructure and maintain visitor confidence following the Category Five hurricane's impact on western Jamaica.

"The arrival of this new route from Québec City is more than just an expansion of airlift—it is a testament to Jamaica's unwavering spirit and determination to emerge stronger from disruption," Bartlett said. "Even as we continue to rebuild and restore our tourism infrastructure following Hurricane Melissa, the confidence shown by WestJet and the Canadian market reinforces that Jamaica remains the Caribbean's premier destination."

The Québec-Montego Bay connection supports Jamaica's target of attracting 600,000 Canadian visitors annually and generating US\$750 million in tourism earnings by 2030. Bartlett highlighted the growth potential of the French-speaking market, noting that the direct link positions Jamaica to offer more immersive cultural and leisure experiences to Québec travellers.

"Canada has always been a vital partner in Jamaica's tourism success, and this new route from Québec City demonstrates the strong ties between our nations," he said. "This French market represents tremendous opportunity for growth, and we are committed to providing Québec travellers with authentic Jamaican experiences that will create lasting memories."

Tourism officials say that beyond visitor arrivals, the new service will help drive trade, employment and cultural exchange. "This route will not only bring more visitors to Jamaica but will also facilitate trade, strengthen people-to-people connections, and create employment opportunities for Jamaicans," Bartlett noted. "Tourism is the engine of our economy, and every new flight represents jobs, livelihoods, and hope for our people."

WestJet's launch follows the carrier's integration of Sunwing's network as part of its expanded winter 2025–2026 schedule for Québec. The weekly service offers travellers easy access to Montego Bay's resort corridor and the island's beaches, culture and hospitality.

"Hurricane Melissa tested us, but it did not break us. The arrival of this new WestJet service is proof that Jamaica is ready to welcome visitors to its shores," said Donovan White, Director of Tourism.

Angella Bennett, Regional Director for Canada, added that the partner-ship with WestJet and Sunwing underscores Jamaica's ongoing recovery efforts. "We are humbled that our partners, WestJet and Sunwing, remain confident in Jamaica's ability to build back, and this reinforces the fact that Jamaica is open for business, and we are ready to welcome our Canadian visitors," she said.

Regional News



MUO confirms Miss Jamaica sustained brain bleed, fracture in stage accident

The Miss Universe Organization (MUO) has issued a new statement on the condition of Miss Jamaica, Dr. Gabrielle Henry, who was seriously injured after falling through an opening on the stage during the preliminary evening gown segment of the Miss Universe competition on Nov. 19.

The update—released on behalf of MUO and Henry's family—aims to clarify her current status after days of speculation. Earlier, MUO, the Miss Universe Jamaica Organization and Henry's sister confirmed that she had been hospitalized in the intensive care unit in Bangkok following the fall.

According to Monday's release, "Dr. Henry suffered a serious fall through an opening on the stage while performing her walk during the preliminary competition on November 19, 2025, resulting in an intracranial hemorrhage with loss of consciousness, a fracture, facial lacerations and other significant injuries."

The statement added: "She was immediately admitted to intensive care in Bangkok, where she remained in critical condition under constant neurological monitoring, and continues to require 24-hour specialist supervision."

An intracranial hemorrhage is a type of bleeding inside the skull and is considered a serious medical emergency, which is why Henry was placed under constant neurological monitoring in the ICU.



Henry is expected to return to Jamaica "in the coming days," where she will arrive with a full medical escort and be transferred directly to a hospital for ongoing care.

MUO also said it has cov-Henry's "hospital, ered medical, and rehabilitation expenses" during her time in Thailand, and provided support for her mother and sister's "accommodation and living costs." The organization added that it is funding her medically escorted repatriation flight and has "committed to covering all future medical expenses arising from this incident."

continued: The release "From the time the incident took place, the Miss Universe Organization has stood beside Gabrielle and her family as if she were their own, assuming full and immediate responsibility without hesitation. The Henry family is deeply grateful to the Miss Universe Organization for their unwavering compassion, presence, and love shown. Their response so far has

gone beyond professional responsibility and reflected devotion and protection of the family."

MUO also addressed rumors circulating online about the cause of the accident, rejecting claims that Henry contributed to the fall. "The Miss Universe Organization has never attributed blame to Dr Henry and confirms that those suggestions are unfounded and do not reflect the facts," the statement said.

Fresh Ride Bright Vibe - Digital Ad 728x90 V1 Henry's return home will mark the start of a long recovery process, but her family, supporters and the Miss Universe community continue to rally around her as she begins the next phase of treatment.

NOTICE

TO: Your Worship
St. Johns Magistrate Court
High Street
St.Johns
Antigua

TO: The Commissioner of Police Police Headquarters American Road St. John's Antigua

Dear Sir/Madame, Re: Notice - Application for Tavern License

I. Jenniffer Roman Adams of Jennings Village, with registered business situated at Edward Street Lower All Saints Road St. John's Antigua and Barbuda DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the liquor licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court. High Street, St. John's,'Antigua on Monday 5th January,' 2026 next ensuring for a Tavern License Pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (intoxication Liquor) Act Cap. 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as "Rencon Cubana Bar & Restaurant" situated at Edward Street Lower All Saints Road in the parish of St.John's Antigua and Barbuda.

Dated the 4th day of December. 2025 Tel # 784-0607



Internationa

PAGE 2

Critical moment to ramp up support for **Ukraine, European allies say**

European leaders have said "now is a critical moment" to ramp up support for Ukraine and put pressure on Russia to bring an end to the war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in London on Monday to discuss the latest version of a peace plan, drafted between Ukrainian and US officials last week.

The European leaders said more work was needed to obtain security guarantees for Ukraine, as the US puts pressure on Kyiv to agree a swift deal with Russia.

Zelensky, who travelled on to Brussels to meet Nato officials, said that Ukraine would share a revised plan with the US on Tuesday.

Last week, Ukrainian officials spent three days with the US negotiating team in Florida pushing for changes to a US-backed peace proposal which has been widely considered favourable to Russia.

Answering questions from journalists after Monday's meeting in London, Zelensky said that the "most certainly anti-Ukrainian points have been removed" from the initial deal proposed in November.

But the Ukrainian president acknowledged that there were some outstanding concerns about ceding territory and a compromise had "not yet been found there".

European leaders walk tightrope between backing Ukraine and keeping US on board

The US has proposed that Ukraine pulls its forces entirely out of eastern regions which Russia has attempted to take by force, but has been unable to capture in full. In return, the US says Russia would withdraw elsewhere and there would be a cessation of fighting. But this is an unpalatable option for Zelensky, who refuses to reward Mos-



The fate of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (pictured in August 2022) is a sticking point in negotiations to end the war, a US official said

cow for its aggression and who has repeatedly warned that Russia would use launch future assaults on Ukraine.

any foothold in the eastern regions to



International



"Americans are inclined, in principle, to finding a compromise," Zelensky said on Monday.

He added that the issue of security guarantees - which Ukraine wants to ensure Russia would be deterred from carrying out future attacks in the event of a peace deal - had yet to be resolved. A spokesperson for the UK prime minister's office said: "The leaders all agreed that now is a critical moment and that we must continue to ramp up support to Ukraine and economic pressure on Putin to bring an end to this barbaric war.

"The leaders discussed the importance of the US-led peace talks for European security and supported the progress made," the statement said.

Leaders also "underscored the need for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, which includes robust security guarantees", it added.

Ahead of the talks he hosted at Downing Street, Starmer said there needed to be "hard-edged security guarantees" in a peace deal for Ukraine.

Merz stated he was "sceptical" about some of the details of the potential plan coming from the US side. "But we have to talk about it. That's why we are here," he added.

Following the meeting, France said work would be "intensified" to provide security guarantees for Ukraine.

There is nervousness in Kyiv and across Europe that the US could end its support of Ukraine over frustration with the slow progress of negotiations. "We can't manage without Americans, we can't manage without Europe and that is why we need to make some important decisions," Zelensky said in London.

Although the White House has been pushing Kyiv and Moscow to swiftly agree to a multi-point plan to end the war, there has been little sign of a breakthrough.

A five-hour meeting between US envoy Steve Witkoff and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow last week failed to yield tangible results.

Those talks were followed by three days of discussions between Zelen-

sky's chief negotiator Rustem Umerov and his US counterparts in Miami, which resulted in vague but positive statements of "progress" from both sides

However, on Sunday Trump accused Zelensky of not having read the draft of the revised deal.

"I'm a little disappointed that President Zelensky hasn't yet read the proposal," he said, while insisting Russia's Vladimir Putin was "fine with it". Almost simultaneously, Zelensky stated that he expected to be briefed on the negotiations by Umerov either in London or Brussels on Monday. "Some issues can only be discussed in person," he said.

The talks in London were the latest attempt by Ukraine's European allies to carve out a role in the US-led efforts to end the war, which they fear will undercut the long-term interests of the continent in favour of a quick resolution.

Despite significant economic pressure and sustained battlefield losses, the Kremlin has shown little sign that it is willing to compromise on its key demands, including ruling out any future path to Ukraine joining the Nato military alliance.

Last week, Putin also restated his willingness to continue fighting until his forces take full control of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, 85% of which is currently occupied by the Russian army.

Reuters A serviceman with a Russian flag on his uniform stands guard near the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. Reuters

The fate of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (pictured in August 2022) is a sticking point in negotiations to end the war, a US official said

As talks in the US and Europe continue, so does the war.

Between Sunday and Monday a total of 10 people were killed and 47 were injured as Russian forces attacked nine regions using drones, glide bombs and missiles.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022. Since then, thousands of civilians and soldiers have been killed or injured, with Ukraine's cities continuing to come under fire on an near-nightly basis.





International

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Hunt under way for Benin coup plotters as two hostages reportedly freed



Two senior military officials taken hostage during Sunday's attempted coup in Benin have been freed, a government source has told the BBC.

It remains unclear how they were released or if other hostages are still being held.

Security forces are continuing a manhunt for those involved in the plot, who remain at large.

A group of soldiers appeared on state TV early in the morning to announce they had taken over in the West African country, and gunfire was heard near the presidential residence.

However, President Patrice Talon later announced that the situation was "totally under control".

Regional power Nigeria assisted in thwarting the mutiny, saying its fighter jets had helped "dislodge the coup plotters from the National TV and a military camp" following a request from Benin's government.

On Sunday afternoon, huge explosions were heard in Cotonou, Benin's largest city and seat of government. They were thought to have been the result of an air strike.

Prior to the explosions, flight-tracking data showed that three aircraft had entered Benin's airspace from neighbouring Nigeria before returning home.

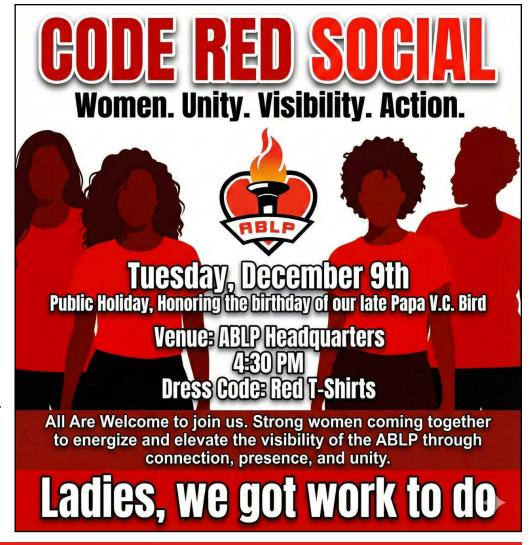
The extent of the damage is not clear. Earlier on Sunday, Benin government spokesperson Wilfried Leandre Houngbedji told the Reuters news agency that 14 people had been arrested in connection with the attempted coup.

A journalist in Benin also told the BBC that of those reportedly arrested 12 are believed to have stormed the offices of the national TV station - including a soldier who had previously been sacked.

The coup plotters said they were led by Lt Col Pascal Tigri, whose whereabouts are unknown.

In Sunday evening's national address, the 67-year-old president said that loyalist forces had "cleared the last pockets of resistance held by the mutineers".

"This commitment and mobilisation enabled us to defeat these opportunists and avert disaster for our country. This



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treachery will not go unpunished," he added.

"I would like to reassure you that the situation is completely under control and therefore invite you to go about your business peacefully."

It is not clear if there have been any casualties, but the president expressed his condolences "to the victims of this senseless adventure, as well as to those still being held by fleeing mutineers". The West African regional bloc, Ecowas, has also deployed troops from Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast to secure key installations and prevent any resurgence of the violence. Under intense pressure after a string of successful coups in the region, Ecowas is signalling that it is no longer willing to watch democratically elected governments fall without resistance.

Benin, a former French colony, has been regarded as one of Africa's more stable democracies.

The nation is one of the continent's largest cotton producers, but ranks among the world's poorest countries. Nigeria, Benin's large neighbour to the

east, has described the coup attempt as a "direct assault on democracy".

The rebel soldiers justified their actions by criticising Talon's management of the country, complaining first about his handling of the "continuing deterioration of the security situation in northern Benin".

Benin's army has suffered losses near its northern border with insurgency-hit Niger and Burkina Faso in recent years, as jihadist militants linked to Islamic State and al-Qaeda spread southwards.

The soldiers' statement cited "the ignorance and neglect of the situation of our brothers in arms who have fallen at the front and, above all, that of their families, abandoned to their sad fate by Mr Patrice Talon's policies".

The rebels also hit out at cuts in health care, including the cancellation of state-funded kidney dialysis, and taxes rises, as well as curbs on political activities.

Talon, who is regarded as a close ally of the West, is due to step down next year after completing his second term in office, with elections scheduled for April.

A businessman known as the "king of cotton", he first came to power in 2016. He has endorsed Finance Minister Romuald Wadagni as his successor. Talon has been praised by his supporters for overseeing economic development, but his government has also been criticised for suppressing dissenting voices.

In October, Benin's electoral commission barred the main opposition candidate from standing on the grounds that he did not have enough sponsors.

Last month, constitutional amendments were passed by MPs, including the creation of a second parliamentary chamber, the Senate.

Terms for elected officials were extended from five to seven years, but

the presidential two-term limit remained in place.

Sunday's attempted coup comes just over a week after Guinea-Bissau's President Umaro Sissoco Embaló was overthrown - though some regional figures have questioned whether this was staged.

In recent years, West Africa has also seen coups in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Niger, prompting concerns about the region's stability.

Russia has strengthened its ties with these Sahel countries over recent years - and Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have left the West African regional bloc Ecowas to form their own group, the Alliance of Sahel States.

News of the attempted takeover in Benin was hailed by several pro-Russian social media accounts, according to BBC Monitoring.

Ecowas and the African Union (AU) both condemned the coup attempt.





Sports News



Young Lions remain unbeaten in Second Division

The Young Lions of Old Road maintained their unbeaten start to their campaign in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division during the latest round of matches.

The Young Lions enjoyed a goal feast as they notched up their third win in four matches with a 9-0 drubbing of the Liberta Blackhawks at the Old Road playing field.

Deante Anthony achieved a hat trick, and Zavier Joseph scored twice. Anthony had conversions in the 16th, 30th, and 32nd minutes, while Joseph converted a penalty kick in the 11th minute and produced a 38th-minute conversion.

The other goals for the Young Lions were scored by Demarques Douglas in

the fourth minute, Geraldo Browne in the 34th, Stefan Smith in the 68th, and Calique Simon in the 79th minute.

The Liberta Blackhawks finished the match with 10 men after Brent Joseph received a red card and was expelled in the 81st minute.

The result allows the Young Lions to advance to 10 points, while the Liberta Blackhawks remained on one point after suffering their third defeat in four matches.

Real Blizzard and Police both kept their unbeaten run intact by battling to a 1-1 draw at the New Winthorpes playing field. Kelton Dalso scored for Real Blizzard.

Both teams advanced to eight points apiece after recording their second draw in four matches.

There was also no winner in the match between the Urlings Golden Stars and the North Coast Academy Juniors, who played to a goalless draw at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

The result allows the Urlings Golden Stars to advance to four points after securing their first draw in three matches. The North Coast Academy Juniors also moved on to four points after salvaging their first draw in four matches.

There was no play in the match between Point West Ham FC and Glanvilles FC due to an unprepared field at Radio Range in Ottos.

Glanvilles FC has three points from three matches, while Point West Ham FC has one point from three games.



Sports News



Another defeat for TG Welding in Mandy Premier League

Buck and Sons Landscaping Services sent TG Welding to their second defeat in the current Mandy Premier League (MPL), Cool and Smooth, and Sherma Jackson Business Softball Cricket League.

Buck and Sons Landscaping Services notched up their fifth win in six matches with a nine-wicket victory over TG Welding, who was beaten for the first time in two years in a nine-run defeat to the Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force (ABDF) in this year's competition.

TG Welding was dismissed for 120 off their 10 overs. Deran Benta hit 41, Essan Warner struck 21, Richie Thomas made 20, and Demari Benta scored 15. Andra Samuel claimed two for 13, Kimani George picked up two for 20, and Charanlall Ramjohn captured two for 21.

Buck and Sons Landscaping Services achieved victory by scoring 121 for one with 10 balls to spare. Male player of the game Steve Martin slammed 71, and Melvin Charles hit 26 not out. Visual Gobin took one for 25.

Buck and Sons Landscaping Services recorded their sixth win in seven matches with a seven-wicket victory against the Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force (ABDF).



Kimberly Anthony, left, and Charanlall Ramjohn of Buck and Sons Landscaping Services.

The Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force crashed to 33 all out, which included six bonus runs.

Female player of the game Kimberly Anthony snapped up four wickets for one run, Rodney Williams grabbed three wickets for nine runs, Andra Samuel claimed two wickets for nine runs, and male player of the game Charanlall Ramjohn picked up a wicket for one run.

Buck and Sons Landscaping Services wrapped up victory by scoring 34 for four in six overs. Charanlall Ramjohn hit 17 not out. Shaquan Reifer grabbed three wickets for two runs, and Julio Charles picked up a wicket for nine runs for the ABDF, who suffered their second loss in five matches. TG Welding claimed their sixth wire in account match.

sixth win in seven matches by coasting to a 104-run victory against PEL Workers. TG Welding made 139 for three off their 10 overs.

Male player of the match Deran Benta hammered 95, including seven sixes and seven fours. Melique Jacobs and Demari Benta each made 12, while Brian Bailey captured one for 17.

In reply, PEL Workers were restricted to 35 for six off their 10 overs. Federick Floyd scored 18. Female player of the game Ann Anthony claimed two wickets for two runs.

Hughan Tonge bagged two wickets for four runs, Demari Benta picked up a wicket for seven runs, and Visual Gobin captured two for 17 as PEL Workers tumbled to their fifth defeat in as many matches.

Construction Solutions claimed their second win in six matches with a nine-wicket victory against Long Island Lightning, who suffered their fifth loss in as many games.

Long Island Lightning were restricted to 101 for three off their 10 overs. Malique Walsh hit 38, and Delon Frederick struck 33 not out. Male player of the game Clarence Francis captured two for 37, and Treverson Attley captured one for 12.

Construction Solutions achieved victory by scoring 102 for one in 7.2 overs. Clarence Francis slammed 61, Veston Lewis made 17, and Adrian Abbott scored 11. James Mackie claimed one wicket for six runs



Sports News



APUA Telecom re-captures Business Football League title



APUA Telecoms team celebrate with their trophies after winning the JOMA Caribbean Ministry of Sports Business Football League Championship at the Antigua Recreation Ground on Saturday, December 6, 2025. (Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Sports)

APUA Telecoms have recaptured the title by winning the 2025 JOMA Caribbean Ministry of Sports Business Football League Championship.

APUA Telecoms, who last won the competition in 2023, reclaimed title honours by coasting to a 3-0 victory against the Ministry of Agriculture in the final at the Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) on Saturday night.

Rakeem Joseph scored twice, and Swayne Thomas converted the other goal for APUA Telecoms.

It is the second consecutive year in which the Ministry of Agriculture has suffered heartache by finishing in the runners-up position, having lost to Hermitage Bay Strikers in the final in 2024.

Although relinquishing their title, the Hermitage Bay Strikers captured the bronze medals by pulling off a 2-0 victory against the Postal Services in the playoff for third place.

Roy Gregory and Troy Jules each scored once for the Hermitage Bay Strikers.

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

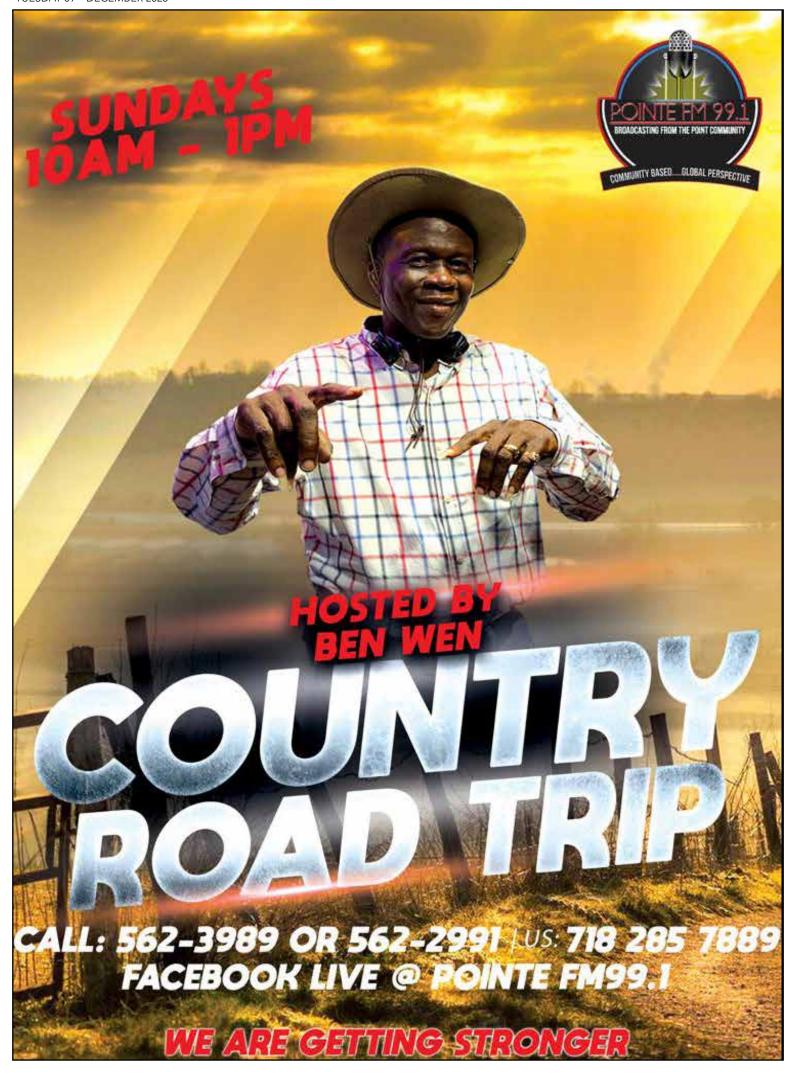
The St. John's Development Corporation (SJDC) won Group 1, the Ministry of Agriculture finished at the top of Group 2, the Postal Services captured Group 3, and the Hermitage Bay Strikers prevailed in Group 4.

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, semi-finals, and final.

Rakeem Joseph of champions APUA Telecoms was named the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the tournament, while his teammate Tariq Highland captured the Best Defender Award.

Colin Ralph of APUA Telecoms won the Coach of the Year Award, while Berchel Andrew of the same team claimed the Manager of the Year accolade.

Chad Williams of the Ministry of Agriculture took home the award for the best midfielder, while Roy Gregory of Hermitage Bay Strikers claimed the Golden Boot Award (Most Goals) with a total of 12 goals.





Sports News



World Cup to include 3-minute hydration breaks



Fluminense players cooling up during a water break at the Club World Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Fluminense and Al Hilal in Orlando, Fla., Friday, July 4, 2025. (AP)

ZURICH (AP) — FIFA says it will include three-minute hydration breaks in each half of every game at next year's World Cup, not just those played in hot weather.

The referee will stop the game 22 minutes into each half for players to take drinks, regardless of the temperature, the host country — the United States, Canada or Mexico

— or whether the stadium has a roof and air conditioning.

The change may also be a hit with broadcasters, since it makes the game schedule more predictable.

FIFA said it was first announced when the governing body's chief tournament officer for the 2026 World Cup, Manolo Zubiria, attended a meeting with broadcasters.

He indicated that referees may have some flexibility if there's a stoppage shortly before the 22-minute mark for an injury.

"This will be addressed on the spot with the referee," Zubiria said.

FIFA said the move is a "streamlined and simplified version" of an earlier practice of having breaks after 30 minutes over a certain temperature threshold, once set at 32 degrees Celsius (89.6 Fahrenheit) on the wet bulb global temperature system.

The change comes after heat and humidity affected players during some games at this year's Club World Cup in the US.

At that tournament, FIFA reacted by lowering the threshold for cooling or water breaks and also placing more water and towels around the edge of the field.

Heat has long been an issue at major soccer tournaments. Amid concerns ahead of the 2014 World Cup, a Brazilian court ordered FIFA to make its recommended breaks mandatory or face fines.



S DOFTS TUESDAY 09TH DECEMBER 2025



All Saints United and Grenades stay unbeaten in Premier Division



A starting XI of the All Saints United football team

Back-to-back defending champions All Saints United, along with the Sandals and Inet Jennings Grenades, maintained their unbeaten runs in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday.

Karique Knight scored twice as All Saints United cruised to a 5-1 victory against John Hughes FC in the last game of a triple-header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Knight had conversions in the 86th and 90th minutes, and Ricardo Dennis converted an own goal in the 42nd minute, while the other goals for All Saints United were scored by Tiquan Isaac in the 20th minute and Raheem Deterville in the 22nd minute.

Tijahni Isaac scored a consolation goal in the 84th minute for John Hughes FC, which remains on three points after suffering their fifth defeat in six matches.

All Saints United remains at the top of the Premier Division standings by advancing to 18 points after recording their sixth win in as many games.

Barrington Blake struck a hat trick in the first half to fire the Jennings Grenades to their fifth win in six matches with a 4-1 victory against the Attacking Saints in the second match of Sunday's triple-header.

Blake had conversions in the 11th, 35th, and 36th minutes, and the other goal was scored by Troy Jules in the 17th minute, as the result carries the Jennings Grenades to 16 points.

Rick Gordon scored a consolation goal in the 82nd minute for the Attacking Saints, who remain on six

points after crashing to their fourth defeat in six matches.

The Ottos Ranges picked up their first point in this season's Premier Division by pulling off a 3-3 draw with Garden Stars in Sunday's opening game.

Junior Benjamin scored twice with conversions in the 55th and 85th minutes, and Josue Arias converted the other goal for the Ottos Rangers in the 35th minute.

Tarek Charles scored a late equalizer in the third minute of added time to salvage a draw for the Garden Stars. The other two goals for the Garden Stars were converted by Ngozie Harvey in the 27th and 78th minutes.

The Ottos Rangers finished the match with 10 men after Kelly Roberts received a red card and was expelled in the 65th minute.

The result allows the Garden Stars to advance to 10 points after securing their first draw in five matches.

The Ottos Rangers, who crashed to defeats in all previous five games, get their first point after securing a draw for the first time this season.

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