

Hundreds to benefit from a free dental clinic next week

Story on page 2



NODS officials pose with NOAA representatives during one of the training sessions held at NODS' headquarters on the American Road

The Ministry of Health joins hands with Sandals Foundation to bring a free dental clinic to the country



Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph

The Ministry of Health this week held a meeting with members of United States medical volunteer group, Great Shape! Inc. at the Sandals Grande Antigua Resort and Spa, ahead of the organization's upcoming free dental clinic, 1000 Smiles that is being coordinated by the Sandals Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

The meeting brought together Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph, key health ministry officials, Great Shape! Inc. leadership, and the Sandals Foundation to reaffirm a shared commitment to improving access to oral healthcare throughout Antigua and Barbuda.

This is the first time the Great Shape! Inc. Dental team is delivering services in Antigua and Barbuda, marking a major expansion of their regional dental mission which takes place annually in Jamaica, The Bahamas, Saint Lucia, Grenada, and Turks and Caicos.

Program Director of Great Shape Inc., Shantelle Senior-Clarke, said



Program Director of Great Shape Inc., Shantelle Senior-Clarke

the team is pleased to be on the ground to deliver much-needed services, including examinations, cleanings, extractions, root canals, and other dental treatments based on assessments conducted through the clinic. She also praised the Min-

istry of Health for its unwavering support, highlighting the Ministry's hands-on leadership and guidance, including the coordination of several key logistical arrangements to ensure the smooth execution and operation of the clinic.

Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph, welcomed the team and expressed his appreciation for the continued partnership. He noted that he is delighted to have Great Shape Inc. in Antigua and Barbuda and looks forward to continued collaboration in advancing community health initiatives. For its part, the Sandals Foundation re-affirmed its pride in its longstanding partnership with Great Shape! team, a collaboration spanning many years and multiple islands across the Caribbean.

"It is our fundamental belief that access to quality oral healthcare is paramount to the overall wellbeing of families and the health of a community. We are committed to using





the network of our resources to continue to bring this primary service to as many residents as is possible,” said Heidi Clarke, Executive Director of the Sandals Foundation.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the Sandals Foundation has committed to supporting Great Shape! Dental’s health outreach initiative through logistical assistance, accommodation support, community coordination, and volunteer engagement. These efforts are expected to enable hundreds, and potentially thousands, of residents—particularly children, seniors, and underserved individuals—to receive free, high-quality dental care that might otherwise be out of reach.

Sandals General Manager, David Latchimy, underscored the resort’s commitment to community wellbeing, stating “true hospitality extends beyond our resorts and into the communities we serve. Supporting free community dental services aligns perfectly with our core values—caring for people, empowering communities, and creating lasting positive change. Oral health is a critical component of overall health, and the services being offered through this initiative will make a meaningful difference in the lives of many individuals and families across Antigua

and Barbuda.”

The free community dental clinic will run from January 19 to January 30 at the Multipurpose Cultural Center, operating Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Pre-registration is already underway at the Villa, Glanvilles, Gray’s Farm, Clare Hall, Liberta and Johnson’s Point Polyclinics and Health Centers. Members of the public are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these free dental services and may visit any of the listed health facilities to complete the pre-registration forms.



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From January 19th 2026 onwards, all registration will take place at the Multi-Purpose Cultural Center.

National Bar Association Hosts 2026 Midwinter Convention in Antigua and Barbuda



Minister of Tourism
Charles 'Max' Fernandez



The National Bar Association (NBA), the largest and oldest network of predominantly Black attorneys, judges, law professors, and legal professionals in the United States, will convene its 2026 Midwinter Convention next week in Antigua and Barbuda.

The Convention will bring together judges and lawyers from across the United States to engage in meaningful collaboration with legal practitioners from Antigua and Barbuda and the wider Caribbean region. Through panel discussions, educational sessions, and professional exchanges, participants will explore shared legal challenges, comparative jurisprudence, judicial administration, and the evolving role of the legal profession in advancing justice, accountability, and the rule of law.

“Antigua and Barbuda is pleased to welcome the National Bar Association to our twin-islands,” said

Charles ‘Max’ Fernandez, Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation, and Investment. “Hosting the NBA’s 2026 Midwinter Convention reinforces Antigua and Barbuda’s strategic focus on the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector and our ongoing efforts to position the country as a premier destination for high-level international meetings. This Convention highlights our capacity to successfully host globally respected professional organizations while facilitating meaningful dialogue, knowledge exchange, and long-term partnerships.

“We extend a warm welcome to the National Bar Association to Antigua and Barbuda, and we look forward to hosting this distinguished group on our island, where professional engagement meets world-class hospitality,” said Colin C. James, CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority.

The Convention is being coordinated by Antiguan-born Beverly Benjamin-George, Esq., a highly respected attorney and long-standing member of the NBA. As Group Coordinator, Ms. Benjamin-George has been instrumental in planning and executing this international gathering, ensuring that logistical, professional, and cultural elements are seamlessly integrated.

Hosting the Midwinter Convention in Antigua and Barbuda underscores the NBA’s commitment to fostering international dialogue, strengthening diasporic and regional legal networks, and creating spaces for cross-border collaboration that honor shared histories while addressing contemporary legal issues. The Convention also provides an opportunity for cultural exchange and relationship-building between U.S. and Caribbean legal professionals.

NODS Partners with NOAA and ITIC to Enhance Tsunami Preparedness in Antigua and Barbuda

The National Office of Disaster Services (NODS) announces a strategic partnership with the United States' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to strengthen national planning and response mechanisms to effectively address tsunami threats.

The partnership specifically involves NOAA's National Weather Service's International Tsunami Information Center (ITIC) which assists Pacific and Caribbean nations with tsunami warning systems, training, and safety information.

On Monday, 12th January, representatives from NODS, alongside key stakeholders, participated in a session aimed at providing essential training on the various products and services offered by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC). Attendees gained critical insights into Tsunami Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and explored tools designed to enhance preparedness for potential tsunami events.

A highlight of this initia-



tive is the ongoing Tsunami Ready Launch and Training Mission, with a specific focus on Barbuda, taking place from January 12 to 16, 2026. This mission brings together local, regional, and international experts to share knowledge and train personnel in Barbuda, ensuring the community is well-equipped to respond swiftly and effectively to tsunami threats.

This project is part of the broader initiative titled "Capacity Development to Build Tsunami Resilient Communities through Tsu-



nami Readiness in the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions."

Coordinated by NOAA's ITIC in partnership with

UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the project aims to empower local communities with the necessary knowledge and



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resources to enhance their resilience against tsunami threats.

With a community budget of approximately USD 93,000.00, the project covers technical services, training and materials, signage among other costs. The University of Colorado Consortium for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) oversees these funds, with payments directed to approved local suppliers and service providers.

Antigua and Barbuda will play a crucial role in iden-

tifying community needs, facilitating the National and Local Tsunami Ready committees, and providing available data. The ITIC Caribbean Office will oversee the coordination, technical expertise, and implementation necessary for success.

The Tsunami Ready Antigua and Barbuda Project supports the initiative Early Warnings for All (EW4All) and aims to strengthen national disaster risk reduction systems. This partnership underscores Antigua and Barbuda's commitment to safeguarding lives, liveli-



hoods, and sustainable development.

NODS reaffirms its dedication to enhancing disaster response capabilities and is

proud to collaborate with NOAA and UNESCO to promote community safety and preparedness.

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Department of Culture Unveils “Culture in Motion” Strategic Plan for 2026

By Elizabeth Fane

The Department of Culture outlined its strategic plans for the first half of 2026, under the theme “Culture in Motion” during a press briefing on Tuesday.

Director of Culture, Khan Cordice, emphasized the department’s renewed focus on youth engagement, institutional balance, and the sustained relevance of cultural expression in national development.

Cordice explained that the strategic direction for 2026 is centered on strengthening the three core pillars of the cultural framework - pan, choral music, and theatre -with particular attention to revitalizing interest and participation among secondary school students.

“Culture must move with the times while remaining rooted in who we are,” Cordice stated, “Our goal is to ensure that young people see culture not as something distant or outdated, but as a living, breathing part of their identity and future.”

As part of the presentation, Cordice invited key personnel within the Department of Culture to expand on specific initiatives under each pillar.

Pan Coordinator, Patrick Johnson, addressed plans to reinvigorate the steelpan movement within secondary schools, outlining programmes aimed at training, mentorship, and increased access to instruments and a structured pan education.

Music Coordinator, Lola Kirby-Richardson spoke on the choral initiative, highlighting efforts to strengthen school choirs, improve technical training, and create more performance opportunities that nurture discipline, teamwork, and artis-



tic excellence.

Deputy Director of Culture and Theatre Coordinator, Owen Jackson, provided insight into the theatre programme, detailing plans to reintroduce theatre arts more robustly at the secondary level through workshops, school productions, and national showcases designed to build confidence, storytelling skills, and creative thinking.

The Director of Culture also announced key dates on the cultural calendar, including an Awards Ceremony and a Theatre Festival scheduled for April 2026, both of which are expected to celebrate excellence, innovation, and sustained contribution within the cultural sector.

During the question-and-answer segment, members of the press raised concerns regarding ongoing United States visa challenges and how these constraints may affect cultural exchange, touring, and international exposure for local artists.

Cordice acknowledged the issue and noted that the department is actively exploring mechanisms to mitigate these challenges through regional partnerships, diplomatic engagement, and alternative platforms for cultural promotion.

Cordice was also asked to comment on the richness and continued relevance of culture in a rapidly changing society. In response, he reaffirmed that culture remains a powerful tool for national identity, social cohesion, and economic opportunity, particularly when aligned with education and youth development.

Additionally, the press sought clarity on what mechanisms are in place to ensure parity among pan, choral, and theatre within the cultural framework. The department gave assurances that resource allocation, programming, and policy direction are being structured to provide equitable support and visibility across all three pillars.



Honours Committee

Government House, Independence Drive, St. John's, Antigua. W.I

PRESS RELEASE

January 13, 2026

St. John's, Antigua

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR NATIONAL HONOURS IN 2026

Members of the public are invited to submit nominations of suitably qualified persons to be considered by the Honours Committee in 2026 for conferral of one of three societies of honour, which are further divided into grades and described in the National Honours Act as:

- i. The Most Distinguished Order of the Nation
- ii. The Most Illustrious Order of Merit
- iii. The Most Precious Order of Princely Heritage.

The criteria for selection are presented below:

1. The candidate being nominated, if an individual, should be 50 years of age or older.
2. The nominee having met the age requirement in No 1, should also satisfy one or more of the following characteristics:
 - i. Should have demonstrated distinguished service, above and beyond the call of duty in his or her field of employment/career.
 - ii. Should be a model or good citizen with proven character, lifestyle, work ethics and a habit of using his/her own resources to the benefit of others,
 - iii. Should have given meritorious service in the field of heritage and cultural endeavours for consideration to be a member of the Most Precious Order of Princely Heritage, or meritorious service in any other field to be considered for membership of the Most Illustrious Order of Merit or distinguished/outstanding service to the nation in any field to be considered for membership of the Most Distinguished Order of the Nation.
 - iv. Should have demonstrated the ability, over a sustained period, to work in the interest of and to give selflessly to others without a demand for personal or monetary reward.



Honours Committee

Government House, Independence Drive, St. John's, Antigua. W.I

3. A nomination may also be submitted for any company, institution, organization or social club which has rendered outstanding contribution to the promotion, development, protection or advancement of the arts, history or cultural heritage or humanitarian endeavours in Antigua and Barbuda. Institutional honours are granted in the Order of the Most Illustrious Order of Merit in the grades of Gold, Silver and Bronze.
4. Regarding the guidelines governing the process of nominations and their consideration, the following should be noted:
 - a. Previous entries which have been submitted without a positive response may be re-submitted for consideration. Once received, nominations are considered for a period of three (3) consecutive years before being retired. This does not prevent the re-submission of the nomination of said individual after that period has passed.
 - b. Nominations must be submitted on the form entitled, 'Nomination for a National Honour of Antigua and Barbuda' providing as much detail as possible as to the work, projects or service rendered by the individual.
 - c. Tangible evidence such as photos, statistics, recommendation letters, videos or other relevant material may be provided with the nomination.
 - d. Self – nominations will not be considered.
 - e. All nominations should be addressed to the:
 Secretary
 Honours Committee
 c/o Government House
 Independence Drive
 St. John's, Antigua
 Antigua and Barbuda

The nominator(s) should provide the following personal information:

- Full Name
- Physical Address
- Email Address
- Telephone No

Please specify the contact information for the key person who should be reached should further information be required.

- f. The final date for nominations for consideration for the annual Independence celebrations is the last working day of July (Friday 31, 2026) by 11 am. Submissions should be delivered to the Office of the Governor General on other days during working hours before 11:00 am, or scanned signed copies may be emailed to hcabgov@gmail.com. Nomination forms may be requested via email govgenab@gmail.com.

Chairman, Honours Committee

The Creative Ministry names the winners of the Christmas Home and Business Lighting Competition, 2025

The winners of the Christmas Home and Business Lighting Competition 2025 have been announced. The Ministry of Creative Industries says this annual event aims to capture the festive spirit through dazzling and innovative lighting displays and features in the Home and Business categories.

The Home category was divided into four zones (East, West, North, and South), while the Business category covered all of Antigua. The competition displayed exceptional creativity and festive spirit, lighting up the holiday season with vibrant and artistic light displays.

Prize Details:

Winners in both categories will receive cash prizes as follows:

First Place: \$3,000.00 ECD

Second Place: \$2,000.00 ECD

Third Place: \$1,000.00 ECD

Home category participants will also benefit from a 100% waiver on their December 2025 electricity bill, while Business participants will receive a 50% waiver.

The Ministry congratulates all winners and thanks all the participants.

Winners by Category:

BUSINESS

Winner: SHOULS'S TOYS GIFTS HOUSEWARE

1st Runner – Up: GALLEY BAY RESORT

2nd Runner – Up: FALMOUTH HARBOUR MARINA



WEST ZONE

Winner: JOEL RAYNE

1st Runner – Up: ALIX-XENNE
JOHN “PURPLE”

2nd Runner – Up: NUFFIELD BUR-
NETTE (3RD PLACE)

EAST ZONE

Winner: DESIREE SIMON

1st Runner – Up: CHATURA PHIL-
LIP (2ND PLACE)

2nd Runner – Up: MARILYN
JONES MARSH (3RD PLACE)

SOUTH ZONE

Winner: VERNEL WESTE

1st Runner – Up: RONALDO JO-
SEPH

2nd Runner – Up: TERRENCE
GEORGE

NORTH ZONE

Winner: DAVE PETERS

1st Runner – Up: SARA SHOUL

2nd Runner – Up: PAUL AFLAK

TOP SCORES

VERNEL WESTE (100)

DESIREE SIMON (99.7)

JOEL RAYNE (95)

DAVE PETERS (94)

*The Ministry of Creative In-
dustries once again congratu-
lates this year’s winners and
looks forward to the contin-
ued growth and prominence
of the annual Christmas
Home and Business Lighting
Competition as a highlight of
the Christmas season.*



AT&LU is offering more scholarships to its members

The nation's oldest industrial trade union – the Antigua Trades and Labour Union – is increasing the number of scholarships that it is offering in partnership with the University of the West Indies Global Campus.

President Bernard DeNully said the courses are geared specifically at members of the union who are employed at different workplaces across Antigua and Barbuda. "We see education as a pathway for promotion for our members and we recognize that many persons do not possess the necessary qualifications to immediately pursue degree programmes. However, by completing these short courses, they then can use the certificates to matriculate into full degree programmes," DeNully explained.

He further explained that the union started the scholarship programme by offering two scholarships which were later increased to four. Now, according to the president the union will offer ten courses per semester making it a total of 30 scholarships per year.

"By offering the scholarships, we are providing our members with the building blocks to begin climbing the ladder of success in their various professions. We are hoping that members will apply and take up all ten scholarships for this semester," he remarked.

The courses are called the Continuing Professional Education programme and they are being offered online by the UWI Global Campus. "Members can therefore do the courses and not have to take time off from work," DeNully stated.



AT&LU SCHOLARSHIP OFFER



The AT&LU remains steadfast and true to our mission of empowering our membership through educational opportunities. Consequently, the Union is pleased to offer **10 (ten)** Scholarships for Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Courses at The University of the West Indies Global Campus Antigua & Barbuda.

Criteria & Guidelines

1. The applicant must be a member of the AT&LU for over 2 (two) years
2. The members must have the necessary prerequisites required from UWI Global Campus
3. Interested members should email the AT&LU at Email: atandlu@hotmail.com stating their interest in the course that they would like to pursue between **1st January to 19th January, 2026**.
4. Drawing will take place on **Wednesday, 21st January, 2026** on ABS Television Live to determine the 10 (ten) successful applicants.
5. For additional information, please feel free to contact the AT&LU at Tel: 1 (268) 462-0090/562-2501

Meanwhile, the AT&LU will observe its 87th anniversary on Friday. A church service to mark the event takes place on Sunday.



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SOOTHE 2026: CONTINUUM

A Decade of Neo-Soul Expression in Motion

SOOTHE, Antigua's signature neo-soul live music experience, returns on March 21, 2026, marking its 10th installation with a landmark edition titled CONTINUUM. The event will take place at AUA Conference Center, beginning at 7:00 PM.

Since its inception, SOOTHE has grown into a distinct cultural platform—celebrated for its intimate fusion of neo-soul, jazz, spoken word, live instrumentation, and conscious lyricism. Over the past decade, the event has evolved organically, reflecting subtle shifts in sound, audience, and artistic voice, while remaining grounded in authenticity and community.

The 2026 theme, CONTINUUM, captures this essence of flow and progression. It speaks to movement without rupture—a decade of growth shaped by experience rather than reinvention. SOOTHE does not reset; it builds, layering memory, rhythm, and creative intention into each new chapter.

Following a three-year pandemic-induced hiatus, SOOTHE's return to the live stage in 2023 reaffirmed its relevance and cultural resonance within Antigua's creative land-



scape. CONTINUUM now stands as both reflection and momentum—honouring where the journey began, while embracing what lies ahead.

Audiences can expect a carefully curated eve-

ning featuring returning favourites and emerging voices, all woven together through live performance and atmosphere. True to the SOOTHE experience, the night will prioritise connection over spectacle, presence over excess, and

artistry over trend.

As SOOTHE enters its second decade, CONTINUUM serves as a reminder that the most meaningful movements are not abrupt—they are lived, felt, and carried forward.



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Ministry of *Foreign Affairs*, Trade, and Barbuda Affairs

Queen Elizabeth Highway

St. John's, ANTIGUA.

Telephone: (268) 462-1062

Fax: (268) 462-2482

Email: foreignaffairs@ab.gov.ag

General Announcement

Be a Part of History: A Call for CHOGM 2026 Volunteers!

Antigua and Barbuda's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Barbuda Affairs invites enthusiastic, motivated, and professional individuals aged 18 or older to volunteer for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2026), to be hosted in St. John's, 1- 4 November 2026.

This is a unique opportunity to contribute your time and skills to a world-class event while gaining experience and expanding your network. A range of roles is available, including hospitality and delegation liaison services. Former volunteers are also welcome to apply. Interested persons are asked to complete the volunteer application form at the following link by **26 January 2026, 12:00 p.m.:**

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/C6EfbAJCCu>

Apply for an opportunity to be part of a historic experience!



AN EXISTENTIAL MOMENT FOR THE CARIBBEAN



By Professor C. Justin Robinson
*Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal,
 The UWI Five Islands Campus*

The international order that has structured global affairs since 1945 is being dismantled. For the Caribbean and CARICOM, this represents an existential threat to the very possibility of meaningful sovereignty and as a people we must be clear-eyed about what is occurring. The United States, the principal architect of the post-war multilateral system is not merely withdrawing from international commitments it is actively punishing states that exercise independent judgment, shrinking the policy space available to smaller nations, and asserting that military and economic might, not treaties or institutions, determine outcomes. I am of the view that this stance is not a temporary aberration but reflects deep currents in American political life that will likely outlast any single administration. For nations ninety miles to nine hundred miles from American shores, the implications could not be more serious.

The Order That Made Us Possible

The post-war system was never perfect, its ideals frequently betrayed, its institutions often captured by great power interests. However, it established frameworks within which small nations could exist with dignity.

The UN Charter's principle of sovereign equality, the legal fiction that Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Barbados, China, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the United States are in some formal sense peers, gave diplomatic voice to nations that could never command attention through force. The International Court of Justice offered recourse for disputes that would otherwise be settled by power alone. Climate frameworks created arenas where vulnerable island states could demand recognition. CARICOM itself is a creature of this era. We pooled sovereignty to amplify voice in forums where voice mattered. We built institutions premised on the assumption that rules would remain the grammar of international affairs. The stark reality is that these assumptions no longer hold!

Coercion, Not Competition

During the Cold War, superpower competition created space for small states to manoeuvre. Both powers courted allies, offered inducements, competed for influence. Non-alignment was possible and the Caribbean navigated between poles, extracted concessions, maintained options. The current moment is qualitatively different. The United States is not competing for Caribbean allegiance it is demanding compliance. The question is not "how can we win your partnership or convince about our ideology?" but "what will you suffer if you defy us?" Economic weaponization has moved from adversary relations to alliance management. Tariffs and sanctions threaten partners who diverge from American preferences. For CARICOM economies dependent on US trade, tourism, remittances, and financial system access, punitive measures could prove devastating within months. The threat need not be executed its credibility alone constrains choice. The cumulative ef-

fect is the shrinking of policy space. What trade relationships can we pursue? What diplomatic positions can we take? Each decision now carries the shadow of punishment.

More Dangerous Than the Cold War

It may seem hyperbolic to claim the present is more dangerous than an era that brought nuclear annihilation to the brink. However, for small states, this may be a more dangerous world. Cold War competition gave us leverage, Soviet alternatives meant options that could extract better terms and the structure of bipolar rivalry created space for agency. Today, no countervailing power courts us the same way. China offers investment but does not compete for ideological allegiance and does not need the Caribbean to demonstrate its model's superiority. Meanwhile, the American posture has shifted from "choose us over them" to "choose us or face consequences."

Moreover, Cold War competition paradoxically reinforced multilateral structures. Both superpowers used international law as an arena for legitimacy, implicitly affirming that rules mattered. Today, the rules themselves are targets. When American officials sanction ICC prosecutors, dismiss WTO rulings, and withdraw from health and human rights bodies, they deny the system's authority. There is no framework to appeal to, no principle the hegemon acknowledges as binding on itself.

Not a Passing Storm

It would be comforting to believe this a temporary aberration, soon corrected by electoral alternation in the USA. CARICOM nations might be tempted to keep heads down until the storm passes. This could be a dangerous miscalculation as the intellectual groundwork for the American shift has been laid over decades and now

represents a potent force, if not the most potent force, in American political life. “America First” nationalism, scepticism of multilateral institutions, rejection of constraints on American sovereignty, these positions command substantial elite support across conservative think tanks, media ecosystems, and political networks. The Republican Party’s transformation is complete and crucially the Democratic alternative has itself shifted toward nationalism, even if the style differs. The coercive turn may persist regardless of which party holds power. The degree may vary but the direction is set.

The Ideological Underpinnings

I feel compelled to name what others leave implicit. The current American political formation is animated by currents of white supremacy with deep roots in American history. The hostility to multilateralism is not ideologically neutral. International institutions constrain the powerful on behalf of universal principles, and Human rights frameworks assert the dignity of all people. These premises are incompatible with a worldview that ranks civilizations, sees demographic change as threat, and understands American greatness in racial terms.

For the Caribbean, this is not abstract. We are nations built from the wreckage of slavery and colonialism, and our populations are overwhelmingly of African and South Asian descent. When American political movements invoke civilizational hierarchy, when they speak of “shithole countries,” when they target majority-Black nations for visa restrictions and deportation enforcement we know what we are hearing as we have heard it before. Our vulnerability is not incidental to this project it is in some sense, the point of the project.

The Caribbean Predicament

Geography is destiny, and ours is unforgiving. Some of our islands lie

closer to Miami than Miami lies to Atlanta. American tourists fill our hotels, American dollars flow through our banks, American visas determine whether our citizens can visit family or conduct business and American deportation flights return our nationals after decades of residence. There is no aspect of Caribbean life untouched by American proximity.


CARICOM’s architecture compounds the vulnerability. Our consensus model is poorly suited for rapid response to bilateral coercion. Washington can apply pressure sequentially, extract concessions from the weakest, use those to pressure others. We can be picked off one by one.

Where do we turn? Europe is distant and distracted. China offers investment but not protection from American pressure, indeed, relationships with China increasingly trigger that pressure. The Non-Aligned Movement presupposed a competitive structure that made space for the unaligned. In a coercive unipolar moment, non-alignment may be a posture without content.

The Stakes

The post-war order did not merely permit small state sovereignty it constituted it. Caribbean nations exist as independent actors because a rules-based system gave juridical equality practical meaning, however, that framework is collapsing. This is not the Cold War, when competition created space. This is hegemony without constraint, exercised by a power from which geography offers no escape. CARICOM faces not a policy challenge but an existential reckoning. The question is whether we can survive as anything other than dependencies, whether we can remain, in any substantive sense, free.

The diagnosis is grim; however, diagnosis is not destiny. What matters now is strategic clarity about our options from compliance to defiance and the choices that will determine whether the Caribbean remains a collection of sovereign nations or becomes, once again, a sphere of influence managed by others which I will explore in part 2. The time for comfortable illusions has passed.



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This too Shall Pass



By the Hon. E.P Chet Greene

The Caribbean is caught in a storm not of its own making. The recent imposition of visa restrictions, talks of financial bonds for entry, the palpable military tensions in our waters and the overt threats to the long standing customs of free movement and trade have cast a shadow over our region.

A sense of siege has taken hold, with the enduring Venezuelan-U.S crisis as its turbulent epicenter, disrupting the rhythm of our interconnected islands. Yet, history and the resilient spirit of the Caribbean itself suggest that this period of difficulty is an interlude, not a conclusion. A return to normalcy is not a distant hope but an inevitable reckoning.

The current pressures feel uniquely punitive and disruptive. Visa restrictions adversely impact the vital threads of family, culture and tourism that bind our archipelago together and link us to the world. Proposals for bonds commodify movement, placing a financial bar before the poor and the working class. Military posturing

turns our serene Caribbean Sea into a chessboard for external powers, jeopardizing both security and the delicate ecosystems that sustain us.

These actions represent a profound rupture with the norms of regional co-operation and understanding that have been painstakingly built over decades.

At the heart of this regional anxiety lies the protracted standoff between Venezuela and the United States. Its waves have lapped onto every shore, influencing diplomacy, affecting economies and fueling uncertainty. It serves as the background noise that amplifies every other disruption.

However, the very extremity of these measures contains the seeds of their own dissolution. They are unsustainable for three fundamental reasons.

First, they are economically self-defeating for those who impose them. The Caribbean is not merely a scenic escape; it is a crucial hub for trade, finance and hemispheric stability. Prolonged restrictions stifle the very economic partnerships and entrepreneurial energy that benefit all parties. The global economy, still finding its footing, cannot long tolerate artificial barriers in such a strategic corridor.

Second, they are politically untenable. The collective voice of CARICOM, though sometimes quiet and appearing dissonant, is diplomatically potent. The region's moral authority, forged through a history of overcoming slavery, colonialism and natural disasters, carries weight. This unified resistance, combined with advocacy from diaspora communities and pragmatic actors within the imposing nations themselves, will create irresistible pressure for a return to sensible and people-centric policy. The world's customs are not so easily remade by

force.

Third and most critically, the Venezuelan-U.S crisis is reaching its own inflection point. Exhaustion with perpetual tension is a powerful force. Behind the scenes diplomacy, driven by regional leaders and international mediators, is slowly carving pathways to de-escalation. The global focus is shifting and the cost of maintaining this confrontation is increasingly seen as a distraction from other pressing challenges of our hemisphere and of our world. A resolution, perhaps not a grand bargain but a stable *modus vivendi* is on the horizon. When that pressure lifts, the secondary policies justified by it will crumble.

The Caribbean has weathered conquistadors, empires, hurricanes and financial crashes. Our normalcy is not a passive state but an active achievement built on resilience, adaptation and an unwavering commitment to community. The current troubles, severe as they are, will be no different.

The bonds of family will prove stronger than visa stamps. The need for shared prosperity will dissolve financial barriers. The demand for peace will quiet the drums of war and as the U.S and Venezuela inevitably step back from the brink, the region will exhale.

This moment of friction will pass because it must. The essential character of the Caribbean; open, connected and fiercely devoted to its own peace will reassert itself. The storm clouds will break and the familiar, blessed trade winds will return. We have seen darker days and we have always found our way back to the light.

I am not Nostradamus, Ezekiel or Daniel but this too shall pass.....

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Regional News

Dominicans should capitalize on opportunities that come with an international airport, urges PM Skerrit

Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit has encouraged Dominicans to take advantage of the opportunities that come with the International Airport on the island.

He made the statement during a site visit held at the International Airport Site in Wesley last week.

“The government’s responsibility is to build the airport. It is left for the citizens of Dominica to take advantage of the opportunities, to position themselves,” he encouraged. “What are the opportunities and benefits of the airport? And so we have to position ourselves to take advantage of those opportunities.”

According to him, there are several foreign nationals who have shown interest in acquiring land in the country.

“Somebody offered to buy over 100 acres of land in this area,” Skerrit revealed. “We’ve had to hold it back, because there are some lands I believe should stay with the people of Dominica.”

He continued, “But people are scouting, people are looking to buy, all foreign nationals.”

Skerrit added, “Can we not put ourselves together in groups, in companies, and make an approach to the government to start putting the Airbnbs and



the guest houses there for stayover people, for airport staff, and for airline staff. And I believe there are a number of things we believe we can position ourselves moving forward.”

Furthermore, the PM says that the International Airport will touch the length and breadth of Dominica.

“Whether you are from Scottshead where we rely on fishing or in the valley where we rely on tourism or in Capuchin where we rely on a mixture of tourism and agriculture or in the Kalinago Territory where we need people to come in to buy our craft, the farmers in Marigot who are planting yams and dasheen who are rearing chickens and goats and so forth, every single sector of the economy is going to benefit directly from this airport.”

Presently, there are over 100 Dominicans employed at the International Airport Development Project. (Dominica News




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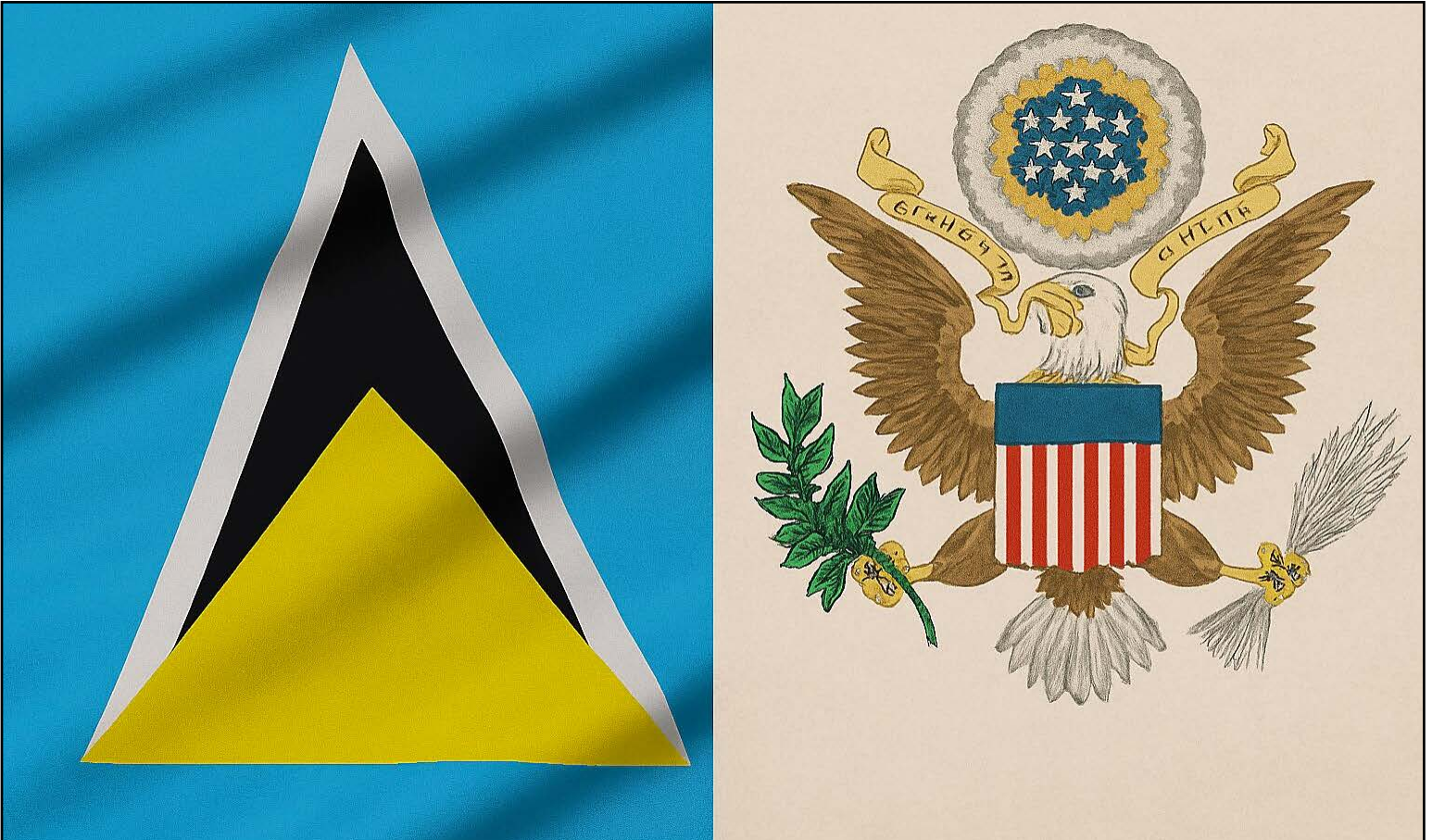
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Saint Lucia signs non-binding migration cooperation framework with United States



Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre has confirmed that the Government of Saint Lucia has approved a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United States, establishing a framework for potential cooperation on migration matters.

The agreement, which received Cabinet approval, outlines areas for dialogue and collaboration involving certain third-country nationals currently in the United States. Addressing the nation in his New Year's message, Pierre emphasized that the MOU does not impose obligations or trigger immediate action.

"This MOU establishes a framework for cooperation and does not trigger any immediate transfer or future engagements," the prime minister stated, referencing official presentation slides released alongside his address.

Pierre reassured citizens amid heightened regional debate on migration ar-

rangements, stressing that the agreement does not affect U.S. visa policy for Saint Lucians.

"As of today, there has been no information given to the government of Saint Lucia regarding any changes in the United States' visa policy for Saint Lucians wishing to travel to the United States," he said.

Saint Lucia's approval makes it the latest member of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to formalize such an understanding with Washington. Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and St. Kitts and Nevis have all announced similar non-binding MOUs in recent months, reflecting a regional trend of engagement with the United States on migration issues.

Of the four OECS countries that have signed migration cooperation agreements, only Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda have been subjected to new U.S. visa restrictions under a procla-

mation signed by President Donald Trump in December. The order cited national security concerns and specifically targeted their citizenship-by-investment programs. Nationals of both countries now face limits on immigrant visas and several categories of nonimmigrant visas, while Saint Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis were not included in the restrictions.

Reaffirming Saint Lucia's broader foreign policy stance, Pierre highlighted the country's commitment to the Caribbean as a "zone of peace," guided by dialogue, diplomacy, and respect for international law as a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

No timeline has been announced for potential implementation of the MOU, and U.S. officials have not yet issued a public response. (Dominica News Online)

Regional News

Ex PM says Caribbean must choose between U.S. absorption & 'creative resistance'

Former St Vincent prime minister Ralph Gonsalves describes the emerging “New World Order” as a “topsy-turvy” global environment that has become less safe and more susceptible to the use of “capricious hegemonic power”.

He asserts that this order has been “enthroned” both in the Western Hemisphere and globally, fundamentally altering international relations.

Gonsalves argues that the previous system, grounded in multilateralism, international law, and the United Nations Charter, has been dramatically upended. In its place, a “pristine unilateralism” has emerged, where the United States acts according to its own interests, often defined as a struggle between “good” (America) and “evil” (everything un-American). He characterizes the core principle of this era as “America first”, motivated by what works for the U.S. rather than traditional political ideology.

A central feature of this order is what Gonsalves calls the “Donro Doctrine,” which is the Trump administration’s corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. This strategy aims to:

- Reassert American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere, viewing the region as America’s “front yard”.
- Checkmate global competitors, specifically the People’s Republic of China, which Gonsalves describes as the “elephant in the room”.
- Deny competitors access to “strate-



gic vital assets” such as oil, gold, lithium, and other earth metals, particularly in countries like Venezuela, Bolivia, Chile, and Ecuador.

Gonsalves suggests that the U.S. is not alone in its desire for a new arrangement; other powerful entities like the European Union, China, and Russia are also calling for a new world order based on their own perceived material interests.

He notes that while some “wannabe hegemonies” may vociferously denounce American actions, they are “quietly on the sidelines applauding” because they see the breakdown of international law as an opening to act similarly in their own spheres of influence and describes this dynamic as “hypocrisy and asymmetrical power

riding in tandem with the horsemen of the apocalypse”.

For the Caribbean, Gonsalves views this historical juncture as a choice between two paths:

Subjugation or absorption by the USA, which he warns would turn independent parliaments into “local government assemblies” and lead to a form of “neo-colonialism” and the pursuance of an independent path through deeper regional unity and “creative resistance,” which he admits is “grievously threatened” by the redefined Trumpian order.

Gonsalves posits that the new order requires the Caribbean to answer three critical questions: “What’s new? Which world? And who gives the orders?” (St Vincent Times)

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UN demands independent probe into woman's killing by US immigration officer



The United Nations demanded Tuesday a swift and independent investigation after a federal immigration officer fatally shot a protester in the US city of Minneapolis last week.

The UN rights office voiced deep concern at the killing of 37-year-old Renee Nicole Good, who was shot dead in her car by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent in the Midwestern city last Wednesday.

“Under international human rights law, the intentional use of lethal force is only permissible as a measure of last resort against an individual representing an imminent

threat to life,” UN rights office spokesman Jeremy Laurence told reporters in Geneva.

“We take note of the FBI investigation and insist on the need for prompt, independent and transparent investigation into the killing,” he said.

Laurence also urged “all authorities to take measures to deescalate tensions and refrain from incitement to violence”.

Good’s killing has sparked widespread anger at the use of force in the Trump administration’s immigration crackdown, sparking nationwide protests.

The Trump administration has sought to paint Good as a “domestic terrorist”, vigorously insisting the agent who fatally shot her was acting in self-defence.

This narrative is strongly disputed by local officials, who say footage shows Good’s vehicle turning away from the agent and did not pose a threat to his life.

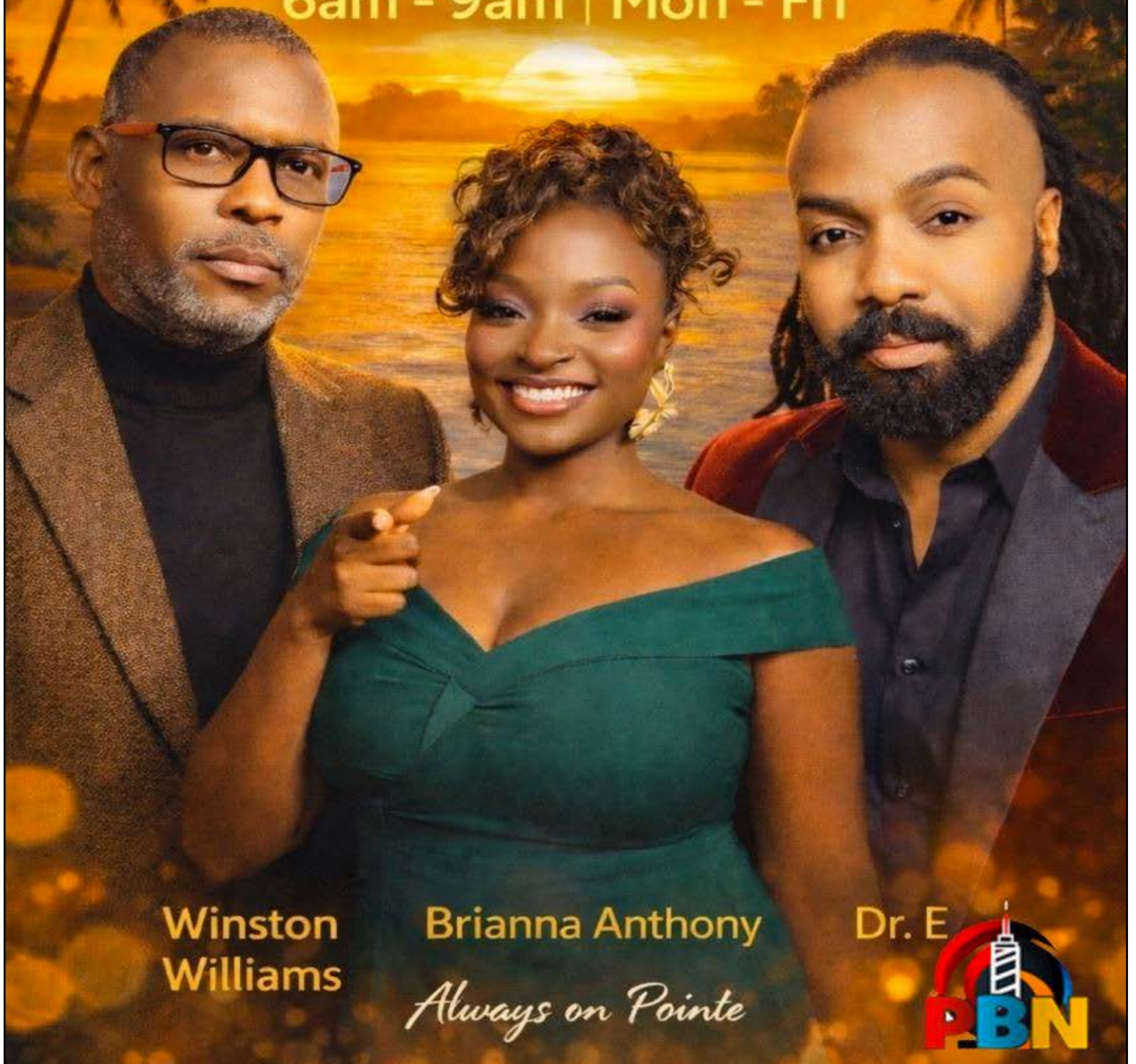
Protesters have demanded a full investigation into the circumstances of the deadly encounter.

Democratic officials are particularly critical of the fact that local authorities have been excluded from the investigation, which is being conducted by the FBI. (AFP)

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United States withdrawal from WHO makes US, world 'unsafe'—WHO chief



The World Health Organization chief warned Tuesday that Washington's decision to withdraw from the UN health agency was dangerous for the United States and the rest of the world alike.

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order just hours after returning to the White House on January 20, 2025, ordering his country's exit from the WHO.

With the one-year withdrawal process due to reach completion next week, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters he deeply regretted the move.

"Withdrawal from WHO is a loss for the United States, and it's also a loss for the rest of the world," he said, speaking from his agency's Geneva headquarters.

The withdrawal, he warned, "makes the US unsafe... and makes the

rest of the world unsafe, so it's not really the right decision".

Tedros highlighted that "there are many things that are done through WHO that benefit the US... especially the health security issues".

"That's why I said the US cannot be safe without working with WHO," he said.

"I hope the US will reconsider its decision and rejoin."

WHO's chief legal officer Steve Solomon said it was a bit unclear when exactly the withdrawal would be official.

He explained to reporters that the WHO constitution does not include a withdrawal clause, but that Washington made arrangements in 1948 reserving the right to withdraw, under certain conditions.

One condition was that

it would need to give one year's notice, and the second was that it would need to "meet its financial obligations to the organisation in full for the current fiscal year", he said.

But currently, "the US for 2024 and 2025 is in arrears on its payments", he said, without giving figures, adding that the WHO member states would need to consider: "Has the condition been fulfilled?"

At a time when dramatic cuts to international aid budgets have hit

health systems worldwide hard, Tedros stressed that "funding is very important for our organisation, for WHO to really deliver".

But he insisted that when calling for the US to return to the WHO fold, "it's not about money".

"What matters most is solidarity, cooperation and for the whole world to prepare itself for any eventualities, to a common enemy like a virus, like Covid," he insisted.

"The best immunity is solidarity." (AFP)

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Death sentence sought for ex-South Korea leader Yoon over martial law decree

An independent lawyer on Tuesday demanded a death sentence for former South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on rebellion charges in connection with his imposition of martial law in December 2024.

Removed from office last April, Yoon faces eight trials over various criminal charges related to his martial law debacle and other scandals related to his time in office. Charges that he directed a rebellion are the most significant ones.

Independent counsel Cho Eun-suk's team requested the Seoul Central District Court to sentence Yoon to death, according to the court.

The Seoul court is expected to deliver a verdict on Yoon in February. Experts say the court likely will sentence him to life in prison. South Korea hasn't executed anyone since 1997.

Yoon was scheduled to make remarks at Tuesday's hearing. He has maintained that his decree was a desperate yet peaceful attempt to raise public awareness about what he considered the danger of the liberal opposition Democratic Party, which used its legislative majority to obstruct his agenda.

He called the opposition-controlled parliament "a den of criminals" and "anti-state forces."

Yoon's decree, the first of its kind in more than 40 years in South Korea, brought armed troops into Seoul streets to encircle the assembly and enter election offices.



That evoked traumatic memories of dictatorships in the 1970s and 1980s, when military-backed rulers used martial law and other emergency decrees to station soldiers and armored vehicles in public places to suppress pro-democracy protests.

On the night of Yoon's martial law declaration, thousands of people rushed to the National Assembly to object to the decree and demand his resignation in dramatic scenes. Enough lawmakers, including even those in Yoon's ruling party, managed to enter an assembly hall to vote down the decree.

Observers described Yoon's action as political suicide. Parliament impeached him and sent the case to the Constitutional Court, which ruled to dismiss him as president.

It was a spectacular downfall for Yoon, a former star prosecutor who won South Korea's presidency in 2022, a year after entering politics.

Lee Jae Myung, a former Democratic Party leader who led Yoon's impeach-

ment bid, became president by winning a snap election last June. After taking office, Lee appointed three independent counsels to delve into allegations involving Yoon, his wife and associates.

There had been speculation that Yoon resorted to martial law to protect his wife, Kim Keon Hee, from potential corruption investigations. But in wrapping up a six-month investigation last month, independent counsel Cho's team concluded that Yoon plotted for over a year to impose martial law to eliminate his political rivals and monopolize power.

Yoon's decree and ensuing power vacuum plunged South Korea into political turmoil, halted the country's high-level diplomacy and rattled its financial markets.

Yoon's earlier vows to fight attempts to impeach and arrest him deepened the country's political divide. In January last year, he became the country's first sitting president to be detained. (AP)

Francis hits century as Windies U-19s crush Japan in warm up match

Antiguan Tanez Francis and Shamar Apple both hit centuries as the West Indies coasted to an emphatic 229-run victory against Japan in their second warm-up match of the 2026 ICC Under-19 Men's World Cup at the United Cricket Club Ground in Windhoek, Namibia, on Tuesday.

The diminutive Francis, who opened the innings, struck 122 not out, while Apple slammed 124 to propel the West Indies Under-19s to 346 for six off their 50 overs after being sent in to bat.

Francis faced 148 balls and struck six fours and three sixes, while Apple's blistering knock came off just 65 balls, which included 10 fours and eight sixes.

Antiguan wicketkeeper/batsman Jewel Andrew, who slammed 81 in the West Indies opening warm-up match against Ireland that was abandoned as a no result on Saturday, chipped in with 31 off 36 balls.

West Indies captain Joshua Dorne



Tanez Francis

contributed 24 off 28 balls, and opener Zachary Carter got 15. Kai Wall picked up two for 36 in six overs.

In reply, Japan never challenged the victory target and was eventually bundled out for 117 in 42.3 overs.

Right-arm medium pacer R'Jai Gittens snapped up four wickets for eight runs in four overs, and

left-arm wrist-spinner Vitel Lawes grabbed three wickets for 28 runs in eight overs.

Antiguan leg-spinner Micah McKenzie took one for 12 in 5.3 overs, while compatriot and all-rounder Matthew Miller picked up one for 15 in three overs.

Only three of the Japanese batsmen managed to reach double figures. Taylor Waugh topscored with 32 off 100 balls, Chihaya Sekine struck 28 off 36 balls, and Gabriel Hara-Hinze cracked 15 off 21 balls.

Drawn in a competitive Group D alongside South Africa, Afghanistan, and Tanzania, the Young West Indies will open their World Cup campaign against Tanzania in Windhoek on Thursday, January 15.

Japan will contest Group A alongside Australia, Sri Lanka, and Ireland. The Japanese will launch their campaign against Sri Lanka in Namibia on Saturday, January 17.



CWI announces West Indies quad for T20 series against Afghanistan

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced its 16-member squad for the three-match T20 International series against Afghanistan, scheduled to be played at the Dubai Cricket International Stadium in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from January 19 to 22.

The series will serve as crucial preparation ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup scheduled to begin on February 6, with the final squad for this highly anticipated competition to be announced ahead of the three-match T20I series against South Africa that is set for January 27 to 31.

West Indies T20 Captain Shai Hope, along with established players Roston Chase, Akeal Hosein, and Sherrane Rutherford were unavailable for selection due to commitments in the ongoing SA20 tournament.

In Hope's absence, Brandon King has been appointed captain. King has previously led the West Indies in T20 Internationals, including during the home series against South Africa in early 2024, and brings valuable leadership experience into this assignment.

Shamar Joseph and Evin Lewis are back in action for this series, with both players successfully clearing return-to-play protocols after recovering from injuries sustained in previous series.

Antiguan Alzarri Joseph, who was also sidelined by injury towards the end of 2025, had been making encouraging progress in his return-to-play programme but has not been included at this stage as a precaution following medical review.

He will continue to be monitored and assessed to determine his eligibility and potential selection for the



Players of the West Indies T20 team

World Cup squad. Quentin Sampson, the Breakout Player of the 2025 Caribbean Premier League, has earned his maiden international call-up.

Sampson replaces Rovman Powell, who has been rested for the series alongside Jason Holder and Romario Shepherd as part of workload management.

Head Coach, Daren Sammy, noted that in addition to being utilized as a fine-tuning opportunity ahead of the ICC World Cup, this series facilitates the reintegration of key players coming off significant periods of absence.

“The opportunity to play competitive matches in subcontinental conditions is ideal, as it assists with our preparations and confidence building ahead of what will be a competitive T20 World Cup.

“It also presents a valuable platform to assess players who would've missed significant time towards the end of 2025, as well as those stepping into important roles for this series, prior to the selection of the final

squad for the international tournament.”

The squad will depart the Caribbean on Wednesday, January 14, and is scheduled to arrive in the UAE on Friday, January 16.

West Indies T20 Squad: Brandon King (captain), Alick Athanaze, Keacy Carty, Johnson Charles, Matthew Forde, Justin Greaves, Shimron Hetmyer, Amir Jangoo, Shamar Joseph, Evin Lewis, Gudakesh Motie, Khary Pierre, Quentin Sampson, Jayden Seales, Ramon Simmonds, and Shamar Springer.

Team Management Unit: Team Manager Rawl Lewis; Head Coach Daren Sammy; Assistant Coach (batting) Floyd Reifer; Assistant Coach (bowling) Ravi Rampaul; Assistant Coach (fielding) Rayon Griffith; Physiotherapist Dr. Denis Byam; Strength & Conditioning Coach Darc Browne; Massage Therapist Fitzbert Alleyne; Performance Analyst Avenesh Seetaram; and Content & Media Officer Jerome Foster

Eritrea set for international football comeback after six-year absence



Players of the Eritrea national football team

TANGIERS, Morocco (Reuters) - Eritrea is set to play its first football international in more than six years after entering the preliminaries for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations finals, to be played in March.

The isolated state on the Red Sea was drawn on Tuesday to take on Eswatini over two legs in the preliminary round in March, in what would be their first outing since a friendly loss to Sudan in January 2020.

Eritrea has not participated in any internationals since eschewing the opportunity to compete in World Cup and Cup of Nations qualification after players consistently defected while on away trips.

Eritrea has been ruled by President Isaias Afwerki since gaining independence from Ethiopia in 1993, and human rights groups consistently describe his rule as highly repressive.

Players and other team members defected after matches or tournaments in Angola in 2007, Kenya in 2009,

Tanzania in 2011, Uganda in 2012, Botswana in 2015, following a World Cup qualifier, and Uganda again in 2019.

It is estimated some 80 footballers have defected while playing for the national team abroad, none of them going on to pursue their football careers in exile.

Eritrea has not allowed teams to travel outside the country since members of its under-20 side fled to Uganda in 2019, but now seems to have had a change of heart.

Eritrea did, however, enter the last Cup of Nations preliminaries only to later withdraw.

If they play in the 2027 qualifiers, it will be the first ever Cup of Nations where every one of the 54 countries on the continent has competed.

The bottom 12 teams in the rankings were drawn on Tuesday into six knockout round ties, to be played home and away in March, to get the 2027 quali-

fiers underway.

The winners will advance to the group stage, along with Africa's 42 top-ranked teams, to be divided into 12 groups of four teams each.

The top two in each group then qualify for the finals, except in those groups where already-qualified co-hosts Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda are drawn to play.

Eritrea has no FIFA ranking because it has not played a fixture within world football's governing body's parameters of 48 months.

According to the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations preliminary round draw, Djibouti will meet South Sudan, Chad will tackle Burundi, Somalia will face Mauritius, the Seychelles will take on Lesotho, Eritrea will clash with Eswatini, and Sao Tome e Principe will oppose Ethiopia.

The team mentioned first plays at home in the first leg. The ties will be played between March 25 and 31.



THANK YOU

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To our incredible One Nation Team, from Management to Logistics, Marketing, Hospitality, Drivers, Engineers, Police, EMS, Solid Waste Management, Services Providers, and the Public Works Department, this festival was carried out to the highest standards of professionalism and expertise. We extend our heartfelt thanks for going above and beyond the call of duty.

To the incredible lineup of artists, from nightly hosts and DJs to our musicians, local, regional, and international, you were all chosen with intention and purpose. You understood the assignment and delivered first-class performances that made the One Nation Caribbean Music Festival high-energy, electrifying, memorable, emotional, and almost magical.

To our wonderful patrons, thank you for entrusting us with your presence at this festival.

Your support, adherence to changes, and unwavering dedication were crucial to its success. You helped create an atmosphere of unity and celebration that truly embodied the spirit of **"One People. One Love, One Nation"**

As we reflect on this achievement, we look forward to building upon this foundation for an even more spectacular One Caribbean Nation Music Festival on **January 9th and 10th, 2027.**

Yours in Gratitude,
The One Nation Team

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Alcaraz eyes Australian Open crown to complete career Slam

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - World number one Carlos Alcaraz arrives in Melbourne with only one mission in mind -- claim a first Australian Open title to become the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam.

The 22-year-old already owns titles at Roland Garros, Wimbledon and the US Open, and victory at Melbourne Park would see him eclipse Don Budge, who wrapped up the career Slam two days before his 23rd birthday by winning the 1938 French Open.

"I would rather win my first Australian Open than retain my French Open and US Open titles next year," Alcaraz, who turns 23 on May 5, said in November.

A first Melbourne triumph would be the Spaniard's seventh Grand Slam crown overall, making him the first men's player to do so before his 23rd birthday.

Yet for all Alcaraz's global success, Australia has been a curious blank on his resume. His run to the quarter-finals in each of the past two seasons is the furthest he has advanced.

This year's campaign carries an added layer of intrigue following his abrupt split with long-time coach Juan Carlos Ferrero, the former world number one who guided Alcaraz from teenager to multiple Grand Slam champion over seven years.

The breakup has been tennis's biggest talking point in the new season, with neither party elaborating on the reasons behind it. Whether Alcaraz will be affected without Ferrero in his corner is one of the tournament's central questions.

He enjoyed the best season of his career in 2025, winning two Grand Slam titles and reclaiming the world number one ranking, but Melbourne will be the first proper test of his new setup under intense pressure.



Carlos Alcaraz

Ferrero helped shape Alcaraz's strategy to deal with arch-rival Jannik Sinner, who took his Wimbledon crown in 2025.

The pair had a two-week training camp focusing on how to break down the Italian before Alcaraz beat him in the US Open final in four sets.

Despite that result, defending Australian Open champion Sinner is the favourite at Melbourne Park, rated slightly ahead of Alcaraz by bookmakers.

Alcaraz's improved serve and variation in his game proved key to overcoming Sinner at the US Open but the

Italian will have made his own adjustments for the new season.

Apart from Sinner, it is hard to imagine any other players capable of stopping Alcaraz.

Novak Djokovic knocked him out of last year's quarter-finals but the 38-year-old Serb was no match in their last meeting, losing in three sets in the US Open semi-finals.

Conquering Melbourne would see Alcaraz cross his last frontier in men's tennis while setting the stage for a first tilt at the coveted calendar Grand Slam.

Sea View Farm drop points but stay unbeaten in Second Division



The Sea View Farm football team

Leaders Sea View Farm FC maintained their unbeaten run but dropped points for the first time during their campaign in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division on Monday.

After winning all previous seven matches, Sea View Farm FC was held to a 2-2 draw by the CPTSA Wings at the Sea View Farm playing field.

Travis Austin snatched the equalizer for the CPTSA Wings with a 55th-minute conversion. His teammate Karanja Mack scored the opening goal of the match in the fourth minute to give

Wings a one-nil lead.

But goals by Justin Hilaire in the eighth minute and Jayden Browne in the 40th minute gave Sea View Farm a 2-1 advantage at halftime.

The result allows Sea View Farm to remain at the top of the Second Division standings by advancing to 22 points from eight matches.

The CPTSA Wings moved on to nine points after salvaging their sixth draw in eight matches.

Kelton Dalso Real Blizzard also kept their unbeaten run intact. Real Blizzard notched up their fifth win in seven matches with a one-

nil victory against the North Coast Academy Juniors at Mount Pleasant playing field.

Following a goalless first half, Taharie James broke the deadlock by snatching the winner with a strike in the second half.

The result carries Real Blizzard to 17 points, while the North Coast Academy Juniors remain on 10 points after slumping to their fourth defeat in eight matches.

Fort Road notched up their fifth win in eight matches by pulling off a 2-1 victory against Herberts United FC at the Pigotts playing field. The result allows Fort Road

FC to advance to 15 points.

The Urlings Golden Stars recorded their third win in seven matches with a 2-0 victory against the Liberta Blackhawks at the Urlings playing field.

Following a goalless first half, Kion Jackson scored twice after the interval to clinch victory for the Urlings Golden Stars.

Jackson had conversions in the 49th and 81st minutes as the Urlings Golden Stars moved on to 11 points, while the Liberta Blackhawks remain on one point after suffering their sixth defeat in seven matches.