

Ghanaian nurses arrive to boost health care system

Story on page 2



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The long-awaited arrival of nurses from Ghana, West Africa, took place Monday evening with an official welcome party, headed by Health Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph, on hand to greet them at the VC Bird International Airport.

“You are our brothers and sisters,” Sir Molwyn told the group leaders, during a brief welcome ceremony held at the airport. He explained that being brothers and sisters does not necessarily mean that they shared the same mother and father. In this case, he said he is referring to a common ancestry and a common humanity.

“This means that you have rejoined your family; you have rejoined your family. So my brothers and sisters I invite you to join me on Saturday evening when we can express the love and the warmth that already



filled this room tonight,” he remarked.

The Minister noted that the arrival of the nurses and accompanying of-

ficials – 119 male and female nurses and 6 officials – is perhaps the largest delegation ever to arrive in Antigua and Barbuda from Ghana by air, adding that this was done peacefully.

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He recalled that larger amounts may have arrived in the past, but under less favourable circumstances, an obvious reference to the Cross-Atlantic slave trade.

Sir Molwyn expressed his appreciation to the President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, who supported the recruitment of Ghanaian nurses to work in the healthcare system in Antigua and Barbuda.

The health minister also expressed appreciation to a Ghanaian minister who traveled to St. John's last year to meet with health officials and to work out the mechanics of having the nurses programme implemented.

In extending welcome to the nurses, Sir Molwyn assured them that there was no need for them to feel any trepidation about leaving their homes to work in Antigua and Barbuda. "You could not be at a better place than Antigua and Barbuda, and you should not entertain any trepidation or anxiety regarding the treatment that is waiting for you in Antigua and Barbuda. We love you! We are happy to have you! We have been estranged for too long," he exclaimed.

Special Director, Ministry of Special Initiatives in the Office of the President, Samuel Kojo Appiah-Ku-



bi, speaking on behalf of the president and the health minister as well as the team of nurses, extended much appreciation and thanks to the Minister of Health and his officials for inviting them to work here in the country.

"We were a little anxious, but as soon as we landed and met the delegation, we immediately felt at home. Thank you for the opportunity for our health professionals to participate in this health exchange. As you rightly indicated, this programme is very dear to the people of Ghana and the President of Ghana so much so



that our flight was delayed because the president wanted to personally be there to give us a warm send-off," he revealed.

Local News

Majors plans are being formulated to honour Sir Robin Yearwood's 50th anniversary in parliament



The member of parliament for St Phillip's North constituency, Sir Robin Yearwood, will celebrate a historic milestone in public life; fifty unbroken years as a member of the Antigua and Barbuda parliament.

A government statement said the Cabinet has appointed a Select Committee to coordinate activities to mark the historic milestone of 50 years of parliamentary service by The Honourable Sir Robin Yearwood, Antigua and Barbuda's longest-serving and most distinguished parliamentarian.

The Cabinet Select Committee comprises Prime Minister Gaston Browne, Attorney General Sir Steadroy Benjamin, and Minister for Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph. The Committee has been tasked with planning and overseeing commemorative activities in rec-

ognition of Sir Robin's five decades of continuous representation in the Lower House of Parliament.

As part of the observances, the House of Representatives will convene a Special Sitting on 18 February to formally celebrate and pay tribute to Sir Robin Yearwood's exceptional contribution to parliamentary democracy and national development. He was elected to office on February 18, 1976, and has never lost an election.

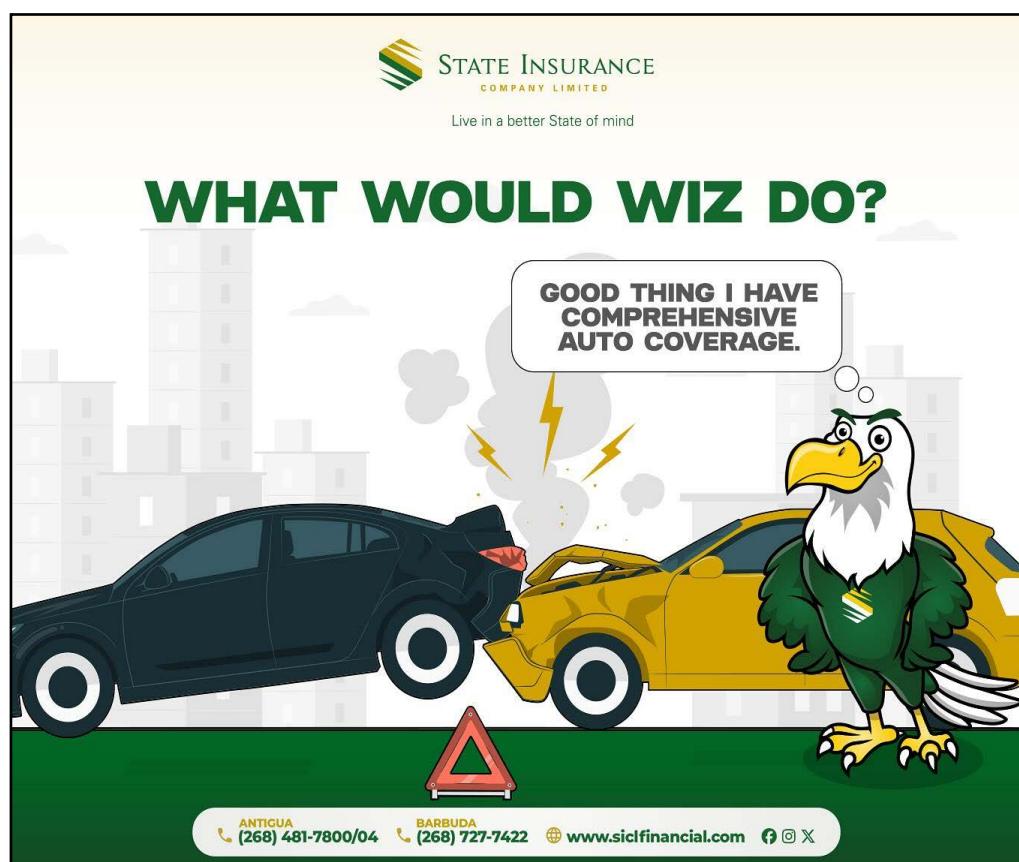
Prime Minister Gaston Browne paid tribute to Sir Robin's extraordinary legacy, noting: "Sir Robin Yearwood's fifty years of uninterrupted service in the House of Representatives is an achievement of rare distinction, not only in Antigua and Barbuda, but across the wider Commonwealth. His lon-

gevity, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the people he represents reflect a deep respect for democratic governance and public service. The nation owes him a profound debt of gratitude."

The Cabinet regards this milestone as a moment of national significance and looks forward to honouring Sir Robin's service, leadership, and enduring contribution to public life.

PM Browne said the planning will involve members of Sir Robin's family and already contact has been made with at least one family member.

Sir Robin's historic service is widely believed to be the longest by a parliamentarian within the Commonwealth.



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ABEC's Chairman Highlights Democratic Resilience at IICDEM 2026

Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission, Ambassador Arthur G.B Thomas, underscored the vital role of independent and professional election management bodies (EMBs) in safeguarding democratic confidence during his address at the EMB Leaders' Plenary of the India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM) 2026.

Speaking during the conference, held under India's Chairship of International IDEA, Chairman Thomas commended India for placing renewed global focus on reimagining democracy for the future and strengthening election management institutions as essential pillars of sustainable democratic governance.

"From the perspective of a small island democracy, electoral legitimacy today is shaped as much by public perception as by formal legal procedures," Thomas noted. "Even robust electoral frameworks are increasingly tested by complex information environments that challenge public trust."

He emphasized that while constitutional safeguards are important, the independence of EMBS must be continuously demonstrated through professional competence, transparent decision-making, consistent application of rules, and principled resistance to political pressure.

Drawing on Antigua and Barbuda's experience, Thomas highlighted that institutional credibility—rather than size or resources—is the decisive factor in maintaining public confidence in elections. He pointed to the importance of clear mandates, stakeholder consultation, and even-handed enforcement of electoral regulations, particularly in campaign conduct and media access.

Chairman Thomas also stressed the need for a long-term approach to election management, calling for a shift



Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission, Ambassador Arthur G.B Thomas

from episodic election preparedness to sustained institutional resilience. This includes investing in professional staff, continuous training, sound governance frameworks, and the careful adoption of technology that enhances transparency and trust.

"In the end, the future of democracy will depend not simply on innovation, but on trusted institutions capable of managing change without sacrificing legitimacy," he said. "Independent, professional, and transparent election management bodies are not merely administrators of elections; they are custodians of democratic confidence."

Chairman Thomas concluded by commending India's leadership during its International IDEA Chairmanship and thanking conference organizers for the opportunity to contribute to the global dialogue on democratic resilience.

The India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM) 2026 convened senior election officials, policymakers, diplomats, and experts from 43 election management bodies representing

democracies across the world. The conference provided a strategic forum to reflect on the evolving challenges of election administration and to strengthen international cooperation in safeguarding electoral integrity.

The conference reaffirmed a shared understanding that elections are not isolated events but complex public services that depend on resilient institutions, sound legal frameworks, professional administration, and sustained public trust. Participants emphasized that democracy does not sustain itself; it must be deliberately designed, carefully managed, and continuously protected.

Participants resolved to operationalize these five pillars through cooperation, innovation, and measurable action, supported by periodic review and peer exchange. To sustain momentum, it was proposed that the conference convene annually, with the next meeting tentatively scheduled for 3–5 December 2026 at IIIDEM, New Delhi.

A fire destroys Cassada Gardens house

For a third consecutive day, the St. John's Fire Station has had to respond to a call to extinguish a fire; this time it was a call to put out a house fire in Cassada Gardens.

Insp Bagot reported that on 26th January 2026 at 4:5am the St John's Fire Station received a telephone call stating that there is a structure on fire in Cassada Garden.

An immediate response was made with the No 17 and 19 fire tenders. On arrival at the scene the fire crew met an 18 X 40 feet structure fully engulfed in flames. Water was used from the fire tenders to control and extinguish the fire.



The building and its contents were completely destroyed by the fire. No one was injured during the incident. The fire brigade is in-

vestigating the origin of the fire.

On Saturday and again on Sunday, the firemen were

called to combat fires at Wireless Road (Saturday) and at the Bendals Primary School (Sunday).

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Dated the 26th day of January, 2026

Jedidiah Harris
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We wish to reassure the public that the price to refill LPG cylinders has **NOT** changed. This adjustment only applies to **new LPG cylinders** purchased through an LPG distributor, or at the WIOC facility on Friars Hill Road.

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- END -

Indian nationals in Antigua and Barbuda celebrate 77th anniversary of Republic Day



Indian community celebrates 77th Republic Day

The Indian diaspora in Antigua and Barbuda gathered on Monday to celebrate the 77th Republic Day of India, a day that reflects the enduring values of democracy, unity, and respect that guide that nation.

Early Monday morning, a Flag Hoisting Ceremony was held at the residence of the Honorary Consul of India, Vijay Tewani, and this was attended by Permanent Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Dr. Clarence Pilgrim, Deputy PS, Karen Cabrall, Ambassador Anthony Liverpool, officials from Metropolitan University, and members of the Indian diaspora.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chet Greene, conveyed his apologies and sent an official diplomatic note to External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar, reflecting the strong friendship, mutual respect, and enduring relationship between the two nations.

"This year's Republic Day theme, "Vande Mataram," reminds us of our deep love for the motherland and the sacrifices made for India's freedom and future.



"Here in Antigua and Barbuda, the Indian community continues to uphold these values while contributing meaningfully to the social, cultural, and economic life of this beautiful nation. We remain deeply grateful for the warmth, opportunities, and sense of belonging extended to us," Tewani stated.

He urged the Indian diaspora members that as they mark this special day, to always honour their heritage, strengthen the bonds between the two nations, and work together toward a future built on cooperation and mutual respect.

Local News

Antigua and Barbuda joins in observing International Holocaust Remembrance Day

The international community will pause today, January 27, to observe International Holocaust Remembrance Day, to remember the campaign to exterminate the Jewish people during the Nazi rule in Germany.

This as a delegation of Jewish leaders met on Sunday with Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Dr. Clarence Pilgrim. Included in the team was a very prominent and influential Jewish leader, who is Head of the Commonwealth Jewish Council affiliated to the Commonwealth Secretariat, Clive Lawton. He is very supportive of Antigua and Barbuda's efforts to host this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

In his remarks, Dr. Pilgrim noted that January 27 is the anniversary of the liberation of the largest Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau, by Soviet troops in 1945, and it was designated as International Holocaust Remembrance Day by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005. It commemorates the victims of Nazi persecution and the Holocaust.

"This solemn day, designated by the United Nations General Assembly



Jewish leader Clive Lawton and Ambassador Dr. Clarence Pilgrim

in 2005, commemorates the millions of men, women, and children who were victims of Nazi persecution and the Holocaust.

"We remember not only to honour the dead, but to reaffirm our collective responsibility to uphold human dignity, reject hatred in all its forms, and confront intolerance wherever it arises. The Holocaust stands as a stark reminder of the consequences of silence, indifference, and the erosion of moral courage," he stated.

Guided by the principles enshrined in the United Nations human rights framework, and echoed within the CARICOM Civil Society Charter, he observed, the world is reminded that respect for

human rights, equality,

and inclusion is not optional ideals, but shared obligations. "In that spirit, we must actively resist all forms of discrimination—against every race, culture, and orientation—and work to build societies grounded in justice, mutual respect, and solidarity.

"As we reflect, let us commit ourselves to remembrance with purpose: educating future generations, defending truth against denial and distortion, and strengthening our resolve to ensure that such atrocities are never repeated," he concluded.

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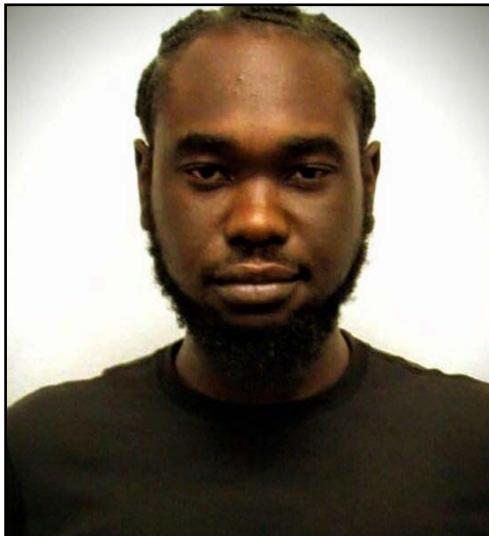


The case against Hezekiah Parker Jnr nears conclusion

The case against Hezekiah Parker Jnr. is nearing completion as the defendant has changed his plea from 'not guilty' to 'guilty' on charges of the illegal possession of firearms, ammunition and cannabis.

The matter stemmed from the arrest of Parker on January 10 this year after the police executed a search warrant at his Cedar Valley Heights home. During the search, the police found a M and P Smith and Wesson .380 pistol and seven (7) rounds of ammunition. He was charged for possessing these items without being the holder of a Firearms Users Licence. This is contrary to the Firearms Act of the Revised Laws of Antigua and Barbuda.

The police also found what appears to be the controlled drug, cannabis in the house and when they queried Parker to whom the cannabis belonged, he replied; "anything you see here belong



Hezekiah Parker Jnr

to me".

Parker also had a quantity of cash in both EC and US dollar notes. The officers told him they believed the money to be the proceeds from the sale of the controlled substance and counted the money in his presence and then

presented him with a receipt. The cash amounted to EC\$4,094.20 and US\$2,372.00.

When Parker appeared in court a few days later, he pleaded not guilty.

However, his attorney, Sherfield Bowen, made a motion before the court asking for the recusal of the presiding magistrate – Chief Magistrate Ngaio Emanuel – who ordered both the attorney and the Director of Public Prosecution to submit written briefs for the court's consideration.

On Monday, the court dismissed the submission for recusal and Parker changed his plea to guilty on all charges, except the charge of possession of cannabis with intent to transfer. This charge was later withdrawn by the court.

The matter returns to the court today (Tuesday) for plea in mitigation.



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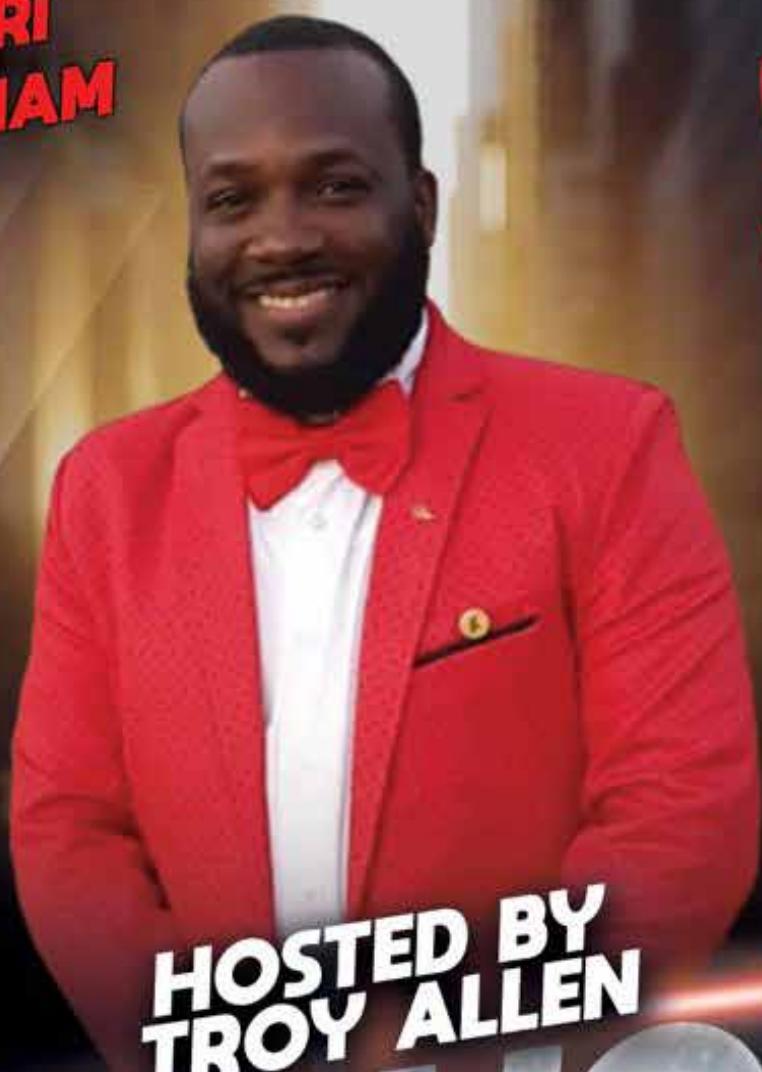
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Regional News

Gonsalves warns of systemic muzzling of SVG's Opposition



The floor of the Temporary Parliament Building in Glen is set to become a crucible for a profound democratic friction.

On January 25, 2026, Ralph E. Gonsalves, Leader of the Opposition and head of the Unity Labour Party (ULP), issued a formal challenge to Speaker Ronnia Durham-Balcombe. The catalyst was the Speaker's summary ruling that three of Gonsalves' questions—

scheduled for the January 29 sitting—were “inadmissible.”

Among the rejected inquiries was a question regarding a “notorious fact” observable by any sentient person: an abnormal presence of swarming flies across the islands. The Speaker ruled this question inadmissible under Standing Order 20(1)(b) and (c), claiming it included unverified statements of fact.

Gonsalves' rebuttal frames this as a metaphorical infestation of the body politic, where literal physical decay meets procedural obstruction. He argues that “science begins and ends with observation,” noting that he had traveled across the islands and observed the hazard personally, even challenging the media on December 15, 2025, to report on the nuisance. By utilizing a “narrow, legalistic” interpretation to block a question about a public health hazard, the Speaker appears to prioritize shielding the Minister of Health over the lived experience of the populace.

The Speaker further utilized Standing Order 20(1)(e)—the “one subject” rule—to block two critical inquiries: Question (1) regarding “His Majesty’s Prisons” and Question (3) regarding the role of the Prime Minister’s son acting as an aide.

Gonsalves argues this is a profound misapprehension of the rule. In the case of the Prisons question, the four sub-parts were designed to facilitate a “coherent, succinct” answer regard-

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ing a single institution. Regarding the Prime Minister's son, Gonsalves maintains that "the role of the son" is the single subject.

The use of technicalities to shield the executive's inner circle from queries about nepotism is an area about which Gonsalves claims the public is "rightly exercised." To remedy this, he has requested "favourable reconsideration" or that the questions be entered into the Order Book with alterations under Standing Order 20(2), rather than being silenced entirely.

The muzzling of the opposition is not an isolated incident; Gonsalves reveals that questions from Senator Carlos James and Senator Keisal Peters were also ruled inadmissible, suggesting a systematic exclusion of dissent. He warns that an "unduly restrictive" parliamentary process invariably leads to "extra-Parliamentary options." In a society where the national motto invokes Pax et Justitia (Peace and Justice), the closing of formal avenues for grievances threatens the very stability of the state.

Gonsalves pointedly contrasts the current NDP era with the ULP administration (2001–2025), which he says fostered transparency through:

- Allocating over four hours at every sitting for oral questions.
- Encouraging Speakers to avoid "unduly restrictive" interpretations.
- Answering questions even when they flouted technical rules regarding length or argumentative inferences.
- Broadcasting the entire proceedings on all media platforms to ensure the "man on the Colonarie omnibus" and the "woman vending in the Kingstown Market" remained informed

The New Democratic Party (NDP) government commands 14 Representatives and four Senators, bolstered by the Attorney General. Facing them across the aisle is a diminished opposition: one elected Representative and two Senators.

In such a "lopsided" environment, Gonsalves argues that "Question Time" ceases to be a procedural formality and becomes the only vital

organ of accountability left beating. When the government enjoys such a massive numerical advantage, the burden of impartiality shifts entirely onto the Speaker.

Gonsalves contends that if the gatekeeper adopts an overly restrictive lens, the opposition is effectively silenced, leaving the public to wonder what a government with such total control might be attempting to hide. The challenge against Speaker Ronnia Durham-Balcombe is rooted in a fundamental question of perceived bias. Before taking the Chair, Durham-Balcombe served as the President of the Women's Arm of the NDP. Her presence on the recent campaign trail was defined by what Gonsalves characterizes as "partisan vitriol."

In the delicate machinery of parliamentary procedure, the Speaker must

be more than a referee; they must be a neutral arbiter whose impartiality is "generally recognised."

Gonsalves argues that in the "intensity of competitive politics" inherent to a small multi-island society—where partisan familial relations often overlap—the Speaker's background makes her rulings on "orderliness" inherently suspect. To bolster this, he cites the foundational doctrine of the Westminster system:

"Confidence in the impartiality of the Speaker is an indispensable condition of the successful working of procedure, and many conventions exist which have as their object not only to ensure the impartiality of the Speaker but also to ensure that her impartiality is generally recognised." — Erskine May: Parliamentary Practice (St. Vincent Times)



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Regional News

Amber Group and Beharry Group launch IT joint venture to power Guyana's digital future



Amber Group and Guyana's Beharry Group have entered into a joint venture to establish a new IT and cybersecurity services company, Beharry-Amber Technologies Inc, marking a major milestone in the region's digital transformation journey.

According to Amber Group in a media release, the joint venture reflects a shared

vision to address a critical gap in Guyana's technology landscape.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Beharry Group, Suresh Beharry, stated that Guyana is at a pivotal moment in its development, where digital infrastructure and cybersecurity are no longer optional but essential.

He noted that the vision

behind the joint venture is to support Guyana's modernisation journey by building strong, reliable and future-ready technology capabilities.

He added that Amber Group stood out as a partner due to its proven delivery record, depth of expertise and shared commitment to long-term impact across the region.

Founder and CEO of Amber Group, Dushyant Savadia, expressed his appreciation for the partnership and the trust placed in Amber by Beharry Group.

He described the collaboration as far more than a commercial venture, emphasising that it represents a shared commitment to Guyana's growth, resilience and technological advancement.

He highlighted Beharry Group's longstanding con-

tribution to national development and noted that the joint venture will play a meaningful role in strengthening digital infrastructure, improving cybersecurity readiness and supporting the country's rapid economic expansion.

Amber Group said Guyana's rapid economic expansion and strong government focus on digital transformation require a comprehensive, locally anchored technology partner capable of delivering end-to-end IT and cybersecurity services at scale.

It added that the partnership directly responds to that need, creating a one-stop technology platform that will serve both government and private sector clients, meeting domestic as well as regional demand. (Jamaica Observer)



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US imposes visa restrictions on Haiti Transitional Presidential Council members

The Donald Trump administration says it is taking steps to impose visa restrictions and revoke the visas of two Haitian Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) members and their immediate family members including their children.

“These actions are being taken due to the TPC member’s involvement in the operation of gangs and other criminal organisations in Haiti, including through interference with the Government of Haiti’s efforts to counter gangs designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) by the United States (US),” said US Department of State Principal Deputy Spokesperson Thomas “Tommy” Pigott.

He did not name the TPC members, but said the action is being taken under the US Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), which generally bars entrance to those whose entry or proposed activities have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for our nation.

“The United States remains committed to supporting Haiti’s stability and to partnering with Haitian authorities to fight gang violence in Haiti. The Haitian people have had enough with gang violence, destruction and political infighting. The Trump administration will promote accountability for those who continue to destabilise Haiti and the region,” Pigott added.

Pigott said US Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke with Haitian Prime Minister Alix Fils-Aimé last Friday in reaffirming the administration’s support for the French-speaking Caribbean Community’s (Caricom) stability and security.

He said Rubio “emphasised the importance of his continued tenure as Haiti’s Prime Minister to combat terrorist gangs and stabilise” the country. “The current violence caused by gangs can only be stopped with consistent, strong leadership, with the full support of the Haitian people,” Pigott



said, noting that Rubio added that the TPC “must be dissolved by February 7 without corrupt actors seeking to interfere in Haiti’s path to elected governance for their own gains”.

“Haiti’s leader must choose Haiti’s stability. The United States will ensure there is a steep cost for corrupt politicians who support vicious gangs and wreak terrorism on Haiti,” Pigott said.

As powerful gangs continue to expand their control across the country, senior United Nations (UN) officials warned the security council last week that Haiti’s deepening crisis has reached a critical phase.

With the political transition set to expire on February 7, UN officials cautioned that escalating violence, entrenched criminal networks and mounting humanitarian needs risk pushing Haiti further into instability unless security and political efforts are urgently sustained.

The head of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), Carlos Ruiz-Massieu, said the country had entered a “critical phase” in efforts to restore democratic institutions, calling on Haitian actors to contain political fragmentation and prioritise elections.

“Let us be clear: the country no longer has time to waste on prolonged internal struggles,” he said, stressing the need for continuity of governance arrangements beyond the February deadline and sustained coordination to bring the transition to a close.

Ruiz-Massieu said recent steps to-

ward elections were encouraging, citing the adoption of an electoral decree on December 1 and the publication of a calendar for going to the polls later that month.

He said new provisions on voter registration, overseas voter participation and women’s representation could boost inclusivity if effectively implemented.

But the UN said progress on the political front is unfolding against a deteriorating security landscape.

The UN said gangs continue to mount coordinated attacks, control key economic corridors and agricultural regions, and force mass displacement stretching police and humanitarian capacity to the limit.

The murder rate in 2025 rose by nearly 20 per cent compared with 2024, Ruiz-Massieu said.

He said some security gains have been made, stating that police operations, supported by the security council-authorised Gang Suppression Force, have reopened roads in parts of Port-au-Prince and the Artibonite Department, while state presence around the capital’s Champ de Mars has been gradually restored.

However, Ruiz-Massieu cautioned that such gains remain fragile and risk reversal without sustained pressure and basic service delivery.

John Brandolino, acting executive director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), said the evolving violence reflects a deeper transformation of Haiti’s criminal landscape.

Both officials underscored the importance of the transition of the Multinational Security Support Mission into the Gang Suppression Force (GSF) and the establishment of the UN Support Office in Haiti, calling for predictable funding and continued international backing.

Beyond security, the UN said the humanitarian situation remains dire. (CMC)

Seven people killed and one injured in private jet crash in Maine

Seven people were killed and one was seriously injured after a private jet crashed while taking off from Bangor International Airport in the US state of Maine.

The Bombardier Challenger 600 went down at around 19:45 local time (00:45 GMT on Monday), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said. The lone survivor of the crash was a member of the flight crew.

The incident came as a dangerous winter storm barrelled across a large swathe of the US, killing several people and leaving hundreds of thousands without power. Pilots had reportedly been struggling with visibility at the airport before the crash.

Bangor remains under a winter storm warning until Tuesday, with heavy snowfall forecast.

In a short report issued on Monday, the FAA said that the jet carrying eight people "crashed under unknown circumstances on departure" on Sunday evening.

The statement added that the aircraft "came to rest inverted and caught fire".

Bangor International Airport said following the incident that it had closed and that emergency crews were responding. The incident remains under investigation, and officials have not



released the identities of the victims.

Public records show that the plane is registered to a law firm in Houston, Texas.

Audio from air traffic control, reported by the BBC's US partner CBS News and published by LiveATC.net, captured discussions between controllers and pilots minutes before the crash concerning poor visibility, though it was unclear which aircraft were heard in the communications.

Shortly afterwards, a controller was heard saying there was "a passenger aircraft upside down". Images from the scene showed smoke and flames

on the runway.

The disruption came amid widespread travel chaos due to the storm, with more than 11,000 flights cancelled and nearly 5,500 delayed across the US on Sunday, according to tracker FlightAware.

Airports in Philadelphia, Washington DC, Baltimore, North Carolina, New York and New Jersey were among those affected.

Between 10 and 16 inches (25-40cm) of snow is forecast to accumulate in parts of Maine, including Bangor, by Tuesday morning, according to the National Weather Service. (BBC)

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Ferry carrying more than 350 people sinks off the Philippines, killing at least 18



A ferry with more than 350 people on board sank early Monday near an island in the southern Philippines, killing at least 18 people, officials said.

Rescuers saved hundreds more, while a fleet of coast guard and naval ships searched for those still missing.

Coast guard officials said the cargo and passenger ferry apparently encountered technical problems and sank after midnight.

The steel-hulled vessel abruptly tilted

to one side and took on water, hurling people into the sea in the darkness, according to a rescued passenger who lost his 6-month-old baby.

“My wife lost hold of our baby and all of us got separated at sea,” a distraught Mohamad Khan told a volunteer rescuer, Gamar Alih, who posted a video of Khan’s remarks on Facebook.

He said he and his wife, who had been holding their child, were rescued, but the baby drowned.

His wife wept by his side as Khan recounted their ordeal.

The M/V Trisha Kerstin 3 was sailing in good weather from the port city of Zamboanga to southern Jolo island in Sulu province with 332 passengers and 27 crew members.

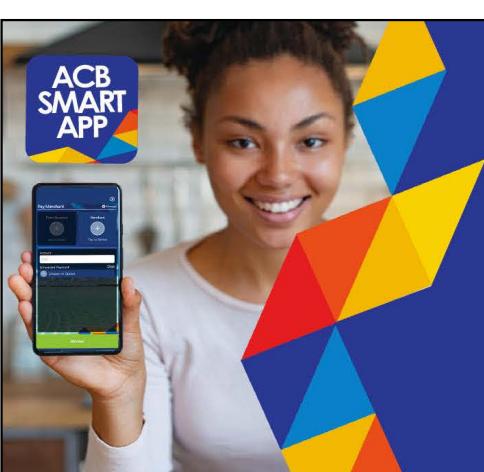
It sank about a nautical mile (nearly 2 kilometres) from the island village of Baluk-baluk in Basilan province, coast guard Commander Romel Dua told The Associated Press.

“There were two coast guard safety officers on board and they were the first to call and alert us to deploy rescue vessels,” Dua said, adding that the two safety marshals survived.

Rescuers saved at least 316 passengers and crewmembers retrieved 18 bodies, officials said.

Coast guard and navy ships, along with a surveillance plane, an air force Black Hawk helicopter and fleets of fishing boats carried out search and rescue operations for about two dozen people believed missing off Basilan, Dua said.

The cause of the ferry sinking was not immediately clear and there will be an investigation, Dua said. The coast guard had cleared the ferry before it left the Zamboanga port, and there was no sign of overloading, he said. (AP)



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Gunmen kill 11 in attack at Mexican football match

Gunmen opened fire on football fans after a match in central Mexico, killing 11 people and injuring a dozen more in a region plagued by violence blamed on organized crime, local authorities said.

Armed men stormed into a community football ground after Sunday's match in Salamanca, a small city of 160,000 people in Guanajuato state.

The city said 10 people died on the scene, and another later in hospital. Twelve people were wounded, including a woman and a child.

Mayor Cesar Prieto urged the national government to help "restore peace, tranquility, and security" in his community, blaming the violence on organized crime groups.

"We are going through a grave moment, a serious social breakdown. There are criminal groups trying to subdue the authorities," he said.

Also in Salamanca, four bags containing human remains were discovered Saturday night, while in two nearby communities, six people were killed the same day.

Last week, there was a bomb threat at a Salamanca-based refinery of state oil company Pemex.

Guanajuato in central Mexico is a thriving industrial hub and home to



several popular tourist destinations, but also the country's deadliest state due to gang turf wars, according to official homicide statistics.

Much of the violence in Guanajuato is linked to conflict between the Santa Rosa de Lima gang, which engages in oil theft, and the Jalisco New Generation drug cartel — one of the most powerful in the Latin American nation.

A manhunt was under way for the shooters.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has said Mexico's homicide rate

in 2025 fell to its lowest level in a decade as a result of her administration's national security strategy. Experts are not convinced by the figures.

Criminal violence — most of it linked to drug trafficking — has claimed more than 480,000 lives in Mexico since the start of a crackdown on cartels in 2006.

More than 120,000 other people have gone missing — many forcibly recruited by cartels or kidnapped. Mass graves or unburied body parts are regularly unearthed in the crime-riddled nation. (AFP)



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Sports News

Losing start for Antiguans in CONCACAF Women's Under-17 Qualifiers



The players of Haiti celebrate after scoring one of their goals against Antigua and Barbuda in their opening Group C game in the 2026 CONCACAF Women's Under-17 Qualifiers at Stadion Rignaal 'Jean' Francisca in Willemstad, Curacao, on Sunday, January 25, 2026. (Photo courtesy of CONCACAF)

The Antigua and Barbuda national team got off to a disappointing start in the opening round of the 2026 CONCACAF Women's Under-17 Qualifiers in Curacao on Sunday evening.

The Antiguans launched their campaign in Group C with a humiliating 6-1 loss against Haiti at Stadion Rignaal "Jean" Francisca in Willemstad.

The opening goal for the Haitians came in the 19th minute when **Keisha Gue** knocked in a ball off her chest.

Haiti doubled the lead soon after, in the 22nd minute, as **Kerdina Lamour** stole the ball, danced past defenders with great skill, and unleashed a low blast into the back of the net.

Gue got her second goal of the game in the 30th minute as a bad clearance led to a goal from the middle of the area.

The fourth Haitian goal landed in the 53rd minute when Gue slipped in a fantastic through ball to **Kyrah Lormil**, who hit past the Antiguan goalkeeper.

Adjani Kamanzi-Mondestin gave

Haiti a five-nil lead in the 65th minute with a powerful shot from the left side of the box.

Antigua and Barbuda avoided the shutout as **Keitonya Skepple** blasted a rocket from the right side to score a consolation goal in the 79th minute.

Lamour put the finishing touches on Haiti's win in the 86th minute as she knocked in a loose ball to record her brace.

Guatemala earned a one-nil victory over the Cayman Islands in the other opening-round Group C match at the same venue.

The only goal of the encounter came in the 85th minute, as a pair of second-half substitutions linked up when **Monica Martínez** found **Emery Aguilar** for the tap-in that secured the win and three points for Guatemala.

National teams from 29 member associations are contesting the opening round of the 2026 CONCACAF Women's Under-17 Qualifiers.

The teams are divided into six groups and are contesting the first phase of

the qualification process for the 2026 FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup from January 24 to February 2.

The first-round matches are taking place in four countries. Aruba is hosting Group D, Group B is being played in Bermuda, Curacao is hosting Groups F and C, and Groups A and E are being played in Nicaragua.

Antigua and Barbuda are competing in Group C alongside Haiti, Guatemala, the Cayman Islands, and St. Lucia.

The Antiguans will face Guatemala on Tuesday, January 27, the Cayman Islands on Thursday, January 29, and then play their final match against St. Lucia on Saturday, January 31.

After the round-robin group stage play, the six group winners and the two best second-place finishers will advance to the final round.

They will be joining the four top-ranked teams in the region, which received a bye to the final round. They are Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the United States of America (USA).

Blackhawks and Lions get second win in ABCA two-day contest



Karima Gore

The PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks and CMW New Winthorpes Lions maintained their successful start, recording the only win during the second round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Two-Day Championship over the weekend.

The Blackhawks continued their campaign for a fifth consecutive title with a commanding innings and 74-run victory against Tertiary Institutions and Schools at Ball Beef in Liberta.

Tertiary Institutions and Schools were bundled out in their first innings for 58 in 34.5 overs after being sent in to bat. Captain and left-arm spinner Karima Gore snapped up five wickets for six runs, and off-spinner Rahkeem Cornwall grabbed five for 13.

In reply, Gore and Elroy Francis Jr. both hit half centuries as the Blackhawks declared their first innings at 198 for four in 35 overs. Gore slammed 63, Francis Jr. struck 51, opener Tarek Charles scored 35, and Michael Greaves made 30.

Facing a deficit of 140 runs, Tertiary Institutions and Schools crashed to 66 all out in 32.5 overs in their second innings. Off-spinner Kofi James bagged four for 25, and Gore claimed three for 18.

The New Winthorpes Lions also claimed their second win in as many matches by pulling off a 72-run victory against the Pigotts Crushers at the Pigotts playing field.

Chasing a victory target of 159 to win, the Pigotts Crushers were bundled out for 86 in 34 overs in their second innings. Demari Benta claimed four for 20.

The Lions were all out in their first innings for 261 in 53.1 overs after being sent in to bat. Opener Tyrone Williams Jr. hit a top score of 56, Ishmael Peters cracked 51, Alzarri Joseph struck 42, and Jedidiah Martin scored 39. Tyree Moore captured five for 27.

Carlon Tuckett hit a top score of 38 in the Pigotts Crushers' first innings

of 156 all out in 37.5 overs. Zishan Motara bagged four for 24.

The New Winthorpes Lions then crashed to 53 all out in 20.2 overs in their second innings. Tyree Moore grabbed three wickets for four runs, and Xaveek Toppin picked up three for 13.

The other three second-round matches all ended in draws. The Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) Bethesda Golden Eagles and the All Saints Pythons fought to draw at Bethesda.

Scores: All Saints Pythons 140 all out in 37.5 overs (Keno Goodwin 4/33, James Cornelius 3/40) and 134/7 in 26 overs (Demetri Lucas 43); Bethesda Golden Eagles 144/9 declared in 53.5 overs (Tron Payne 58, Kevin Pitman 53; Demetri Lucas 4/29, Kenrick Scott 3/7).

The Bolans Blasters and WES Rising Sun Spartans played to a draw at Rising Sun.

Scores: Bolans Blasters 169/9 in 44 overs (Gershum Phillip 47); Rising Sun Spartans 202/6 in 45.5 overs (Jeremiah Louis 97, Royal Richards 58; Dimitri Adams 3/29).

The Jennings Tigers and Empire Nation battled to a draw at the Factory Grounds.

Scores: Jennings Tigers 133 all out in 24.4 overs (Deran Benta 57; Justin Athanaze 5/38, Nathan Edward 3/57); Empire Nation 137/5 in 30 overs (Zianni Da Silva 63, George Elvin 38).



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Sports News

United returns to winning form to go second in Premier League



A starting XI of the All Saints United football team

Defending back-to-back champions All Saints United returned to winning form and moved into second place in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday night.

After their unbeaten run was ended in a one-nil loss to leaders Sandals and APUA Inet Jennings Grenades in their last outing in the first round, All Saints United romped to a commanding 5-2 victory against neighbours Attacking Saints in their opening second-round match at the ABFA Technical Center.

D'Andre Bishop and Raheem Deterville each scored twice for All Saints United. Bishop scored in the 29th and 63rd minutes, while Deterville had conversions in the 53rd and 58th minutes. Zafique Drew scored the other goal for All Saints United in the 49th minute.

The goals for the Attacking Saints were scored by Carl Osbourne in the 47th minute and Obafami Poyotte in the 86th minute.

Their ninth win in 12 matches allows All Saints United to move from third to second place with 29 points, three adrift of unbeaten leaders Jennings Grenades.

The Attacking Saints remain on 10 points after crashing to their eighth defeat in 12 matches.

Rakeem Joseph struck a hat trick as Old Road FC consolidated their position in fourth place with a 5-1 victory against struggling Ottos Rangers in the last game of Sunday's Premier Division triple-header.

Joseph had conversions in the 25th, 39th, and 56th minutes. The other goals for Old Road FC were scored by Rodney Lawrence in the 34th minute

and Shackwon Simon in the 45th minute.

Nyhiem Jones scored a consolation goal for the Ottos Rangers in the sixth minute.

Their eighth win in 12 matches allows Old Road FC to remain in fourth place by advancing to 26 points. The Ottos Rangers remain second from the bottom of the standings with four points after losing for the 10th time in matches.

There was no winner in Sunday's opening game as Garden Stars FC and Green City FC battled to a goalless draw.

The result allows Garden Stars to advance to 16 points after recording their fourth draw in 12 matches. Green City FC moves on to 12 points after salvaging their third draw in 12 games.

Pakistan delays decision on whether to go to T20 World Cup



ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan will decide by next Monday whether to participate in the T20 World Cup after disagreeing with the International Cricket Council's (ICC) move to bring Scotland into the tournament in place of Bangladesh.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi, who met with prime minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday, wrote on X that they had held a “productive meeting” over the World Cup issues.

“He (Sharif) directed that we resolve it while keeping all options on the table,” Naqvi said.

“It was agreed the final decision (on Pakistan’s participation) will be taken either on Friday or next Monday.”

On Saturday, the ICC included Scotland in Group C after rejecting Bangladesh’s request to shift their games from India to co-host Sri Lanka due to security concerns.

Political and sporting relations between the two nations were also strained when Bangladesh paceman Mustafizur Rahman was removed from the Kolkata Knight Riders IPL team earlier this month by order of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

“You can’t have double standards,” Naqvi said. “You can’t say for one country (India), they can do whatever they want, and for the others to have to do the complete opposite.

“That’s why we’ve taken this stand and made clear Bangladesh have had an injustice done to them. They should play in the World Cup; they are a major stakeholder in cricket.”

Pakistan, which also has strained political relations with India, is scheduled to play their World Cup games in Sri Lanka.

The 20-nation tournament is to be played from February 7 to March 8.



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CWI names Windies squad for 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced the 15-member squad to compete in the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup, which will take place in India and Sri Lanka from February 6 to March 9.

The selection follows an extensive assessment period and is aimed at assembling a group capable of competing consistently at the highest level, while adapting to the unique demands of subcontinental conditions.

Head Coach Daren Sammy, who captained the West Indies to their most recent triumphs in 2012 and 2016, said the squad reflects careful planning and a clear understanding of what will be required to succeed at the global event.

"We have selected a squad with balance, extensive experience, and a touch of mystery. We've got X-factor where it counts, hungry newcomers pushing the seasoned heads, and a group ready to fight to make the region proud."

"We've thought long and hard about what it takes to win in India and Sri Lanka, and we've come up with the best team to help us achieve that goal, and I firmly believe we will", he added.

Gudakesh Motie returns to the squad with renewed confidence after completing a development stint in South Africa in the lead up to and during the SA20.

Johnson Charles has been selected as the squad's backup wicketkeeper, with selectors noting that with the available player pool, his international experience and proven powerplay capability also provide valuable opening cover.

Quentin Sampson has also been included as a middle-order option. Antiguan fast bowler Alzarri Joseph, who continues his return-to-play process



Players of the West Indies T20 squad

after injury, has not been included in the squad.

While Joseph has made significant progress, he has not yet been cleared for high-intensity competition and will continue to work closely with CWI's medical and performance teams.

Captain Shai Hope spoke on the opportunity to represent the region on the world stage and expressed confidence in the group looking to make a deep run in this year's T20 World Cup tournament.

"World Cups are special, and as a player you want to play on the biggest stages possible," he said.

"This is an experienced group of players, and we are no strangers to playing in these conditions. We've got plenty of power and skill in the batting and quality bowlers who can adapt to conditions on any given day to help us compete and win matches consistently."

The squad has assembled in South Africa for the three match T20I series

against the Proteas from January 27 to 31. The three matches will serve as the West Indies final preparation before the opening fixtures of the T20 World Cup.

West Indies Squad for the ICC T20 World Cup: Shai Hope (captain), Johnson Charles, Roston Chase, Matthew Forde, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Gudakesh Motie, Rovman Powell, Sherfane Rutherford, Quentin Sampson, Jayden Seales, and Romario Shepherd.

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, Message Therapist Fitzbert Alleyne, Team Doctor Dr. Akshai Mansingh, Performance Analyst Avenesh Seetaram, and Content & Media Officer Jerome Foster.