

WEDNESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026 | VOLUME 8 ISSUE 75 | [WWW.POINTVILLE.AG](http://WWW.POINTVILLE.AG)

# Government to upgrade Border Control System

*Story on page 2*



**Health Minister Sir Molwyn Joseph, who led the welcome party for the Ghanaian nurses and officials when they arrived at VC Bird International Airport on Monday...was in for a bit of a surprise when the Ghanaian contingent presented him with a traditional African outfit.**

Photo courtesy: Wayne Mariette

# Government to upgrade Border Control System

The government has approved a major upgrade to the Department of Immigration's Border Management System (BMS) and e-Visa platform, marking a significant step forward in strengthening border security, improving efficiency at ports of entry, and enhancing the overall travel experience.

The upgrade will modernise systems that have been in operation for more than a decade and have reached the end of their functional lifespan. The new platform will introduce advanced technology designed to support the country's growing travel and tourism sector while ensuring alignment with evolving international security and aviation standards.

Key features of the upgraded system include enhanced passenger screening capabilities, automated processing of passenger in-



formation, and seamless integration across air and sea ports. The upgrade will also expand coverage to include Barbuda and introduce electronic gates (e-Gates) to facilitate faster and more efficient passenger movement.

The new system will strengthen security through improved biometric and watchlist functionality, expanded fingerprint databases, and upgraded reporting tools. It will also integrate with international law en-

forcement and aviation platforms, supporting compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards and future developments such as next-generation e-Passports.

In addition, the project includes a comprehensive upgrade of hardware and software, migration of existing data to the new platform, and the expansion of infrastructure across multiple ports of entry. Ongoing

maintenance, technical support, and the involvement of local service providers will ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the system.

The Cabinet believes that failure to modernise the existing infrastructure would risk operational delays at ports of entry, increased security vulnerabilities, and potential negative impacts on tourism and border control operations. The upgrade is therefore considered both timely and essential.

The Ministry of Information, Communication Technologies, Utilities and Energy emphasized that the modernised system will significantly enhance national security, improve service delivery, and position Antigua and Barbuda to meet future border management and travel facilitation demands.

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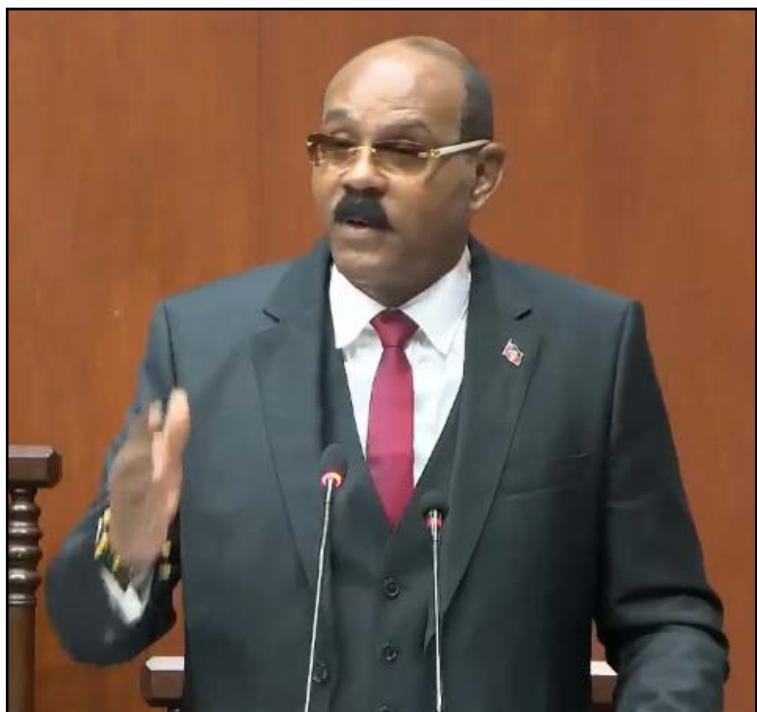
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# Local News

## Research shows that the decision not to have a hard lockdown during COVID-19 pandemic benefited Antigua and Barbuda



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Prime Minister Gaston Browne says research now shows that the decision not to enforce a 'hard' lockdown of the Antigua and Barbuda economy during the COVID-19 pandemic

was beneficial to the country.

PM Browne says despite skepticism from some quarters Antigua and Barbuda was the last Caribbean territory to lockdown because

of the COVID-19 pandemic and the first to open. The prime minister, who is also the country's finance minister, revealed that comparatively, Antigua and Barbuda did much better than neighbouring St. Kitts and Nevis, which followed conventional wisdom with a hard lockdown.

"We took a decision not to lockdown our economy. We allowed Global Ports Holding and other major capital projects to continue to the extent that they contributed to economic development during those slow years, the COVID years. Additionally, they kept a number of people employed during the period," the prime minister recalled.

According to PM Browne the research was undertaken by the government into the decision to continue to 'do business' with what he

termed 'a soft lockdown'. "We were the last to lockdown and the first to open in the Caribbean and when we compared the economic gains that we had during that period compared Kitts and Nevis, there was a net gain in the region of \$1 billion in economic activity as a result of the decision we took to pursue a **high-risk profile** to allow our economy to continue to function," he revealed.

In fact, he emphasized, if the government had pursued a hard lockdown similar to the ones implemented by other economies in the region, Antigua and Barbuda would still be suffering from the scars associated with the lock-down.

"Though it was considered to be somewhat risky, it was the right decision that we took at the time," he further emphasized.



# Local News

## Sir Molwyn gets a traditional African wear



Health Minister Sir Molwyn Joseph, who led the welcome party for the Ghanaian nurses and officials when they arrived at VC Bird International Airport on Monday... was in for a bit of a surprise when the Ghanaian contingent presented him with a traditional African outfit.

Sir Molwyn warmly welcomed the 119 health professionals and 6 officials to Antigua and Barbuda telling them that they are 'brothers and sisters' of the people of the twin-island nation.

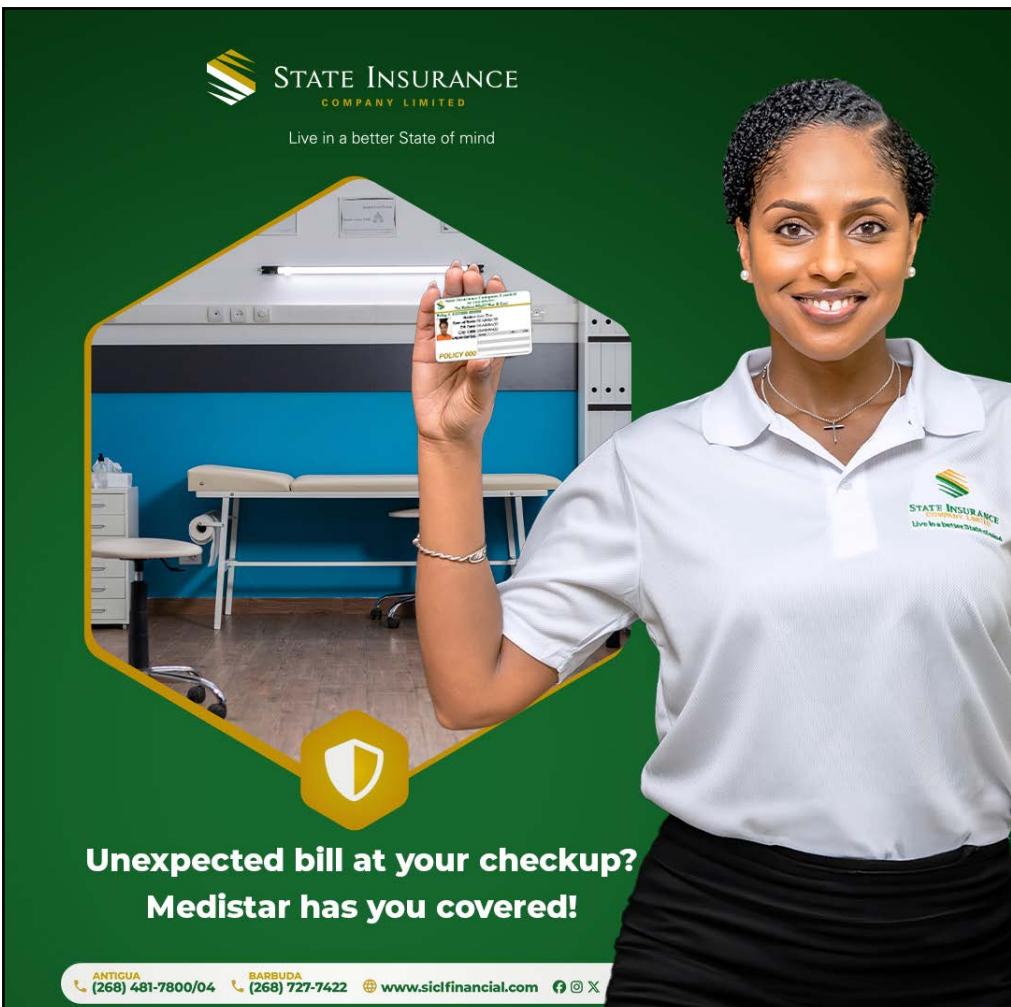
The health minister informed the group leaders that the airport welcome was just a precursor of a much grander event planned in their honour and slated for Saturday night.

He then indicated that he may appear dressed in traditional African wear, when as if on cue, the team members produced an African wear, called shmok, and presented it to the minister. "This is from northern Ghana and we are proud to present it to you minister," a represented stated.

They also helped to dress the minister with the outfit that also included a headwear.

Fully adorned in his African wear, Minister Joseph posed with the Ghanaians holding up the flag of Ghana.





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## ACP launches 'Name the Quay' competition for its new Upland Development

Antiguans and Barbudans near and far are invited to participate in a competition to name the new tourism development facility being constructed by the Antigua Cruise Port.

Global Ports Holding, through its local subsidiary, Antigua Cruise Port, has invested significant sums of money to undertake a tourism facility at Lower Newgate Street.

First phase of the facility – the cruise terminal – was officially opened last Saturday and ACP General Manager, Gasper George, says the terminal forms part of the broader Upland Development which he predicts will further reshape the port landscape, introducing enhanced passenger flow, commercial spaces, experimental offerings, and improved connectivity between the port and the city.

This major tourism attraction adjacent to the Fifth Berth is expected to be completed by mid-year and will be fully operational in time for the 2026-27 cruise tourism season.

### Competition Guidelines:

- Open to all Antiguans and Barbudans locally and across the diaspora
- Each submission must include a brief explanation (maximum 100 words)
- Proposed names must be original and not currently in official use in Antigua and Barbuda
- Names should reflect national culture, heritage, identity, and a future vision for cruise tourism
- Final selection rests with the Antigua Cruise Port

### Judging Criteria:

- Submissions will be assessed based on:
- Reflection of Antiguan and Barbudan culture and identity



- Clear meaning and strong symbolism
- Originality, distinctiveness, and respectfulness
- Ease of pronunciation and timeless appeal
- Suitability for permanent public use

The grand prize winner of the "Name the Quay" competition will receive a cruise trip for two, offering an opportunity to experience the newly opened cruise terminal firsthand as part of an unforgettable homeporting cruise experience from Antigua and Barbuda.

### How to Enter:

To request a "Name the Quay" entry form or obtain further details, please contact Antigua Cruise Port:

Email: [info@antiguacruiseport.com](mailto:info@antiguacruiseport.com)  
Submission Deadline: February 28, 2026

Terms and conditions apply.

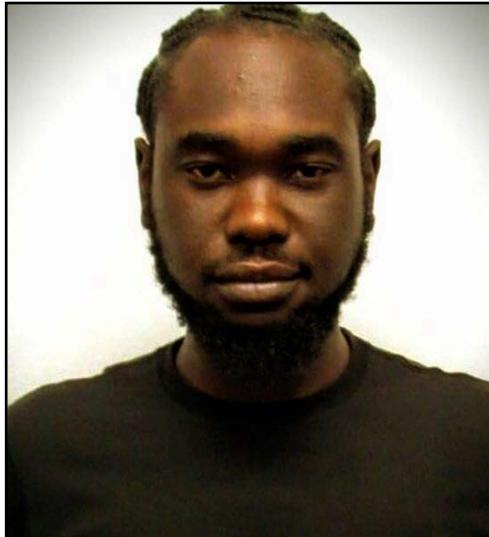
NOTE: Antigua Cruise Port reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to select, amend, or reject any submission. Submission does not guarantee selection or winning.

## Hezekiah Parker Jr. to serve 2-years 7-months in prison

Hezekiah Parker Jr. of Cedar Valley Heights has been sentenced to prison, following his conviction for firearm and ammunition-related offences.

The defendant appeared before Chief Magistrate Ngaio Emanuel at the St. John's Magistrate's Court on Tuesday, where he entered pleas to multiple charges arising from his arrest.

Parker Jr. pleaded guilty to Possession of an Unlicensed Firearm, Possession of Ammunition, and Possession of Cannabis. He pleaded not guilty to Possession of Cannabis with Intent to Supply.



Hezekiah Parker Jnr

The pleas were accepted by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), and the charge of posses-

sion with intent to supply was subsequently withdrawn.

On the charge of Possession of an Unlicensed Firearm, involving one Smith & Wesson .380 pistol, Parker Jr. was sentenced to two (2) years and seven (7) months at His Majesty's Prison.

For Possession of Ammunition, involving seven .380 rounds of ammunition, he was sentenced to six (6) months imprisonment. He was reprimanded and discharged on the charge of Possession of Cannabis, involving 100 grams of cannabis.

The court ordered that all sentences run concurrently.

## One man is in police custody charged with aggravated robbery



Police have arrested one man who is assisting with investigations into an alleged aggravated robbery that occurred in the Gunthorpes area on Monday, 26 January.

Reports indicate that around 8:00 a.m., two male suspects allegedly entered a business establishment and used a

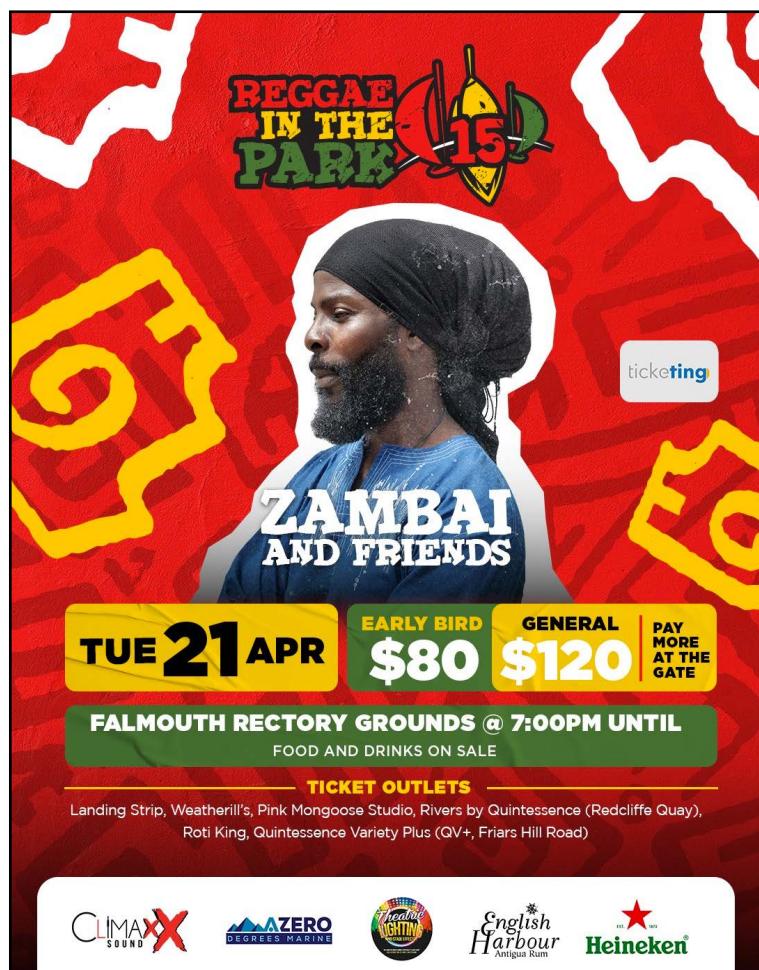
knife to rob the proprietor of a knapsack containing cash and other personal documents.

The suspects reportedly fled the area, and the stolen bag was later recovered.

On Tuesday, 27 January, police executed several search warrants at multiple locations in St. John's as part of the ongoing investigation.

One man was subsequently arrested on suspicion of aggravated robbery and taken into custody.

Investigations are ongoing.



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## Dadli Directory Jobs Launches WhatsApp Channel, Giving Job Seekers Faster, Cleaner Access to Opportunities



Job seekers across Antigua and Barbuda now have a faster and more organized way to access job opportunities with the launch of the official Dadli Jobs WhatsApp Channel, available at

<https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Vb4XKd542DcWtumySP19>.

Dadli Jobs, one of the largest and most active digital employment hubs in Antigua and Barbuda, introduced the channel to give job seekers a clean, announcement-only feed where verified job postings are delivered directly to their phones.

By following the channel, users can quickly see new vacancies, apply directly, and stay consistently informed, making it easier to act on opportunities as soon as they become available. The channel is ideal for unemployed persons, professionals, job changers, and anyone actively seeking work who wants reliable updates in one central place.

Dadli Jobs remains the most comprehensive employment platform in Antigua and Barbuda, supported by its high-traffic website, social media presence, and large WhatsApp job communities. Thousands of job seekers rely on the platform daily to connect talent with opportunities across multiple industries.

The launch of the WhatsApp Channel does not replace existing Dadli Jobs WhatsApp groups or the Dadli Directory website. All current groups will remain active and all job listings will continue to be published on the website. The channel simply adds another convenient option for users who prefer a streamlined, quiet feed focused purely on job alerts.

This expansion reflects Dadli Jobs' continued investment in improving how job seekers access information, reducing barriers to employment, and modernizing workforce connectivity in Antigua and Barbuda.

## NOTICE

**TO: WORSHIP, The Licensing Magistrate  
District "A" Magistrate's Court  
High Street  
St. John's Antigua**

**TO: COMMISSIONER OF POLICE  
Police Headquarters  
American Road  
St. John's Antigua**

### Notice: Application for Tavern License

I, Jedidiah Harris of Codrington Village Barbuda. With registered business situated at Thomas Street in Codrington Antigua and Barbuda DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE, that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the liquor licensing (Intoxication Liquor) Act Cap, 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as "Jedi's Classic Spirits." situated on Thomas Street in the parish of St. Johns Antigua and Barbuda

Dated the 26<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026

.....  
Jedidiah Harris  
268-725-2470



## PUBLIC NOTICE

### ADJUSTMENT TO LPG CYLINDER DEPOSIT

The West Indies Oil Company Ltd. (WIOC) wishes to advise the public that effective **1st February, 2026**, there will be a price increase in the refundable deposit required for LPG cylinders.

This adjustment is necessary due to inflationary costs from our suppliers due to higher manufacturing, procurement and shipping costs.

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.

#### Revised LPG Cylinder Deposits

Cylinder Type	Old Deposit (per cylinder)	New Deposit (per cylinder)	LPG Refill	Total for New Cylinder
20lb	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$32.00	\$142.00
25lb Composite	\$125.00	\$150.00	\$40.00	\$190.00
100lb	\$250.00	\$275.00	\$155.00	\$430.00

\*Deposit remains fully refundable upon return of the cylinder. Terms & Conditions are applicable.

We thank you for your understanding and continued support as we remain committed to providing safe, reliable, and affordable LPG service.

- END -

# Elfrida Payne-Abbott turns 100 years old!

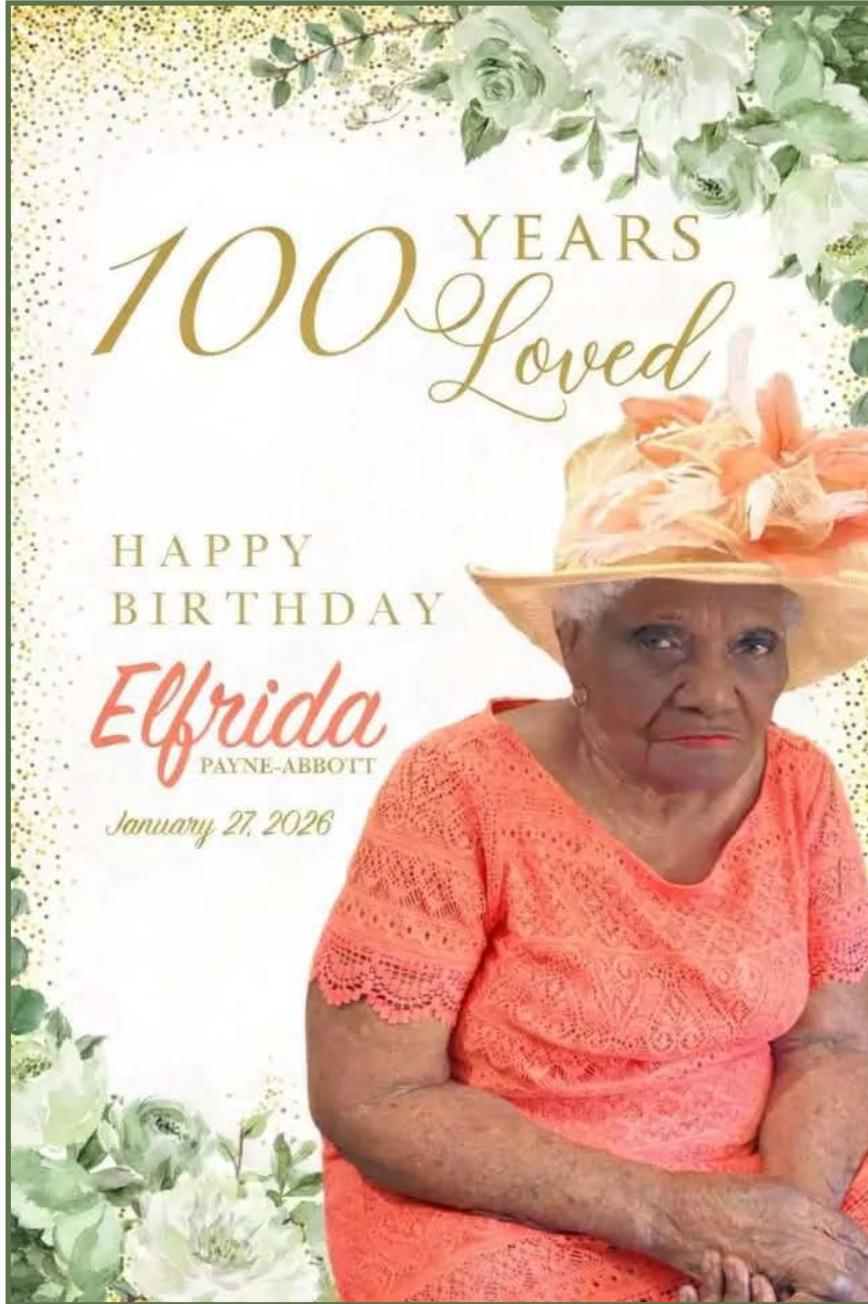


Photo courtesy: Wayne Mariette

Elfrida Payne-Abbott, affectionately known as Ms. Tiny, was celebrated by friends, family, and members of the community at the Lebanon Moravian Church on Tuesday. She marked her 100th birthday on January 27.

The centenarian, who was born in Seaview Farm in 1926, received a special greeting from Governor General Sir Rodney Williams, who presented her with a gift basket to commemorate the milestone occasion.

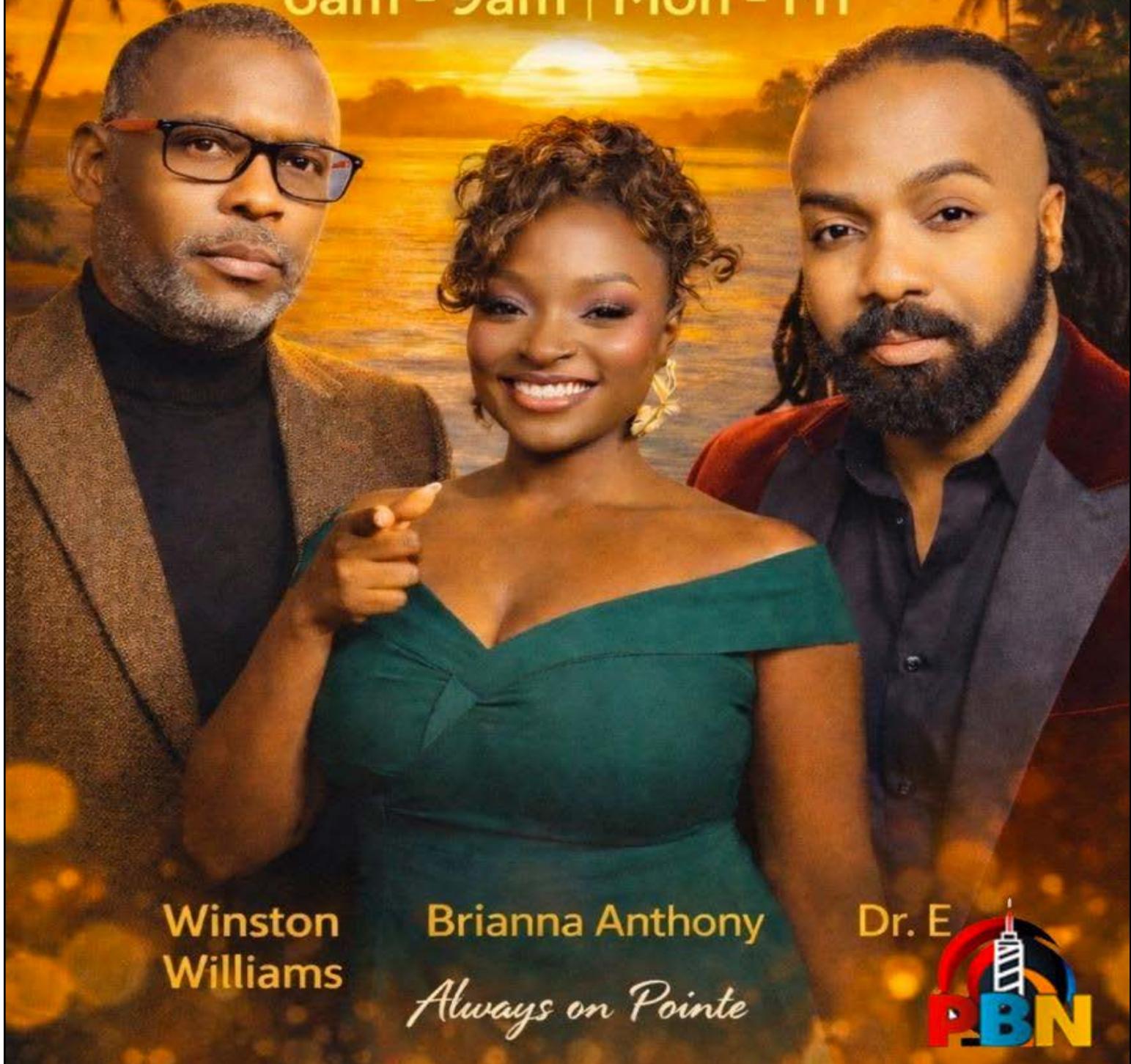
Ms. Tiny, who raised four children alone after her husband passed away when she was in her thirties, has lived a life guided by faith, hard work and resilience. She worked as a farmer, domestic worker, baker and entrepreneur throughout her life.

Her message to younger generations is simple: work hard, trust God, and stay connected to family.

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# Feature

## Six Months. One App. Thousands of Chances to Build Access

Diana does not want to lose her independence. At Potter's Primary School, she can use the bathroom on her own. She can access her classroom without assistance. These changes may appear small, but for a child with a disability, they are life-changing. In September, when Diana moves to secondary school, that independence is under threat.

Sir Novelle Richards Academy, the school closest to her home, does not have an accessible bathroom. Antigua Girls' High School, where Diana hopes to attend if she places in the top 100, is also not accessible. St. Mary's Secondary School has an accessible bathroom, but requires a lift to reach upper floors and transportation support. This is not a lack of ambition. It is a lack of infrastructure.

"When I met Diana in Grade 4, she had to ask for help every time she needed to use the restroom," said Joshuanette Francis of Good Humans 268 Inc. "That is not independence. I will not allow her to go backwards." Diana's story represents a larger issue affecting thousands. Roughly 16,000 people in Antigua and Barbuda live with disabilities, yet many secondary schools remain inaccessible. Children grow — but access often does not grow with them.

Through Project RED, Good Humans 268 is working to change that by retrofitting at least 10 schools across the island. This year, a new partner has made it easier for the public to be part of the solution: AllMart. For the next six months, anyone making a purchase on the AllMart App will have the option to donate toward accessibility at checkout. No separate fundraiser. No special event. Just a simple choice made during everyday shopping. "Accessibility should be everyone's responsibility," Francis said. "The AllMart App allows people to support the mission in a practical, consistent way."

Donations made through the app will

support accessibility upgrades at secondary schools, including lifts, bathrooms, and transportation solutions. Early assessments have been completed at Sir Novelle Richards Academy, Antigua Girls' High School, and St. Mary's Secondary School. While St. Mary's is currently the most cost-effective immediate option, all three schools remain part of the organization's long-term plan. A full cost comparison will be shared publicly in the coming weeks. Accessibility is not a one-time fix. Once built, it remains — supporting future students, teachers, and families.

For the next six months, every pur-

chase on the AllMart App is a chance to help build access. Good Humans 268 is encouraging the public to donate what they can, share the mission, and stay locked on their social media platforms for updates, videos, and more information as this year's accessibility work unfolds.

Because dignity should not depend on which school a child attends — and access should be built into the system, one step at a time.

**Joshuanette Francis**  
Founder and President, Good Humans 268 Inc.

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

**Medical Benefits Scheme Prevention Unit  
Private/Primary Government School  
Obesity Awareness Competition**

**What's in my Healthy 3D Lunchbox?**

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026 | MBS Courtyard, Nevis Street**

**GUIDELINES:**

1. Participants are required to be creative in making the lunchbox.
2. Foods from the Caribbean six food groups must be used to create the 3D model.
3. Your full name, the school you represent, and age must be written at the bottom of the box.
4. Your 3D healthy lunchbox must be submitted to the Prevention Unit on or before **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026**.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:**

- Creativity/Originality
- Appeal
- Color combination
- Nutrition Content:
  1. Inclusion of healthy options from all food groups
  2. No sugar sweetened beverages
  3. No processed meats
  4. Use of healthy snack options (low in salt, sugar, fats)

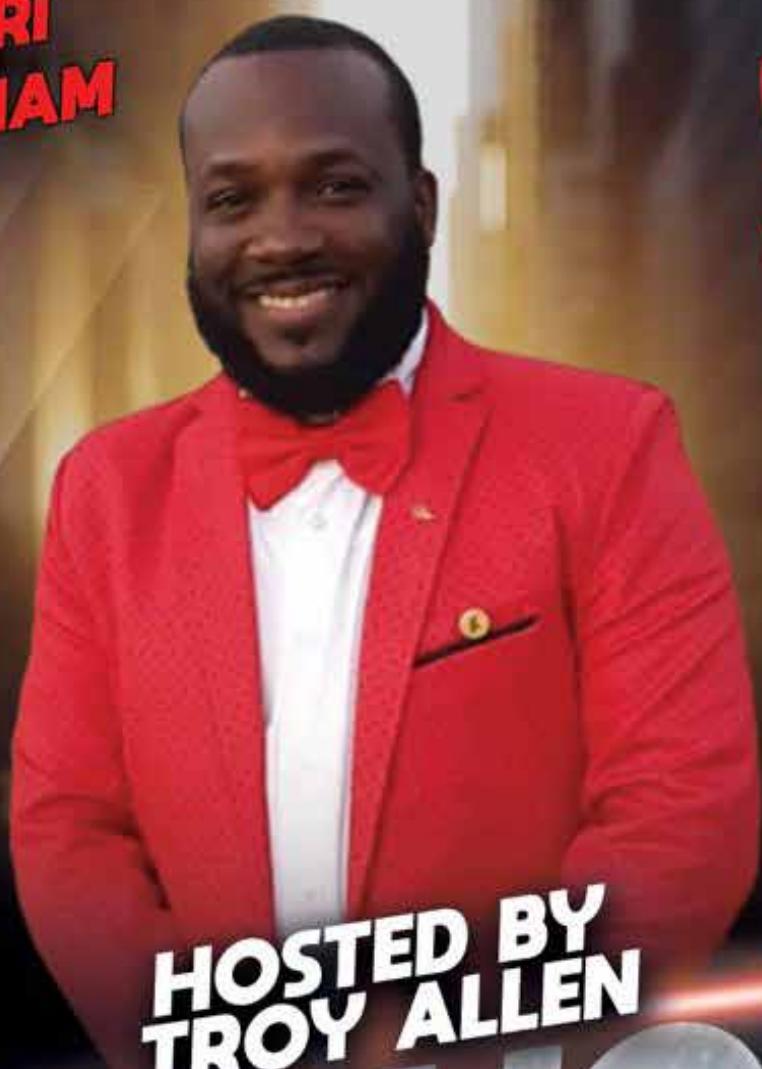
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- CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme
- Antigua and Barbuda National Youth Parliament
- Student of a University or Tertiary Institution
- Head Boy, Head Girl, or Prefect

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  - Video Editing & Lighting

### HOW TO APPLY

Email: [mediaabchogm2026@gmail.com](mailto:mediaabchogm2026@gmail.com)

Subject: **CHOGM Correspondents**

**DEADLINE: Friday February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026**





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# Regional News

## Jamaica has lost a musical titan, Gov't and Opposition remember Sly Dunbar



The Government and the Opposition have hailed veteran drummer and musician Lowell 'Sly' Dunbar as an extraordinary and influential figure in Jamaican music who contributed significantly to the musical landscape.

Dunbar passed away this morning after a period of illness.

In paying tribute, Prime Minister Dr Andrew Holness said Jamaica has lost a titan of music.

"Sly was an architect of sound. Alongside Robbie Shakespeare, he established a foundation that defined the era of reggae and dancehall. From the 'Taxi' label to his work with international superstars like Grace Jones and the Rolling Stones, Sly's influence was global," said Holness in a post on his social media.

The Prime Minister described Dunbar as a pioneer who integrated electronic elements into traditional reggae beats, thus keeping the music modern and relevant for decades.

Dunbar remained humble, he noted, despite international recognition and the Order of Distinction award.

"His contribution to our cultural heri-

tage is immeasurable. His legacy lives on every time a drum kit is played or a reggae record spins. On behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica, I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and the music fraternity," continued the Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, Minister of Culture Olivia 'Babsy' Grange described Dunbar as one of the greatest drummers ever, saying his passing is a great loss for reggae music.

"Sly and Robbie produced some of the best Jamaican music; they appeared on many records and backed some of our most outstanding artistes, including Bunny Wailer, Black Uhuru, Jimmy Cliff, Beenie Man, Chaka Demus and Pliers, Grace Jones, and Omi, among others," said Grange in a statement on Monday.

"Sly and Robbie were the 'go-to'. They produced and/or played on tracks for several international acts, including No Doubt, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, the Fugees, and Simply Red. Sly was a truly gifted and remarkable musician and producer," said Grange, as she sent condolences to his family.

Meanwhile, the Opposition People's

National Party, through its Spokesperson on Culture, Nekeisha Burchell, described Dunbar as a world-class musician and a creative force in the exportation of Jamaica's culture worldwide.

"Sly Dunbar was rhythm, innovation, and excellence in motion. He represented the very best of Jamaican creativity—bold, original, and uncompromising in its quality. His contribution to our music industry helped position Jamaica as a cultural superpower long before the term became fashionable," Burchell said.

Through his work, Burchell said Dunbar influenced countless artistes across genres and generations, and opened doors for Jamaican musicians, producers, and creatives to access global markets and collaborations.

"His legacy goes beyond awards, living in the sound of Jamaican music. That legacy places a responsibility on us to protect, invest in, and grow the creative industries that icons like Sly helped to build," she said, while also extending condolences to Dunbar's family. (Jamaica Gleaner)

## Azruddin Mohamed declared Guyana's Leader of the Opposition



Azruddin Mohamed of We Invest in Nationhood (WIN) was on Monday declared Guyana's new Leader of the Opposition following an election held among Opposition Members of Parliament at the Parliament Buildings.

Amanza Walton-Desir, the lone Member of Parliament from the Forward Guyana Movement, voted for Mohamed, along with the 16 We Invest in Nationhood MPs; the 12 APNU+ MPs left

the meeting after the nomination was made.

Azruddin Mohamed, along with his father Nazar Mohamed have been indicted on several charges in the United States and are now facing extradition proceedings.

They are charged with, among other things, money laundering, wire and mail fraud, bribery and tax evasion and related allegations. (St. Vincent Times)

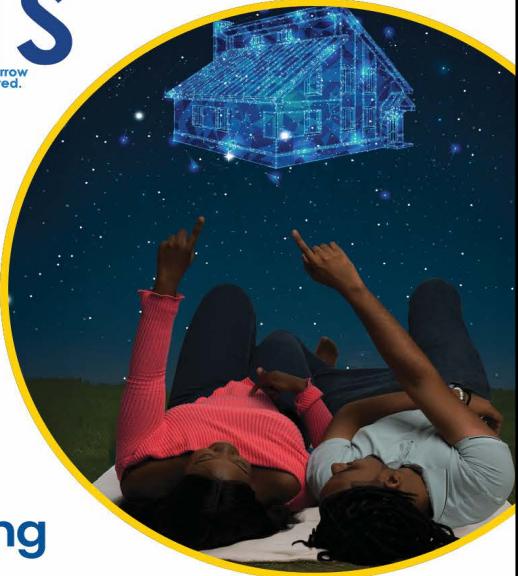


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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY



# Regional News

## Migrant registration website sees over 137,000 hits in first day



By 1 p.m. on Monday, the Government's Migrant Registration Framework had received 137,198 hits to its website.

According to Homeland Security Minister Roger Alexander, the online programme was launched at 12 a.m. on Monday morning.

By 1 p.m. the website had registered 137,198 hits, Alexander stated via What's App.

Information provided by Alexander stated that as of 1 p.m., 1,611 persons started applications but did not complete the process.

The number of completed applications was at 599, he advised.

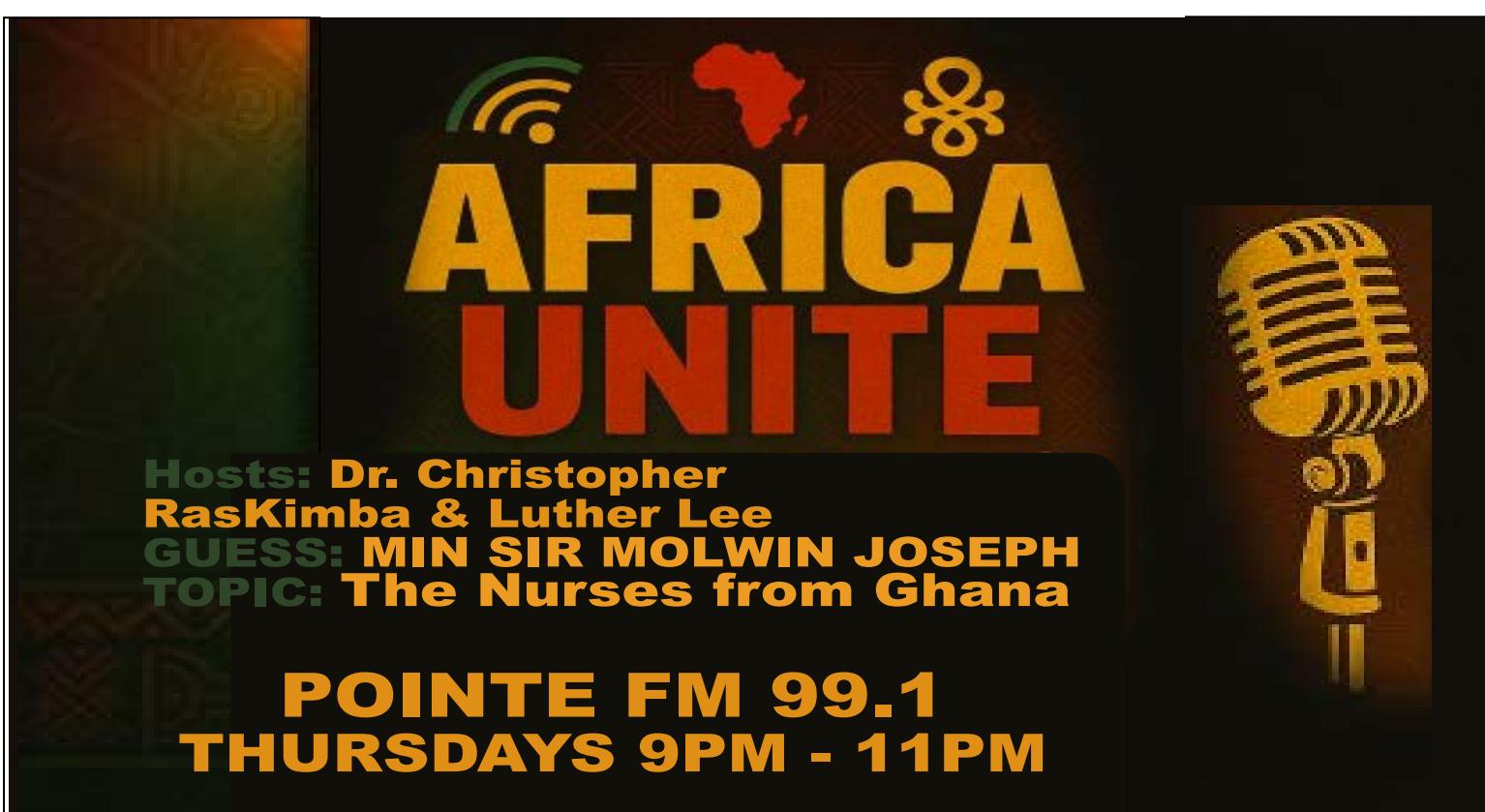
The Government earlier this month announced its continuation, with some changes, of the previous administration's migrant registration process for Venezuelans.

The renewed MRF was expanded to include all migrants in Trinidad and Tobago.

Alexander also last week announced that applicants would be subject to a fee of \$700.

The processing charge was criticised by some civil rights activists, including Venezuelan activist Yesenia Gonzales, who argued that most migrants would be unable to come up with the money.

Gonzales was also among those claiming that the registration was being unjustly used to net and deport Venezuelans, which has been denied by Alexander. (Trinidad Express)



**AFRICA UNITE**

**Hosts:** Dr. Christopher RasKimba & Luther Lee

**GUESS:** MIN SIR MOLWIN JOSEPH

**TOPIC:** The Nurses from Ghana

**POINTE FM 99.1**  
**THURSDAYS 9PM - 11PM**

## US President Trump pulls immigration chief out of Minnesota after second fatal ICE shooting



The Trump administration has announced that they are conducting a comprehensive review of the recent incidents involving law enforcement, following the death of a U.S. citizen in a second fatal shooting by federal agents within a few weeks.

The incident occurred on Saturday in Minneapolis, where federal agents shot and killed Pretti.

The details surrounding this latest incident have sparked intense debate, highlighting ongoing tensions between state and federal authorities, stated the BBC.

Officials have supported the actions of the officers involved, with Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem asserting that the individual, Alex Jeffrey Pretti, an intensive-care nurse, was shot because he was allegedly “brandishing” a firearm.

However, local officials dispute this account, stating that the weapon was legally registered and that Pretti was shot after the firearm was taken away from him.

Pretti's family has clarified that he owned a handgun legally and had a permit to carry concealed in Minnesota, though they stated they were unaware he was carrying it at the time. Law enforcement sources in the area confirm that Pretti was a licensed firearm owner, and that Minnesota law permits carrying a handgun in public with proper authorization.

The BBC reports that the video shows a physical altercation between Border Patrol agents and Pretti moments before the shooting took place.

The Department of Homeland Security maintains that the agents acted in self-defense, claiming Pretti was resisting their efforts to disarm him and

that he was armed with a handgun at the time.

Meanwhile, a headline from the New York Times said:

The article goes on to outline that videos analyzed by The New York Times appear to contradict federal accounts of the shooting.

“Federal officials said he was armed, but there is no sign in videos analyzed by The New York Times that he pulled his weapon, or that agents even knew he had one until he was already pinned on the sidewalk.”

In response, President Donald Trump announced earlier that his administration was conducting a comprehensive review following the deadly shooting.

“President Donald Trump indicated today there may be a shift in how his administration will handle its immigration crackdown in Minnesota following a call with Gov. Tim Walz today.

“It was a very good call, and we, actually, seemed to be on a similar wavelength,” Trump wrote Truth Social, as reported by CNN.

The White House has since announced that Customs and Border Patrol Chief will be shipped out of the state of Minnesota tomorrow and replaced with colleague Tom Homan.

On January 7, American citizen Renee Good was shot in the face by an immigration agent while attempting to leave the scene in Minneapolis. (Dominica News Online)

## US braces for more freezing cold as winter storm leaves at least 29 dead

Many in the United States faced another night of below-freezing temperatures and no electricity after a colossal winter storm heaped more snow Monday on the Northeast and kept parts of the South coated in ice.

At least 29 deaths were reported in states afflicted with severe cold.

Deep snow — over a foot (30 centimetres) extending in a 1,300-mile (2,100-kilometre) swath from Arkansas to New England — halted traffic, canceled flights and triggered wide school closures Monday.

The National Weather Service said areas north of Pittsburgh got up to 20 inches (50 centimetres) of snow and faced wind chills as low as minus 25 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 31 degrees Celsius) late Monday into Tuesday.

The bitter cold afflicting two-thirds of the US wasn't going away. The weather service said Monday that a fresh influx of artic air is expected to sustain freezing temperatures in places already covered in snow and ice. And forecasters said it's possible another winter storm could hit parts of the East Coast this weekend.

A rising death toll included two people run over by snowplows in Massachusetts and Ohio, fatal sledding accidents in Arkansas and Texas, and a woman whose body was found covered in snow by police with bloodhounds after she was last seen leaving a Kansas bar.

In New York City, officials said eight people were found dead outdoors in the course of the frigid weekend.

There were still more than 670,000 power outages in the nation Monday evening, according to poweroutage.com. Most of them were in the South, where weekend blasts of freezing rain caused tree limbs and power lines to snap, inflicting crippling outages on northern Mississippi and parts of Tennessee. (AP)





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## India and EU announce 'mother of all trade deals'



The European Union and India have announced a landmark trade deal after nearly two decades of on-off talks, as both sides aim to deepen ties amid tensions with the US.

"We did it, we delivered the mother of all deals," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said at a media briefing in Delhi. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the pact "historic".

It will allow free trade of goods between the bloc of 27 European states and the world's most populous country, which together make up nearly 25% of global gross domestic product and a market of two billion people.

The deal will see a number of huge tariff cuts across a range of goods and services, and a joint security partnership.

Von der Leyen and European Council President António Costa are in Delhi, where they met Modi at a bilateral summit.

The European Commission said would eliminate tariffs on most exports of chemicals, machinery and electrical equipment, as well as aircraft and spacecraft, following phased reductions. Significantly, duties on motor vehicles, currently as high as 110%, would be cut to 10% under a quota of 250,000 vehicles. That is six times larger than the 37,000-unit quota India granted to the UK in a deal signed last July.

India will also cut tariffs on wine, beer and olive oil from the EU. Brussels said the agreement would support investment flows, improve access to European markets and deepen supply-chain integration.

Delhi said almost all of its exports would get "preferential access" into the EU, with textiles, leather, marine products, handicrafts, gems and jewellery set to see a reduction or elimination of tariffs.

While commodities such as tea, cof-

fee, spices and processed foods will benefit from the agreement, Delhi "has prudently safeguarded sensitive sectors, including dairy, cereals, poultry, soy meal, certain fruits and vegetables, balancing export growth with domestic priorities", it said.

Delhi and Brussels have also agreed on a mobility framework that eases restrictions for professionals to travel between India and the EU in the short term.

"This is India's biggest free trade agreement," Modi said. "It will make access to European markets easier for India's farmers and small business. It will also boost manufacturing and services sectors. It will boost innovative partnerships."

The trade deal comes as both India and the EU contend with economic and geopolitical pressure from the US.

Delhi is grappling with 50% tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump last year amid talks aimed at securing

a trade deal between India and the US that are still dragging on.

Last week, Trump threatened to escalate his trade war with European allies for opposing a US takeover of Greenland, before backing off.

That larger geopolitical context was evident in statements made by leaders.

On Tuesday, von der Leyen said: "This is the tale of two giants - the world's second and fourth largest economies. Two giants which chose partnership in a true win-win fashion. A strong message that co-operation is the best answer to global challenges."

A day before that Costa had said, without naming the US, that the trade deal would send an "important political message to the world that India and the EU believe more in trade agreements than in tariffs".

The deal with the European Union may help labour-intensive sectors in India such as shrimp farming, textiles, gems and jewellery, which were hit hard by the US tariffs, experts say.

But some analysts also predict challenges - especially when it comes to compliance with EU regulations and standards. "The EU has very strict regulations, for instance, on environment. It is one of the leaders when it comes to carbon offsetting mechanisms," says economist Mitali Nikore.

She says India's manufacturing sector "might not be fully prepared" for this and that it is critical that it takes steps to fix this.

"It is an opportunity more than a challenge," she says.

For the EU, the deal is aimed at providing some certainty, even security, in a time of economic coercion and global turbulence.

Germany and France are projected to be among the biggest beneficiaries even if this isn't the "super maximally ambitious" version of a trade deal once envisioned, says Andrew Small, Asia director at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

However, he says, the agreement is seen as a building block rather than a final destination as the EU looks to tap into a massive, fast-growing economy.

"It really is understood as a floor for what is possible for the bilateral relationship."

The formal signing is likely to take place only later this year, after the agreement is approved by the European Parliament and member states.

There may be some concerns around this after another major trade deal the EU struck with the Mercosur bloc of South American countries was recently derailed in the European Parliament.

However, the India agreement is regarded as less contentious as it "cuts around sensitivities on both sides," says Small.

Alongside the trade agreement, India and the European Union are also advancing separate talks on security and defence co-operation, and climate ac-

tion.

On Tuesday, India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said he had discussed a range of bilateral security and defence issues with the European Commission's vice-president Kaja Kallas, including opportunities to integrate supply chains to build trusted defence ecosystems and develop future-ready capabilities.

The two sides are working on a draft security and defence partnership covering areas such as maritime security, cyber threats and defence dialogue, Reuters news agency reported.

The EU is India's largest trading partner in goods, with bilateral merchandise trade reaching \$136bn (£99.4bn) in 2024-25, nearly doubling over a decade.

Talks for a deal started in 2007 but stalled in 2013 over roadblocks in market access and regulatory demands. Discussions were formally restarted in July 2022.

Trump's tariffs proved to be a "useful tailwind in the homestretch" to get the deal over the line, one EU diplomat told the BBC.

In the past seven months, India has signed major trade agreements with the UK, Oman and New Zealand, and a 2024 pact signed with the four-nation European Free Trade Association bloc of Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein came into effect last year. It signed a trade pact with Australia in 2022. (BBC)



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# Sports News

## Sea View Farm regains sole leadership in Second Division League



**The Sea View Farm football team**

For the second straight game, Sea View Farm FC dropped points but regained sole leadership of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League on Monday.

After their eight-match unbeaten start to the competition came to an abrupt end in a 2-1 loss to Fort Road in their previous outing, Sea View Farm dropped more points in salvaging a 2-2 draw with Kelton Dalso Real Blizzard at the Sea View Farm playing field.

Amos Christian, who scored both goals for Real Blizzard, snatched the equalizer with a 90th-minute conversion after scoring the opening goal in the 41st minute to give his team a one-nil lead at halftime.

The goals for Sea View Farm were scored by Nigel Graham in the 59th minute and Justin Hilaire

in the 71st minute.

The result allows Sea View Farm to take sole leadership of the Second Division. Their second draw in 10 matches carries Sea View Farm to 23 points, one more than the second-placed Guydadli Jets, who have two games in hand.

Real Blizzard kept their unbeaten run intact to remain in third place by advancing to 21 points after recording their third draw in nine matches.

Fort Road moved into joint third place by notching up their seventh win in 10 matches with a 1-0 victory against JSC Progressors at the Fort Road playing field.

Shaquille Perry struck the winner for Fort Road when he scored the only goal of the match by converting a penalty kick in the 34th minute.

The result allows Fort Road to advance to 21

points, the same as Real Blizzard, who have a game in hand. JSC Progressors remain on seven points after losing for the seventh time in 10 matches.

Glanvilles FC secured their second win in seven matches with a 2-0 victory against the CPTSA

Wings at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

Roshaun Martin scored for Glanvilles FC, which advanced to seven points, while the CPTSA Wings remain on nine points after slumping to their third defeat in 10 matches.

However, the match at Urlings between Belmont FC and the Urlings Golden Stars was not played.

Belmont FC remains on five points from seven matches, while the Urlings Golden Stars currently have 11 points from eight matches.

The Second Division will continue with one match on Wednesday. North Coast Academy Juniors will take on the Liberta Blackhawks at Mount Pleasant at 4:15 pm.



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# Sports News

## Contrasting wins for Clare Hall and St. Anthony's in school basketball

Clare Hall Secondary School (CHSS) and St. Anthony's Secondary School (SASS) recorded contrasting wins in the Senior Boys Division of the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball League at the JSC Sports Complex on Monday.

Clare Hall Secondary School coasted to a 47-19 victory against Jennings Secondary School in a lopsided affair.

Castro Perez sank 13 points, Jahaziel Santana scored 12 points, Luis Ozuna converted 10 points, and Aiden Pascal chipped in with eight points for Clare Hall Secondary. Louis Moria shot a game-high 17 points for Jennings Secondary.

St. Anthony's Secondary snatched a narrow 42-41 victory against Sir McChesney George High School. Zende Dorsett sank 14 points, and Khalil Roberts scored eight points for St. Anthony's Secondary School.

Theodore Frank converted 15 points, and Eli Harris sank 14 points for Sir McChesney George High School.

St. Anthony's Secondary School also coasted to a commanding 47-12 victory against Jennings Secondary in the Junior Boys Division.

Khalil Roberts sank



*Players of the Clare Hall Secondary School go on a fast break against Jennings Secondary School in the Senior Boys' Division in the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball League at the JSC Sports Complex on Monday, January 26, 2026. (Photo courtesy of the school basketball league)*

15 points, while Nyke Hughes and Zende Dorsett each converted 10 points for St. Anthony's Secondary School. Demiah Clarke scored five points and Jamoy Jeremy sank four points for Jennings Secondary.

Erije Joseph shot a game-high 36 points to lead St. Joseph's Academy to a crushing 86-10 victory against All Saints Secondary in the Junior Boys Division.

Nathan Matthew gave support with 20 points, Jayden Lewis produced 12 points, and N'Kesi James chipped in with 10 points for St. Joseph's Academy.

In other results, Post Millennial Academy, Greenbay Primary, and Cedar Grove Primary recorded wins in the Mini Boys Primary Division.

Aiden Osbourne pro-

Josue Rose converted 10 points, and Daniel Perez scored eight points to propel Greenbay Primary to a 24-2 victory over SR Olivia David Primary.

Sjai Abbott and Jarel Knowles each sank four points to lead Cedar Grove Primary to an 8-0 victory against Villa Primary.

St. Anthony's Secondary secured a 28-11 victory against St. Joseph's Academy in the Mini Boys Secondary Division.

Kejonte Hamilton scored eight points for St. Anthony's Secondary, while Micah Joyce sank five points for St. Joseph's Academy.



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# Sports News

## Gauff dumped out by Svitolina at Australian Open



**Coco Gauff of the USA reacts during her quarterfinal match against Elina Svitolina of Ukraine during their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026. (AP)**

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Coco Gauff's bid for a third Grand Slam title went up in smoke at the Australian Open quarter-finals with a 6-1, 6-2 defeat by Ukrainian Elina Svitolina on Tuesday, after the third seed endured a nightmare on serve.

The result meant 12th seed Svitolina marched into the semi-finals at Melbourne Park for the first time in her career, after three previous quarter-final finishes, keeping alive the 31-year-old's hopes of a maiden major title.

Svitolina will also return to the top 10 in the world when the updated rankings are released next Monday, a reward for her consistency after giving birth to her daughter with fellow tennis player Gael Monfils in late 2022.

Meanwhile, Carlos Alcaraz sizzled under the bright lights at the Australian Open and blazed into the men's singles semi-finals on Tuesday after

fellow women's top seed Aryna Sabalenka remained cool in the unforgiving Melbourne heat to stay on course for another title.

Alexander Zverev was briefly made to sweat under the roof of Rod Laver Arena before overcoming Learner Tien. The German third seed, runner-up to Jannik Sinner last year, secured a 6-3, 6-7(5), 6-1, 7-6(3) victory to stay on course for a first Grand Slam trophy but the path will get tougher with Alcaraz up next.

Alcaraz pulled off a dominant 7-5, 6-2, 6-1 victory over Alex de Minaur on the main showcourt, as the Spaniard dashed his sixth-seeded opponent's hopes of ending a five-decade Australian wait for a homegrown men's champion.

The 22-year-old, a six-times major winner, is seeking his own piece of history at Melbourne Park, where he

can eclipse Don Budge and become the youngest man to lift all four Grand Slam trophies.

Sabalenka, chasing her third title in four years, also got into a high gear for a dominant 6-3, 6-0 win over 18-year-old Iva Jovic on a sweltering Centre Court, where the roof was open with the "Heat Stress Scale" not at its highest threshold.

Shortly after her victory, though, tournament organisers invoked the extreme heat policy as temperatures crossed the 40 Celsius (104F) mark, prompting the suspension of play on the outer courts and the closure of roofs on the main ones.

Up next for Sabalenka is Ukrainian 12th seed Svitolina, who took full advantage of Gauff's woes on serve and reached her first Australian Open semi-final with her dominant victory in under an hour.

## South Africa beat West Indies in first T20I



West Indies batsmen Shimron Hetmyer, right, and Rovman Powell added 74 runs for the sixth wicket against South Africa during the first T20 International at Boland Park in Paarl, South Africa, on Tuesday, January 27, 2026. (Getty Images)

Captain Aiden Markram scored an unbeaten 86 to lead South Africa to a commanding nine-wicket victory in the opening KFC T20 International (T20I) against the West Indies at Boland Park in Paarl on Tuesday evening.

The right-handed opening barely put a foot wrong during his 47-ball innings, which included nine fours and three sixes, as he guided South Africa to victory at 176 for one with 13 balls to spare in response to the West Indies' 173 for seven after winning the toss and electing to bowl first.

Having scored a previous career-best of 78 against the West Indies in Grenada back in 2021, Markram drove Jason Holder down the ground for six to surpass that and the pulled the next ball for four to clinch victory.

Markram's opening stand of 83 with Lhuan-dre Pretorius, who hit 44, came from just 49 deliveries,

setting the perfect platform for the chase of the above-par target.

Pretorius was aggressive as normal, striking six fours and a six from 28 deliveries before being caught by Matthew Forde on the mid-wicket fence from the bowling of Roston Chase, who captured one for 31.

Markram had been given a life by Akeal Hosein at mid-off from the bowling of Holder when on 27, but the South African skipper calmed down and played the near-perfect innings.

Despite the loss of Pretorius's wicket, Markram was assisted perfectly by Ryan Rickelton. Rickelton cracked two sixes and a four from 32 deliveries, to end unbeaten on 40 as he and Markram shared an unbroken 93-run second-wicket partnership from only 62 balls.

Such was Markram's control that he only conceded eight dot balls with a strike-rate of 182.98.

Earlier, Shimron Hetmyer with

48 and Rovman Powell with 29 not out combined for an excellent sixth-wicket stand of 74 from 52 deliveries to guide the West Indies to their above-par total after the visitors found themselves in some difficulty at 95 for five in the 12th over.

The West Indies had made a fast start as Brandon King (27) and Johnson Charles (13) added 39 runs briskly for the opening stand from just 24 balls before Keshav Maharaj, who captured two for 44, found a gap in Charles' defences and castled the middle stump.

Then the visitors started chopping the ball onto their own stumps. King, after striking five fours and a six from 16 balls, chopped a ball from Corbin Bosch onto his stumps before Sherfane Rutherford (6) did the same against Maharaj.

Chase (22) repeated the feat against George Linde after Forde (16) had given his wicket away, well-caught by Kagiso Rabada diving forward at long-on from the bowling of Bosch, who finished with two for 35. Linde captured three for 25.

Hetmyer and Powell, who hit two fours and a six during his 25-ball knock, gave the West Indies a total worth defending under the Paarl night sky.

Chasing is never easy in the Cape Winelands but Hetmyer, who struck four fours and three maximums from 32 balls, had given the visitors a chance, but did not expect the dominant performance from Markram, Pretorius, and Rickelton.

Both teams will meet again in the second T20 International at Super-Sport Park in Centurion on Thursday.

## Division One teams select 16 players during ABBA Draft Showcase

A total of 16 overseas-based players were selected by seven of the teams that will be battling for supremacy in this year's Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division One Championship.

The players were selected during the 2026 ABBA Draft Showcase, which took place at the JSC Sports Complex from January 21 to 25.

Fourteen of the drafted players came from the United States of America (USA), while the other two selectees came from Canada and the Bahamas.

All Saints Slam selected six players during the draft. Slam selected Omar Dunn and Andre Daigle during the first round, Lorenzo Barberri and Andre Burnett in the second, and Rolantae Knowles and Davon Fludd in Round 3.

Kennedy's Club Ottos Full Throttle drafted three players. Full Throttle selected Pindo Drammeh, Christian Walker, and Nick Strawter.

Newly promoted Cuties Ovals Ojays, who won the 2025 Division Two League and Playoff ti-



*EZ Fit Flyers head coach George Hughes, left, welcomes TJ Williams at the 2026 ABBA Draft Showcase at the Cortsland Hotel on Sunday, January 25. (Photo courtesy of ABBA)*

ties, drafted two players. The Ojays selected Jabari Smith and Jaylen Owens.

However, current ABBA Division One three-peat champions, EZ Fit Flyers, only drafted one player, picking up TJ Williams in

the first round.

Former Division One champions, Northside Stingerz, selected two players, drafting Brycen Thomas in the first round and Kymani Powell in the second.

The other two players were selected by Da Project, which drafted Cornel Greenwood in the first round and picked up Malik Moore in the second.

The Navigators, who gained promotion to the Division One League after finishing second behind 2025 Second Division League and Playoff Champions, Cuties Ovals Ojays, did not select any players during the draft.

The JSC Red Hawks, formerly Spanish Heat, were unable to participate in the recent ABBA Draft Showcase. However, ABBA has granted permission for the JSC Red Hawks to sign overseas-based players prior to the start of the league next month.

The 2026 ABBA domestic season will officially commence with a march past and opening ceremony at the JSC Sports Complex on Sunday, February 1.

Competitive action in the ABBA Second Division will shoot off at the same venue on Monday, February 2.