

# Failure to pass on savings from tax waivers could attract stiffer penalties

*Story on page 2*



*Photo courtesy: Wayne Mariette*

**The public consultation organized by the government to discuss plans for the re-development and re-vitalisation of the city of St. John's attracted hundreds of people online and in person with many more watching on local television stations.**

## **Failure to pass on savings from tax waivers could attract stiffer penalties**

The Cabinet is considering its options for the best course of action to deal with the problem of non-compliance from some supermarket operators who fail to pass on savings from tax waivers to their customers.

Cabinet spokesman, Director General of Communications, Maurice Merchant, noted that the rationale for introducing the tax waivers on some imported items, particularly food items, was to have these benefits passed on to consumers. It is one of the tools the government has to deal with rising food prices since most of these items are imported and may be coming from markets where inflation is high.

Merchant reported that during Wednesday's Cabinet session, the members received detailed updates on the ongoing monitoring and enforcement of price reductions on essential goods following recent duty and tax concessions, with a particular focus on fruits, vegetables, and other basic food items aimed at improving affordability and encouraging healthier consumption.

According to the spokesman, officials from the Prices and Consumer Affairs Division reported that price reductions are already visible in several categories, particularly for fresh fruits and vegetables, which are imported frequently and therefore reflect changes more quickly. In contrast, preserved



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**Director of Communications in the Office of  
the Prime Minister, Maurice Merchant**

and less frequently imported items, such as canned goods, are expected to show price adjustments over a longer period, extending into the coming weeks and months.

Cabinet was informed that inspection teams have been actively monitoring supermarkets and retail outlets across the country to assess compliance. While some retailers, particularly within major supermarket chains, have demonstrated partial compliance, inspectors have encountered reluctance from several suppliers and retailers to provide invoices and pricing documentation, despite this being a legal requirement under existing legislation. Officials noted that only a limited number of suppliers have cooperated fully to date.

“The Division reported that its of-

ficers have been verbally abused by some supermarket operators and have been ordered to remove themselves from the business places forthwith,” Merchant revealed.

During the discussions, Cabinet acknowledged challenges associated with enforcement under the existing Prices Control Act, which dates back to 1957 and requires lengthy court processes. Cabinet therefore emphasized the importance of strengthening enforcement mechanisms through the Consumer Protection framework, including the expedited establishment of a Consumer Protection Tribunal, which would allow for faster resolution of breaches and more immediate sanctions.

Cabinet noted that penalties for non-compliance currently range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for failure to provide required information, and up to \$25,000 for serious price-related breaches. Cabinet also discussed the need to increase fines, expand the list of price-controlled goods, and consider stronger measures, including the withdrawal or suspension of business licences, to ensure compliance and protect consumers.

Another course of action is to increase the number of inspectors in the field to monitor the movement of prices and Merchant announced that the Cabinet has approved the appointment of nine new officers for the department.

An advertisement banner for the LOTS (Land Ownership Tomorrow Secured) program. The banner features the ACB Caribbean logo on the left, followed by the text 'Claim Your Keys. Secure Your Land.' in large, bold, white and yellow letters. Below this, there are two logos: 'Home Advantage' with a stylized house icon and 'LOTS' with a colorful geometric design. To the right is a photograph of a smiling family (a man, a woman, and a child) standing in front of a yellow geometric shape. The text 'Apply today.' is displayed in large yellow letters, with social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn below it. The background is a solid blue color.

## Hundreds attend St. John's re-development consultation

The public consultation organized by the government to discuss plans for the re-development and re-vitalisation of the city of St. John's attracted hundreds of people online and in person with many more watching on local television stations.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne described the turnout and participation as 'excellent' noting that he was quite pleased with both the turnout - online and in person – noting that the participation from those in the audience at the Sir John E St. Luce Centre on Wednesday evening was 'great'.

"I want to commend all the stakeholders who made contributions or even by showing up as they are showing an interest in working with the government to redo St. John's. We have been pursuing a programme of renewal for our capital city," he stated.

The consultation featured a panel of Cabinet ministers including; Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin, Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez, Works Minister, Maria Browne and Urban Development Minister, Rawdon Turner. Along with the panel were representatives from several key government agencies; APUA, the Development Control Authority, the Central Board of Health, the National Solid Waste Management Authority and the St. John's Development Corporation. General Manager of Antigua Cruise Port, Gasper George, also attended the consultation.

The prime minister gave a commitment to hold follow-up meetings with his team and other stakeholders and to return for a follow-up consultation after the master-plan for the re-development of St John's has been finalized.

PM Browne said the key is to have stakeholder involvement at every step in the process.



## Apron lights are to be installed at the Barbuda airport shortly

The airport in Barbuda will soon operate for extended hours following the planned installation of apron lights there.

Reports are that this followed discussions between the government and the principals of PLH Tourism Project operating on the island.

“The apron light expansion project will commence shortly as the current lights only allow for the airport to operate during daylight hours. Once the sun sets, then the airport closes. So the apron lights will be installed and this would expand the time of operations up to 9:30 pm daily,” a government spokesman stated.

These developments followed discussions between the government and



PLH, which will undertake the expansion of the lights in collaboration with

the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority.

## Public Consultations

### WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT (PREVENTION) BILL 2026



#### Multipurpose Centre

 28th January @ 5:30 p.m.

#### Villa Community Centre

 5th February @ 5:30 p.m.

#### JT Ambrose Primary School

 11th February @ 5:30 p.m.

#### Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium

 18th February @ 5:30 p.m.

For further information, please contact

1-268-728-0047

Join the discussion happening in your *community*.

## ABEC Officials Participate in International Electoral Observation Mission in Costa Rica

The Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) has been selected to participate in an international electoral observation mission in Costa Rica from January 29 to February 2.

ABEC's delegation comprises **Member of the Commission, Clovis St. Romaine**, and **Assistant to the Human Resource and Training Officer, Kisher Esprit**. Their participation follows an official invitation from Costa Rica to serve as observers within the framework of the **Official Electoral Observation Mission under the Tikai Protocol**.

The **Tikai Protocol** is a cooperative framework that guides electoral observation and collaboration among electoral management bodies. It promotes transparency, impartiality, professionalism, and respect for national sovereignty in the conduct of elections.

Through the protocol, participating institutions support democratic governance by observing electoral processes, sharing technical expertise, and fostering mutual learning across jurisdictions.

ABEC's participation in this mission underscores its continued commitment to strengthening electoral integrity, enhancing professional development, and contributing to regional and international efforts that support free, fair, and credible elections.

Chairman of ABEC, Ambassador Arthur G.B Thomas expressed that "observation missions are vital to strengthening electoral integrity. Through this engagement, ABEC continues to build professional capacity while contributing to regional and international efforts to uphold free, fair, and credible elections."

The Commission views international observation missions as a valuable tool for continuous improvement and reaffirms its dedication to upholding democratic principles both locally and abroad.





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# Local News

## The launch of a limestone kiln set to support restoration work across Antigua and Barbuda



A new limestone kiln has been inaugurated at the Harrison Centre that will produce the lime mortar that is essential in restoration work at historical sites in Antigua and Barbuda.

The construction of the kiln was made possible through the efforts of the Commonwealth Heritage Forum (CHF), Government House, the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS), the Antigua and Barbuda UK High Commission, Karen-Mae Hill and

Mark Womersley of the UK who advised on the construction of the kiln and who will also assist in teaching the students at the Harrison Centre on its operation.

In remarks to the lighting ceremony, Governor General, Rodney Williams, who serves as patron of CHF, said the different entities have come together with a specific goal in mind. He revealed that a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed to advance heritage conservation, training, and youth engage-

ment across multiple projects in the nation.

“The kiln itself measures 48 inches square and approximately 10 feet in height, excluding the chimney, and will be used to produce quicklime and lime mortar essential for historic building conservation. Significantly, this may well be the first lime burned in Antigua since the 1960s, marking an important step



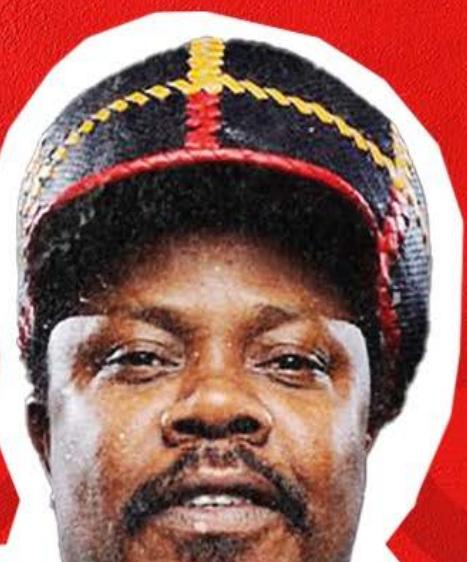
in reviving traditional conservation practices that are critical to the preservation of our built heritage,” he explained.

President of the ABCAS, Dr. Jonah

Greene, explained that the project came out of the need for limestone mortar to undertake current restoration work that students at the Harrison Centre have been engaged in since last year. She noted that in many cases traditional cement has been used as the binding agent in restoration work locally. However, limestone mortar was found to be a better material to be used in these

projects, but with no kiln to produce the product locally, it was felt that building one at the Harrison Centre was the logical solution to that problem.

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Roti King, Quintessence Variety Plus (QV+, Friars Hill Road)



English  
Harbour  
Antigua Rum



## New building craft programme for Antigua and Barbuda with King's Foundation, UK

A new Building Craft Programme for Antigua and Barbuda has been launched by The King's Foundation (UK) in collaboration with the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, offering a unique, fully funded international training opportunity for skilled individuals in the construction and craft sector.

The programme is a four-week intensive course de-

livered in April 2026 at The King's Foundation's training sites in the United Kingdom, including Dumfries House Estate in Scotland and Highgrove Gardens in Gloucestershire. It is designed specifically for participants from Antigua and Barbuda who already have experience or training in building crafts and are seeking to advance their skills in heritage conservation and climate-resilient construction.

The course will focus on traditional building techniques, materials, and sustainable construction methods, with particular relevance to the historic built environment of Antigua and Barbuda. Past participant Dion Desamours, from The Bahamas, reflected on his experience of the programme, stating, *"It not only strengthened my technical skills but also gave me a deeper appreciation of how craftsmanship and heritage can work together to preserve*

*historic structures."*

Workshops will be led by master craftspeople and will cover areas such as carpentry, stonemasonry, ironwork, roofing, plastering, technical drawing, and architecture. The programme is intended for individuals who already have a foundation in these areas and are committed to applying their skills to the conservation, repair, and sustainable development of buildings in Antigua and Barbuda.

**Do you have experience in construction or architecture?  
Are you interested in stone masonry, carpentry or other trades?**

Apply now to receive world class training with The King's Foundation in the UK



### A Building Craft Programme For Antigua & Barbuda

In collaboration with ABCAS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Course Dates: April-May 2026**

**Application Deadline: 20th February 2026**



#### About the Course

The Building Craft Programme is a full-time four week course specifically designed for those working in the construction and craft sector to push their skills to the next level and continue on their journey to become the next generation of master craftspeople in Antigua and Barbuda.

The Programme is geared towards adults aged 18+ with experience and interest in building crafts such as stonemasonry, carpentry, plastering and roofing, as well as architectural and engineering techniques for building in a sustainable and climate resilient way. Four weeks of practical workshops will take place at The King's Foundation Centres in the UK. On return to Antigua and Barbuda partner organisations will lead four weeks of heritage building projects, providing the opportunity to put your new skills into action!

 **Tuition Fees, UK Accommodation and Return Flights are provided.**

#### Eligibility criteria:

- ◆ Applicants must be over 18
- ◆ Have a qualification or experience in a building craft
- ◆ Want to learn more about heritage crafts and climate resilient building
- ◆ Have excellent team working and communication skills
- ◆ Have a passport
- ◆ Can travel to the UK in April 2026

#### How to Apply

Applications are now open - please contact Raynel Carroll on +1 (268) 727-8785 for further information or Jennie Hartley at jennie.hartley@kings-foundation.org for an application form.

**Application Deadline: Friday 20th February**

# Local News

Only eight candidates will be selected for the programme. All successful participants will receive a full scholarship, which includes tuition, accommodation, return flights to the United Kingdom, and programme materials.

Upon returning to Antigua and Barbuda, participants will take part in Live Build projects led by local partner organisations. These projects will provide an opportunity to apply newly acquired skills in real-world settings and demonstrate the value and impact of traditional

building crafts in practice.

Dr Simon Sadinsky, Executive Director of Education at The King's Foundation, said, *"We are delighted to offer this opportunity to talented individuals from Antigua and Barbuda who are looking to deepen their skills in traditional building crafts and climate-resilient construction. We look forward to welcoming the next cohort to our UK training centres."*

High Commissioner for Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom, Karen Mae-Hill, added,

*"Guided by the Government's mandate for people-focused growth and development, the Building Craft Programme with The King's Foundation is strengthening our national skills pipeline, supporting heritage conservation, and building climate-resilient capacity. Most importantly, it gives participants world-class training, confidence, and real career opportunity, so they return ready to contribute, earn, and help shape the future of Antigua and Barbuda."*

Applicants must be over 18 years old, have exist-

ing experience or training in a building craft, and be available for the full duration of the programme. Participants will also be required to apply for and receive a United Kingdom Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) prior to travel.

**Applications are now open.** Interested individuals may request an application form by contacting Raynel Carroll at +1 (268) 727-8785 or Jennie Hartley at [jennie.hartley@kings-foundation.org](mailto:jennie.hartley@kings-foundation.org).

Application Deadline: Friday 20 February 2026.



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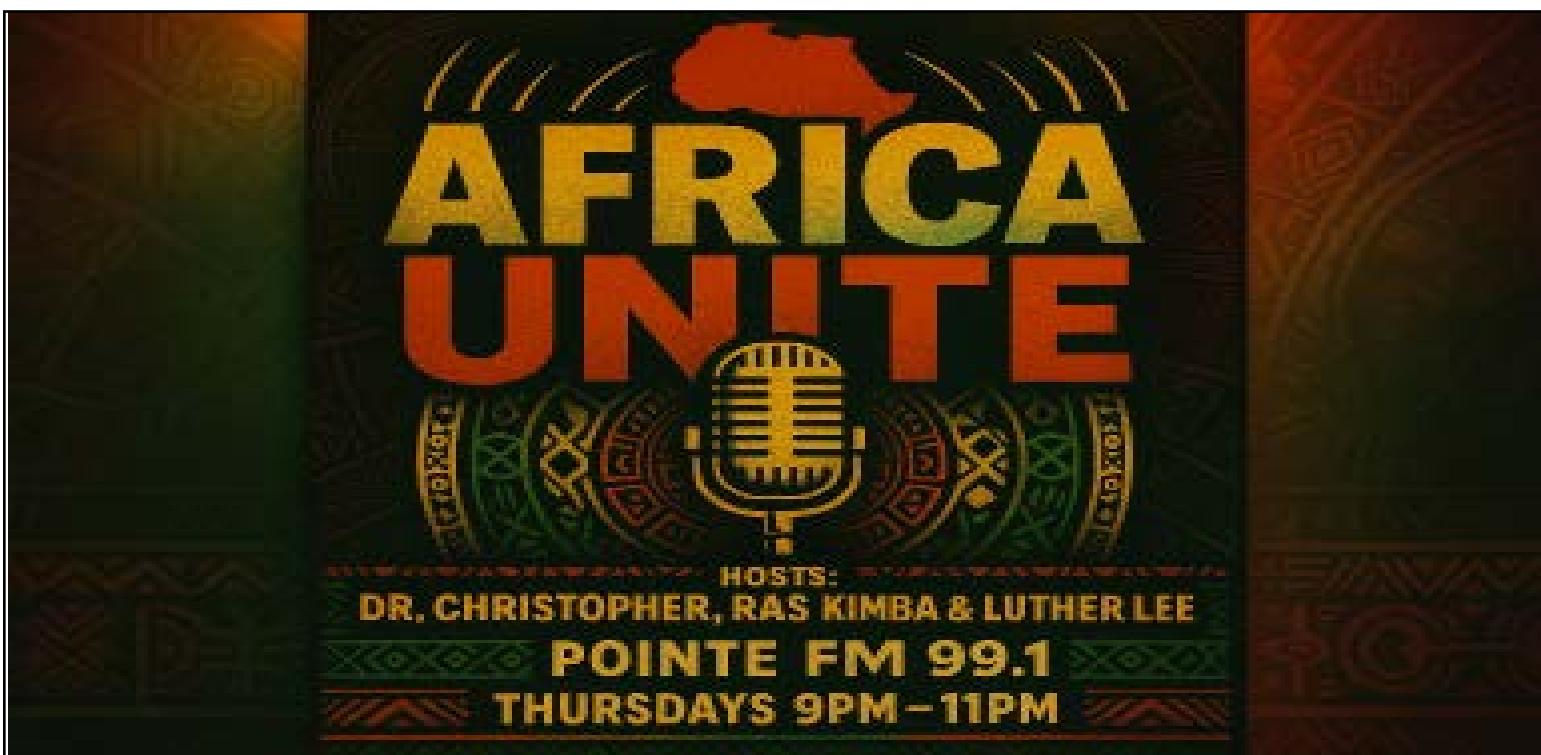
## Race car driver - Jason Marsh – is hospitalised in the US Virgin Islands after accident

Popular race car driver – Jason Marsh of English Harbour – is hospitalized in the US Virgin Islands following a racing accident there recently.

Reports reaching the Cabinet indicate that Marsh suffered multiple broken bones during one of the races in which he participated in St. Croix, USVI.

“He suffered with a broken back, broken neck, other broken bones and he is in a serious condition,” Cabinet spokesman Maurice Merchant reported.

He said the Cabinet took note of this information by sending best wishes for his recovery and it also pledges its support for Marsh for his healthcare and for the lengthy recovery that will likely follow.

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# Feature

## Two juvenile inmates at His Majesty's prison are soon to be transferred



Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin

A proposal for the relocation of two male juvenile inmates currently housed at His Majesty's Prison to the Dennis Bowers Rehabilitation Centre in Willikies, has been approved by the Cabinet.

Submitted by the Attorney

General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin, the decision follows an assessment of the proposed accommodation at the rehabilitation facility, conducted in accordance with Cabinet's directive. The assessment identified specific areas requiring attention to

ensure the safety, security, and suitability of the environment for occupancy.

Approved works are intended to support a rehabilitative setting consistent with the welfare and development needs of juvenile residents.

Cabinet has given the Ministry of Works the green-light to commence work on the adjustments needed with immediate effect. The Attorney General is to provide an update to the next Cabinet session on Wednesday.

Cabinet also noted that arrangements have been agreed for the provision of meals for the relocated juveniles, while the Prison Administration will retain responsibility for supervision and security at the facility.

In addition, Cabinet

approved measures to strengthen transportation and emergency-response coordination between the Dennis Bowers Rehabilitation Centre and His Majesty's Prison, recognising the importance of timely response and effective operational support.

The approval forms part of the Government's ongoing commitment to juvenile rehabilitation, public safety, and the enhancement of correctional and social development services across Antigua and Barbuda.

The justification for this move comes from the legal requirement for adult and juvenile offenders to be housed separately within the penal system.

## wild Wild WINGS!!

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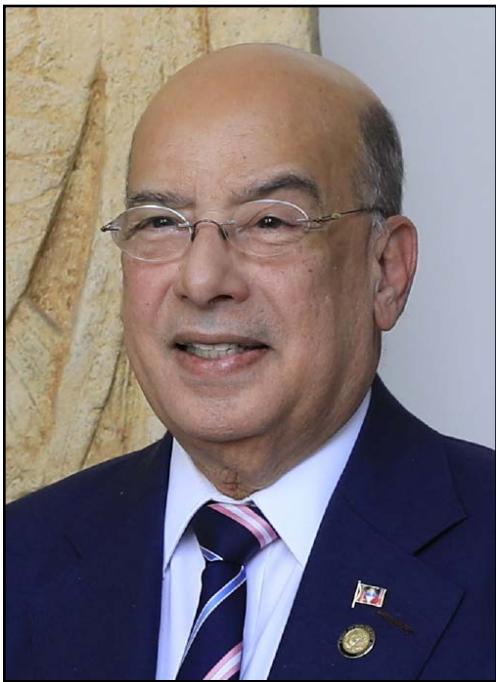
-25 Hot Wings ONLY Bucket

\$29.99



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## Education as Economic Policy: Remedy the Mismatch



By Sir Ronald Sanders

When the door to migration narrows, the long-standing mismatch between education and economic absorption is no longer abstract; a country's true immigration policy becomes domestic — how many jobs it can create, and how quickly it can match people to them.

On January 14, 2026, the United States Department of State announced a policy shift with direct economic consequences: effective January 21, it paused the issuance of immigrant visas for nationals of 75 countries deemed to be at "high risk of public benefits usage." Eleven of the fourteen independent CARICOM countries are included in that list, which may yet expand.

This was not framed as a temporary administrative adjustment. It signals a doctrinal shift: the United States will tighten selection toward migrants it actively seeks and will screen harder for those it fears may impose fiscal or social costs.

For decades, outward migration absorbed part of the Caribbean's internal economic pressure — unemployment,

underemployment, low wages, limited domestic markets, and frustrated professionals. As that outlet narrows, the pressure will intensify at home.

This does not mean migration has ended, but it does mean that the long-standing assumption that migration will always remain available as a safety valve is no longer reliable. That illusion has been eroding globally for years.

As migration tightens, more people — including skilled graduates — will have to stay in their home countries. That reality turns attention to an issue Caribbean states have too often postponed: whether their education output aligns with their development needs. Even in the three CARICOM countries not yet affected, education should now be regarded as an integral part of economic policy.

The response required now is structural. Governments, the private sector, and trade unions in each CARICOM country should waste no time in confronting a shared responsibility: to create and sustain conditions in which enterprise expands fast enough to absorb both skilled and unskilled labour.

This requires political coordination at the highest level. Each country should adopt a national development strategy that states clearly where it intends to be in ten years and use it as a governing instrument. That strategy should be reviewed every two years to adjust priorities and methods as conditions change, and it should explicitly guide budget allocations, public investment, skills formation, and regulatory reform. Without such a framework, education systems will continue to produce graduates without clear economic pathways, and governments will continue to respond to unemployment after the fact rather than prevent it by design.

This is not central planning; it is coordination — the difference between

drifting and choosing a direction.

A credible national strategy provides a road map for institutions — especially universities and training institutes — to align their work with national priorities. It clarifies how many engineers, technicians, nurses, teachers, digital specialists, construction supervisors, energy professionals, agro-processing workers, and specialist lawyers and doctors the economy will require. It allows teaching institutions to shape curricula accordingly — encouraging study and research in priority areas while placing less emphasis on fields that play a smaller role in the agreed national development plan.

This is not an argument against broad education or intellectual freedom. It is an argument for a system that takes full account of the need for graduates to earn a living in their home economies.

The Caribbean's challenge lies in remedying mismatch. Employers across the region report difficulty finding workers with appropriate skills, even as graduates struggle to find employment. Weak linkages among firms, universities, and training institutions compound the problem, leaving education and enterprise operating in parallel rather than in partnership.

Addressing this requires deliberate collaboration. Governments should convene sector-specific councils — in tourism, construction, logistics, health, agriculture, renewable energy, creative industries, and digital services — where employers, unions, and training institutions jointly define competencies, certification standards, and pathways from training to work. Trade unions have a vital role here, not only in defending wages and conditions, but in engaging seriously with productivity, skills upgrading, and enterprise sustainability.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) must also be

# Feature

modernised. In too many societies, TVET is treated as a second choice rather than a respected route to skilled employment. That misjudgement carries a high price. Modern TVET systems — linked to employers and responsive to technological change — are essential to labour absorption at scale.

Education must also prepare people not only to seek jobs, but to create them. This does not mean everyone should become an entrepreneur. It means every economy needs a growing share of citizens who can build enterprises — particularly when traditional wage employment cannot absorb all who seek it. Training in finance, management, technology, and the disciplined use of digital tools, including artificial intelligence, can allow small firms to reach markets beyond national borders. In a digital economy, small states can export services and ideas without exporting people.

None of this will succeed if the wider economic environment remains hostile to enterprise. High energy costs, slow approvals, overlapping regulation, expensive logistics, and entrenched inefficiencies continue to inflate the cost of doing business in many Caribbean states. The economic cost of delay is consistently underestimated.

If unemployment remains high while migration outlets narrow, the consequences will not be patience. There will be rising poverty, higher crime, strained public finances, weakened investor confidence, and social fragmentation.

Responsibility for labour absorption must be operational. Governments must lower the cost of doing business decisively and remove regulatory bottlenecks that deter investment. The private sector, in turn, must commit capital, innovation, and managerial effort to domestic production rather than rely on protection, rent-seeking, or incentives alone. Trade unions have a central role in this compact: defending workers' rights while engaging

constructively on productivity, skills upgrading, and enterprise sustainability. Educational institutions must also be full partners — aligning curricula, research priorities, and certification with national development objectives and labour-market demand. Economic reform cannot be treated as a partisan contest or deferred without cost. When any actor withholds cooperation, society as a whole suffers.

There is only one viable response: build opportunities for investment and jobs at home — deliberately, collectively, and with shared purpose.

(The author is the Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the United States and the OAS, and Dean of the OAS Ambassadors accredited to the OAS. Responses and previous commentaries: [www.sirronaldsanders.com](http://www.sirronaldsanders.com))

**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 20th 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)

**PRIZES:**  
1st place | 2nd place | 3rd place

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL:  
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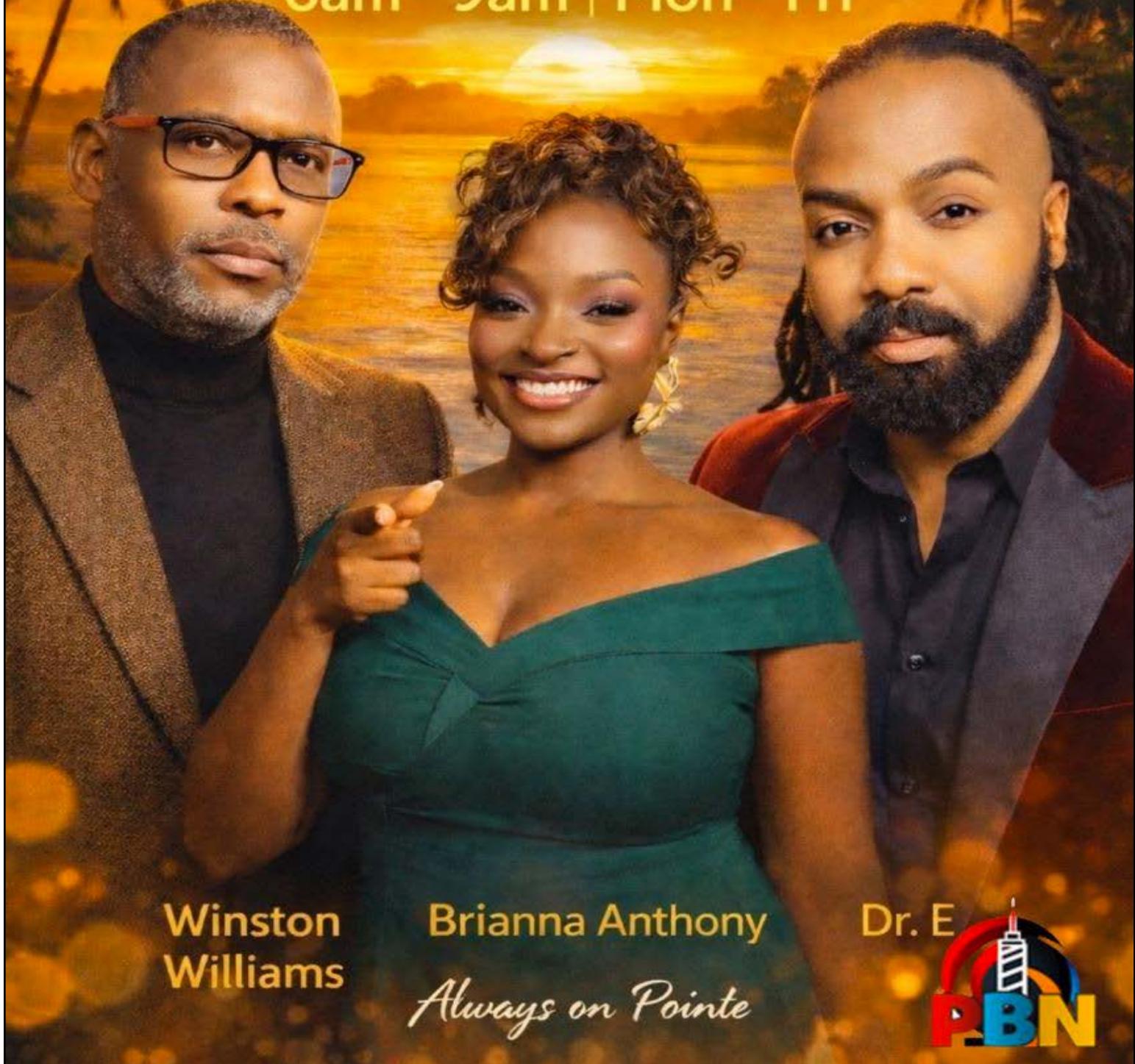
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FRIDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026

# The MORNING POINTE Show

Coming January 2026

6am - 9am | Mon - Fri



Winston  
Williams

Brianna Anthony  
*Always on Pointe*

Dr. E





## CIBC Caribbean Bank (Barbados) Limited - Antigua Branch

### Summary Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 October 2025 (expressed in thousands of Eastern Caribbean dollars)

#### REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Shareholder of CIBC CARIBBEAN BANK (BARBADOS) LIMITED - ANTIGUA BRANCH

##### Opinion

We have audited the special purpose financial statements of CIBC Caribbean Bank (Barbados) Limited - Antigua Branch (the "Branch") which comprise the statement of financial position as at October 31, 2025, the statement of income, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in head office account and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of material accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Branch as at October 31, 2025, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the framework described in Note 2.1.

##### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing ("ISAs"). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Branch in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' ("IESBA") International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including International Independence Standards) ("IESBA Code"), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the IESBA Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

##### Emphasis of Matter - Basis of accounting

We draw attention to Note 2.1 to the special purpose financial statements, which describes the basis of accounting. These special purpose financial statements are prepared to comply with the financial reporting requirements of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. As a result, the financial statements may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

##### Responsibilities of Management and the Board of Directors for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the framework described in Note 2.1, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Branch's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Branch or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing the Branch's financial reporting process.

##### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the

aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Branch's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Branch's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Branch to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of business activities within the Branch to express an opinion on the financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit opinion.

We communicate with the Board of Directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS  
St. Lucia  
January 23, 2026



## NOTICE

### TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

#### Temporary Closure of the Magistrates' Court located on High Street, St John's

Notice is hereby given that the Magistrates' Court located High Street, St John's will be closed on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 to Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2026 for maintenance.

All persons who have matters scheduled on the above dates should report to the respective courtrooms on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

All filing, service and disposition of matters not presently on the E Litigation Portal should be done by the mail address "magistratescourt@gmail.com".

Also note that this notice does not apply to the Magistrates' Court of the Family Division which is located at the High Court on Parliament Drive, St John's.

Any inconvenience caused is regretted.

Dated the 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2026

Sgnd Rhohan Frederick

Rhohan Frederick

Court Administrator of the Magistrates' Court





## Become a **CHOGM 2026** **SOCIAL MEDIA** **CORRESPONDENT**

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### Requirements

Be an active member or alum of one of the following:

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

### Skills

- Strong On Camera Presence
- Appreciation of production principles: lights, sound, framing, etc.
- Content Creation Tools:
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# Regional News

## Gas prices to go up Thursday

Motorists will pay more for gas on Thursday.

The state-owned oil refinery, Petrojam, says E-10 87 is to go up by \$1.20 to sell for \$149.52 per litre and a litre of E-10 90 will go up by \$1.17 to sell for \$156.06.

Automotive diesel oil will go up by \$2.44 per litre to sell for \$162.71.

Ultra low sulphur diesel will sell for \$169.70 per litre following an increase of \$3.06.

The price of kerosene will go up by \$3.06, with that fuel to sell for \$150.70.

In the meantime, propane cooking gas will go up by \$1.44 to sell for \$70.01, while butane will go up by \$1.41 to sell for \$80.05 per litre.

Retailers will add their mark-ups to the announced prices. (Jamaica Gleaner)



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## Dominica to host five young women vying for Miss OECS title this week

The stage is set for the much-anticipated 2026 Miss OECS Pageant scheduled to take place this Friday.

Five contestants will compete for the prestigious title at the Windsor Park Sporks Stadium from 8:00 PM.

They are: Tanisha Balson representing Dominica, Kia Kirwan of Antigua & Barbuda, Ariel Bushay of Anguilla, Donyelle Hodge of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) and Dahvana Providence of St Vincent & the Grenadines.

“Preparations are advancing with great momentum and reflect this year’s theme: Crowning Radiance, Embracing Unity,” Chairperson of the Miss OECS Queen Show Organizing Committee Ramoulda Hyacinth said. “Delegates across the OECS are being carefully groomed through cultural showcases, rehearsals and mentorship sessions, ensuring that they shine with individuality, while embodying the collective harmony of the region.”

She said that with five outstanding young ladies representing the OECS, anticipation is high.

Hyacinth asserted that the organizing committee is confident that the pageant will be more than a competition, it will be a vibrant celebration of beauty, culture, and a unifying bond, “that connects our islands.”

Meanwhile, Dominica’s Ambassador to the OECS and CARICOM, Dr. Gerald Jean-Jacques said during a statement that the OECS Queen Pageant was never just a competition, but a powerful regional institution that brings together people from our member states

“Young women, patrons, artists, and in doing so it reflects the values of OECS integration, commonality, fraternity and solidarity,” he said. “Through this pageant we see our region, not as isolated islands but as a connected community bound by com-



mon history, shared challenges and collective aspirations.”

Dr. Jean Jacques continued, “The OECS Queen Pageant embodies these principles in a unique and visible way as contestants socialize, train and grow together, learning not only about themselves, but about the cultures, the traditions and perspectives of the sister territories.”

According to him, these interactions build lasting relationships and a deep appreciation, “for what unites us while celebrating the diversity that enriches our region.”

Furthermore, Dr. Jean-Jacques noted

that the pageant also serves as a platform for leadership, development, and regional advocacy.

“Our contestants are ambassadors, young women who are engaged with issues such as education, climate resilience, cultural preservation, entrepreneurship, and social development,” he emphasized.

Tickets for the show are available at Bullseye Pharmacy and Pay.shopdm.store/miss-oecls-pageant. VIP tickets cost \$120, seating \$80, and standing \$50.

The Reigning Miss OECS is Dominica's Kyanna Dyer. (Dominica News Online)

# Regional News

## CALL FOR UNITY

### Holness urges Latin American, Caribbean to move from fragmented national initiatives to aligned regional priorities, stamp place in global system

Prime Minister Dr Andrew Holness is calling for an end to the era of isolated markets, urging his regional counterparts to abandon fragmented national agendas in favour of a singular, united hemispheric goal.

Holness, who was speaking on day one of the plenary session of the CAF-International Economic Forum Latin America and the Caribbean 2026, warned that national borders are becoming economic barriers at a time when the region is navigating global uncertainty and the question of agency.

“The question before us is not whether the global system is changing. It is whether our region will change with intention or drift by default,” said Holness, who shared the stage of the two-day conference in Panama City with leaders from Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Bolivia, Guatemala, Colombia, and Chile.

Holness said that, for too long, Latin America and the Caribbean have been described primarily through a language of vulnerability, noting that this is not the region’s destiny.

He argued that the region possesses what the world increasingly needs, listing young populations, strategic geography, extraordinary natural assets, food-producing capabilities, renewable energy potential, creative industries, and resilient democracies as its strengths.

He asserted that the era of Latin America and the Caribbean as a peripheral player is over, and in a defiant call for regional unity, challenged regional leaders to scale their ambitions or risk being left behind in the global race for green tech and digital dominance.

“We are not peripheral to the global system. We are central to its stability, sustainability and future growth. But



to project that reality we must act deliberately. We must articulate clearer regional positions on climate resilience, supply chain diversification, digital inclusion and sustainable energy,” he said in front of the thousands in attendance, including diplomats and business leaders.

“We must move from fragmented national initiatives to aligned regional priorities. We must shift from reacting to global change to anticipating it, helping shape the standards and partnerships of the next decade,” added Holness.

However, his call comes amid a backdrop of simmering regional tension, deepening ideological rifts that threaten to shred the region’s identity as a zone of peace and re-emerging United States policies that have strained relations with several Latin American governments.

Still, he said leaders must look towards a regional competitiveness agenda anchored in connectivity, logistics, energy security, and digital transformation.

Further, he said Latin American and Caribbean countries must ensure institutional readiness, credible frame-

works that give global partners confidence that their ambitions can be executed with professionalism and continuity.

He said there must also be a renewed diplomatic and economic posture deepening engagement not only with traditional partners, but with emerging markets, global value chain leaders, and the rapidly expanding green technology ecosystem.

“If our region is to rise, we must deepen our economic connections. If our economies are to scale, we must scale our ambitions. If our voice is to carry globally, we must speak not as isolated markets, but as a coherent hemisphere.

“The opportunity before us is not modest. It is broad, bold and transformative,” said Holness.

He asserted that Jamaica stands ready to play its part through stronger institutions, more efficient government, and an increasingly competitive economic environment.

“We intend to contribute to a hemisphere that is not merely participating in global affairs, but shaping them. Let us therefore commit to a shared regional vision, a hemisphere that acts with discipline, speaks with purpose, and competes with confidence. A hemisphere that is resilient, dynamic and future-ready. A hemisphere that the world recognises not for its challenges, but for its capabilities,” he said.

At the same time, he cautioned that the next decade will not belong to those who wait for opportunity to arrive, but those who create it.

He said countries of Latin America and the Caribbean “standing together” can shape a future worthy of its people and equal to its potential, in the same breath opening an invitation to regional partners and investors to look to Jamaica for economic opportunities. (Jamaica Gleaner)

## Minneapolis firearm instructors see surge in interest amid ongoing turmoil

At the Stock & Barrel Gun Club's two locations near Minneapolis, the classes for people seeking a permit to carry a firearm almost always draw large crowds.

"It's usually in the hundreds," David Taylor, the club's CEO, said.

But since immigration enforcement agents flooded the city, sparking clashes in the streets and the killing of two protesters, interest in the classes has only grown. In just the past two weeks, Taylor said, his club has received four times the usual number of sign-ups.

That does not appear to be an anomaly. Five firearm instructors in the Minneapolis area told NBC News they have seen a similar trend. The sudden interest, they say, is a reflection of the fear and uneasiness that has gripped the region amid the ongoing turmoil in the streets.

"It's very typical whenever there is a black swan incident," Taylor said, using a term for unexpected events with far-reaching consequences.

"People tend to panic and want to run out to get their permits," he added.

To obtain a permit to carry in Minnesota, a person must submit an application to their county sheriff and provide documentation that they have been trained by a certified instructor in the safe use of a pistol. State law allows for the weapon to be concealed.

R. Steven Rogers, who owns a private security company in Minneapolis and offers firearm training on the side, said he has received a burst of calls from people inquiring about his permit-to-carry classes.

"Most are people afraid of ICE," Rogers said, referring to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "There are some who are afraid of the generalized violence."



He has also received calls from two people interested in hiring security guards to protect their homes, which he said was "very unusual."

Tensions began to rise in Minneapolis earlier this month with the arrival of roughly 3,000 federal agents focused on immigration enforcement. The fatal shootings of two American citizens — Renee Good and Alex Petti, both 37 — by federal immigration agents have only ratcheted up the tensions.

Petti's killing has also rattled some Second Amendment advocates in the Minneapolis area.

An intensive care unit nurse, Petti was recording federal agents with his phone Saturday, when bystander video captured him getting in between some officers and a woman who had been pushed to the ground. Several officers sprayed him with a chemical agent before pulling him down to the pavement, and one emerged from the scrum with a gun taken from Petti's holster, the video shows.

An officer yelled "He's got a gun!" multiple times before a Border Patrol

agent then opened fire at point-blank range, according to a Department of Homeland Security report. A second officer also opened fire, the report added.

The report did not make any mention of Petti having attacked officers or brandished a gun, as Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem claimed in the aftermath of the shooting.

White House adviser Stephen Miller had been quick to label Petti as a "would-be assassin." Border Patrol commander Gregory Bovino said Petti planned to "massacre" federal agents. FBI Director Kash Patel said that "you cannot bring a firearm, loaded, with multiple magazines, to any sort of protest."

Those comments, particularly Patel's, did not go over well among the leadership at the Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus, an advocacy group.

"It's just factually inaccurate," said Bryan Strawser, chairman of the caucus.

"It's not illegal to bring a loaded gun to a protest," he said. "It happens all the time."

# International

AROUND THE WORLD

Strawser was referring to Minnesota specifically. But there have been prominent recent cases in other states.

Kyle Rittenhouse brought a loaded rifle to a protest in Wisconsin over the police shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man. Rittenhouse fatally shot two people and was later found not guilty of all five charges related to his actions. Unlike Pretti, he was hailed as a hero by conservative politicians.

Local officials have said Pretti had a permit to carry his gun, which has been a subject of interest among firearm enthusiasts in the area and beyond. It appears to be a Sig Sauer P320-AXG Combat, with a detachable sight, according to multiple experts.

The pistol is popular among law enforcement and military veterans. But with a price tag of roughly \$1,000, experts say it's more expensive than many other 9 mm pistols and is larger.

"That is not the sort of gun you would expect someone who is untrained to carry," said Scott Sweetow, a former top official with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

John McConkey, president of The Modern Sportsman gun shop, said in an email: "I can confirm the Sig Sauer pistol recovered at the scene was obtained legally with a background check."

Federal officials have said that at the time of the shooting Pretti was not carrying a government-issued photo ID or permit, which are both required under Minnesota law when in possession of a firearm. Failing to produce them when asked by police is punishable by a \$25 fine.

Some of the firearms experts interviewed by NBC News questioned why Pretti would go out with a gun and no ID if his intention was to engage with, or even just observe, federal agents patrolling the city.

Strawser, of the Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus, pushed back against

the idea that Pretti was in any way to blame for his death.

"It is not a crime — it's an infraction like a traffic ticket," Strawser said, referring to Pretti's lack of an ID. "So I'm not sure that this is relevant to the shooting at all unless someone is looking for an excuse to blame the victim here."

Erik Pakieser, a Minneapolis-based firearms instructor and law enforcement veteran, said he had a permit-to-carry class scheduled for the day after the shooting.

"As we were going into last week, I had only six people signed up," Pakieser said. "I ended up having 25 people in the class on that Sunday. It essentially quadrupled in size."

"What I am seeing consistently," he added, "is people who are historically not interested in guns — or even

opposed to gun ownership — seeking that out now because they're looking out the window and seeing what's going on and they're saying this is no longer theoretical."

It's not unusual for firearms classes to draw a flood of new members during periods of unrest. The same thing happened in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd in 2020, one of the Minneapolis-area instructors said.

He was among two others who spoke to NBC News on the condition of anonymity out of fear of being targeted by anti-ICE protesters.

"In any other time, I would be very willing to help you out," the veteran instructor with more than 25 years of experience said. "Right now, it's just too dicey." (NBC)



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## Ukraine receives 1,000 bodies in latest soldier swap with Russia

The bodies of 1,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been returned by Russia, Kyiv has said, in the latest exchange between the warring countries.

Russia received 38 bodies in return, Moscow's chief negotiator Vladimir Medinsky said.

Medinsky posted a photo on Telegram apparently showing the exchange, with individuals dressed in biohazard suits standing next to a line of white refrigerated trucks used to transport bodies.

Kyiv and Moscow have exchanged thousands of soldiers' bodies over the course of the almost four-year conflict. The latest exchange took place under an agreement reached by the two sides during negotiations in Istanbul in 2025.

Under that deal, Moscow and Kyiv agreed to return the bodies of 12,000 soldiers, as well as all sick and heavily wounded prisoners of war and those aged under 25.

The last swap took place in November last year when Russia returned 1,000 bodies to Ukraine and received 30 in return.

There has not been an exchange of prisoners of war since October 2025,



with both sides accusing the other of stalling.

As the fourth anniversary of the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 inches closer, efforts at brokering a peace deal between the two countries continue.

Last week, Russian, Ukrainian and US negotiators met in the United Arab Emirates for the first trilateral talks since the war began.

The negotiations were described by all sides as constructive, but key territorial issues remain unresolved, including Russia's demand that Ukraine

give up the 25% of the Donetsk region still under its control.

Despite the ongoing negotiations, both sides continue to exchange drone attacks.

At least five people were killed in Ukraine's Kharkiv region on Tuesday after a Russian drone struck a passenger train.

Russia has intensified its strikes on key infrastructure targets in recent months, leaving many people in Ukraine to face freezing temperatures without heating or power. (BBC)



## Floods push crocodiles into Mozambican towns as health concerns rise



As floods ravage Mozambique, crocodiles are appearing in submerged towns and responsible for at least three deaths.

In the town of Xai-Xai, the provincial capital of Gaza province and one of the worst-affected areas in the country's south, authorities have warned residents of heightened crocodile risks as floodwaters spread and evacuations to higher ground continue.

Torrential rains and severe flooding across parts of southern Africa over the past month have killed more than 100 people in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, destroying thousands of homes and damaging infrastructure such as roads, bridges, schools and health facilities.

Of the 13 people reported dead from the floods in Mozambique, three were killed by crocodiles, authorities said.

"The river levels are rising and are reaching urban areas or heavily populated areas," Paola Emerson, head of the United Nations (UN) Office

for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mozambique, said this week after visiting the town.

"So the crocodiles that are in the Limpopo river in this case are able to get into populated areas that are now submerged under water and that is the concern."

The Limpopo river flows from South Africa through Mozambique on its way into the Indian Ocean.

Two people were killed in an attack that left three others injured in the Gaza region earlier this month. A man was "swallowed" by a crocodile in Moamba, a small town in Maputo province, local media quoted Henrique Bongece, the province's secretary, as saying this week. Maputo is the impoverished country's capital.

Authorities said in Maputo that the crocodiles appeared to have been driven into the area by floodwaters from a park in neighboring South Africa.

"We want to urge everyone not to

approach still waters because crocodiles are drifting in these waters. The rivers have connected with all areas where there is water," local media quoted Bongece as saying this week.

Beyond the immediate danger posed by wildlife, the floods have triggered a deepening humanitarian crisis.

Weeks of heavy rainfall, compounded by dam releases to prevent structural failure, have affected more than 700,000 people, more than half of them children, leaving a trail of destruction across vast farmland, according to humanitarian bodies such as the World Food Program and UNICEF.

On Friday, the World Health Organization warned of severe disruptions to health services in Gaza and Maputo provinces following the destruction of at least 44 health facilities, leaving tens of thousands without access to care.

The UN agency said that damage to critical infrastructure has interrupted service delivery, while more than 50,000 people who have been forced to relocate to temporary shelters face limited or nonexistent basic health services.

It warned that displaced people on long-term medication face life-threatening interruptions, and said that urgent action is needed to restore essential services, deploy mobile health teams and ensure continuity of care for people with chronic conditions.

Across the three countries, humanitarian agencies say hunger and disease risks are rising, with extreme weather wiping out crops that millions of small-scale farmers rely on to feed themselves, while the threat of water-borne diseases such as cholera looms large. (AP)

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# Sports News

## North Coast Academy beat Blackhawks in Second Division

North Coast Academy Juniors won their latest match in the Antigua and Barbuda Second Division League on Wednesday.

North Coast Academy Juniors notched up their fourth win in 10 matches with a 4-1 drubbing of the Liberta Blackhawks at the Mount Pleasant playing field.

It was the Blackhawks, who scored first via a Lester Dupigny conversion in the opening minute. Roshan Samuel got the equalizer for North Coast Academy Juniors with a strike in the ninth minute.

An own goal by Malique Martin in the 11th minute, and a 32nd-minute conversion by Torres Francis gave North Coast Academy Juniors a 3-1 lead at halftime.

Ajabe Rae wrapped up his team's victory by scoring a fourth and final goal with a strike in the 58th minute.

The result allows the North Coast Academy Juniors to move on 14 points, while the Liberta Blackhawks remain on one point after suffering their seventh defeat in eight matches.



**Coach Donovan Peart, left, and players of the North Coast Academy Juniors football team.**

The ABFA's Second Division will continue with the remaining four matches in the 10th round of fixtures on Friday at 4:15 pm.

Earthquakes FC will host neighbours Point West Ham at Fort Road, and the

Young Warriors FC will entertain the Guydadli Jest at Buckleys.

TAMO FC will take on Police at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park, and Bethesda will clash with Blackburn Palace at Bethesda.

## Results of matches in the Inter-Schools' Netball League

The Ministry of Sports Inter-Schools' Netball League is underway and here are the results of recent matches.

### Under 16 Division

Irene B. Williams prevailed 12-6 against Pares Secondary. Antigua Girls High School trounced Clare Hall Secondary 29-4. Princess Margaret School snatch a 14-12 victory against Ottos Comprehensive School, and Antigua Girls High School beat All Saints Secondary 17-6.

### Under 18 Division

The Antigua Girls High School defeated ABCAS 13-4, and Clare Hall Secondary crushed Ottos Comprehensive School 30-2.

### Under 13 Secondary Division

The Antigua Girls High School (AGHS) has 4 teams in U-13 Division. Sir Novelle Richards Academy prevailed 3-2 over Pares Secondary School.

AGHS 4 romped to a 12-8 victory against AGHS 1. Princess Margaret School beat Jennings Secondary School 8-4, and Clare Hall Secondary School snatched a 6-4 victory over All Saints Secondary School.

AGHS 3 were 7-4 winners over AGHS 2, and AGHS 4 claimed a 9-5 victory against Christ the King High School.

### 13 and Under Primary Zone 1 Division

### 13 and Under Primary Zone 2 Division

Liberta Primary beat Potters Primary 7-1, and J.T. Ambrose Primary won by default over T.N. Kirnon Primary.

Buckleys Primary beat Old Road Primary 7-0, and Nelvie N. Gore Primary were 2-0 winners over Freemansville Primary.

### 13 and Under Primary Zone 3 Division

Villa Primary coasted to a 12-0 victory over Nelvie N. Gore Primary, Mary E. Pigott Primary snatched a 2-1 victory against Jennings Primary, and Five Islands Primary played to a 1-1 tie with Golden Grove Primary.

# Sports News

## AGS and PMS among winners in school basketball league

The Antigua Grammar School (AGS) and Princess Margaret School (PMS) recorded wins in the Senior Boys Division in the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball League at the JSC Sports Complex on Wednesday.

Antigua Grammar School cruised to a commanding 65-29 victory against the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS).

Jordan Andrew and Derick Perez each converted 17 points, and Raheem Sawyer scored 14 points for Antigua Grammar School. Akeem Shaw sank 10 points for ABCAS.

Princess Margaret School romped to an emphatic 71-54 victory over St. Mary's Secondary School.

Gabriel De Suza produced 32 points, Noah Massiah sank 14 points, and Elijah Charles scored 12 points for Princess Margaret School.

Yohan Nicholas shot a game-high 35 points, and Sheldon George contributed 10 points for St. Mary's Secondary School.

There were wins as well for Clare Hall Secondary and Ottos Comprehensive School in the Junior Boys Division.



Players of the Antigua Grammar School (green uniform) and ABCAS compete in the Senior Boys' Division in the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball League at the JSC Sports Complex on Wednesday, January 28, 2026. (Photo courtesy of the school basketball league)

hensive School in the Junior Boys Division.

Clare Hall Secondary prevailed 51-23 over Island Academy. Louis Ozuna converted 15 points, Richard Anthony sank 11 points, and Jahziel Santana scored 10 points for Clare Hall Secondary School. Tristan Thibou converted 13 points for Island Academy.

The Ottos Comprehensive surged to a crushing 72-3 victory against the Sir Novelle Richards Academy.

Levi Richards shot a game-high 20 points, Elliott Samuel produced 18 points, and Kerron Titus chipped in with 14 points for Ottos Comprehensive School.



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# Sports News

## Young footballer to expose talent at CAF GNFC player combine



Young footballers participate in a scrimmage during the 2025 CAF Player Identification Combine at the ABFA Technical Center. (Photo courtesy of GNFC)

Young footballers in Antigua and Barbuda will once again get the opportunity to showcase their talent before overseas scouts of various clubs, colleges, and universities during next month's 7th Annual Calvin Ayre Foundation (CAF) Player Identification Combine (PIC), which is hosted by the Generation Next Football Club (GNFC).

This year's CAF Player Identification Combine for male and female players, ages 13 to 21, will be held at the ABFA Technical Center from Friday, February 6, to Sunday, February 8.

Several overseas football coaches and scouts will be representing colleges, universities, and professional clubs in exploring for new talent at the annual event.

The CAF Player Identification Combine is being held for players to showcase their talents in their bids to secure athletic scholarships at colleges and universities or trials at professional football clubs.

The participants will be involved in skill evaluation, drills, and match play during the three-day event.

Scouts and coaches from Future Pro, Brookhouse College, Ackworth School, and the Steven Gerrard Academy will be heading to Antigua

for the 2026 CAF Player ID Combine, on the hunt for the next generation of elite talent.

However, there would be an absence of US-based coaches and scouts due to recent developments regarding possible restrictions on Antiguans getting new visas to facilitate travelling to the United States of America.

Interested players can register online with the GNFC or call 464-4369 and 779-4369 for further information. The registration fee is EC\$100.



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# Sports

FRIDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026

**POINT** EXPRESS  
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TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

## De Kock century leads South Africa to series win over Windies



Quinton de Kock, left, and Ryan Rickleton put on 162 in just 72 balls during the second T20 International against the West Indies at Supersport Park in Centurion, South Africa, on Thursday, January 29, 2026. (Getty Images)

Quinton de Kock was at his dazzling best with a sensational 115 to lead host South Africa to a commanding seven-wicket victory against the West Indies in the second T20 International (T20I) at Supersport Park in Centurion on Thursday evening, to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

South Africa's bowlers fought back well to restrict the West Indies to a total of 221 for four on a typically perfect batting surface. De Kock then dominated a bristling second-wicket partnership of 162 with Ryan Rickleton, who struck 77 not out from 36 balls, to all but win the game, which was completed with South Africa at 225 for three with 15 balls to spare.

De Kock's trademark pulls and slog-sweeps were outshone by his straight driving

as the West Indies opted to bowl full – half his boundary count of six fours and 10 sixes came with glorious straight drives over long on and long off.

His second T20I century came from just 43 balls, matching his first against the same opponents at the same venue four years ago. There were just five balls from which he did not score in his innings. By the time he miscued a slog-sweep and was dismissed by spinner Akeal Hosein, the game was won and the opponents despondent. He required just 49 balls for his 115. Rickleton's recent form was emphatically endorsed with an array of shots around the ground delivering nine fours and three sixes.

Earlier, Shimron Hetmyer hammered 75 from 42 balls to lead the West Indies to a total of over 200 runs, but it



Shimron Hetmyer topscored for the West Indies

could have been even more. At 115 for two after 10 overs, the South Africans were gasping for breath. But Marco Jansen, who took one for 39, and Keshav Maharaj with two for 22, bowled a couple of tight overs in the middle to restrict the total to an eminently chaseable one. West Indies+

captain Shai Hope (4) went early when he was dismissed by Kagiso Rabada, who finished with one for 35. But Brandon King, who hit 49 from 30 balls, and Hetmyer shared a breathtaking second-wicket partnership of 126 in just over 10 overs.

King hit five fours and three sixes during his knock as Pacer Anrich Nortje bore the brunt of the assault, with 24 runs coming from his first over and another 20 from his second.

Hetmyer's wonderful innings, which included eight fours and three sixes, end-

ed when he fell to Maharaj, while Rovman Powell endured a frustrating two runs from eight balls before he was bowled by Maharaj. But Sherfane Rutherford continued his staggering form in the SA20 with a bewildering innings of 57 not out from just 24 balls in the closing overs, picking his gaps for five fours and walloping four sixes.

Romario Shepherd finished unbeaten on 17 from 10 balls. Nortje's first two overs cost 44 but he was still required to bowl the 20th. It yielded 15 runs to finish with figures of none for 59 in his three overs.

South Africa, having comfortably won the first match at Boland Park by nine wickets, completed a series victory with the third and final match to be played at the Wanderers on Saturday, the annual 'Pink Ball' international.