

# Government: No Binding U.S. Refugee Deal

*Story on page 3*



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# Editorial

## Little Room to Manoeuvre



by Petra Williams

The recent decisions by Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda to engage the United States on third-country refugee arrangements have exposed an uncomfortable truth for small states: there is very little leg room left in a world where power speaks loudly and consequences travel quickly.

In Dominica, Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit has been explicit. The agreement, he insists, is tightly controlled, security-conscious, and rooted in protecting Dominica's broader interests, particularly access to travel, education, employment, and family connections for Dominicans abroad. In Antigua and Barbuda, the government has been equally clear that no binding agreement exists, no quotas apply, and sovereignty remains intact.

Yet clarity does not erase consequence. What these parallel situations reveal is not a lack of transparency, but a lack of options. Small Caribbean states are operating in a narrow corridor between cooperation and coercion, where saying "no" outright can carry penalties, and saying "yes" cautiously can still unsettle public confidence at home.

For citizens, the fallout is rarely ab-

stract. Refugee arrangements raise immediate questions about security, resources, social cohesion, and fairness. People instinctively ask: *Why us? Who decides? What happens if things go wrong?*

Governments may insist that numbers are small and vetting is strict, but the psychological burden is shared by the public, not absorbed by diplomatic language.

This is where the tension sharpens. Governments may have limited room to manoeuvre, but people have even less. They do not negotiate MOUs. They live with outcomes.

This imbalance mirrors what is unfolding much closer to home in Antigua's transport sector.

The United Taxi Company, an institution that has served the country for decades, is fighting to modernise, re-organise, and protect its members in the face of forces largely beyond its control. Digital disruption, illegal operators, infrastructure deficits, and regulatory lag have squeezed an industry that has invested millions and carried the country's tourism brand on its wheels.

Taxi operators, like governments, are being told to adapt quickly to global standards, technological shifts, and competitive pressures, often without the supportive frameworks arriving at the same pace. They are asked to absorb change, manage fallout, and maintain professionalism, all while navigating potholes both literal and institutional.

The parallel is instructive. Whether at the level of statecraft or street-level service, small actors are being compressed by larger systems that do not slow down to accommodate them.

Zooming out, the global context makes this moment even more sobering.

When Denmark's prime minister warns that threats to Greenland should be taken seriously, she is not speaking

only for Denmark. She is articulating a reality that small territories and small states have long understood in an era of strategic competition, size offers little insulation.

If powerful nations openly discuss acquiring territory, redrawing influence, or leveraging pressure through security and migration policy, then Caribbean states must read the moment clearly. This is not a time of expanded sovereignty. It is a time of constrained choice.

None of these validates poor communication, weak consultation, or dismissive governance. On the contrary, it demands more maturity, not less.

When room to manoeuvre is tight, trust becomes the most valuable currency a government has. Citizens may accept difficult decisions if they believe they are being told the truth, early and fully. They are far less forgiving when they sense minimisation or deflection.

The same applies across society. Institutions like the United Taxi Company are not merely service providers; they are shock absorbers in a volatile economy. Supporting their transition is not about nostalgia. It is about resilience.

The fallout from the Dominica and Antigua refugee discussions will not end with press statements. Nor will the pressures on local industries ease simply because they are inconvenient.

This is the terrain of 2026: fewer buffers, faster consequences, and harder choices.

Small states cannot afford noise, division, or political theatre. Nor can they pretend that global tremors will stop at our shores. Whether the issue is refugees, transport reform, or far-off debates about Greenland, the lesson is the same.

When space is limited, leadership must be steadier, citizens more engaged, and institutions more supported. There is very little room left for error.

## Government: No Binding U.S. Refugee Deal

**January 6, 2026** - The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has moved to clarify public discussion surrounding its engagement with the United States on the possible acceptance of a very limited number of third-country nationals, including refugees.

In a formal statement issued Monday, the Government stressed that no secret or binding agreement exists and that all discussions to date remain non-binding, discretionary, and fully under national control.

No binding agreement, no secrecy

According to the statement, Antigua and Barbuda has **not** entered into any binding agreement to accept deportees or refugees. What exists is a **non-binding Memorandum of Understanding** proposed by the United States as part of its broader international effort to share responsibility for refugees already present within its borders.

The Government confirmed that Antigua and Barbuda was approached alongside more than one hundred countries worldwide, including several within the **Caribbean Community (CARICOM)**.

"This Understanding creates no legal obligation, commits the Government to no quotas, and may be terminated at any time at Antigua and Barbuda's sole discretion," the statement noted, dismissing claims of coercion or secrecy as "incorrect and misleading."

The Government empha-

sized that under the proposed Understanding:

- ▶ Antigua and Barbuda retains the **absolute right to reject any individual**.
- ▶ All cases would be reviewed strictly on a **case-by-case basis**;
- ▶ **No individuals with criminal records** would be accepted; and
- ▶ Any consideration would be capped at **no more than ten persons per year**, entirely at the Government's discretion.

"There is no surrender of sovereignty, no transfer of authority, and no loss of control over borders or national security," the statement affirmed.

The Government was explicit that the arrangement does **not** involve accepting deportees or becoming a destination for individuals rejected elsewhere.

Instead, the discussions relate solely to lawfully screened third-country nationals, including refugees already present in the United States, and only where Antigua and Barbuda is fully satisfied through intelligence vetting and national security assessments that no risk would be posed.

The statement explained that consideration of the Understanding was authorised by the Prime Minister and the Attorney General as a good-faith diplomatic step, reflecting Antigua and Barbuda's willingness to cooperate internationally where it is safe, lawful, and aligned with national interests.

"This was not a concession,

nor an attempt to trade people or curry favour," the Government said, adding that such cooperation is a normal feature of responsible international relations. The Government also confirmed that Antigua and Barbuda is currently engaged in discussions with the United States on other important matters, including: the restoration of normal visa issuance and renewals for Antiguan and Barbudan nationals; and technical issues relating to biometric standards and international identity assur-

ance. These discussions, the Government noted, do not compromise national security or sovereignty.

In closing, the Government reaffirmed that Antigua and Barbuda remains a sovereign state fully in control of its decisions and borders and urged responsible, informed public discourse. "The Government will continue to act prudently, transparently, and in the best interests of the people of Antigua and Barbuda," the statement concluded.



Government of Antigua and Barbuda

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA On Cooperation with the United States Regarding Third-Country Nationals

5<sup>th</sup> January 2026

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda considers it appropriate to clarify the facts regarding its engagement with the United States on the possible acceptance of a very limited number of third-country nationals, including refugees.

In the interest of accuracy, transparency, and public confidence, the Government sets out below the relevant facts and context.

#### No secret or binding agreement

Antigua and Barbuda has not entered into any binding agreement with the United States to accept deportees or refugees.

What exists is a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding proposed by the United States, as part of its global efforts to share responsibility for refugees already present in its territory. Antigua and Barbuda was approached by the United States, along with more than one hundred governments worldwide, including several within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), to consider this non-binding arrangement.

The United States is today the country that hosts the largest number of refugees from across the world—individuals who cannot be returned to their countries of origin because doing so would expose them to serious harm, persecution, or grave reprisals. In response to this humanitarian reality, the United States has sought the cooperation of other governments to share the burden, by accepting such non-criminal refugees as they are able to do so safely and lawfully. Many countries have already agreed to this non-binding understanding.

This Understanding:

- creates no legal obligation on Antigua and Barbuda;
- commits the Government to no quotas or automatic acceptance of any persons; and
- may be terminated at any time, at Antigua and Barbuda's sole discretion.

Claims that Antigua and Barbuda has been bound by a secret or coercive agreement are incorrect and misleading.

#### Full national control is retained

Under this non-binding Understanding:

# Local News

## Sir McLean “King Short Shirt” Emanuel Recovering at Home, Gives Thanks for Support

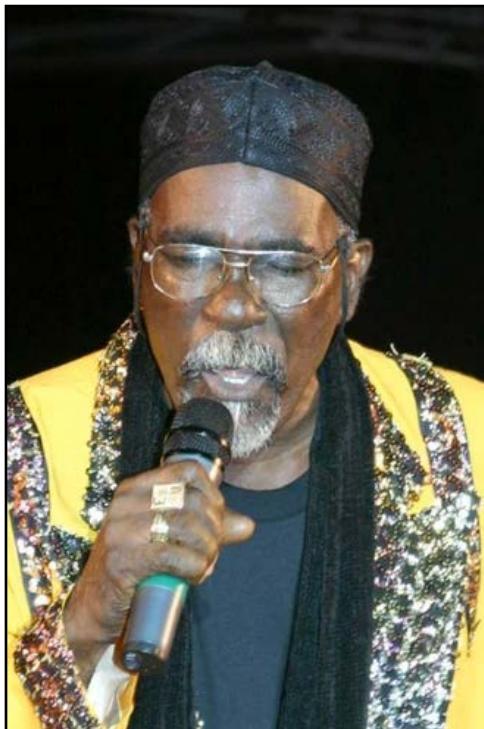
National cultural icon Sir McLean King Short Shirt Emanuel has been discharged from hospital and is now recovering at home, expressing heartfelt gratitude for the prayers, support and well-wishes he received during his recent hospitalisation.

In a statement issued following his discharge, Sir McLean gave thanks to God for His mercy and healing, saying he was deeply moved by the overwhelming outpouring of love from the people of Antigua and Barbuda, as well as supporters across the Caribbean and the wider diaspora.

He extended special appreciation to individuals in St. Kitts and Nevis, Montserrat, the United States Virgin Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Lucia, noting that the prayers and messages of encouragement meant more to him and his family than words could adequately express.

Sir McLean also praised the medical team at the Celesteburn Medical Centre, offering sincere thanks to Dr. Bell and the doctors, nurses, and medical staff who cared for him during his stay. He commended their professionalism, dedication, and compassion throughout his treatment.

The veteran calypsonian and cultural



**Sir McLean King Short Shirt Emanuel**

ambassador acknowledged the concern and well-wishes of the Governor General, the Prime Minister, and members of Cabinet, offering special thanks to former Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer for his kindness and support. He also expressed gratitude to the Antigua Public Utilities Authority, including board members, management, and staff, for their prayers and encouragement.

Sir McLean concluded by thanking

his fans and supporters in Antigua and Barbuda, throughout the Caribbean, and in the United States and Canada, particularly those who reached out via social media. He said the messages lifted his spirit and reminded him how blessed he is to be surrounded by love, adding that he looks forward to continuing his journey with renewed faith, strength, and gratitude as he focuses on recovery.

Sir McLean “King Short Shirt” Emanuel is one of Antigua and Barbuda’s most influential cultural figures, widely regarded as a pioneer of socially conscious calypso in the Eastern Caribbean. Rising to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s, his music became synonymous with national identity, political awareness, and the voice of the common people.

His lyrics have chronicled Antiguan society, governance, faith, and resilience, earning him regional respect and multiple accolades, including a knighthood for his contribution to culture and nation-building. Beyond music, Sir McLean has long been recognised as a cultural ambassador whose work helped place Antigua and Barbuda firmly on the Caribbean’s cultural map.

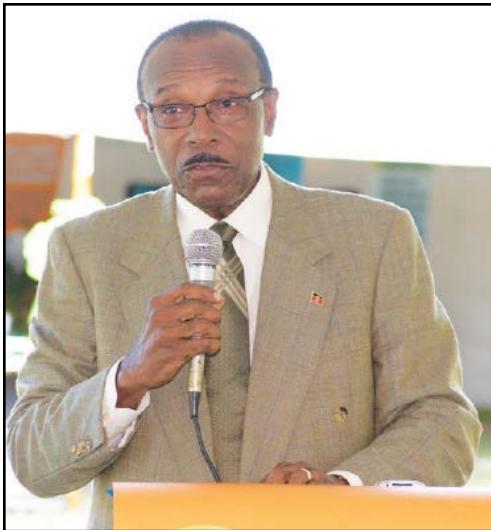


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## Consultations Begin on Proposed Pharmacy Bill and Regulations 2026



**Minister for Health and Wellness,  
Sir Molwyn Joseph**

January 6, 2026 - National consultations have begun on Antigua and Barbuda's proposed Pharmacy Bill and Regulations 2026, a legislative update aimed at strengthening pub-

lic health protections, modernising oversight of pharmaceuticals, and ensuring the safe distribution and use of medicines across the country.

The consultations are being hosted at the Parliament Building by the Antigua and Barbuda Pharmacy Council, in collaboration with the Ministry of Legal Affairs, through the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel. Sessions began today and continue tomorrow from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Speaking at the opening session, Sir Molwyn Joseph, Minister for Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment, emphasised that pharmaceutical regulation is not merely a technical exercise, but a frontline public health issue. "To my understanding, the pharmaceutical industry has a role to play in terms of

the quality and the safety of drugs in our country," the Minister said, drawing attention to the growing global threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

He warned that improper and excessive use of antibiotics has weakened medicines that were once effective, making infections harder to treat and increasing risks to patients. "This is not a simple process," Minister Joseph cautioned. "We are relying on you, who are the technicians, all of you well trained, and the Government is inviting you to abide by the law to maintain safe standards in the distribution and use of these drugs."

The Minister noted that updated pharmacy legislation is essential to ensuring that medicines dispensed in Antigua and Barbuda meet modern safety

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# Local News



standards, reduce the circulation of inappropriate or misused drugs, and help preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for future generations.

Also addressing the consultations was Michael Joseph, who outlined the legislative gaps the new bill seeks to close. He explained that while pharmaceuticals have always been central to healthcare, the country's legal framework has not kept pace with rapid advances in medicine, treatment protocols, and international best practices. "The first pharmaceutical legislation was enacted in 1995," he said. "Over the years, we have had different fragments of legislation trying to cover different areas. What is significant about this bill is that it brings all of those pieces together into one comprehensive framework."

By consolidating multiple pieces of legislation into a single, coherent bill, the proposed law is expected to clarify regulations, improve enforcement, and strengthen accountability across the pharmaceutical supply chain, from importation and wholesale dis-

tribution to dispensing at pharmacies.

Why the reforms matter to the public

The proposed Pharmacy Bill and Regulations 2026 are expected to have direct implications for everyday life in Antigua and Barbuda. Stronger regulation of pharmaceuticals helps ensure that medicines sold in pharmacies are safe, properly stored, and dispensed by qualified professionals. It also strengthens oversight against counterfeit or improperly handled drugs, a growing concern in global pharmaceutical markets.

Equally important is the role the legislation is expected to play in addressing antimicrobial resistance. By tightening controls on how antibiotics are distributed and used, the law aims to reduce misuse that contributes to drug-resistant infections, which pose a serious threat to modern healthcare.

As Antigua and Barbuda becomes more integrated into regional and international health systems, updated pharmacy regulation also helps align the country with global standards, supporting confidence in its health-

care institutions and safeguarding public health at home and abroad.

Yesterday's consultations were structured to allow focused input from key stakeholders. Pharmacists participated in the morning session, followed by wholesalers, pharmacy owners, and their pharmacists in the afternoon.

Today's programme is expected to expand the discussion further. Members of the general public and government regulators, including Customs, Police, the ONDCP, the Pesticide Board, and the Forensic Laboratory, will contribute in the morning, while doctors, veterinarians, and dentists are scheduled to provide feedback in the afternoon.

The consultations are intended to inform final refinements to the Pharmacy Bill and Regulations 2026 before the legislation is presented to Parliament, as the Government moves to ensure that Antigua and Barbuda's pharmaceutical framework protects public health, supports professional standards, and keeps pace with an evolving healthcare landscape.



## FDC Marks New Milestone with Expanded and Modernised Offices



Finance and Development Company Limited (FDC) has marked another significant milestone in its growth with the completion of a newly expanded and modernised office space, underscoring the company's strong public trust, financial stability, and long-term commitment to Antigua and Barbuda.

The renovation is part of the continued expansion of the Hadeed Group of Companies, with FDC officially returning to its upstairs offices following approximately four months of extensive refurbishment. During that period, staff were temporarily relocated to the showroom area to facilitate the upgrade.

The completed renovation delivers a significantly enhanced working environment, including a newly added conference room, expanded offices for loan officers, and additional workstations. The improvements reflect FDC's growing portfolio and the increasing demand for its financial services.

One of the founding di-



rectors of the Hadeed Group, Sir Aziz Hadeed, reflected on the institution's journey from modest beginnings to becoming one of the country's most established financial companies. "What began as a very difficult start-up has grown into a strong financial institution," Hadid said, noting that FDC's portfolio now stands at more than EC\$275 million. He attributed that growth to disciplined management, prudent decision-making, and a sustained commitment to service over decades. "Our portfolio now stands at \$275 million EC dollars. We are very proud of our history with regard to Finance and Development," he said.

He also addressed the company's regulatory framework and capital structure, explaining that FDC operates under strict rules similar to those governing commercial banks across Antigua and Barbuda and the wider Eastern Caribbean. He explained that while regulations limit lending to 25 percent of paid-up capi-



tal, FDC's capital base has continued to grow, with paid-up capital now standing at approximately EC\$27 million, supplemented by substantial shareholder investment. "The rest of it is family-owned money that we inject into the company," Sir Hadeed explained, a position he described as unmatched by banks across the region. "That is why we say we are one of the safest institutions for depositors."

Another founding member of FDC, Francis Hadeed, described the company as one of the most trusted financial institutions in Antigua and Barbuda, estimating that nearly 90 percent of all households on the island have done business with FDC at some point over its roughly 40-year history.

He also expressed sincere appreciation to those who contributed to the success-

ful completion of the renovation project. "I'd like to thank Mr. Jason West, Delroy, and Mr. Jenkins and Mrs. Jenkins. We were truly impressed with the work that was done," Hadid said. "I also want to thank all our staff members for bringing this project to fruition in just under four months."

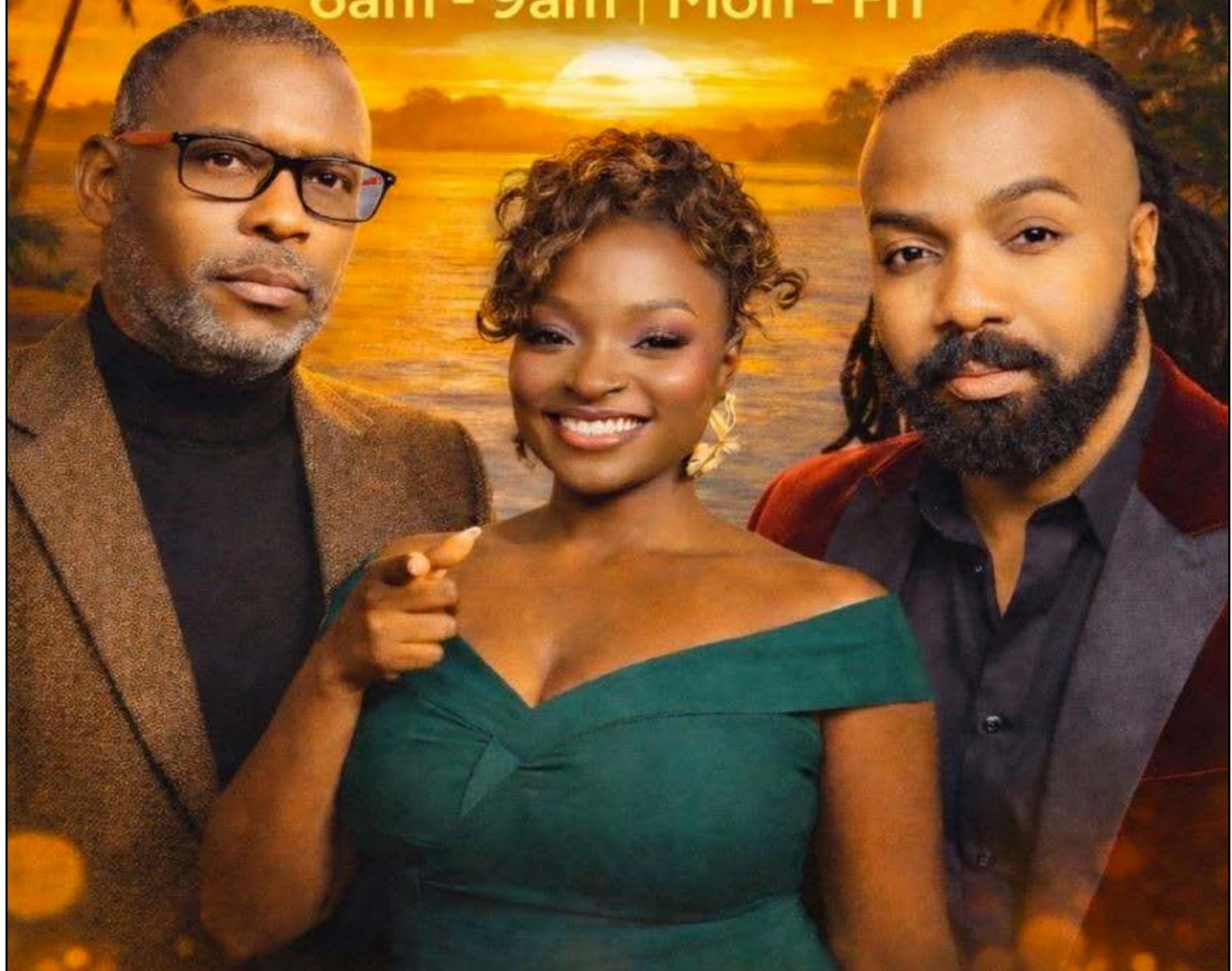
He noted that the building was completely gutted and rebuilt, with new roofing, tiles, flooring, and interior finishes installed within a tight timeline.

The renovated office space further reinforces the Hadeed Group's reputation as a pillar of local entrepreneurship, financial stability, and long-term investment in Antigua and Barbuda, standing as a visible marker of how far the institution has come and its confidence in the road ahead.

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## United Taxi Company Accelerates Digital Transformation as Internal Reorganisation Gets Underway



**IAN JOSEPH**  
PRESIDENT - UNITED TAXI COMPANY

The United Taxi Company (UTC) is entering 2026 with a dual focus on digital modernisation and internal reorganisation, as the long-established transport provider works to strengthen governance, improve enforcement at the airport, and meet the expectations of today's travellers.

In recent interviews, UTC President Ian Joseph said the organisation, which has operated at the V.C. Bird International Airport since the 1960s, is modernising to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving transportation landscape.

At the centre of that shift is a major digital push. Joseph confirmed that the UTC is finalising its official website, which will allow visitors to pre-book airport pickups and access island-wide transportation services online. He noted that the association's growing presence on platforms such as Instagram has already generated overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Joseph stressed that a strong online footprint is no longer optional. Without it, he warned, service providers risk being left behind by competitors who already rely heavily on digital platforms to capture business.

Alongside the digital transformation, Joseph confirmed that internal reorganisation is underway, describing it as necessary "internal housekeeping" before the UTC can fully pursue its

2026 objectives. He said there has been a meeting of the minds among the parties involved, with a joint proposal for resolution submitted to the court, signalling tangible progress. He further confirmed that earlier legal and executive disputes within the UTC have now been settled.

"Thankfully, that matter has been settled," Joseph said, explaining that senior members intervened to bring both sides together and resolve the issue internally. "That matter is done and dusted."

The restructuring follows a period of internal discord earlier this year, when members gathered near the old terminal amid leadership tensions. A new executive, comprising both seasoned and newer members, was elected, following a petition last year signed by more than half of the membership calling for changes amid concerns about division and governance.

Joseph said the current process is aimed at closing that chapter, stabilising leadership, and allowing the UTC to move forward as a more cohesive organisation.

On the long-standing issue of unauthorised operators at the airport, Joseph said enforcement is improving but remains a work in progress. He confirmed that the airport authority is actively involved in tightening regulations and carving out designated areas to accommodate legitimate pick-ups.

"We are never against legitimate taxi drivers coming to pick up their guests," Joseph said, noting that licensed operators often have pre-arranged clients arriving by air. "But what we have is an illegal operation with people using illegal transportation at the airport, and that is what we want to cut."

Joseph said discussions with the Attorney General and technical drafters have begun to yield results. While he admitted he is "not totally satisfied," he said there has been clear movement, with assurances that the outstanding

issues raised in those meetings will be addressed by mid-January.

Joseph also addressed the recent increase in licensing fees for taxi operators, saying the UTC did not oppose the adjustment, particularly if funds are directed toward improving road infrastructure.

"Our offices are on the road, and we navigate every pothole," he said. "If the increase is to fix the roads, we had no issues with it."

He pointed out that the investment required to enter the profession is substantial, exceeding EC\$200,000 per driver. He added that several drivers at the airport recently upgraded their vehicles, representing more than EC\$1.2 million in new investment.

"We have to protect our investments," Joseph said, underscoring the importance of safer, better-maintained roads. He acknowledged that poor road conditions can be uncomfortable for visitors and, at times, embarrassing for drivers who serve as tourism ambassadors, particularly on popular routes such as Devil's Bridge and roads surrounding the airport.

Reflecting on 2025, Joseph rejected suggestions that it was a difficult year for the UTC, saying the organisation performed well and has moved past earlier internal challenges. His focus, he said, is on unity, enforcement, and modernisation.

Looking ahead to 2026, Joseph reiterated that the UTC is committed to regularising illegal transportation, strengthening collaboration with authorities, and becoming more visible and accessible online.

The goal, he stressed, is not merely to survive, but to stay ahead of the game by providing the convenience, reliability, and professionalism that modern travellers expect, while presenting a united front as one of Antigua and Barbuda's most enduring transport institutions.



## **GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

*It is with sorrow that the Prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Honourable Gaston Browne, sends this formal notification of the death of Mrs. Genevieve Clatilda Smith MBE OM, Former Educator, on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2025.*

*The Official Funeral Service for Mrs. Smith will be held at the Spring Gardens Moravian Church, St. John's Street, on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. Persons are asked to be seated by 9:30 a.m. Additionally, the condolence book will be available for signing at that time.*

*Interment will be at Floreta Gardens, Potters Village.*

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

*St. John's*

*2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2026*

*Celebrating the life of*  
**Genevieve Smith Nee Lewis OM, MBE**  
 JANUARY 7, 1934 - DECEMBER 11, 2025



## PRESS STATEMENT - IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Observer Story – false and misleading The Minister of Foreign Affairs, E. Paul Chet Greene, categorically rejects the article published on page 14 of the Antigua Observer on January 5, 2026, which alleges that a student visa was cancelled as a result of Presidential Proclamation 10998 and contrary to assurances given by the Government that visas issued before January 1, 2026, would be respected. Following direct inquiries, United States authorities have confirmed that the case described has nothing to do with the Presidential Proclamation.

The applicant did not qualify for a visa under Section 214(b) of U.S. immigration law. As is standard practice, an indication of approval at the interview does not constitute final U.S. visa issuance.

All applications undergo

mandatory post-interview vetting, including checks routed through Washington, D.C. It is during this process that applications may be refused if statutory requirements are not met. No visa was issued in this case.

Had the application been refused under the Presidential Proclamation, the applicant would have received a different refusal notice expressly citing that legal basis. That did not occur.

Additionally, the photograph published in the article—purporting to show a cancelled visa—was examined and found to be entirely

unrelated. It depicts an application from India for an H-1B work visa, not a student visa, and bears no connection to the alleged Antiguan case. The Ministry is therefore compelled to conclude that the article is false and deliberately misleading, constructed to suggest—maliciously—that visas approved or issued prior to January 1, 2026 were not being honoured. The Government of Antigua and Barbuda stands by its statements: validly issued visas are respected.

The article's claims are not supported by facts and should be treated accordingly. (Ends)

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# Eye on The Economy

## 2025 in Review: How a Weakened US Dollar Shaped Small Island Livelihoods



By Petra Williams

How a weakening green-back reshaped prices, tourism, and Caribbean economic life

The US dollar did not collapse in 2025. But it lost something just as important: its bite.

After years of global dominance, the greenback entered a broad decline that reshaped everything from supermarket shelves in St John's to impacting visitor spending. By the end of the year, the US Dollar Index had fallen sharply, reflecting a global recalibration driv-

en by slowing US growth, shifting Federal Reserve policy, ballooning US fiscal deficits, and investor unease over America's political and economic direction.

For Antigua and Barbuda and the wider Caribbean, this was not an abstract Wall Street story. It showed up in the cost of food, shipping, fuel, hotel margins, and how much visitors chose to spend once they stepped off the plane.

In 2025, we were reminded that even a softer US dollar can still shape small economies in powerful ways.

### Why the Dollar Slipped in 2025

The US dollar's decline in 2025 began with a loss of confidence in policy direction.

The slide began in January as markets reacted to a mix of trade shocks, fiscal unease, and shifting expectations about the future of US monetary policy. By mid-year, it had recorded one of its steepest first-half declines in decades.

Several forces converged. Early in the year, renewed tariff measures and trade threats unsettled global markets. These moves were widely viewed as inflationary and growth-damaging, weakening confidence in US economic management and triggering early selling of dollar-denominated assets.

At the same time, expanding US deficits and rising debt levels added to investor unease about the long-term stability of US macro policy.

By mid-2025, the narrative had changed from "the dollar is unbeatable" to "the dollar is vulnerable." That shift in sentiment helped turn what began as a policy-driven pullback into a sustained depreciation.

Monetary policy movements by the Federal Reserve also played a role. Interest rate

reductions in the last quarter of 2025 confirmed that the era of higher yields relative to other currencies was ending, further eroding investor confidence.

With growth improving in parts of Europe and elsewhere, and US policy risk rising, global investors diversified. Capital flowed toward non-US assets, while many large funds began hedging their dollar exposure, a process that itself added downward pressure on the currency.

Yet, as major analysts have emphasized, this was not a structural collapse of the US dollar. It remained the world's dominant reserve and settlement currency, and it continued to attract capital during periods of global stress.

What 2025 represented was a prolonged cyclical weakening driven by policy uncertainty, fiscal strain, and changing global capital flows, not the end of dollar supremacy.

### Imports, Inflation and the Cost of Living in Antigua and Barbuda

For Antigua and Barbuda, a weaker US dollar cut in an uncomfortable direction.

The EC dollar is pegged to the US dollar, which means the country inherits both its stability and its vulnerabilities. When the dollar weak-

ens globally, Antigua does not gain export competitiveness the way flexible-currency countries do. Instead, it absorbs higher import costs.

That mattered in 2025 because almost everything consumed was imported. As the dollar weakened against the euro, the pound, and other currencies, goods sourced outside the US became more expensive. Combined with shipping costs, already elevated after years of global disruption and rising again, and the escalation of US tariff wars, pushed prices higher. Supermarkets, hardware stores, and pharmacies all felt the squeeze.

This was one of the main, though unspoken, drivers of the inflation Antigua experienced in 2025. Even when local demand was steady, movement in global currencies and freight costs pushed prices upward. It became more expensive to live, not because Antiguans were consuming more, but because the currency foundation for those imports was shifting.

### How the Decline in US Currency Value Decline Impacted Tourism

The dollar's decline also impacted tourism behaviour.

In theory, linked to a fixed exchange rate, Antigua's prices stayed stable. Hotel rooms, tours, restaurants, and most visitor services are priced in US dollars or pegged to the EC dollar. So, US visitors did not suddenly see higher headline prices.

But their purchasing power changed. In real terms,

Table: US Dollar Movement, January–December 2025		
Month	Dollar Index (Approx.)	What Was Happening
Jan	125	Dollar starts the year elevated but begins to weaken as trade and fiscal uncertainty grows
Feb	123	Early decline continues as markets reassess US policy risks
Mar	120	Trade and tariff shocks accelerate selling of US dollar assets
Apr	117	Confidence erodes further as fiscal and policy fears deepen
May	115	Dollar slides to multi-year lows against major currencies
Jun	113	First-half decline reaches its steepest point
Jul	120.53	Partial stabilisation as markets digest losses
Aug	120.98	Dollar remains weak, with only modest recovery
Sep	120.45	Pressure persists as rate cuts approach
Oct	121.17	Small rebound on short-term volatility
Nov	121.80	Late-year firmness, but still below early-year strength
Dec	~121	Year ends with the dollar weaker than where it

their dollars did less. The effect showed up not in whether they travelled, but in how they spent. This is where discretionary spending patterns shifted.

The American still came, but once on the island, spending shifted: fewer private boat charters, fewer spa days, fewer art and jewellery purchases, for example. The result was a reduction in the flow of money into the small local businesses that depend on visitor expenditure.

At the same time, UK and European visitors enjoyed stronger currencies against the dollar. For them, Antigua felt more affordable. Their discretionary spending was often more robust, subtly reshaping the mix of tourism demand through the year.

### The US Dollar: Still the World's Financial Spine

Despite all this, the dollar remains the core of the global financial system as 2026 begins.

It is still the primary global trading currency, the dominant commodity pricing currency, the world's main reserve currency, and the anchor of global debt, banking, and settlement systems. No other currency offers the depth, liquidity, legal certainty, and institutional trust that the dollar does. The United States still hosts the world's largest consumer market and deepest capital markets. That makes the dollar more than a currency. It is infrastructure.

Even in 2025, when investors questioned US policy, they did not abandon the dollar. They hedged. They diversified. But they stayed inside the system.

### Where BRICS and Latin

### America Fit In

The expanding BRICS bloc and growing Latin American engagement with alternative financial systems reflect a global push to reduce over-dependence on any one currency. Countries are experimenting with local-currency trade, alternative payment systems, and new development banks.

For the Caribbean, this matters. It opens the door to new sources of infrastructure and tourism investment, broader trade financing options, and long-term reserve diversification

But it does not replace the dollar. Even many BRICS-linked trade agreements still convert through it. BRICS is widening the map. The dollar still holds the compass.

### Looking Ahead to 2026

As 2026 unfolds, the Caribbean sits inside a shifting global system.

A softer dollar means continued pressure on import prices. It means careful management of inflation. It means tourism strategies that speak not just to US visitors, but to UK and European markets whose currencies carry more weight.

For investors and currency traders, the era of easy dollar dominance has ended. Volatility is back. Capital moves more freely. But when global stress rises, money still runs to the greenback.

For small, open economies like Antigua and Barbuda, learning to navigate the space between dominance and economic diversification while managing our cost of living will define the

# Feature

## Clarity, Community, and the Courage to Keep Going



The start of a new year often brings with it reflection, recalibration, and renewed hope. It is a natural pause—a moment to look back at what has been learned and forward to what is possible. For communities across Antigua and Barbuda—particularly those closely following the Student Community Service Recycling Program—this moment is no different. We are beginning this year with optimism, clarity, and warmth, grounded in transparency and guided by the belief that meaningful change takes time, trust, and collaboration. As the United Nations has emphasized, “Sustainable development is not possible without strong, inclusive communities at its core.” Community is not an afterthought to progress—it is the engine that drives it. When people feel informed, respected, and involved, even difficult conversations can become opportunities for growth. Several short videos have been shared on Good Humans 268’s YouTube platform. These videos respond directly to questions raised by the public, particularly concerning project activities taking place in John Hughes. Rather than one

long explanation, the organization made a conscious decision to share information in smaller, focused segments—creating space for clarity, understanding, and honest dialogue. Alongside these videos, a Quarter 2 update from the Student Community Service Recycling Project was also released. It highlights how far the project has come, the lessons learned along the way, and the adjustments being made as the initiative continues to evolve. Recycling, after all, is not an event—it is a process. Systems must be tested, partnerships refined, and education reinforced. Progress is rarely instant, but it is meaningful when it is intentional.

This work exists within a much larger global context. The United Nations Environment Programme has warned that “Plastic pollution has become one of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time, affecting ecosystems, economies, and human health.” Another UN assessment cautions that “Without urgent action, plastic waste entering aquatic and marine environments could nearly triple by 2040.” For small island states like Antigua and Barbuda, these

warnings are not abstract. They are visible on coastlines, in waterways, and in landfills—underscoring why local action matters. As part of this ongoing process, Good Humans 268 has acknowledged that the project did not move forward exactly as initially envisioned. That acknowledgment matters. Communities deserve honesty, not perfection. When plans shift, when delays occur, and when learning happens in real time, it is communication—not silence—that keeps people connected. What does accountability look like if not the willingness to say, “We are learning as we go”?

Looking ahead, the organization has committed to hosting a public consultation in the coming weeks. This consultation will create space for open discussion, shared understanding, and updates on ongoing conversations with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda. Collaboration, after all, is central to Sustainable Development Goal 17—Partnerships for the Goals—and meaningful environmental progress cannot occur in isolation. UNDESA reminds us that “Inclusive decision-



making and participatory governance are essential to achieving sustainable development.” When communities are invited into the process, trust deepens. At its core, the Student Community Service Recycling Program supports SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). Yet beyond global frameworks, it is ultimately about people—students, teachers, families, and communities—showing up every day to do a little better than yesterday. UNESCO has consistently emphasized that “Education is the foundation for sustainable development,” reminding us that lasting change begins with knowledge, values, and shared responsibility.

There is also a critical human dimension to this work. The World Health Organization has noted that “Environmental risks,

including pollution and poor waste management, contribute significantly to preventable disease worldwide.” Clean environments support healthy communities. Proper waste management is not only an environmental responsibility—it is a public health priority.

As the year begins, three guiding principles continue to shape the work ahead—principles that extend beyond any single organization and speak to how communities sustain momentum over time.

Lead with purpose, not pressure. This work is not driven by obligation, but by calling. When initiatives align with purpose, challenges become lessons rather than roadblocks. Protect your energy like your greatest asset. Rest, boundaries, and thoughtful collaboration are not luxuries; they are strategies for sustainability. Sustainable work requires sustainable

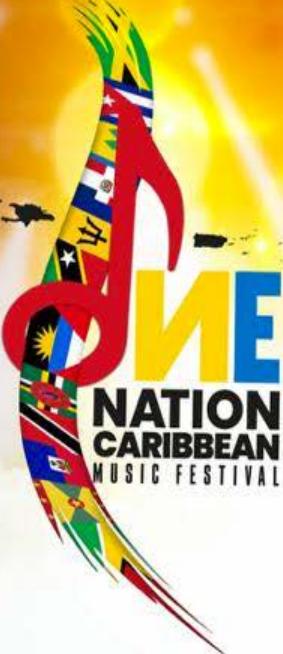
people. Show up imperfect—but show up consistently.

Progress does not demand perfection. It asks for persistence. Small, steady actions compound into lasting impact.

So where do we go from here? Forward—with openness. Forward—with humility. Forward—with community at the center. The road ahead may not be perfectly straight, but it is purposeful. And as we step into this new year, one question remains worth asking: what kind of Antigua and Barbuda are we willing to build together?

**Joshuanette Francis**  
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## HERE IS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

### VENUE ENTRY

#### GENERAL ADMISSION

- OLD PARHAM RD. (ROUNDABOUT)
- INDEPENDENCE DRIVE (LONG ST.)

### ALL-INCLUSIVE ACCESS CORONATION RD

Night 1 - Reggae Kingdom

Night 2 - Kingdom of Praise

### PARKING - ARCHIVES

### TICKET AND AGE GUIDELINES

**Night 1 - General \$100.00**

**Night 2 - General \$100.00**

- Children under 16 with **valid ID** \$25 at the gate
- Children under 5 FREE (**only for night 2**)

### GATES OPEN

**NIGHT 1 - 7 PM**

**NIGHT 2 - 4 PM**

### HEADLINER PERFORMANCES

**NIGHT 1 - BEFORE 10 PM**

**NIGHT 2 - BEFORE 7 PM**

### ROAD CLOSURE

- CENOTAPH TO THE ROUNDABOUT
- CORONATION ROAD
- OLD PARHAM RD. GRAMMAR SCHOOL WESTWARD TO THE ROUNDABOUT

### TICKETS

#### ARG TICKET BOOTHS

**THURSDAY - FRIDAY 10 AM TO 5 PM**

**OLD PARHAM RD. ROUNDABOUT (ONLY)**

**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY - 10 AM UNTIL BOTH TICKET BOOTHS (OLD PARHAM RD AND INDEPENDENCE DRIVE)**



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ANTIGUA CARNIVAL

## Resolutions Have No Expiry Date

**Why growth, intention, and new beginnings are possible at every stage of life**

A quiet but powerful truth emerged during the end-of-year (2025) discussion on the PDV CAB Hour on Point FM 99.1: growth does not retire. There is no age at which intention becomes irrelevant, no stage of life where personal development should be shelved.

The conversation unfolded naturally, rooted in reflection rather than instruction. As Antigua and Barbuda stepped out of the Christmas season and toward a new year, listeners were encouraged to think beyond the familiar ritual of resolutions, which they had long considered reserved for the young or the ambitious. Instead, resolutions were framed as what they truly are: promises we make to ourselves, whether to begin something new or to let something go.

### Endings That Carry Beginnings

December, the programme reminded listeners, is often misunderstood. It is treated as an ending when, in fact, it carries the symbolism of beginnings. In the Christian tradition, the birth of Jesus represents the moment when “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”, not an ending, but a profound beginning rooted in purpose and responsibility.

That framing matters! It shifts the conversation from pressure and performance

to meaning. Growth is not about reinvention for show. It is about alignment.

### Comfort Is Not the Same as Progress

One of the strongest threads in the discussion was the distinction between routine and growth. Habit, while

of transformation does not come from standing still.

### Resolutions at Any Age

Perhaps the most important takeaway was the dismantling of the myth that resolutions belong to youth. Goal setting, listeners were reminded, has no age re-

plan wisely. Growth should stretch you, not break you.

### Planning with Intention

The programme’s familiar wisdom from “grandma” landed with quiet authority: *“If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.”* It was not offered as a cliché, but as a reminder that intention without structure rarely survives.

Resolutions, when grounded in planning, become sustainable. They become less about January declarations and more about daily choices.

What made the discussion resonate was its refusal to dramatise change. Growth was not framed as a dramatic leap, but as a mindset. One that recognises that endings are rarely final, that beginnings are often subtle, and that progress looks different at different stages of life. In a society that frequently celebrates youth while quietly sidelining maturity, the message landed with quiet power: there is no expiry date on purpose.

As the new year unfolds, the invitation is not simply to make resolutions, but to make them honest, realistic, and deeply personal. At any age, the work continues.

*The conversation continues every Monday from 11:00 a.m. to noon on Pointe FM 99.1, as Mrs Jellette “Jelly Beans” Ralph hosts the PDV Hour, sponsored by PDV Caribe Antigua and Barbuda Limited.*

### How to Set Realistic Goals at Any Age

#### 1. Start with honesty, not pressure

A goal should reflect where you are, not where society says you should be. Age is not a limitation, but it does shape capacity, priorities, and pace.

#### 2. Adjust the form, not the dream

If a goal is no longer physically or financially practical, reshape it. What once required doing can evolve into teaching, mentoring, or guiding others.

#### 3. Build from what already works

Progress does not always require starting over. Strengthen routines that serve you and discard habits that quietly block growth.

#### 4. Plan in stages

Break goals into manageable steps. Small, consistent actions are more powerful than ambitious plans with no structure.

#### 5. Leave room for flexibility

Life changes. Health changes. Circumstances change. A realistic goal allows adjustment without guilt.

#### 6. Measure growth, not speed

Growth is not a race. Whether progress is visible or subtle, forward movement at any pace still counts.

#### 7. Commit to consistency, not perfection

Missing a day does not mean failure. What matters is returning to intention, again and again.

#### AND THIS AS A PULL OUT QUOTE (Kinda Picture Box)

“As long as a person is alive, growth remains possible. The dream may change shape, but it should never disappear.”

comforting, can quietly become a ceiling. The acknowledgement was simple but honest: people are creatures of habit, and habits can either support development or stall it.

Real growth, the program suggested, happens when comfort is challenged. The reflection on personal change from one year to the next was telling. Sometimes growth is so substantial that you hardly recognize the version of yourself from just a year earlier. That kind

striction. As long as life continues, growth remains possible.

What does change with age is not the need for goals, but the way they are shaped. Ambition matures; dreams adapt. A goal that once required physical exertion may evolve into teaching, mentoring, or guiding others. The dream does not disappear; it transforms.

This realism was not presented as a limitation, but as wisdom. The message was clear: dream boldly, but

# Is South Africa next?



## The US's annexation of Venezuela is a symbol of unchecked power

By Ayanda Mdluli

In a move that has caused untold despair and destabilisation of the relatively peaceful global south nation, the United States recently embarked on a controversial operation that saw the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

The event, unfolding in the last 48 hours, has stirred an international uproar, signalling a dangerous precedent in global diplomacy and power dynamics.

Let us picture this for a second: You lie peacefully in your home, your only concern, a mundane day ahead. Suddenly, your door is kicked in, and intruders haul you from your bedroom, dragging you out in your pyjamas, mercilessly assaulting you before your family, handcuffed and thrown into the boot of a truck, whisked away to a foreign land without so much as a hint of consent.

This heinous scenario captures the essence of what happened when U.S.

forces entered Venezuela, capturing Maduro and his wife, and transporting them to an uncertain fate in the United States.

Donald Trump's post on Truth Social confirming the operation, along with an indictment by the U.S. Attorney General, has fairytale elements to it, yet stark realities underpin this unfolding drama.

Accompanying Trump's proclamation was a press conference, during which he boasted of the U.S. military's unsassable strength, asserting that Venezuela was now effectively under direct U.S. colonial rule until a compliant leader emerges.

His words resonate with chilling finality: in a world ruled by power, some nations bend the knee while others dictate terms.

Venezuela sits atop the world's largest proven oil reserves, making it a lucrative target for a nation that has historically benefited from such resources. Trump hinted in his address that the plan included a comprehensive reconstruction of Venezuela's collapsing oil infrastructure with the involvement of U.S. oil giants, a pointed reminder of the tension between the U.S. and Venezuela that dates back to Hugo Chavez's nationalisation of oil resources nearly three decades ago.

Also in the press conference, Trump effectively announced the annexation of Venezuela by stating that the US is going to "run" the country going forward. As the U.S. faces rising challenges to its dominance, including de-dollarisation efforts led by nations like China, the stakes have substantial-

ly escalated.

Venezuela's flirtation with the petroyuan, as early as 2017, has resulted in the U.S. feeling compelled to reassert its control with military force.

What this means for the fabric of international relations remains to be seen. In the wake of these developments, nations beyond the shores of the American mainland must brace themselves for potential repercussions.

South Africa, in particular, must not simply condemn these actions through perfunctory statements but should take decisive measures to fortify its military amidst the spectre of U.S. aggression.

The recent insinuations and narratives propagated by Trump's administration, including unfounded claims of 'white genocide', serve as stark reminders that the rhetoric of division is alive and well.

Now, more than ever, South Africa's leadership must commence strategic planning as President Cyril Ramaphosa can no longer afford to govern with complacency.

The rise of secessionist sentiments in regions like the Western Cape only adds another layer of complexity to an already precarious socio-political climate.

As the implications of global power shifts come to fruition, it is imperative that South Africa fortifies itself against incursions, whether real or rhetorical, engineered by formidable actors in the international arena.

*Ayanda Mdluli is the editor of the Daily News and Media Strategist in South Africa*

# Regional News

## Dominica Signs Third-Country Refugee Arrangement with United States, Skerrit Assures Strict Vetting

The Government of Dominica has confirmed that it has entered into an arrangement with the United States to accept a limited number of third-country refugees who cannot be returned to their countries of birth or origin, with Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit stressing that national security safeguards are central to the agreement.

Speaking at a press conference held Monday morning, Prime Minister Skerrit said the arrangement followed extensive discussions with the U.S. State Department and includes strict intelligence vetting to ensure that no violent or dangerous individuals are sent to Dominica.

“In our discussions with the State Department, there has been careful deliberation of the need to avoid receiving violent individuals or individuals who will compromise the security of Dominica. This has been acknowledged and well received by the State Department,” Skerrit told reporters.

He said the agreement is framed within the broader context of maintaining strong bilateral relations between Dominica and the United States.

“Given the importance of bilateral relationships between the United States and Dominica, as prime minister and head of government, I believe it is important to find key points of agreement and compromise between our countries,” he said.

According to Skerrit, the engagement is not only about humanitarian considerations, but also about protecting the practical interests of Dominican citizens abroad.

“This engagement is based on our responsibility to safeguard the well-being of our people, particularly their access to lawful travel, education, employment and family connections, while strengthening cooperation between our governments,” he explained.

“I believe this will further deepen our



longstanding relationship and signal clearly that Dominica remains a willing and reliable partner of the United States in the region.”

When asked to identify which countries the refugees would originate from, Prime Minister Skerrit said those details could not be disclosed at this stage.

“I think they have taken our concerns into very serious consideration, and those concerns are being reflected in the final document agreed between ourselves. But as time goes by, we will know how we operate this agreement,” he said.

He added that the agreement, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), reflects extensive dialogue on all relevant concerns.

“But all of the questions you have asked have been considered as part of the discussions and part of the agreement, the MOU between Dominica and the United States,” Skerrit said, noting that Washington “has been very respectful and reasonable and understanding of our concerns”.

The announcement comes amid

heightened scrutiny of U.S. immigration and security policies. Dominica was recently listed among 39 countries added to a U.S. travel ban at the start of the new year, according to reports carried by the *Royal Gazette*, raising concerns across the region about mobility, access, and diplomatic positioning.

Regional observers note that Dominica’s agreement places it among a small but growing number of Caribbean states navigating complex third-country arrangements with the United States, balancing humanitarian considerations with domestic security and international relations.

Prime Minister Skerrit maintained that Dominica’s primary responsibility remains the protection of its citizens and national stability, while continuing to engage constructively with international partners.

The agreement is expected to be implemented gradually, with further operational details to be clarified as the process unfolds.

# Regional News

## Former UN ambassador, Crispin Gregoire: CARICOM must find its voice amid Venezuela crisis

Former Dominican ambassador to the United Nations, Crispin Gregoire, has urged CARICOM leaders to break their silence and respond decisively to the unfolding crisis in Venezuela following the dramatic capture of President Nicolás Maduro.

Gregoire expressed disappointment at what he described as a “timid” regional response, stressing that this is the moment Caribbean leaders must stand together and engage directly with Washington.

According to Gregoire, the United States executed a precision operation that stunned Venezuela’s military and political establishment. He revealed that U.S. intelligence had penetrated Maduro’s inner circle, even buying off members of his personal security detail. Families of those bodyguards were reportedly relocated to the United States under new identities before the strike. With their cooperation, a Delta Force team swiftly entered, seized Maduro and his wife, and departed within twelve minutes—leaving Venezuela’s defense minister and armed forces “totally dumbfounded.”

Gregoire, in an interview on Q95 today, warned that the operation raises profound legal and political questions. On the international level, he argued, the U.S. violated Venezuela’s sovereignty, ignoring norms of international law. Domestically, he noted that President Trump bypassed Congress, sparking opposition among lawmakers who question the administration’s authority to intervene. “The U.S. invokes international rules when convenient,” Gregoire said, “but ignores them when it suits their interests.”

Maduro now faces a sweeping indictment in U.S. courts, reportedly spanning 700 pages and portraying



him as a drug kingpin responsible for facilitating massive cocaine shipments. Gregoire drew parallels to the case of Panama’s Manuel Noriega, who was tried in the United States after being forcibly removed from power. He questioned whether U.S. courts have legitimacy in prosecuting a foreign leader taken under such circumstances, calling the act “kidnapping.”

The ambassador also highlighted the destabilizing implications for Venezuela. Armed groups, including Colombian factions and Maduro’s own colectivos militia, remain active and heavily armed. With the government in disarray, Gregoire warned that Venezuela’s stability is “in crisis, starting yesterday.”

Complicating matters further, he noted reports that Caribbean politicians may be implicated in Maduro’s alleged drug network. Recent seizures of cocaine in Dominica and investi-

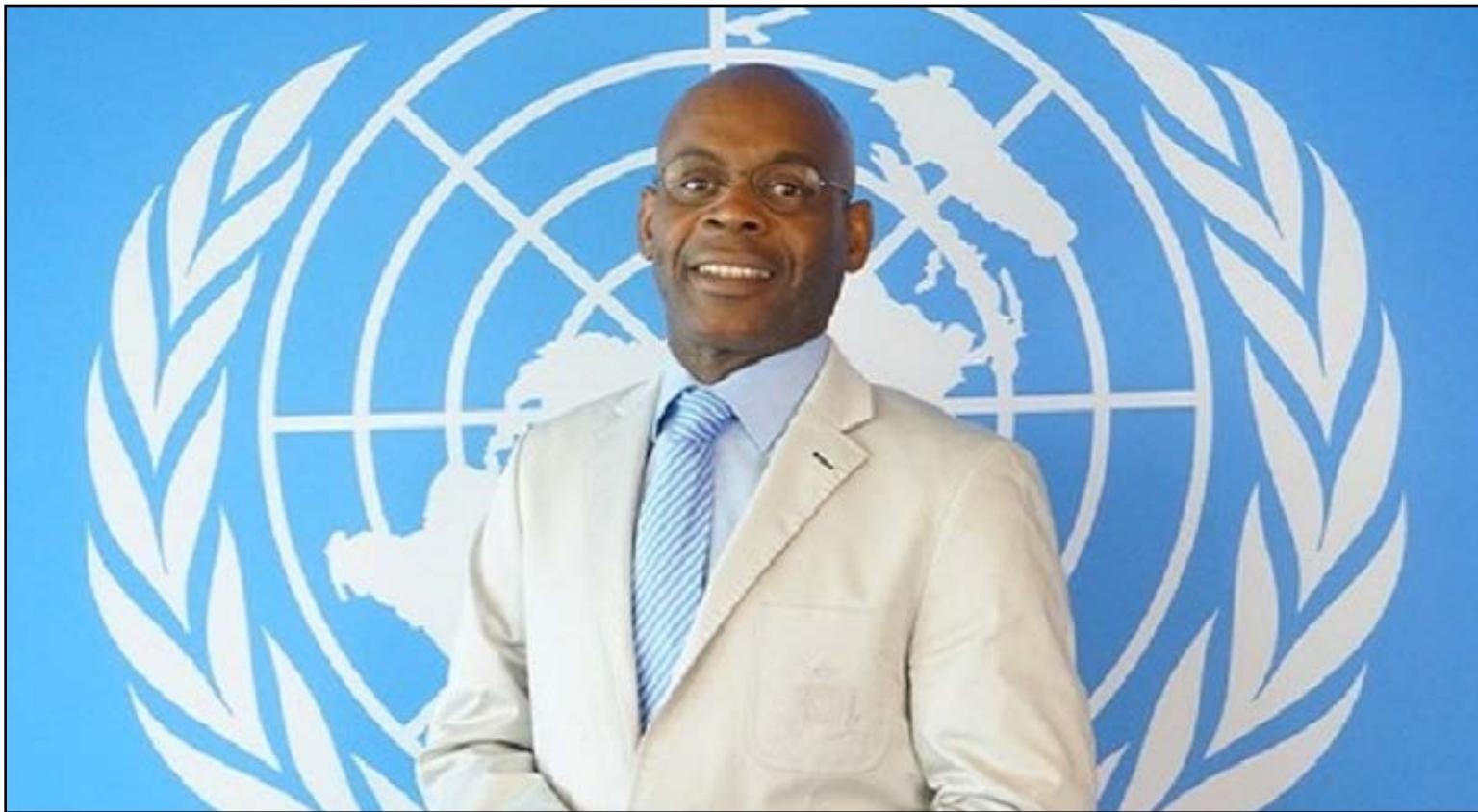
gations into regional energy officials have fueled speculation of Caribbean involvement. Gregoire expressed concern that such revelations could tarnish the region’s credibility and deepen its vulnerability.

Despite these mounting challenges, Gregoire’s central message was clear: CARICOM cannot remain passive. He criticized regional leaders for failing to publicly reach out to President Trump or articulate a collective position. “The Caribbean leaders have been whipped into submission,” he said, “and for their own survival, they now have to play Donald Trump’s tune.”

For Gregoire, the crisis is not only about Venezuela’s future but also about the Caribbean’s ability to assert itself in the face of great power intervention. His call is a reminder that silence, in moments of geopolitical upheaval, carries its own risks. (Dominica News Online)

# Regional News

## SVG Lawyer Slams US “Kidnapping” of Maduro



Dr. Richard Byron Cox, a lawyer and citizen of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, characterizes the U.S. military action in Venezuela as an illegal act and defines the removal of President Maduro as a kidnapping rather than a capture.

Dr. Cox asserts that the United States violated the Charter of the United Nations, which he describes as the “backbone of contemporary international law”. He explains that the charter prohibits not only the use of force but also the threat of force, concluding that the U.S. broke the law twice—first by threatening Venezuela with military buildup and then by invading it.

He emphasizes that sovereignty is the foundational basis of international law and states that the U.S. has ignored this principle entirely.

Dr Cox highlighted that there is “not a shred of evidence” to support the accusations of drug trafficking against Maduro, arguing that without such evidence, the intervention is legally and morally indefensible.

Cox suggests the primary motivation for the intervention is the control of Venezuela’s strategic resources, particularly its oil. He explains that since Venezuela holds the world’s largest known oil reserves, its potential to trade oil in non-dollar currencies (such as the BRICS “unit”) poses a direct existential threat to the U.S. dollar and the American economy.

He views this event as a “latest version” of a long-standing U.S. policy of regime change, comparing it to historical interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria and rejected the idea that this is solely a “Donald Trump” action, calling it instead a consistent policy of the United States government.

On the implications for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr Cox points out that the situation has caused immediate economic and travel dislocation in the region. He notes that the U.S. effectively closed St. Vincent’s airspace, impacting travel to various countries and damaging the local tourism indus-

try.

Cox reminded listeners of the “wonderful relations” between the two nations, citing Venezuela’s assistance in building the Argyle International Airport (AIA), the forgiveness of over \$100 million in debt, and social programs like “Miracle Vision”. He warns that an ideological shift toward a U.S.-backed regime would not be in the interest of St. Vincent.

He describes the Caribbean as a “zone of peace” that has now been broken and argued that small nations have a moral responsibility to demand respect for international law, as it is an “existential question” for their own survival in a neighborhood where military force is used to determine political outcomes.

Cox says that St Vincent must remain in full solidarity with the Venezuelan government and coordinate with CARICOM to ensure that international law and morality are upheld. (St. Vincent Times)

## Americas 'do not belong' to any power — Mexican president

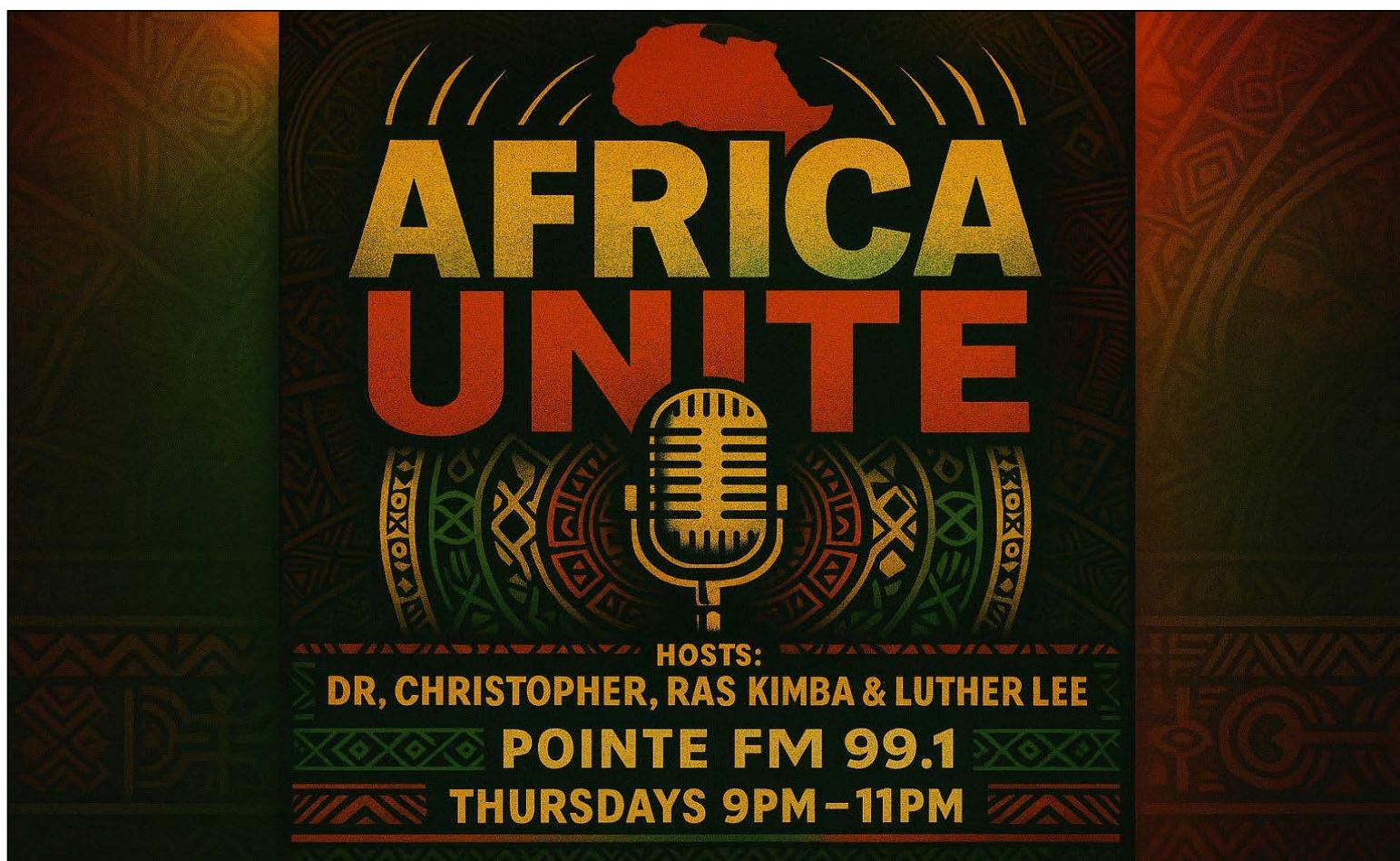
The Americas "do not belong" to any power, Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum said Monday after US counterpart Donald Trump invoked Washington's "dominance" of the hemisphere after seizing Venezuela's leader in a military raid.

Trump described the weekend US military operation against leftist Nicolas Maduro as an update of the Monroe Doctrine: the 1823 declaration by fifth US president James Monroe that Latin America was closed to other powers, which at the time meant Europe.

Sheinbaum hit back Monday, saying: "The Americas do not belong to any doctrine or any power. The



American continent belongs to the peoples of each of the countries that comprise it." (AFP)



**AFRICA UNITE**

HOSTS:  
DR. CHRISTOPHER, RAS KIMBA & LUTHER LEE

POINTE FM 99.1

THURSDAYS 9PM – 11PM

# All 116 injured in Swiss ski resort fire identified

All 116 people injured in a bar fire at a Swiss ski resort have now been identified, officials have said.

Forty people were killed when a fire tore through a busy venue in Crans-Montana on New Year's Eve, with victims' age ranging from 14 to 39 years old.

While the dead had all previously been identified, work had been ongoing to establish who the injured are, some of whom remain in a critical condition.

Swiss police confirmed on Monday that 83 people remained in hospital, with the injured including at least 12 nationalities.

Most of the injured suffered severe burns, which in some cases meant they could not be identified, police have said.

Investigators said 119 people had been injured but that number has been revised down in the latest update

A criminal investigation has been launched into the French couple who managed the Le Constellation bar - a venue known to be popular with a younger crowd in the ski resort town, where the drinking age is 16.

Sparklers on bottles being carried too close to the ceiling were the likely cause of the fire, a preliminary investigation has found.

Beatrice Pilloud, Valais canton lead prosecutor, said in a statement that investigators were looking into whether the acoustic foam on the venue's ceiling was "the cause of the problem", as well as "whether it complies with regulations".

Details have begun to emerge about some of those who lost their lives in the tragedy.

Among them was Charlotte Niddam, believed to be 15, who was a pupil at two UK schools. Her family wrote on social media: "It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our



beautiful daughter and sister Charlotte."

The mother of Arthur Brodard, 16, confirmed he had died in the fire.

She said in a video message: "We can start our mourning, knowing that he is in peace and in the light."

Italian media named junior golfer Emanuele Galeppini, 16, as also being among the victims.

Italian Golf Federation paying tribute to the "young athlete who carried with him passion and authentic values". (BBC)

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## As Maduro goes to court, Delcy seeks peace, dialogue with US

Hours after she was warned of facing a worse fate than ousted President Nicolas Maduro, Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodriguez softened her defiance of the United States' and its President Donald Trump, calling for dialogue between the two.

Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores were this morning escorted by helicopter from Brooklyn to the federal courthouse in Manhattan, where they are expected to be arraigned on a four-count criminal indictment, after being extracted by US forces from Caracas on Saturday.

Trump yesterday stated that Rodriguez's resistance to the US intervention in the South American country would not stand, telling the Atlantic Magazine, "If she doesn't do what's right, she is going to pay a very big price, probably bigger than Maduro."

He had earlier claimed that Rodriguez was willing to "make Venezuela great again," as the US aimed to oversee the country, maintaining a presence there until a safe and judicious transition of power could be attained.

He claimed that Rodriguez had spoken to Rubio, and that a team, comprising those in proximity to him, would be tasked with running the country. He also issued a warning to Venezuelan politicians that they too could meet Maduro's fate.

But moments later in a press conference of her own, flanked by Maduro regime officials, Rodriguez defied Trump's claim and called the US action an attempt to seize the country's vast mineral and oil wealth, stating, "If there is one thing the Venezuelan people and this country understand with absolute clarity, it



is that we will never again be slaves, that we will never again be a colony of any empire, of whatever kind it may be."

In a statement posted to her social media overnight, Rodriguez adopted a more diplomatic tone, stating that the country aspired to live without external threats and planned to prioritise moving towards balanced and respectful international relations between the two.

"These principles guide our diplomacy with the rest of the world. We invite the US government to collaborate with us on an agenda of co-operation oriented towards shared development within the framework of international law to strengthen lasting community coexistence."

"President Donald Trump, our peoples and our region deserve peace and dialogue, not war. This has always been President Nicolás Maduro's message, and it is the message of all of Venezuela right now. This is the Venezuela I believe in and have dedicated my life to. I dream of a Venezuela where all good Venezuelans can come together. Venezuela

has the right to peace, development, sovereignty and a future," she said.

The statement did not call for Maduro's immediate release, as did one issued by the Armed Bolivarian Forces one day earlier, nor did it refer to his capture as a kidnapping, as Rodriguez had previously claimed.

Yesterday, Venezuela's Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez had thrown support behind Rodriguez and called for Maduro's release as he remained detained in Brooklyn.

Padrino, in charge of the country's military, speaking yesterday further condemned Maduro's extraction, stating that the country's sovereignty had been violated. He said Maduro was constitutionally elected and that the Bolivarian National Armed Forces demanded his immediate release.

"This is an act of profound outrage, a profound offense not only against the legitimate president of Venezuela, but also against a woman of Christian values, a woman of principles, who was also taken away in handcuffs."

"We appeal to the world, we ask the world to look closely at everything that is happening against Venezuela, against its sovereignty, against its Constitution...Let the world put its guard up, because this represents a severe threat to the global order. If today it is against Venezuela, tomorrow it could be against any State, against any country, under a colonialist pretense that seeks to be imposed in the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine over Latin America and the Caribbean. We reject this from here," he had said. (Trinidad Express)

## Denmark Warns Trump's Greenland Threats Could Shatter NATO Order



Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has issued her strongest warning yet over renewed comments by Donald Trump about acquiring Greenland, saying the former U.S. president "should be taken seriously" and that such rhetoric places unacceptable pressure on the international system.

Speaking on Monday in an interview with Danish broadcaster DR, Frederiksen said Trump's repeated statements about taking control of Greenland could not be dismissed as casual provocation, particularly given the broader geopolitical climate following recent U.S. military action in Venezuela.

Her comments came a day after she publicly urged Trump to "stop the threats" against the semiautonomous Danish territory, warning that the implications extend far beyond bilateral tensions.

"If the United States were to choose to attack another NATO country, then everything would come to an end,"

Frederiksen said in a separate interview with Danish outlet Live News. "The international community as we know it, democratic rules of the game, NATO, the world's strongest defensive alliance, all of that would collapse if one NATO country chose to attack another."

Greenland is formally part of the Kingdom of Denmark, making Denmark a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Any attempt to forcibly alter its status, Frederiksen suggested, would represent a rupture of the alliance's core principle of collective defence.

Trump, however, has doubled down on his long-standing interest in the Arctic territory. Speaking to reporters, he said the United States "needs Greenland from the standpoint of national security," again citing its strategic location and mineral wealth. The former president has repeatedly argued that Greenland's position in the Arctic makes it vital for U.S. defence interests, an argument he first advanced during his

presidency.

Greenland's own leadership has rejected the notion outright. Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen described Trump's remarks as "utterly unacceptable," saying comparisons between Greenland and Venezuela were "wrong" and "disrespectful." In a blunt response, he added that the idea of U.S. control over Greenland was a "fantasy" and that "that's enough now."

The exchange has reignited debate over sovereignty, alliance politics, and the limits of power in an era of rising geopolitical tension. For Denmark, the concern is not only about Greenland itself, but about the precedent such threats would set within NATO and the wider democratic order.

As Frederiksen made clear, the issue is no longer theoretical. In a world already unsettled by conflict and coercive diplomacy, she warned, words from powerful leaders can no longer be brushed aside.



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# Sports News

## TG Welding and Construction Solution win eliminators in MPL

Defending champions TG Welding and Construction Solutions will battle for the remaining semi-final spot in the Mandy Premier League (MPL), Cool and Smooth, Poolside Villa Glendon and Arlene Air BNB, and Sherma Jackson Business Softball Cricket League.

Both teams won their respective eliminators to qualify for a third and deciding eliminator, with the winners advancing to face the Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force (ABDF) in the semi-final.

TG Welding coasted to a 69-run victory against Long Island Lightning in the second eliminator at the Powells playing field.

TG Welding made 129 for seven off their allotted 10 overs. Male player of the game Deran Benta slammed 50, including seven sixes and two fours. Essan Warner cracked 34, and Demari Benta scored 16.

Mandy “Remover” Weatherhead picked up two wickets for six runs, Kerique Mentore claimed two for 22, and Rachael Greaves also captured a wicket for one run.

In reply, the Long Island Lightning were restricted to 60 for eight off their 10 overs, with Kerique Mentore getting 18.

Deran Benta bagged two for 13, female player of the game Ann Anthony picked up one wicket for one run, Richie Thomas claimed one wicket for three runs, and Malique Jacobs had one wicket for four runs.



**TG Welding softball team**

Construction Solutions snatched a 17-run victory against PEL Workers in the first eliminator.

Construction Solutions made 114 off their 10 overs. Male player of the game Charles James hit 41, while Veston Lewis and Ashfield Weatherhead each made 12. Karl Simon claimed a wicket for five runs, and Isiah Viville captured one for 26.

In reply, the PEL Workers were restricted to 98 for four off their 10 overs. Frederick Floyd struck 42, and Brian Bailey scored 22.

Charles James picked up one wicket for seven runs, female player of

the game Menova Govia claimed one wicket for nine runs, and Ashfield Weatherhead captured one for 14.

The Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force (ABDF) clinched an automatic spot in the semi-finals by finishing second in the preliminary standings with 75 points.

Buck and Sons Landscaping Services gained an automatic berth into the final by finishing at the top of their preliminary standings with 90 points, winning nine and losing one of their quota of 10 matches.

A total of six teams participated in the current Mandy Premier League.

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# Sports News

## Bangladesh bans IPL broadcasts after Mustafizur snub



Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman

DHAKA/NEW DELHI (Reuters) - Bangladesh's interim government on Monday banned broadcasts of this year's Indian Premier League (IPL), the latest flashpoint in a growing row with neighbouring India.

The move follows the Indian cricket board's decision to have Kolkata Knight Riders drop Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who had signed for the IPL franchise for this season.

Bangladesh have also refused to play their matches of next month's Twenty20 World Cup in India, demanding

those be staged in Sri Lanka, co-host of the 20-team tournament.

The unceremonious dumping of a "star player" like Mustafizur from the IPL "defied logic" and had "hurt people", the country's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said in a statement explaining its decision.

The IPL, the world's richest T20 league, is scheduled from March 26 to May 31.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) did not reply to Reuters emails inquiring whether it would agree to

Bangladesh's demand of playing their World Cup matches in Sri Lanka.

Tensions have risen in recent weeks between India and Bangladesh.

Hundreds protested near Bangladesh's High Commission in New Delhi last month after a Hindu factory worker was beaten and set on fire in Bangladesh's Mymensingh district over allegations he insulted the Prophet Muhammad.

Following the protests, the Indian board asked Knight Riders to drop Mustafizur.



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# Sports News

## Egypt survive Benin scare to reach Cup of Nations quarter-finals



**Egypt's Mohamed Salah celebrates after scoring his side's third goal during the Africa Cup of Nations round of 16 soccer match between Egypt and Benin in Agadir, Morocco, Monday, Jan. 5, 2026. (AP)**

AGADIR, Morocco (Reuters) - Yasser Ibrahim's superb header and Mohamed Salah's breakaway strike earned record seven-time champions Egypt a hard-fought 3-1 extra-time victory over Benin in the Africa Cup of Nations round of 16 on Monday.

Egypt led after 69 minutes through a superb 30-yard strike from Marwan Attia, but Benin forced the game into an additional 30 minutes when they equalised late on through Jodel Dossou.

Defender Ibrahim scored his first international goal on 97 minutes when he met Attia's cross with a header from 15 yards that looped into the top corner of the net, and Salah raced clear to add the third with the last kick of the game.

Egypt will face defending champions Ivory Coast or Burkina Faso in the

quarter-finals in Agadir on Saturday.

Benin's energy and never-say-die spirit were a match for Egypt's more composed artistry, and although they had to weather waves of Egyptian attacks, the underdogs put in a performance that almost delivered an upset win.

Omar Marmoush was put through one-on-one with Benin goalkeeper Marcel Dandjinou but delayed his shot too long and the gloveman was able to make the save at his feet.

Egypt went closer when Marmoush poked the loose ball goalwards but defender Yohan Roche cleared the ball off the line.

Rami Rabia should have given Egypt the lead 10 minutes into the second half. His shot from five yards deflected off Dandjinou, onto Benin defend-

er Tamimou Ouorou and behind for a corner.

Egypt finally broke the deadlock when the ball came to Attia outside the box and he curled his shot into the top corner.

Benin equalised with eight minutes remaining in normal time though and there was a touch of good fortune about it.

Junior Olaitan's cross from the right took a wicked deflection off Ahmed Fatouh and although Egypt goalkeeper Mohamed El Shenawy made a superb save, Dossou bundled the ball over the line from close range.

After Ibrahim had restored Egypt's advantage, Salah raced clear in the 124th minute and produced a typically composed finish as he beat the back-pedalling keeper from 25 metres.



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# Sports News

## Manchester United sack Amorim after turbulent tenure



**Ruben Amorim**

LONDON (Reuters) - Ruben Amorim's turbulent 14-month tenure as Manchester United manager ended abruptly on Monday when he was sacked a day after voicing a passionate defence of his role and vowed not to quit in the wake of a disappointing 1-1 draw with Leeds United.

"With Manchester United sitting sixth in the Premier League, the club's leadership has reluctantly made the decision that it is the right time to make a change. This will give the team the best opportunity of the highest possible Premier League finish," the club said in a statement.

The Portuguese coach, 40, took over from Erik ten Hag in November 2024, ending his first season with the club 15th in the Premier League - their worst placing since they were relegated in 1974 - and losing to

Tottenham Hotspur in the Europa League final.

This season they are sixth after 20 games - 17 behind leaders Arsenal - having won three of their last 11 matches and the Leeds result triggered a fiery outburst in a press conference from the usually mild-mannered and refreshingly honest coach.

He bristled at questions about his job security, delivering a defiant message that he came to United as a manager with full authority and not merely a coach taking orders.

"If people cannot handle the Gary Nevilles and the criticisms of everything, we need to change the club," he said, in reference to the former full back-turned pundit who has been a regular critic of Amorim's tactical inflexibility as he remained wedded to his three/five at the back formation.

"I just want to say I came here to be the manager, not to be the coach. Every department - the scouting department, the sporting director - need to do their job.

Amorim joined United after impressing at Portugal's Sporting Lisbon but struggled to make any immediate impact.

In his 63 games, he oversaw 24 wins, 18 draws and 21 defeats, with a win percentage of 38.1. In the league that dropped to 32%, the worst of any of the club's managers in the Premier League era and which has left them completely out of the conversation when it comes to challenging for the title.

While appreciated by the media for his honest and thoughtful answers, some players and observers were less impressed by his public criticism of his players, which included describing

his team as "maybe the worst in the club's history" a year ago.

The club's summer signings of Benjamin Sesko, Bryan Mbeumo and Matheus Cunha gave him more frontline firepower, but the team still looked thin in midfield and horribly disjointed and vulnerable at the back.

Recent fixtures brought little seasonal joy to the fans as a 1-0 win over Newcastle United was sandwiched by a defeat at Aston Villa, a home draw with bottom club Wolves and Sunday's draw at Leeds.

Next up is a trip to Burnley on Wednesday, when former midfielder Darren Fletcher, who prefers a traditional 4-4-2 system in the under-18 squad he oversees, will take charge.

The club's hierarchy will now set about trying to find a big-name operator who can bring back the glory days of the Alex Ferguson era.

Since Ferguson retired in 2013, United have turned to David Moyes, Louis van Gaal, Jose Mourinho, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Ralf Rangnick and Ten Hag with very limited success and it is now 13 years since they won the last of their 20 league titles.

Amorim's sacking comes four days after Chelsea's Enzo Maresca also departed after an apparent fallout with his club's leadership.

## All Saints United drop points again in Premier Division

Back-to-back defending champions All Saints United maintained their unbeaten run but dropped points for the second consecutive time this season in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday.

All Saints United also failed to win in back-to-back matches for the first time this season when they were held to a draw for the second time in 10 matches in a 1-1 stalemate with Old Road in the first game of a triple-header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Roneba Cordice scored an own goal in the 29th minute to give Old Road a one-nil lead at halftime, while Vaughn Jackson scored the equalizer in the 83rd minute to salvage the draw for All Saints United.

Sunday's result follows All Saints United's 2-2 draw with Garden Stars FC in their previous outing. All Saints United made a perfect start in defense of their title by winning all of their first eight matches.

It means All Saints United are now level with Sandals and Inet Jennings Grenades on 26 points at the top of the Premier Division.

Old Road FC moved on to 17 points after securing their second draw in nine matches.



A starting XI of the All Saints United football team

Jahlanie Barzey scored twice to lead the Aston Villa Lions to their seventh win in nine matches with a 4-3 victory against the Attacking Saints in Sunday's second game.

Barzey had conversions in the 28th and 34th minutes after teammate and captain Kwame "Munchie" Kirby scored the opening goal in the 11th minute to give the Villa Lions a three-nil lead.

The Villa Lions were reduced to 10 men in the 30th minute when midfielder Dajari Barthley received a red card and was expelled.

Eli Green scored in the 35th minute to reduce the deficit for the Attacking Saints, giving the Villa Lions a 3-1 advantage at halftime.

Following the interval, the Attacking Saints made it 3-2 with a goal from Rick Gordon in the 48th minute. The Attacking Saints were reduced to 10 men with the

expulsion of Omri Simpson, who received a red card in the 68th minute.

Eroy Gonsalves scored in the 70th minute to give the Villa Lions a 4-2 lead. The Attacking Saints got a third goal when Jahwanda George scored an own goal in the third minute of added time.

The result allows the Villa Lions to consolidate their position in third place by advancing to 21 points, while the Attacking Saints will remain on 10 points after suffering their sixth defeat in 10 matches.

John Hughes recorded their second win in 10 matches by snatching a 1-0 victory against the Ottos Rangers in the last game on Sunday.

Dashawn Plunkett struck the winner for John Hughes FC by scoring the only goal of the match in the 37th minute.

The result allows John Hughes FC to move on to seven points, while the Ottos Rangers remain on four points after tumbling to their eighth loss in 10 matches.

League Standings

Pos	Team	MP	W	D	L	Goals	GD	Pts
1	All Saints Utd.	9	7	2	0	35:7	+28	23
2	Grenades	9	7	2	0	21:8	+13	23
3	Aston Villa	8	6	0	2	25:13	+12	18
4	Pigotts Bullets	8	5	0	3	18:7	+11	15
5	Old Road	8	4	2	2	27:12	+15	14
6	Potters	9	3	3	3	14:17	-3	12
7	Garden Stars	8	3	2	3	19:17	+2	11
8	Green City	9	3	2	4	15:20	-5	11
9	Attacking Saints	9	2	1	6	13:23	-10	7
10	John Hughes	9	2	1	6	7:23	-16	7
11	Ottos Rangers	9	1	1	7	7:25	-18	4
12	Jennings	9	1	0	8	4:33	-29	3