

PM wants other countries to follow Antigua and Barbuda and China's example

Story on page 2



Prime Minister Gaston Browne (centre) and Chinese ambassador Jiang Wei (on his right) posed with Antigua and Barbuda students who studied in China at the Chinese New Year's celebrations on Sunday

Photo courtesy: Wayne Mariette

PM wants other countries to follow Antigua and Barbuda and China's example



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Prime Minister Gaston Browne says the mutual respect that exists between the People's Republic of China and Antigua and Barbuda should be something that other countries emulate.

Speaking on Sunday evening at the celebrations marking the Chinese New year, the Year of the Horse, PM Browne, noted that the geopolitical shifts that have taken place within this hemisphere have resulted in countries being intimidated. Conversely, the relationship between the PRC, the country with the second largest economy and the second largest population, and Antigua and Barbuda, one of the smallest both in terms of its land-mass and population, the level of mutual respect that exists between the two countries should be an example for other countries to follow.

"I think it is an example of how powerful countries should treat with small vulnerable countries. China is not intimidating us; China has never made any demands of Antigua and Barbuda to do anything that is not in our self-interest. You would also recognize that above and beyond the cooperation that is taking place at the governmental



level, they are also enhancing people-to-people exchanges. For example, nearly 300 Antiguan and Barbudans have been given an opportunity to travel to China to experience the Chinese culture and to seek to have a formal cultural integration and diversity," PM Browne observed.

According to the prime minister, China remains 'very respectful' of Antigua and Barbuda as a sovereign country despite the differences in size. "I think this is a good example of how countries, including the United States, should treat small vulnerable countries. China does not have any restrictions on Antigua and Barbuda; not

even visa restrictions as we now have visa-free access to China. China does not have any sanctions on Antigua and Barbuda and I think this is how small and large countries should cooperate," he remarked.

Given the current frosty nature of the relationship between nations, the prime minister suggested that he would not be surprised if sometime in the future Antigua and Barbuda is called upon to distance itself from China, but this is something that the country would never do.

"I say to you this must not happen. We must continue to stand with China; if not out of gratitude, then in the interest of international cooperation," he declared.

The prime minister was also mindful that there are constant shifts in the international relationship and nations fall in and out of favour from time to time. "What happens if we choose sides and then the parties become friends again; we would be left out in the cold," he stated.

PM Browne repeated Antigua and Barbuda's foreign policy mantra; 'Friends of all, enemies of none'.

Government officials join in celebrating Chinese New Year



Governor General, Sir Rodney William

Senior government officials, led by the Governor General, Sir Rodney William and Prime Minister Gaston Browne, joined with the Chinese Ambassador, Jiang Wei, and the Chinese diaspora in Antigua and Barbuda in celebrating the Chinese New Year, the Year of the Horse, on Sunday.

It was an occasion where the Chinese and Antigua and Barbuda cultures were on full display as the official speeches spoke to the strengthen of the relationship between the two nations; Antigua and Barbuda and the People Republic of China.

In his remarks, Sir Rodney spoke of the enduring relationship between the two nations, a relationship built on mutual respect, cooperation and shared aspiration for development, prosperity and friendship.

“Antigua and Barbuda values highly its friendship with the People’s Republic of China. We appreciate the many areas of cooperation that have strengthened our ties over the years, in infrastructure, education, health, culture and people to people exchange,” he noted.



Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P. Chet Greene described the friendship between Antigua and Barbuda and the People’s Republic of China as a bridge across the vast Pacific, connecting Antiguan and Barbudans and the Chinese people in common pursuit of development and dignity.

“We reflect with profound gratitude. The generosity of the Chinese people, mirrored in tangible cooperation, has been a catalyst for social



and economic advancement across our Antiguan and Barbudan society. From empowering infrastructure that connects our communities, to investments in human capital and cultural dialogue, this partnership is a cornerstone of our progress. For this steadfast collaboration, we offer our deepest and most abiding appreciation,” Minister Greene stated.

In her remarks, Ambassador Jiang noted that the year 2025 was a signif-

Local News



icant year for both Antigua and Barbuda and China. She explained that the Chinese economy continued to grow as has the Antigua and Barbuda economy. Cooperation between the two countries also flourished during the year.

“In 2025, cooperation between China and Antigua and Barbuda has been deepened. Chinese float was showcased in Carnival’s parade. Agricultural experts cultivated delicious fruits and vegetable. Booby Alley Housing Project has taken shape. Nearly 300 people from Antigua and

Barbuda went to China for training, and beautiful beaches in Antigua and Barbuda have attracted more and more Chinese tourists. We are deeply impressed by the long-standing friendship between China and Antigua and Barbuda, and proud of the achievements of this bilateral relationship,” she recalled.

Also adding his voice to the celebrations was the President of the Chinese Association of Antigua and Barbuda and operator of the Little Canton Supermarket, Li Yucheng, who said he has been living in Antigua and Barbuda for more than thirty years and

he has witnessed the relationship between Antigua and Barbuda gets stronger with each passing year.

“Because of that relationship, we have seen the Big Creek Bridge, the Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre, the new terminal at the VC Bird International Airport and the recent developments at the St. John’s Harbour. We also have visa-free travel. I am happy to see all those developments.” He stated.

According to Li, he is now a citizen of Antigua and Barbuda and he pleased to see the strengthening of relations between the two countries.

PM happy with favourable rating from international body



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

The Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes has just completed an assessment of Antigua and Barbuda along with four other countries on how well they share financial information with the relevant international institutions.

The Global Forum reported in its December, 2025, report that it carried out a peer review that assessed Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Cabo Verde, Palau, and Seychelles.

It reported that Antigua and Barbuda received an overall rating of “largely compliant” with the Exchange of Information on Request (EOIR) standard.

Global Forum revealed that the review noted several areas of progress since the country’s previous 2023 assessment:

- Stronger availability of ownership information
- Improved access to accounting records
- Enhanced supervisory and regulatory oversight
- Better responsiveness to international information requests

The international body reported that to strengthen transparency, the country undertook what it termed ‘the administrative dissolution of approximately

13,200 inactive international business companies (IBCs)’ between 2024 and 2025. Additionally, ‘over 3,500 IBCs voluntarily dissolved’, leaving a more compliant and orderly corporate registry.

It noted that new legal requirements also now mandate that IBCs ‘maintain accounting records with local service providers’, ensuring records are accessible when needed for regulatory or international cooperation purposes.

It emphasised that while some recent reforms still need to demonstrate long-term effectiveness in practice, the report confirmed that Antigua and Barbuda has addressed most previously identified deficiencies.

Prime Minister Browne, who is also the country’s finance minister, described the rating as ‘one of the best Antigua and Barbuda has received’

since joining the Global Forum in 2009. He recalled that in earlier decades, the country had been placed on ‘international sanction and grey lists’, which negatively affected financial reputation and banking relationships.

He stressed that transparency compliance is not merely technical — it has real economic consequences. As an example, he explained that a poor rating can:

Disrupt correspondent banking relationships

Slow international transactions

Create trade and investment barriers

The Prime Minister expressed optimism that similar positive outcomes would follow when ‘the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)’ conducts its mutual evaluation in 2027, noting that a dedicated team is already working to close remaining gaps.



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Tourism Minister Fernandez tours MOONGATE development ahead of its 2026 opening



Antigua ad Barbuda's newest ultra-modern, self-sustaining and distinctly chic east coast property, MoonGate Hotel and Spa, will begin accepting reservations, offering guests a truly elevated hospitality experience.

Minister of Tourism, Charles Fernandez, has expressed strong satisfaction with the progress of the development, noting the significant value MoonGate will add to Antigua and Barbuda's tourism product, particularly within the luxury and eco-conscious boutique market.

The Minister recently toured the property alongside Director of Policy and Planning, St. Clair Soleyn, guided by Directors, Gaye Hechme and Camron Fraser, as well as General Manager, Trevor MacDonald.

Located at the iconic Half Moon Bay, MoonGate Ho-

tel and Spa is a boutique resort designed with a strong eco-conscious ethos. Phase One, now nearing completion, comprises 26 standard suites, 14 premium suites, and seven penthouse suites. Phase Two will introduce additional 22 one and two-bedroom luxury suites, expanding investment opportunities while maintaining the resort's exclusive character.

Guests will enjoy a wide array of premium amenities, including a reception and piano lounge, a plant-based bistro, a full-service restaurant and bar, garden and infinity swimming pools, a state-of-the-art gym, a wellness centre and spa.

Commenting on the project's progress and its contribution to the destination, Minister Fernandez stated:

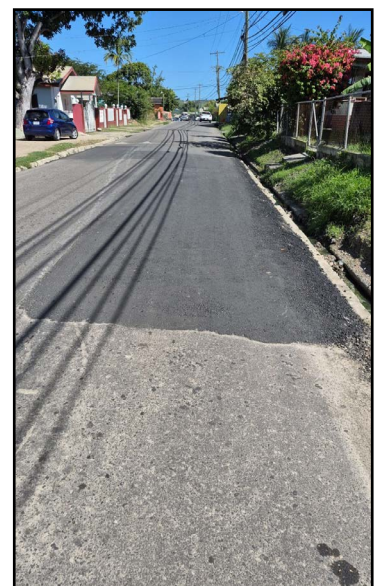
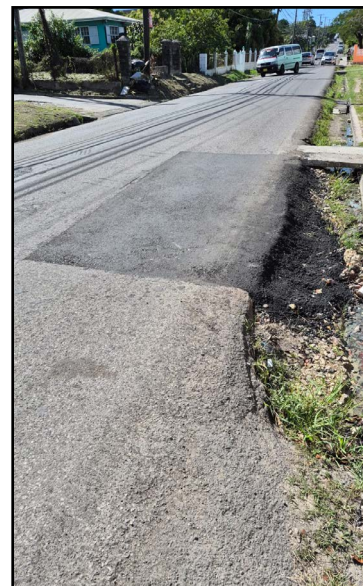
"Developments such as MoonGate represent exactly the direction in

which Antigua and Barbuda's tourism industry is heading—thoughtfully designed, environmentally conscious, and aligned with the expectations of today's discerning traveler. This project enhances our east coast offerings while reinforcing our commitment to sustainable, high-quality investment that delivers long-term economic benefits for our people."

Over 120 locals will be employed at the development.

The opening of MoonGate Hotel and Spa is expected to further strengthen Antigua's position as a leading luxury and boutique destination in the Caribbean, while creating employment opportunities and stimulating continued growth within the tourism sector.

Senator Michael Joseph recommends Perry Bay Main Road for heavy-duty equipment



The Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party's caretaker for the St. John's Rural West Constituency, Senator Michael M. Joseph wants heavy-duty equipment drivers to refrain from using the Federation Road, but instead to make use of the Perry Bay Main Road.

This comes as the daily use of these heavy-duty equipment on community roads, such as Federation Road, has been identified as one of the causes of the rapid deterioration of these roads that traverse the Grays-Green communities.

Reports are that the Ministry of Works has since been mobilise to carry out necessary repairs to Federation Road and to Union Road in Hatten.

Senator Joseph, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Health, welcomed the intervention from the Ministry of Works noting that it is important for residents who rely on the roadway daily and helps restore safer conditions for motorists and pedestrians alike.

"While the repairs are welcomed, there is growing concern about the continued use of Federation Road by heavy-duty equipment. Ongoing heavy traffic of this kind places significant strain on residential roads, accelerates surface deterioration, and raises serious health and safety concerns for nearby communities.

"The Perry Bay Main Road remains the more structurally appropriate route for

heavy-duty traffic. Its use would help protect residential infrastructure while ensuring safer and more efficient movement of heavy machinery," Sen. Joseph observed.

The ABLP Caretaker noted that the sustained use of community road by heavy-duty

equipment is not sustainable and this places residents at unnecessary risk. "Using more structurally appropriate routes like the Perry Bay Main Road is critical to preventing repeated damage and ensuring public safety," he concluded.

Halo Foundation names the winners of its Christmas Art Competition

Three students from St Nicholas Primary School secured the top honours in the 2025 Halo Christmas Art Competition, once again showcasing the school's outstanding artistic talent.

The winners were:

- **Jordan Holborough** – *2nd Place*
- **Amélie Hall** – *1st Place*
- **Savanah Holborough** – *Overall Winner*

The 2025 edition of the competition adopted a new format, awarding the top three overall winners instead of the traditional age-category divisions. Notably, the winning group included a brother-and-sister duo, further highlighting the exceptional talent emerging from our youth population.

During the brief ceremony, Lady Sandra Williams made a special announcement outlining the Foundation's plans to host - once again - its annual major art development training programme in conjunction with the Royal Drawing School. This year, the competition will not only be open to schools, but will impose no age restrictions.

This initiative will culminate in a national art competition in recognition of **CHOGM**, aimed at celebrating and showcasing the creative abilities of the



nation's people.

Special commendation was also extended to St Nicholas Primary School for its unbroken record of participation in the Halo Christmas Card Competition, as well as for being the school with the highest number of wins since the competition's inception.

Savannah Holborough, the overall winner, received a framed copy of her art work, an artist's kit, and will shortly be presented with one of the Christmas cards printed with her design. The other two winners also received attractive and art-inspired prizes.

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Miss Zaine Frederick wins SJRW pageant



Miss Zaine Frederick has emerged as the winner of the St. John's Rural West Pageant that was held at the Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre on Saturday night.

In a highly competitive pageant, Zaine, 26, won two of the five judged segments; Best Speech and Best Interview. Zaine had as her platform, entrepreneurial-ship, as she wants to encourage young women in the society to 'know their value and their potential' and to begin to think seriously about entering into the world of owning their own businesses.

Zaine has owned her own beauty salon since 2019, and she feels that other young women can take that bold step to become business women...not only in the beauty space...but other areas of endeavor. Her salon, *Beauty By Zaine*, is located on the Burning Flames Highway (Potters Main Road).

The first Runner-up role award went to Treveisha Adams while Maydoria Smith took second runner-up.



Both Zaine and Treveisha are to audition for before the Labour Queen Pageant Committee to determine who gets a spot in the competition.

The winners of the segments are as follows;

- Best Speech- Zaine Frederick
- Best Interview- Zaine Frederick
- Best Swimwear- Maydoria Smith

- Best Talent- Anique Roberts
- Best Evening Wear- Treveisha Adams

For photos...check website below

<https://quickshare.samsungcloud.com/q4cfgenP4WTt>

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WISH Releases National Mental Health Survey Findings, Calls for Legislative Action and System Strengthening

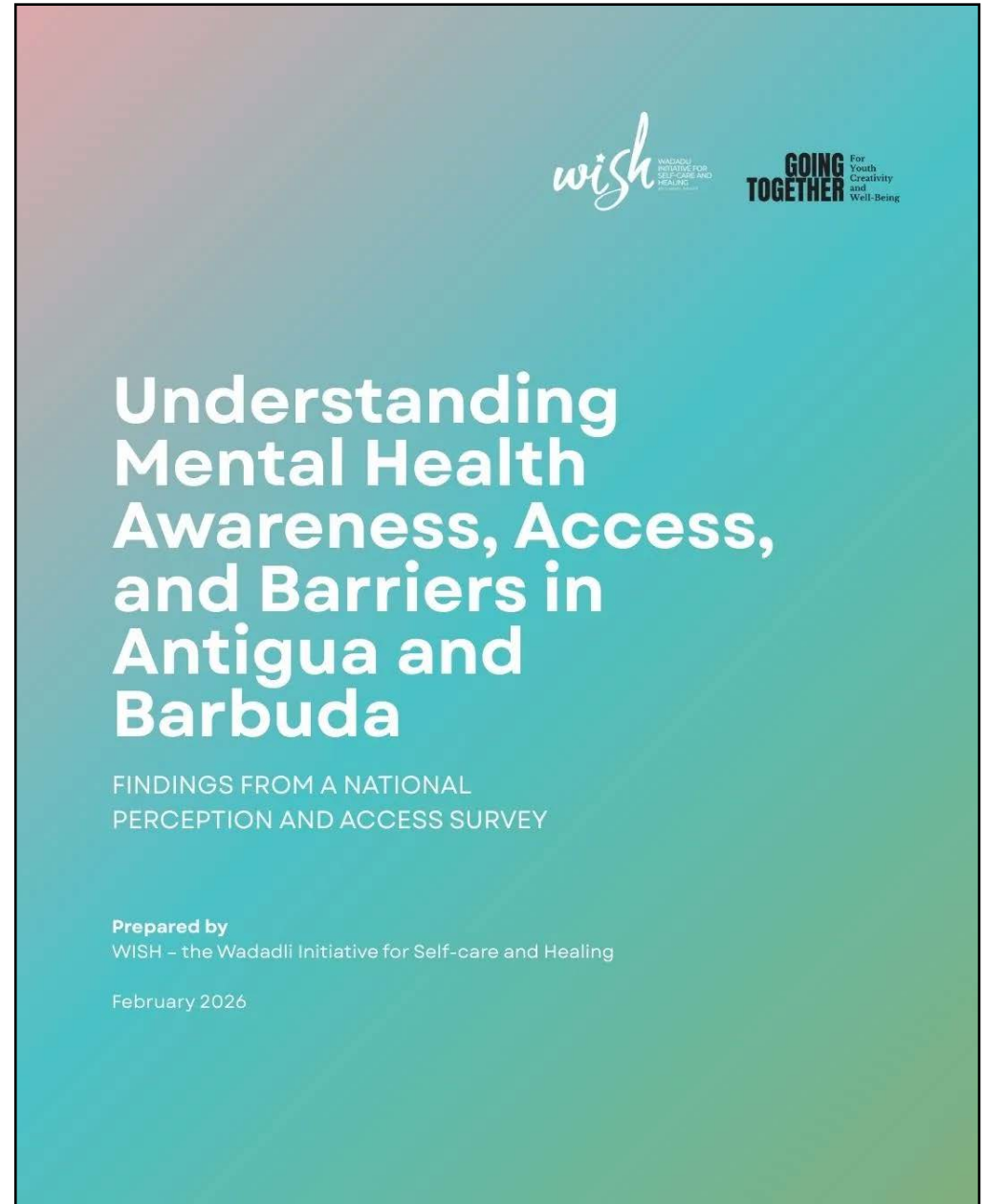
WISH, the Wadadli Initiative for Self-care and Healing, has released the findings of a national mental health perception and access survey conducted in October 2024, offering new insight into public awareness, stigma, and access to mental health services in Antigua and Barbuda.

The survey, which gathered responses from 154 participants across multiple parishes, indicates growing public awareness and willingness to engage in conversations about mental health. At the same time, respondents continue to report significant barriers to care, including affordability, limited service availability, information gaps, and persistent stigma.

“These findings reflect a country at an important moment,” said WISH Founder Chaneil Imhoff, “There has been clear progress in elevating mental health within public discourse and health sector reform, but public demand for services is now outpacing system capacity. That gap must be addressed through coordinated policy, investment, and legislation.”

Respondents overwhelmingly identified high levels of perceived stigma surrounding mental health, while also expressing strong interest in digital and community-based mental health services as tools to expand access. Adults aged 25 to 44 represented the largest group of respondents, underscoring the relevance of mental health policy to workforce wellbeing, productivity, and family life.

WISH acknowledges the steps already taken by the Antigua and Barbuda government to advance health



sector reform and mental health awareness. However, the findings highlight the need for comprehensive mental health legislation to strengthen rights-based care, improve coordination, and support long-term system planning.

The organisation has expressed its willingness to support government-led efforts through technical input, community engagement, data collection, and public education.

This research was funded in part by the UNESCO X SEVENTEEN – Going Together Grant, supporting WISH’s work in evidence-building and mental health advocacy.

The full policy brief, including data visualisations and recommendations, is available at: <https://wish-wadadli.org/understanding-mental-health-awareness-access-and-barriers-in-antigua-and-barbuda/>

WTP 93.5 FM Celebrates Four Years of Excellence



WTP 93.5 FM is celebrating four years on air today, marking a significant milestone since first broadcasting from its base in St. Paul, Liberta and connecting audiences locally and across the globe.

Since its launch in 2022, WTP 93.5 FM has grown into a trusted and vibrant media platform, built on the collective efforts of dedicated professionals and the unwavering support of its community. The station's fourth anniversary is not only a celebration of time, but of a journey defined by purpose, collaboration and a deep commitment to serving the people.

WTP 93.5 FM extends heartfelt gratitude to its team of managers, producers, announcers, DJs, talk show hosts, journalists, sales professionals and technicians. Their professionalism, creativity, and dedication have been central to the station's success, ensuring consistent programming that delivers responsible music, reliable information and engaging entertainment. Together, they have helped shape WTP 93.5 FM into both a thriving business and a respected community institution.

Special appreciation is also extended to the station's loyal listeners and online followers. For four years, audiences have welcomed WTP 93.5 FM into their homes, vehicles and daily routines through traditional radio and digital streaming platforms. Their engagement, feedback, and trust continue to drive the station forward. WTP

93.5 FM remains, first and foremost, a station for the people.

The station also acknowledges the invaluable contribution of its sponsors and advertisers. Their partnership and confidence in the brand have played a vital role in WTP's growth. WTP 93.5 FM reaffirms its commitment to delivering high-quality programming that connects meaningfully with diverse

audiences and markets.

As the station enters its fifth year, WTP 93.5 FM does so with renewed energy and a clear vision: to become the number one radio station in the nation. This ambition is strengthened by the continued support, encouragement, and belief of its listeners, partners and community.

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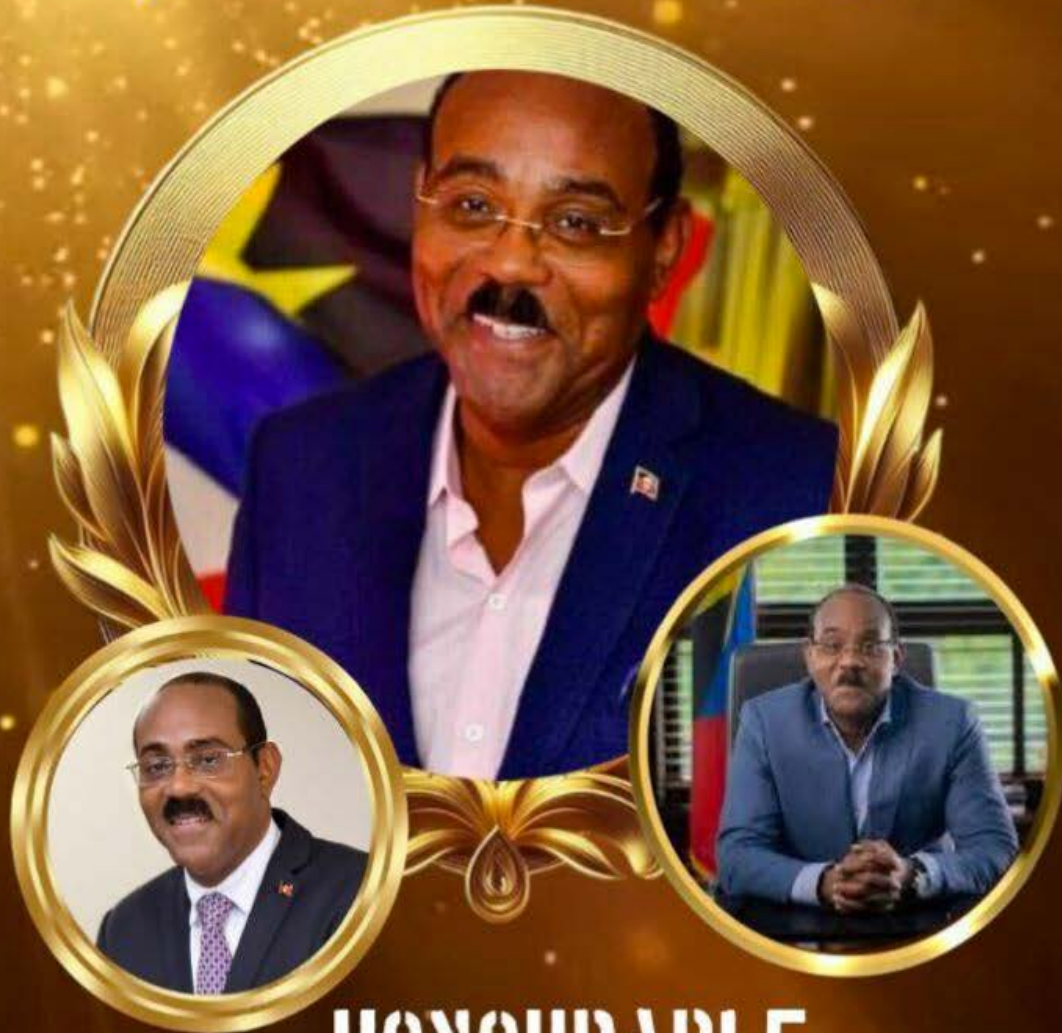
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9
FEB

Happy Birthday



**HONOURABLE
GASTON A. BROWNE MP.**

To an exceptional boss and an inspiring leader. Your dedication, wisdom, and steady service continue to uplift not only those who work alongside you, but the people of Antigua and Barbuda as a whole. Wishing you good health, fulfillment, and many more years of continued success in all you do.

We appreciate you dearly
from the staff at the Office of the Prime Minister

Honouring Leadership: A Birthday Tribute for Prime Minister Gaston Browne

By Aneka Lee

Today marks the 59th birthday of the Honourable Gaston A. Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, and it is with much celebration that we honour a leader whose life is defined not only by his unwavering commitment to national development, but by his purpose-driven perseverance.

A Shakespearean adage reminds us that “some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.” In the case of Prime Minister Browne greatness was not a matter of inheritance but of necessity. Born into humble beginnings and shaped by the realities of abject poverty, he had little choice but to strive for excellence. Circumstance demanded resilience, and adversity forged resolve. From those early challenges emerged a leader who understood struggle intimately and transformed it into a lifelong commitment to uplift others.

Guided by discipline, education, and what has come to be known as his unwavering faith in God, Prime Minister Browne rose through tenacious persistence rather than privilege. His faith has long been a quiet but steady anchor, informing his sense of purpose, humility, and responsibility to serve. His per-



sonal journey remains an inspiration to countless Antiguan and Barbudans, and the wider Caribbean, particularly young people seeking proof that their beginnings do not define their destiny.

Since assuming office in 2014, Prime Minister Browne has presided over a period of notable political and economic transformation. His administration has focused on fiscal reform, economic

recovery, and national resilience, strengthening the country's macroeconomic position while expanding social protection programmes. Under his leadership, Antigua and Barbuda has advanced major infrastructure projects in housing, healthcare, education, road networks, and port modernization. On the regional and international stage, he has been a steadfast advocate for Small Island

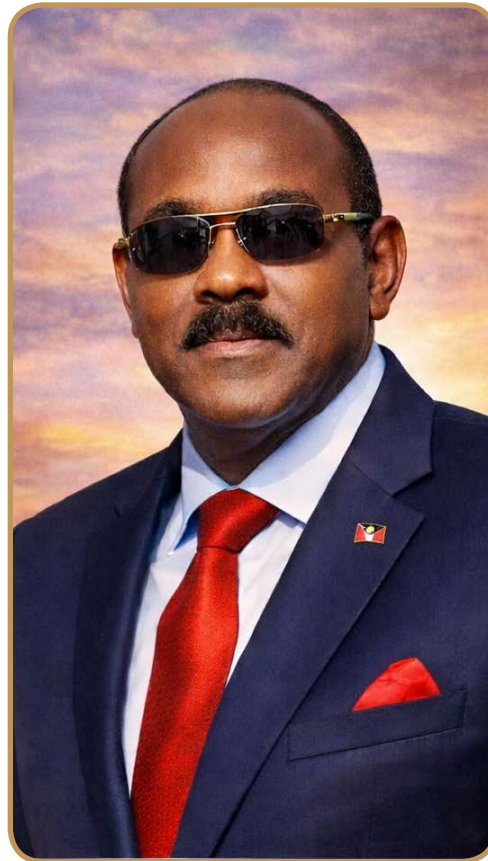
Feature

Developing States, elevating Antigua and Barbuda's voice on climate change, global economic equity, and reparatory justice.

Prime Minister Browne is a leader who takes time to speak to everyone, regardless of age, status, station or political persuasion. That accessibility has left lasting impressions on many, myself included. As I recall my very first election experience, a then MP Gaston Browne, sat me down and campaigned directly to me, speaking with fervor about development, and particularly his vision for youth advancement within the constituency. It was not political theatre, but a genuine and persuasive conversation that left no doubt that young people mattered and that their futures were an integral part of his vision for national progress.

That belief has consistently translated into action. In 2014, the Gaston Browne-led administration appointed Senator the Honourable Shenella Govia, who also happens to be celebrating a birthday today, the youngest person appointment to the senate of Antigua and Barbuda at the age of 22. Youth development has remained a central pillar of Prime Minister Browne's leadership, reflected in expanded access to education, skills training, entrepreneurship support, and

employment opportunities. His administration has emphasized empowering young people not merely as beneficiaries of policy, but as active contributors to nation-build-



ing.

One of the most enduring expressions of this commitment is his championship of the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus. The proposal was ambitious and transformative and, as is often the case with forward-looking initiatives, was met with scrutiny. At the time, I served as Guild President of the then Open Campus, now Global Campus, and witnessed firsthand the deliberations surrounding the proposal. While there were understandable

reservations, Prime Minister Browne remained steadfast continuing to articulate with clarity, patience, and resolve the long-term national and regional value of establishing a full UWI campus in Antigua and Barbuda. His perseverance ultimately prevailed, and after years of dedicated advocacy, today the Five Islands Campus stands as a tangible investment in the intellectual and professional development of the nation's youth.

Prime Minister Browne has consistently encouraged young people to see themselves as active partners in national development. His message has been unwavering: leadership is attainable, excellence is expected, and service to country is not a partisan undertaking but both a duty and an honour for all.

However you may have come to know the Honourable Gaston A. Browne, statesman, businessman, Farmer Browne or Gassy Dread, we invite you to join us in celebration of a truly inspirational and multifaceted individual who remains one of Antigua and Barbuda's greatest champions. Happy Birthday, Honourable Gaston A. Browne, may your faith, vision, and steadfast commitment continue to illuminate the path for generations to come.

Accessing Accessibility: Why Three Schools Are Helping Us Ask the Right Questions

Accessibility in education is often spoken about as an abstract goal, but rarely explored through everyday realities. It is a word that appears frequently in policies, speeches, and international commitments, yet for many families, accessibility is not theoretical at all. It is lived — step by step, corridor by corridor, class by class.

What does accessibility actually look like during a normal school day? How does it feel for a student navigating barriers? And how do we fairly decide where upgrades will have the greatest and most lasting impact? These are the questions guiding Project RED, implemented in partnership with The Giving Syndicate, as part of a wider effort to improve accessibility across ten schools in Antigua and Barbuda. Rather than approaching accessibility as a one-size-fits-all solution, the project has intentionally begun with assessment, reflection, and transparency.

As part of this broader initiative, three secondary schools — Antigua Girls' High School, St. Mary's Secondary School, and Sir Novelle Richards Academy — are currently being closely examined. These schools are not being selected because they are failing, nor are they being positioned as perfect examples. Instead, they are helping to guide a learning process that will inform decision-making, future investment, and long-term planning across the education system. This process has been deliberately framed as "Accessing Accessibility." The language matters. The intention is not to criticise schools or compare them unfairly, but to understand — clearly and honestly — how accessibility functions in real school environments. It recognises that accessibility is layered. It is not just about whether a student can enter a building, but whether they can move independently, manage their day with dignity, and participate fully in school life.



To do this, the same 12 accessibility points are being assessed at each of the three schools. Applying the same criteria ensures fairness and consistency. These points look well beyond ramps and buildings and consider the full school experience, including movement around the compound, transportation to and from school, staff willingness, parent support, mental wellbeing, independence, daily energy and fatigue, and long-term impact beyond a single student. These factors reflect realities that many people do not immediately see. For example, a school may have classrooms on multiple levels, but how many of those classrooms are accessed daily? Are there accessible bathrooms that can be used privately and without disrup-

tion? How far apart are classrooms, and what condition are the pathways connecting them? How much energy does it take for a student to simply get from one lesson to the next? Importantly, videos have already been procured at each of the three schools, capturing real spaces, layouts, walkways, and facilities. These visuals will form the foundation of an upcoming 12-part video series, with each short video focusing on one of the 12 points of comparison. Footage from all three schools will be used in each video, allowing the public to see how the same accessibility issue can present differently depending on layout, size, and design. This visual approach is intentional. Accessibility is often misunderstood because people are asked

to imagine barriers they have never personally faced. By showing real environments and explaining the same criteria across schools, Project RED and The Giving Syndicate are creating transparency. The public is not being asked to assume — they are being invited to observe, learn, and understand. The United Nations has long recognised education as a fundamental human right, and this right is reinforced through the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. That convention makes it clear that inclusive education must be provided on an equal basis with others, without discrimination. UNESCO has repeatedly emphasised that inclusion must be practical, meaningful, and sustainable, warning that placing a student into an inaccessible environment does not constitute true inclusion. This work aligns closely with Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities, which calls on societies to remove barriers that limit participation and opportunity. Inequality in education is not always intentional. Often, it emerges quietly — through stairs without alternatives, long distances between classrooms, bathrooms that

cannot be accessed independently, or school days that require constant assistance just to function.

By examining the same 12 factors at each school, Project RED and The Giving Syndicate are working to ensure that decisions are guided by evidence rather than assumptions. This approach allows for honest conversations about readiness, feasibility, and long-term sustainability. It also helps ensure that accessibility upgrades are not reactive or rushed, but thoughtfully planned. The three schools currently under focus are three of the ten schools targeted for upgrades under the programme. They are contributing to a broader learning process that will inform how accessibility improvements are rolled out across the remaining schools. What is learned here will shape how investments are prioritised, how timelines are set, and how maintenance and sustainability are considered in the years ahead. Accessibility, when done well, benefits everyone. Students with disabilities gain independence and confidence, teachers gain safer and more functional environments, parents gain

peace of mind, and schools become more welcoming spaces for visitors and the wider community. These improvements do not serve one child alone — they strengthen the entire system. Accessing accessibility means slowing down, looking carefully, and asking the right questions before rushing to solutions. It is a process rooted in dignity, transparency, and long-term thinking. Most importantly, it reflects a simple belief: no child's future should be determined by physical barriers or overlooked design.

By taking the time to assess, document, and explain accessibility clearly, this initiative moves the conversation from intention to action — and from promises to lasting change.

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Senator the Hon. Shenella Govia

Best wishes on your birthday. May it be as brilliant as you are. Your hard work and dedication are valued.



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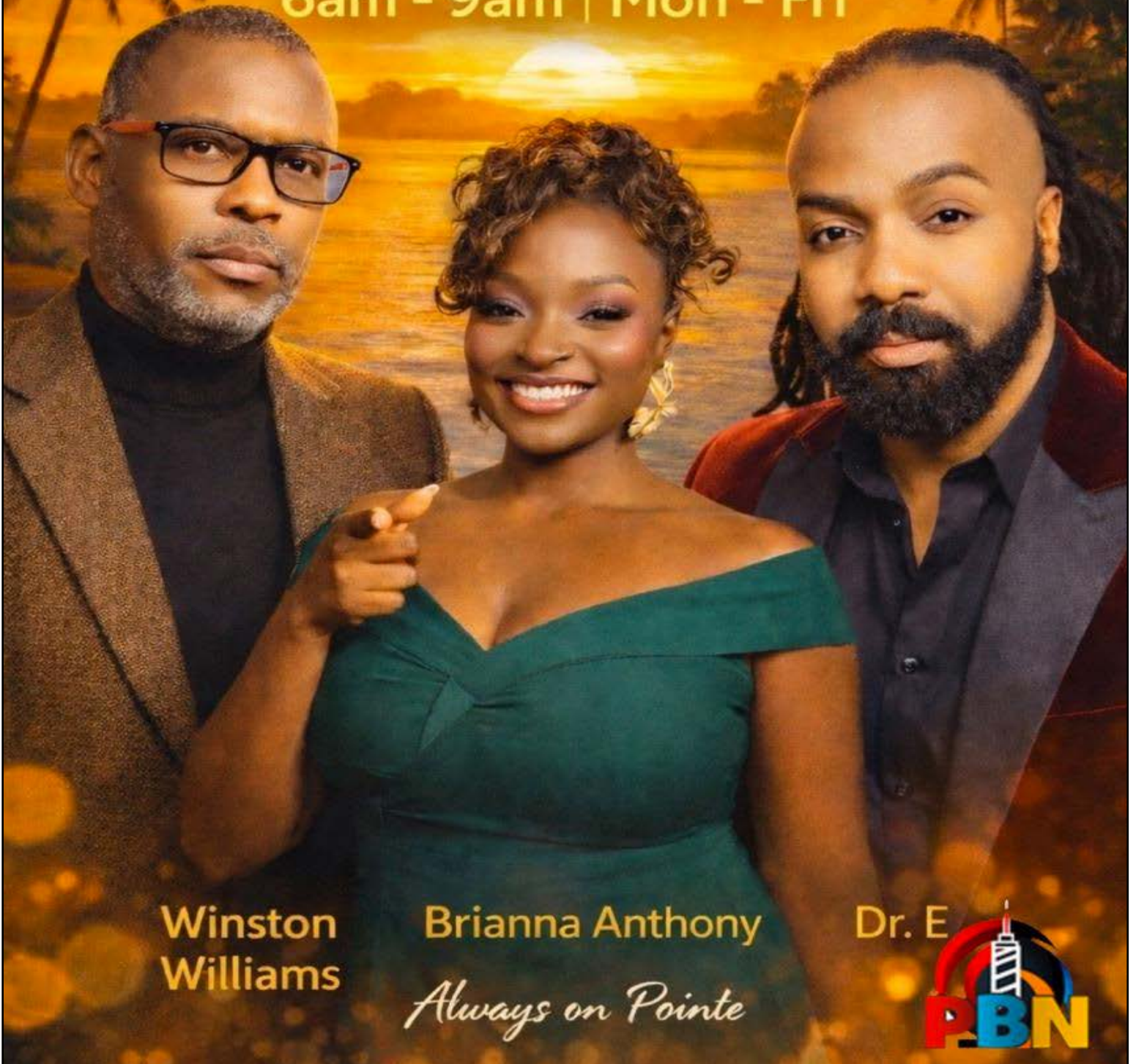
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**ANTIGUA
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Regional News

Haiti's presidential council dissolved after rocky tenure as unelected US-backed ruler remains



Haiti's presidential council stepped down on Saturday after almost two years of tumultuous rule alongside a US-backed prime minister, who is expected to remain in power as the country prepares for the first general elections in a decade.

Days before the nine-member council was dissolved, the US deployed a warship and two US Coast Guard boats to waters near Haiti's capital, where gangs control 90% of Port-au-Prince.

"The naval presence appears to provide the latest proof of Washington's willingness to use the threat of force to shape politics in the Western Hemisphere," said Diego Da Rin, an analyst with the International Crisis Group.

In late January, two of the council's most influential members announced that a majority had voted to oust Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé, defying calls from the US government to uphold the country's fragile political stability.

Days later, the US government an-

nounced visa revocations for four unidentified council members and a Cabinet minister.

The council's plan to oust Fils-Aimé for reasons not made public appeared to fall to the wayside as it stepped down in an official ceremony on Saturday.

"We need to put our personal interest to the side and continue progress for security," said the council's outgoing president, Laurent Saint-Cyr, who rejected a push to dismiss the prime minister.

Fils-Aimé spoke briefly, saying he would address the nation later in the day.

Feb. 7 is a historic date for Haiti that marks the start of democratic rule after a nearly 30-year dictatorship. It's also when presidents are traditionally sworn in.

But Haiti failed to hold general elections on Saturday as envisioned a couple of years ago, with gang violence gripping much of the capital and

swaths of land in the country's central region. Tentative dates were announced for August and December, but many believe it's unlikely an election and a run-off will be held this year.

The council was established in April 2024, nearly three years after President Jovenel Moïse was killed at his residence, throwing Haiti into widespread upheaval.

At the time, former Prime Minister Ariel Henry was unable to return to Haiti following an official

trip to Kenya because a powerful gang coalition had attacked key state infrastructure over the course of several days, forcing the country's main international airport to close for nearly three months.

The council was created after Caribbean leaders and U.S. officials urgently met in Jamaica to build a framework for a political transition after Henry resigned.

Council members had long pledged to quell gang violence and improve life for Haiti but fell overwhelmingly short.

"The government has been unable to push back criminal gangs that control most of Port-au-Prince and have expanded into other areas," Da Rin noted.

The council also was rocked by accusations of corruption, with a government agency accusing three members of bribery in late 2024. (AP)

Former BVI premier files appeal challenging cocaine trafficking and money laundering conviction



Former British Virgin Islands premier Andrew Fahie has filed an appeal challenging his conviction in the United States, arguing that the government's sting operation involved a substance that "would never test positive" for cocaine and that key information about the credibility of the confidential informant was withheld from the court.

According to the Initial Brief of Appellant filed earlier this week before the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, Fahie is seeking to overturn his conviction on three primary grounds.

Fahie was convicted in February 2024 of conspiracy to import five kilograms or more of cocaine, conspiracy to engage in money laundering, attempted money laundering, and foreign travel in aid of racketeering.

He was sentenced to more than 11 years' imprisonment.

In the appeal, his attorneys argue that the trial court erred in refusing to dismiss the indictment based on what they describe as "significant government misconduct".

The brief states that a Mexican judicial officer previously found the same confidential informant used in Fahie's case to have "credibility and reliability issues", which led to the dismissal of corruption charges against Mexican officials.

The appeal contends that United States authorities were aware of that adverse credibility finding but did not disclose it during bond proceedings or at trial.

The district court acknowledged concerns about the case agent's conduct

but declined to dismiss the charges.

A second central argument focuses on the nature of the substance at the heart of the conspiracy charge.

The brief states that the confidential informant repeatedly described the shipment as liquid construction materials that had been chemically treated so they would "never, never, never" test positive for cocaine during inspections.

According to the filing, the informant explained that cocaine could only be extracted after a four-day chemical process in Puerto Rico.

Fahie's attorneys argue that because the substance could not be detected as cocaine

while in transit, the government failed to prove that it contained "a detectable amount of cocaine," as required under federal law.

The appeal also raises concerns about jury unanimity.

Shortly after the verdict was delivered and the jury discharged, two jurors reportedly expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome, with one stating the verdict was not hers at the time she answered during polling.

The district court conducted a limited inquiry but declined to grant a mistrial.

The appellate court has been asked to dismiss the indictment, vacate the cocaine conspiracy conviction, or order a mistrial or further evidentiary hearing on the jury issue. (CMC)

Regional News

OECS Secretariat assists St Vincent and the Grenadines in advancing digital innovation



The OECS (Organization of Eastern Caribbean States) Commission has reaffirmed its dedication to promoting digital evolution throughout the OECS Community.

Recognizing that digital transition plays a vital role in enhancing contemporary governance—leading to improved public service delivery and bolstering the private sector’s capacity for accelerated economic progress—the OECS supports initiatives designed to cultivate a robust digital en-

vironment among its member nations.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), digital transformation is a central element of the country’s developmental strategy, said a press release from the OECS Secretariat. It acts as a driving force for optimizing administrative procedures, increasing the efficiency of public services, fostering greater citizen participation, and strengthening connections within the OECS region and the international community.

Embracing a comprehensive “whole-of-society” approach, SVG is committed to investing in flexible technological innovations while overhauling legal, policy, and governance systems to create a seamless digital framework. As part of this initiative, the OECS Commission collaborated with the SVG government to facilitate a two-day workshop focused on reviewing and reinforcing the legal, policy, and governance structures necessary for deploying effective Civil Registration and Unique Identification (UID) systems.

According to the release, the workshop convened essential stakeholders from various government departments, including the Attorney General’s Chambers, National Security, Immigration, Customs, Civil Registry, Electoral, and Health sectors. Discussions centered on best practices and emerging trends in digital identification and civil registration. Through detailed consultations and expert-led sessions, participants assessed existing legislative frameworks and explored areas requiring policy harmonization and updates. The event also included the formal transfer of specialized equipment aimed at supporting decentralization and efficient management of civil registration and UID operations across



Regional News

PAGE 25

both rural and urban areas in SVG.

Dr. Didacus Jules, Director General of the OECS, emphasized the transformative potential of digital solutions on government effectiveness, stating that “Digital transformation is not merely a technological upgrade; it is a profound shift in how governments engage with citizens and deliver essential services.”

He further highlighted that “by modernizing civil registration and identification systems, we are laying the foundation for more transparent, agile, and inclusive governance.”

In his remarks during the opening ceremony, Dr. Clarence Henry, Acting Head of Regional Integration at the OECS Commission, acknowledged the significant support of the European Union (EU) through the 11th EDF Regional Integration Through Growth, Harmonization, and Technology (RIGHT) project. He expressed gratitude for the EU’s ongoing partnership and steadfast backing, which have been vital in addressing legal, policy, and governance gaps, as well as upgrading equipment and capacity-building efforts for public sector agencies committed to realizing a dig-

itally integrated OECS community.

Winston George, Coordinator of the Caribbean Digital Transformation Project (CARDTP), underscored the strategic importance of the UID system, remarking:

“The Unique Identification System is a cornerstone of Digital Public Infrastructure. It is essential not only for streamlining government operations but also for enabling robust Know Your Customer (KYC) processes in both public and private sectors. This foundational system enhances trust, security, and accessibility, promoting greater confidence in digital services for all Vincentians.”

Ms. Shernell Hadaway, Parliamentary Counsel III, representing Attorney General Sarah Louise Mitchell, stressed the significance of the workshop for all participants, noting:

“Your insights and expertise are invaluable. The success of the CR/UID systems depends not only on sound technology and good laws, but on broad-based understanding, acceptance, and usage across all spheres – government, civil society, and the private sector.”

This two-day event, coupled with the equipment handover, signifies a critical step forward in SVG’s ongoing digital transformation journey, states the OECS. By bolstering legal, policy, and governance frameworks and investing in advanced technology, the OECS Commission said that together with its partners, it is ensuring that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains at the forefront of regional innovation and service excellence. These efforts aim to facilitate the deployment of secure, interoperable systems that improve access to government services, stimulate economic activity, and position SVG as a leader in digital governance within the Eastern Caribbean.

Looking ahead, the OECS Commission will persist in collaborating closely with SVG and other member states to advance digital initiatives, leveraging regional cooperation and international support. Through continuous investment in technology and capacity development, the OECS aims to build resilient, future-ready societies where both citizens and businesses can flourish in the digital era. (Dominica News Online)



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Three European countries present credentials to CARICOM this week

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) advanced its expanding partnerships this week by welcoming new diplomatic representatives from Sweden, Norway, and Austria, solidifying their ties with the regional organization through the formal accreditation of ambassadors.

On Tuesday, February 3, Secretary-General Dr. Carla Barnett received the Letters of Credence from Her Excellency Maria Velasco, who is now serving as Sweden's ambassador to CARICOM. The following day, she also accredited His Excellency John Petter Opdahl from Norway and His Excellency Gerold Vollmer from Austria.

Dr. Barnett reportedly highlighted the enduring relationship between CARICOM and Sweden, emphasizing cooperation across bilateral, regional, and multilateral spheres. She pointed out ongoing dialogue among their foreign ministers, as well as joint efforts in ocean governance, water resource management, and climate change adaptation. She praised Sweden's role as a steadfast partner in global climate initiatives and acknowledged its technical contributions toward building resilient energy infrastructure.

The release shared that the Secretary-General further underscored the alliance between CARICOM and Norway, recognizing their shared maritime identity and mutual dedication to multilateralism. She recalled Norway's early support in 2001 and 2003, that was instrumental in establishing the CARICOM Secretariat's Office in



Haiti, thereby aiding Haiti's integration into the Community. She also expressed appreciation for Norway's backing of the Gang Suppression Force under UN Security Council Resolution 2793.

Addressing the new Austrian envoy, Dr. Barnett affirmed that CARICOM and Austria are united by their commitment to multilateralism and the rule of law. She acknowledged Austria's financial contribution to the Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CCREEE), as well as its efforts in capacity-building for emerging Caribbean diplomats.

CARICOM reports that the Secretary-General encouraged all three ambassadors to prioritize Haiti in their diplomatic agendas, given the country's ongoing fragile transition toward holding general elections.

Ambassador Velasco conveyed that CARICOM, together with the European Union, encompasses 41 nations that share common per-

spectives on various global issues. She emphasized their collective potential to influence international policy in defending core principles and tackling shared challenges such as climate change and organized crime.

The release outlined that Ambassador Opdahl pointed out the common difficulties faced by small island and coastal states and reaffirmed Norway's dedication to sustained cooperation, particularly through its ongoing partnership with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).

Ambassador Vollmer identified three key areas of collaboration: Austria's support for CCREEE, training programs for CARICOM diplomats in Vienna, and Austria's proposal to assist in establishing a CARICOM office in Vienna to strengthen representation at UN agencies. (Dominica News Online)

Pakistan's famous kite festival cautiously returns after 19-year ban

In the streets of Lahore, there are hints that the kite flying festival, Basant, has returned.

Someone is fishing a kite from electricity cables, the distant sound of a drum beat, a flash of neon when you look up in the walled city's narrow streets to a stretch of sky. This party is above.

As the sun sets across the city, on every rooftop we can see families and friends, laughing, shouting, watching as kites zig zag, circle, and soar through the city's skies.

"It's really difficult!" Abu Bakar Ahmad tells me.

The 25-year-old tech engineer has been coached by his cousin, coaxing the kite higher and higher with a twitch of the string.

"All our generations here are very excited; the elders know how to fly a kite, but we Gen-Zers don't know."

The festival has returned after nearly two decades. Marking the start of spring, it dates back centuries, but was banned in 2007 after several years of injuries and



fatalities caused by sharp kite strings, falls and aerial firing.

It means for many this is their first time flying; they've never seen the skies above Lahore like this. Others are practicing the skill after years.

"It's gathering, it's love. Flying kites is ok, but the main thing is bonding," Kanwal Amin, 48, tells me. "I like watching and eating good food."

Kashif Siddiqui is a pharmacist, but admits his kite flying is a bit rusty. He shows me pictures of his last Basant - then Kashif's son was three. Now his son is here with his own children.

"It's special for Lahori's - this runs in our blood. It's not about kite and thread, it's about tradition. My father and his father before him used to do it."

Kashif's aunt, Mina Sikan-

der, 60, is here from Miami; she didn't want to miss out.

"I'm very fond of this festival," she says. "It was worth the journey!"

Kite flying is not just about beauty, it's about the battle to knock your opponent's kite out of the sky by cutting their string.

That led to ever sharper, stronger threads, some coated in powdered glass, others made from metal or chemical material that would not break.

Each festival there were deaths, including of children. It was particularly dangerous for motorcyclists who could inadvertently drive into a thread draped across a road, cutting their throats.

Celebratory aerial firing and falls from rooftops also caused injuries and fatalities.

In a bid to try to make the festival safer, it's now been limited to only three days.

Motorcyclists have been given metal rods, sticking up between their handlebars, to stop any threads they drive into from becoming


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ing tied around their necks.

Large kites are banned because they require a stronger string and create a bigger risk the authorities say.

Nets have been placed over certain streets; in previous years metal kite strings have fallen on to electricity wires giving an electric shock to anyone holding them - and causing the wires to short circuit.

To prevent anyone flying before the festival officially began any kites sold before February 1 were seized along with any string deemed dangerous.

Faisal Kamran, Deputy Inspector General of Lahore Police, shows us some of more than 100,000 kites and 2,100 rolls of string he says his team seized.

His officers are monitoring the skies and rooftops through drones, officers watching in person and repositioned CCTV cameras.

"All these cameras were covering our main roads," he says pointing to images now looking across Lahore's rooftops. "We have a good view just to keep a check on activities like if somebody is using that banned material or weapons."

He says the cameras will be turned back to the roads when Basant is over.

Many are hoping the measures are a success, not least the Punjab government who decided to bring Basant back and have been promoting it.

In the narrow streets of Mochi gate, customers hold their paper kites overhead to stop them getting ripped

as they squeeze through the crowd and past the occasional slow moving motor-bike.

Usman, one of the kite sellers, tells me he's sold more than 7000 kites in just a few days.

Yousaf Salahuddin has been one of the festival's key supporters and advocates for decades.

In the 1980s he hosted the glitterati of Pakistan at the festival and invited the media to cover it to raise its profile. He says it makes a financial difference to the city too.

"There was a lot of revenue," Yousaf says. "And that revenue was going down to the poorest - the vendors on the street, the restaurants in the old city, the people who dyed the clothes, the people who were selling shoes, bangles, everything."

"And then the hotels were all booked, there were extra flights coming in."

His first memories of the festival date back to before he was old enough to fly kites, when instead he would rush across the rooftops to catch the kites whose strings had been cut.

Yousaf felt emotional seeing them back in Lahore's skies in such numbers for the first time this weekend.

"It's always been a part of us, I don't remember the city without kites," he says.

That doesn't mean he wants to fly them though.

"I don't have the patience, I flew one last night and it got cut," Yousaf says. "So I said, 'I'm not flying anymore - I'm done!'" (BBC)

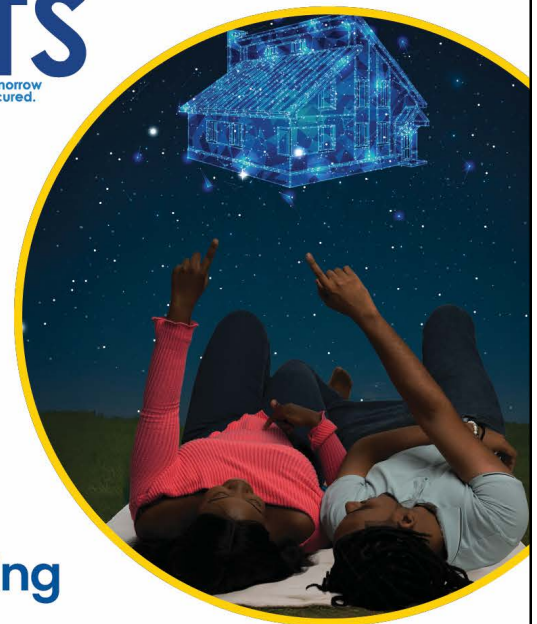


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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

Nigerian court orders UK to pay \$572 million to families of miners killed during colonial rule



A Nigerian court has ordered the British government to pay 20 million pounds (US\$27 million) to families of 21 coal miners killed in 1949 by security forces during British colonial rule, according to the state-run news agency.

The ruling on Thursday culminates decades of campaigning for compensation over the killings, widely seen in Nigeria as one of the triggers to agita-

tions for independence.

Nigeria gained its independence from Britain 11 years later, in 1960.

The miners were killed at the Iva Valley Coal Mine in the southeastern Enugu state as they were protesting harsh working conditions.

They had occupied the mine when the colonial police opened fire on them, killing 21 and injuring many others.

In his verdict, Justice Anthony Onovo of the Enugu High Court found the British colonial administration liable for the killings and ruled that the British government should also tender formal apologies to the victims.

The British government declined to comment.


The UK was not represented in the court proceedings.


"These defenceless coal miners were asking for improved work conditions, they were not embarking on any violent action against the authorities, but yet were shot and killed," the judge said.

British authorities must pay 420 million pounds in total to the victims' families as "effective remedy and compensation for the violations of the right to life," he added.

The judge also ruled that the Nigerian government failed in its constitutional duty to seek redress for the victims.

Defence lawyers described the ruling as a significant milestone that delivers "historical accountability and justice for colonial-era violations, affirming that the right to life transcends time, borders, and changes in sovereignty," said Yemi Akinseye-George, one of the applicants' lawyers. (AP)





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Italian police arrest protesters after clash in Olympic host city Milan



Six people have been arrested after police clashed with protesters in Milan, one of the host cities of the Winter Olympic Games, during the first day of the competition.

Thousands took to the streets in the northern Italian city on Saturday to protest against the Games and a range of issues including the cost of living. Some released fireworks and threw stones at police, who responded with water cannon.

It comes after the government tightened protest laws in the wake of a demonstration last weekend in Turin that left more than 100 officers injured, according to government figures.

Meanwhile, officials are investigating suspected sabotage on northern Italy's railway network on Saturday.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said those protesting against the Olympics were the "enemy of Italy" and had put images of the demonstrations "on the televisions of half the world", while thousands of other Italians were working hard to make the competition a success.

She said this had happened "after others locked railway cables to prevent trains from starting".

Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini described those involved in confrontations in Milan as "criminals".

"Just days after the shameful violence in Turin, more clashes, more attacks on law enforcement," he said.

"We're proud to have pushed for a new security package that will allow for even more effective interventions against thugs and criminals."

The Turin demonstration, which was called in response to the eviction of an unofficial social centre, started peacefully but later turned violent when armed groups confronted police. More than 30 people were arrested.

One officer was attacked with a hammer, which Meloni described as attempted murder.

A new security package, which was adopted on Thursday after being fast-tracked as a result of the violence in Turin, allows police to detain suspected troublemakers for up to 12 hours before demonstrations to stop them from spreading unrest. Critics have called it repressive.

Most of those involved in Saturday's protest in Milan marched peacefully. One woman, Francesca Missana, told news agency AFP that the Olympic

Games were "no longer sustainable from an environmental or a social point of view, their time is up".

"These Games were promoted as sustainable and cost-neutral," protest organiser Alberto di Monte told AFP. He added that because the Games were spread across multiple sites, and that billions had been spent on roads instead of protecting the mountains.

Saturday also saw chaos on some of Italy's northern rail networks, with suspected attacks delaying people for hours.

A fire hit rail infrastructure between Bologna and Venice, and police later found severed cables and an explosive device in locations nearby.

Police said a track switch was set alight near Pesaro on the Adriatic coast and electric cables were found severed near Bologna, along with a rudimentary explosive device left by a track.

Bologna's central rail station is a major hub, linking cities in the north and south, and east to west lines.

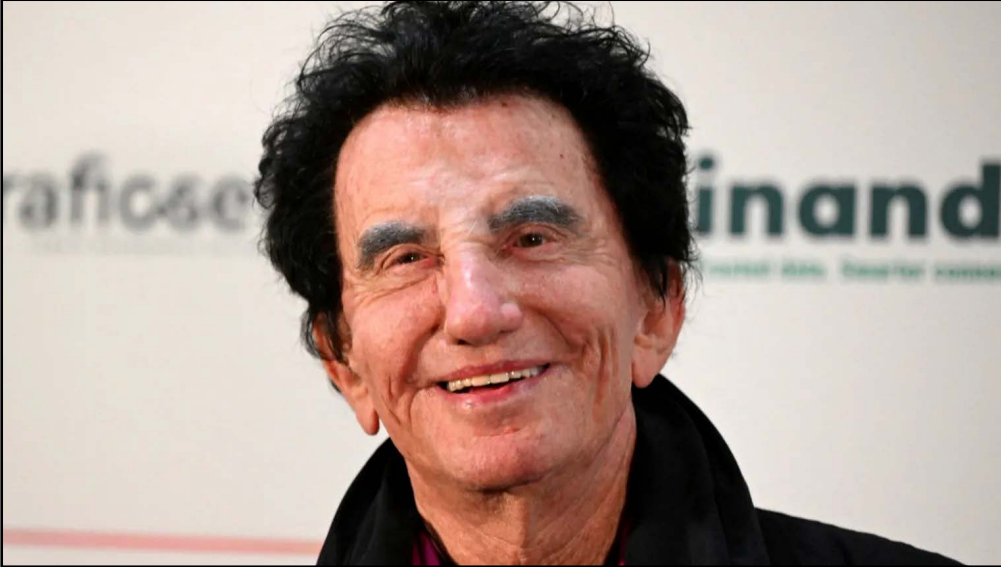
RFI, which owns the country's railways, said services have since returned to normal.

The transport ministry described the incidents as "suspected sabotage" and said they mirrored vandalism at the start of the Paris Olympics in 2024.

"These actions of unprecedented seriousness do not in any way tarnish Italy's image in the world, an image that the Games will make even more compelling," Salvini, who is also Italy's transport minister, said on Saturday.

The Winter Olympics are taking place until 22 February in a number of locations, from Milan to the resort town of Cortina d'Ampezzo, the Dolomite regions of Predazzo and Tesero, and the Alpine resorts of Livigno and Bormio. (BBC)

France investigates ex-minister Jack Lang over Epstein links



Financial crime prosecutors in France say they have opened a preliminary inquiry into former Culture Minister Jack Lang over his links to Jeffrey Epstein.

Lang, a major figure in French socialist governments between the 1980s and 2000s, is being investigated for suspected “laundering of tax fraud proceeds”.

It follows the US Department of Justice’s release of the Epstein files, which have documented links between the Lang family and the late American sex offender.

Lang, now 86, denies wrongdoing and on Saturday described the allegations against him as “baseless”.

He told AFP the investigation “will bring much light on to the accusations that are questioning my probity and my honour”.

Hours after the investigation was announced, Lang offered to resign as head of the Arab World Institute, a body that promotes cooperation and exchanges between France and Arab nations.

In a letter to Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot, seen by AFP, Lang

said he would submit his resignation at the next board meeting.

The former French minister, who is named almost 700 times in the Epstein files, had until now resisted pressure to step down.

Barrot, who had summoned Lang for talks on Sunday, said he had acknowledged the resignation offer and planned to start the process of looking for a successor.

Lang’s daughter Caroline, 64, is also being investigated in the case. Earlier this week she stepped down as head of a French film producers’ union.

On Tuesday, he told broadcaster BFMTV he had known nothing about Epstein’s crimes when he met him “some 15 years ago”. The US financier was convicted in Florida in 2008 of soliciting a minor for prostitution.

Lang - who served as culture minister between 1981 and 1993 and later as minister of education - says he was introduced to Epstein by US actor-director Woody Allen.

He said he had found Epstein “passionate about art, culture and cine-

ma”.

In a separate interview on Tuesday, he told RTL radio that Epstein had been “generous” and “courteous”, adding: “When I meet people I don’t ask to see their criminal record.”

Details from the files revealed by French media suggest Lang appealed to Epstein for funds or favours on several occasions - including the use of Epstein’s car and private plane for himself and his family.

Caroline Lang told French news website Mediapart that she met Epstein in 2012, when he told her he wanted to “invest in young French and international artists”.

She said his lawyers had set up a company, Prytanee LLC, based in the US Virgin Islands. Mediapart said Caroline Lang had received half of the shares, but she said she had not invested in it or received any funds from it.

An email in the Epstein files suggested she contributed her art knowledge, Mediapart reports. She told the website she had been “incredibly naïve”.

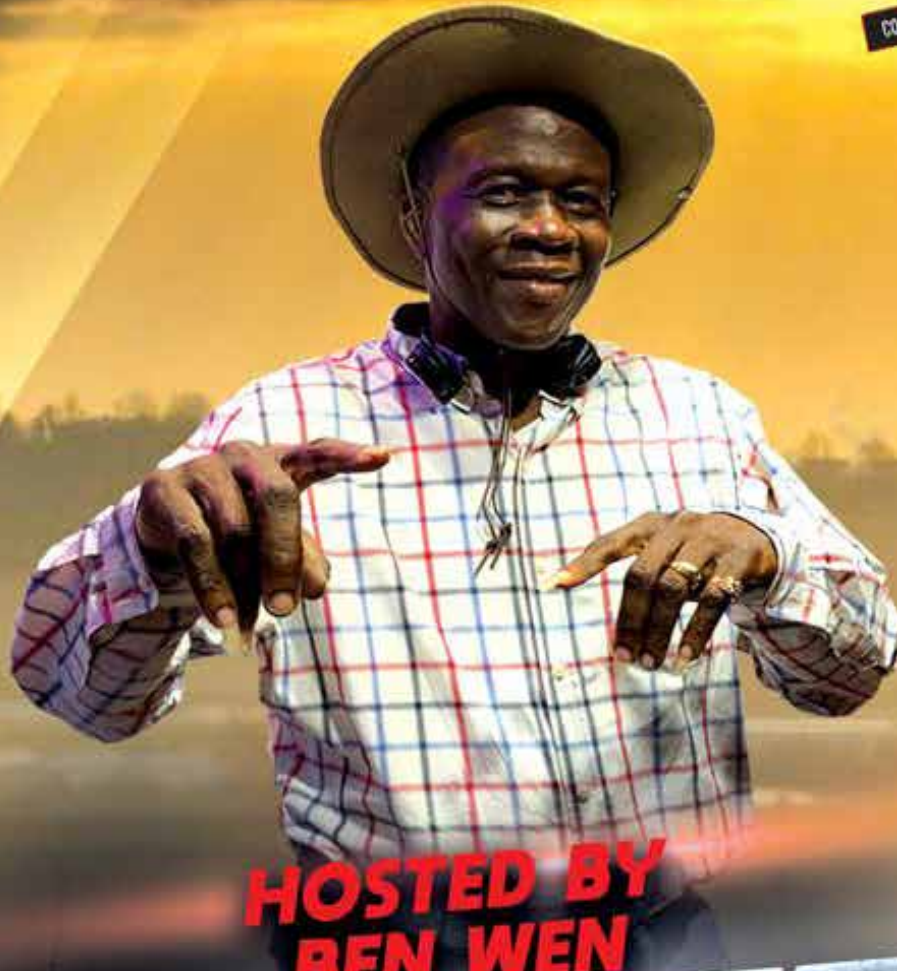
Resigning from her post in the Independent Production Union, she said: “I do not want this situation to in any way harm the union.”

The files do not suggest either Lang or his daughter were implicated in Epstein’s sexual crimes.

The latest release of Epstein files by the US government - which include millions of documents - include the names of rich and powerful people from around the world. Being mentioned does not imply wrongdoing.

Epstein died in prison in New York in 2019 while awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges. (BBC)

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Second loss for Antiguanans in CONCACAF Men's Under-17 Qualifiers



The Antigua and Barbuda National Men's Under-17 football squad. (Photo courtesy of the ABFA)

The Antigua and Barbuda national team suffered their second loss in their Group C campaign at the 2026 CONCACAF Men's Under-17 Qualifiers in Guatemala on Saturday.

The young Benna Boys were beaten 4-0 by Haiti in their second encounter in the four-team group at Estadio Cementos Progreso in Guatemala City.

Haiti took the lead in the first half with goals from **Julien Casillas** in the 10th minute and an own goal by Antiguan defender Cody Richardson in the 16th minute.

The victory was sealed in the second half with strikes from **Macenat Prophète** in the 76th minute and **Danrick Dalce** in the 90th minute.

The Antigua and Barbuda national team got off to a losing start in the competition on Thursday night.

The young Benna Boys were beaten 2-0 by host Guatemala in their opening Group C encounter at Estadio Cementos Progreso in Guatemala City.

After a scoreless first half, the home side got on the board in the 47th minute when **Patrick Arana** unleashed a vicious blast from outside the box.

The Guatemalans doubled their lead soon after as **Jeffery Interiano** found the back of the net in the 52nd minute with a shot from within the box.

Haiti earned a 5-1 win over Grenada in the other Group C opener at the same venue in Guatemala on Thursday.

Guatemala took the lead in Group C with a 7-0 win against Grenada at Estadio Cementos Progreso in Guatemala City on Saturday.

The hosts took a three-goal lead in the first half with strikes from **Matías Miché** in the 4th minute, **Patrick Arana** in the 24th minute, and **Joshua Perez** in the 27th minute.

Jorge de León continued the scoring in the 47th minute, followed by a conversion by **Jorge Castellanos** in the 57th minute and two goals from **Ángel García** in the first and seventh minutes of added time.

The teams will play their final match in Group C during the last double-header at Estadio Cementos Progreso in Guatemala City on Tuesday.

The Antiguanans will meet Grenada, and Guatemala will take on Haiti. The winner of the group will secure a berth in the 2026 FIFA U-17 World Cup in Qatar in November.



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Full Throttle maintains winning start in ABBA's Division One League



Kennedy's Club Ottos Full Throttle continued their winning start to their campaign in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association (ABBA) First Division League on Saturday.

The Ottos Full Throttle notched up their second win in as many matches with a 105-80 drubbing of the JSC Red Hawks, formerly Spanish Heat, at the JSC Sports Complex.

Danny Perez shot a game-high 33 points, and Nick Strawter produced a triple-double with 17 points, 11 rebounds, and 10 assists to lead their Full Throttle to the latest victory.

In support, Pindo Drammeh sank 15 points and claimed eight rebounds, Lindsay McDonald scored 12 points,

and Christian Walker converted 10 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for the Full Throttle.

Cohen Desouza sank 24 points and snatched nine rebounds, and Bryce Smith converted 17 points and grabbed 13 rebounds as the leading performers for the Red Hawks.

In support, Aubrey Feastez scored 13 points and claimed eight rebounds, Darius Daniels sank 11 points, and Humroy Wright scored 10 points for the Red Hawks.

After suffering an 88-94 defeat to back-to-back champions EZ Fit Flyers in their opening game, the Lava Smoke Elite Stingerz rebounded to claim their first win with a 100-70 victory over the Navigators, who lost for the second time in as many matches.

Joshua Minner produced a game-high 30 points with six assists, Steven Matthew sank 23 points, and Brycen Thomas chipped in with 15 points, eight assists, and five rebounds for the Elite Stingerz.

Coy Quinland converted 17 points and snatched seven rebounds, DeLorng Jules sank 12 points, and Michael Barton scored nine points and grabbed 15 rebounds for the Navigators.

tors.

Da Project rebounded from their opening-match loss to the Ottos Full Throttle to record their first win with a commanding 95-77 victory over All Saints Slam in their second encounter.

Cornell Greenwood shot a game-high 34 points and grabbed 13 rebounds, T-Shawn Lewis sank 27 points and claimed eight rebounds, and Sadiq Phillip converted 12 points and snatched 11 rebounds for Da Project.

Tajahron Davis scored 17 points, Rolontae Knowles sank 16 points, and Javon Simon sank 10 points for All Saints Slam.

The Cuties Ovals Ojays launched their Division One campaign with a comprehensive 110-55 drubbing of the Navigators in their opening encounter.

Jabari Smith shot a game-high 28 points, and Jaylen Owens sank 27 points to lead the Ovals Ojays. In support, Sam Taylor produced 17 points, seven rebounds, seven steals, and five assists, and Christian Wood scored 16 points for the Ovals Ojays.

Raheem Sawyer sank 18 points and claimed eight rebounds, and Coy Quinland scored 11 points and claimed six rebounds for the Navigators.

Five Islands open up five-point lead atop First Division League

The Five Islands FC won their latest match to open up a five-point lead at the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League.

Five Islands FC notched up their eighth win in 14 matches by snatching a one-nil victory against Golden Grove FC at the Golden Grove playing field.

Demario Roberts scored

the winner by converting the only goal of the match with a strike in the fifth minute.

The result allows Five Islands FC to remain at the top of the First Division by advancing to 28 points. Golden Grove FC remains in third place with 23 points after suffering their fourth defeat in 13 matches.

The Freemans Village Scorpions are in second place on goal difference

with 23 points from 10 matches.

Makhai Browne and Kimoi Alexander each scored twice as the Swetes Vipers secured their fifth win in 13 matches with a 4-1 drubbing of Empire FC at the Freemans Village playing field.

Browne scored in the 24th and 61st minutes, while Alexander had conversions in the 60th and 76th minutes.

Nickado Lindsay scored the only goal for Empire FC when he converted a penalty kick in the 18th minute to give his team a one-nil lead.

The result allows the Swetes Vipers FC to move on to 20 points, while Empire FC remains on 21 points after suffering their fourth defeat in 13 matches.

Guydadli Jets return to the top of Second Division League



The Guydadli Jets football team

The Guydadli Jets maintained their unbeaten run during the latest round of matches to return to the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League.

The Guydadli Jets notched up their ninth win in 10 matches with a 2-1 victory against North Coast Academy Juniors at Mount Pleasant.

All the goals came in the first half, with Ivan Grant scoring in the eighth minute and Imani Joyce in the 14th minute for Guydadli Jets. Ajabe Rae converted a penalty kick in the 31st minute for North Coast Academy.

The result allows the Guydadli Jets to move ahead of the Young Lions of Old Road and Sea View Farm FC into first place. The Guydadli Jets advanced to 28 points, two more than the Young Lions and Sea View Farm FC, which has played 11 matches.

North Coast Academy Juniors

remain on 14 points after succumbing to their fifth loss in 11 matches.

Police extended their unbeaten run by claiming their sixth win in nine matches with a 1-0 victory against Earthquakes FC at Fort Road.

Following a goalless first half, Carl Kirby broke the deadlock with a 67th-minute conversion to snatch victory for the Police.

The result allows Police to move on to 21 points, while Earthquakes FC remains on six points after losing for the seventh time in nine matches.

The CPTSA Wings notched up their second win in 11 matches with a 2-1 victory against the Liberta Blackhawks at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

Karanja Mack converted a penalty kick in the 79th minute to snatch victory for the CPTSA Wings after teammate Joseph Saigh scored an equalizer in the

69th minute. Jakeze Quinland scored in the 33rd minute to give the Liberta Blackhawks a one-nil lead at halftime.

The CPTSA Wings will move on to 12 points, while the Liberta Blackhawks remain on one point after suffering their eighth defeat in nine matches.

Jahvier Joseph scored five goals as Belmont FC secured their second win in eight matches with a 9-1 drubbing of the Young Warriors at the Cashew Hill playing field.

Joseph had conversions in the fourth, 17th, 29th, 49th, and 50th minutes. The other goals for Belmont FC were scored by Brendon Sutherland, Joshua Blenman, Urel Mitchell, and Michael Woode.

Leonard Francis scored a consolation goal in the 37th minute for the Young Warriors. Belmont FC advanced to eight points, while the Young Warriors remain without any points after crashing to their seventh defeat in as many matches.

Point West Ham notched up their third win in seven matches with a 2-0 victory against Herberts United FC at the Pigotts playing field.

The goals for Point West Ham were scored by Laquante Ambrose in the 26th minute and Jahmarley Barzey in the 47th minute.

The result allows Point West Ham FC to move on to 10 points, while Herberts United FC remains on four points after crashing to their seventh defeat in nine matches.

Shepherd takes hat trick at T20 WCup as West Indies beat Scotland

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — West Indies fast bowler Romario Shepherd took four Scottish wickets in five balls, including a hat trick, and Faheem Ashraf's late assault rescued Pakistan in a three-wicket win over the Netherlands on an eventful opening day of cricket's T20 World Cup on Saturday.

The US gave India a huge scare in Mumbai before captain Suryakumar Yadav saved his team with 84 not out off 49 balls as the tournament co-host won by 29 runs.

In the afternoon match at Kolkata, West Indies had a 35-run victory over Scotland, which replaced Bangladesh at late notice in Group C.

Shepherd grabbed five for 20, including four wickets in the match-changing 17th over, and Shimron Hetmyer hit 64 off 34 balls to win the man of the match award.

Hetmyer's aggressive batting lifted the West Indies to a strong 182 for five off their 20 overs before Shepherd's heroics led to Scotland all out for 147 in 18.5 overs.

Hetmyer smacked six sixes and two boundaries in the fastest half century by a West Indian batter at men's T20 World Cups. Opener Brandon King hit 35, Rutherford cracked 26, Rovman Powell made 24, and captain Shai Hope got 19. Left-arm fast bowler Brad Currie claimed two for 23.

In reply, captain Richie Berrington made a fighting 42 but his dismissal in the 14th over saw Scotland collapse from 115 for three to 147 all out. Tom Bruce struck 35 off 28 balls.

Shepherd claimed the wickets of Matthew Cross (11) and Michael Leask (0) before knocking back the off stump of Oliver Davidson (0) to achieve the hat trick.

Safyaan Sharif (0) offered a tame catch at mid-off at the end of the over as Scotland capitulated in their run chase. Pacer Jason Holder picked up three for 30.

Pakistan needed the win on Saturday as it can ill afford to lose points in any of the Group A games it plays after



West Indies pacer Romario Shepherd, second left, celebrates with his teammates after picking up a five-wicket haul against Scotland in their Group C match in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Kolkata, India, on Saturday, February 7, 2026. (ICC/Getty Images)

announcing it would boycott its Feb. 15 match in Sri Lanka against co-host India, a decision that shook the cricket world. The ICC hopes the PCB will reconsider otherwise Pakistan will forfeit the marquee game of the tournament.

The Pakistan Cricket Board accused the ICC of double standards in ousting Bangladesh from the 20-team tournament and the boycott controversy appeared to have affected Pakistan as it crashed to 114 for seven at Colombo. But Ashraf smashed an unbeaten 29 runs off 11 balls to carry the former champions to 148 for seven in 19.3 overs.

The Netherlands had earlier collapsed to 147 all out in 19.5 overs, losing the last six wickets for 20 runs, on an unusual grassy wicket at the Sinhalese Sports Club.

The Netherlands was on the cusp of an upset and had squeezed Pakistan before Ashraf cut loose against fast bowler Logan van Beek in a penultimate over that cost 24 runs and also saw Max O'Dowd dropping a crucial catch of Ashraf at long-on.

Pakistan had choked in the middle overs as fast bowler Paul van Meekeren's (2-20) double-wicket maiden over turned the game on its head when Sahibzada Farhan (47) holed out in the

outfield and Usman Khan chopped the ball back onto his stumps.

Babar Azam's struggle in the T20 format continued when he made a scratchy 15 off 18 balls and offered a tame catch at long on.

Earlier, Netherlands captain Scott Edwards top scored with 37 off 29 balls and had guided his team to 127 for four, but his dismissal in the 16th over saw the Dutch collapse.

Saim Ayub, who was surprisingly introduced in the death overs, grabbed two for seven in the only over he bowled. Left-arm fast bowler Salman Mirza took three for 24 that included two wickets in the final over.

Defending champion India batted first after the United States won the toss and chose to field in the last game of the opening day at Mumbai.

India was in unexpected trouble at 46 for four and 118 for seven. Yadav came to the rescue and took the defending champions to 161 for nine in their 20 overs by hitting 10 fours and four sixes.

Medium pacer Shadley van Schalkwyk impressed with figures of four for 25 in four overs, including the wickets of Ishan Kishan (20) and Tilak Varma (25). The target proved too much for the Americans, who scored 132 for eight.

United takes sole leadership in Premier Division League



A starting XI of the All Saints United football team

Defending back-to-back champions All Saints United regained sole leadership of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Saturday night.

All Saints United moved three points clear of Sandals and APUA Inet Jennings Grenades at the top of the Premier League by recording their 11th win in 14 matches with a 2-1 victory against Green City FC in the last game of a triple-header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Goals by Raheem Deterville in the 33rd minute and D'Andre Bishop in the 52nd minute gave All Saints United a two-nil lead. Omarion Barrett reduced the deficit for Green City FC by scoring a consolation goal in the first minute of added time.

The result allows All Saints United to

remain at the top of the 12-team standings with 35 points. Green City FC remains on 15 points after losing for the seventh time in 14 matches.

The Potters Tigers notched up their sixth win in 13 matches with a 4-1 drubbing of the Ottos Rangers FC in Saturday's second game.

Javere Joseph scaaaaaaaoored twice with conversions in the 74th and 83rd minutes after teammate Abraham Barry scored in the sixth minute to give the Potters Tigers a one-nil lead at halftime.

Javorn Benjamin scored the final goal for the Potters Tigers with a strike in the fourth minute of added time. Marmarlique Davidson scored a consolation goal for Ottos Rangers in the 54th minute.

The Potters Tigers advanced to 22 points, while the Ottos Rangers slipped to the bottom of the standings with four points after losing for the 12th time in 14 matches.

Swayne Thomas scored twice as Sir Molwyn Joseph Jennings United moved out of the cellar by recording their second win in 14 matches by pulling off a 2-0 victory over John Hughes FC in Saturday's opening game.

Following a goalless first half, Thomas had conversions in the 76th minute and in the fourth minute of added time.

Jennings United advanced to six points, while John Hughes FC remains third from the bottom of the standings with 10 points after losing for the 10th time in 14 matches.