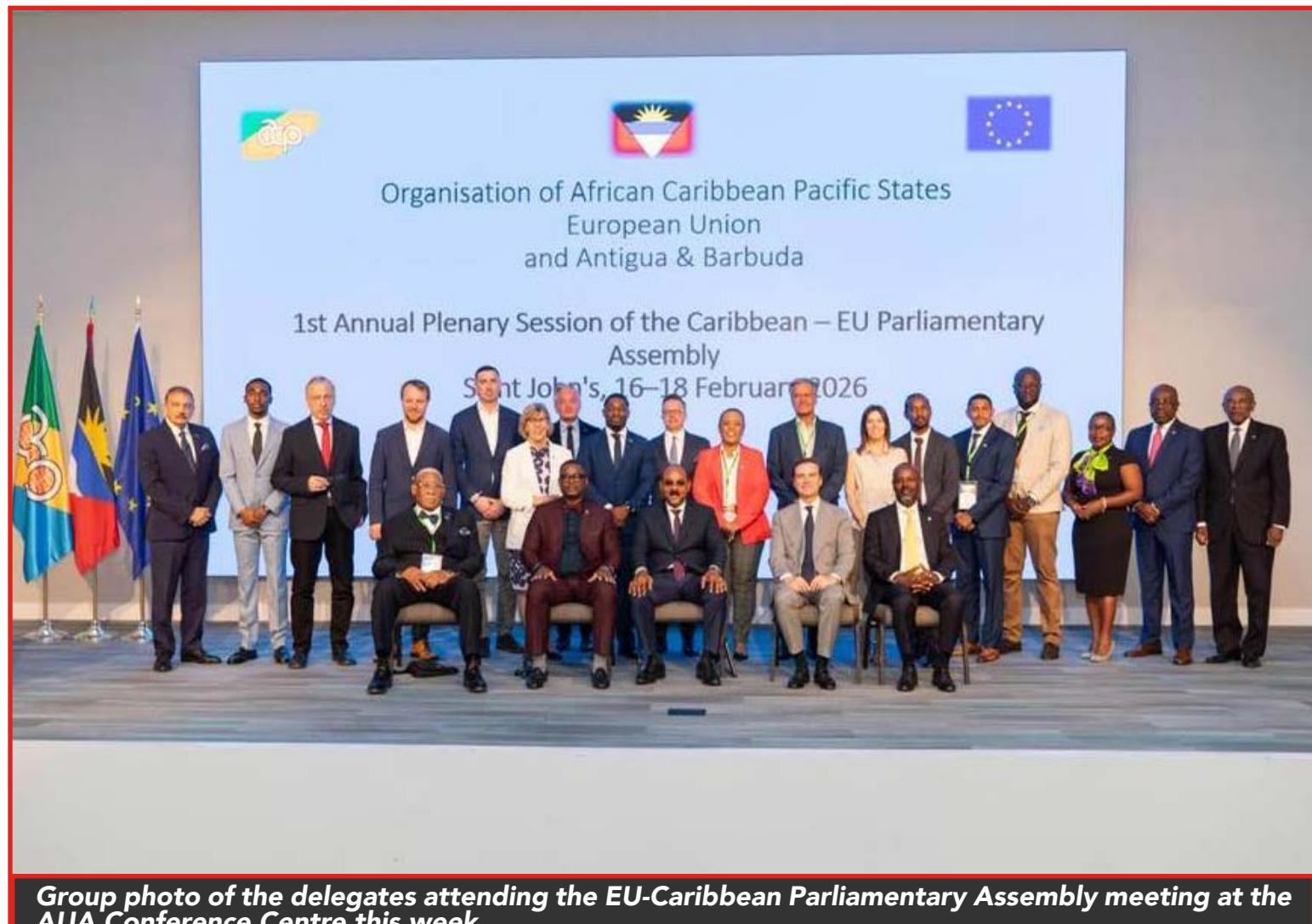


PM Browne Invites the EU to Dialogue with Caribbean CBI Countries



Group photo of the delegates attending the EU-Caribbean Parliamentary Assembly meeting at the AUA Conference Centre this week

Local News

PM Browne Invites the EU to Dialogue with Caribbean CBI Countries



Prime Minister Gaston Browne is inviting the European Union to engage in dialogue with the Caribbean states that operate Citizenship By Investment Programmes (CBI's) to address their concerns regarding the efficacy of these programmes.

Speaking at the opening of the EU-Caribbean Parliamentary meeting at the Conference Centre at the American University of Antigua (AUA) on Monday, PM Browne noted that for several Caribbean small island states, the CBI's are lawful, transparent development tools, operating within clear legal frameworks and strong oversight.

"They have been strengthened in consultation and with the participa-

tion of the European Union, United Kingdom and the United States.

"These programs are very important. They have helped finance hurricane recovery, climate-resilient infrastructure, healthcare, education, and fiscal stability in these small economies with limited alternatives. We recognise that integrity is essential, and we have acted accordingly—tightening vetting, enhancing regulation, and expanding international cooperation.

"Citizenship policy remains a sovereign responsibility, but sovereignty does not preclude dialogue," he remarked.

According to the prime minister the CBI-countries have invited and continue to engage with the European Union on strengthening their CBI programmes. "It is an engagement that is evidence-based, technically grounded, and as respectful of our development realities as we are re-



spectful of your concerns.

“The stringent due diligence, biometrics, residency and other requirements make obtaining our citizenship far more difficult and less risky than other third country nationals obtaining non-immigrant EU visas. Therefore, the perceived risks associated with our citizens accessing the European Union are exacerbated,” he observed.

PM Browne indicated that on the issue of territorial integrity, their position is unambiguous. “Borders matter, commitments matter and International adjudication matters,” he declared.

Turning his attention to the current state of the international relations between countries, the Antigua and Barbuda leader made a strong appeal for multilateralism in what he sees as

‘a world where pressure is increasingly mistaken for policy’. He reminded all that law, not leverage, is the only durable foundation of peace and prosperity.

“For the Caribbean, multilateralism is not a generalised abstract concept. It is a rules based order on which small states in the Caribbean depend. It is how small states survive in a world of unequal power and inequitable distribution of economic and social benefits,” he stated.

According to PM Browne, when the pillars of multilateralism are weakened, then vulnerability grows. This he noted is first felt by small open economies, but it doesn’t stop there as it spreads outwards engulfing middle powers as well.

Foreign Minister Greene calls for unlocking of the development mandate of the EPA



Antigua and Barbuda's Foreign Minister, E.P Chet Greene, has called for the urgent unlocking of the development mandate within the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states.

Minister Greene made the call during his address to the 1st Plenary Session of the Caribbean-EU Parliamentary Assembly here in Antigua and Barbuda on the topic "*The Future of EU-Caribbean Trade: A Critical Assessment and Call to Action*".

Greene offered a candid assessment of the agreement stating "the promise of that partnership remains largely unfulfilled for many of us". He drew attention to the fact that "for a small economy like

Antigua and Barbuda, the EPA provides 100% duty-free access to the EU market. Yet, in 2023, the country's total exports to the European Union were a mere USD \$60,000. In 2024, that figure crept up to just USD\$124,000. Minister Greene noted that the data points to the EPA as being not a partnership but instead underperformance.

Greene posited that the 'celebrated benefits' of market access remain theoretical for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. "We see no real collaboration between EU firms and our producers to get our rum, our fresh fish, or our fruits onto your supermarket shelves. In essence, the Agreement has facilitated EU exports to our region far more effectively than it has helped

us diversify our own trade portfolios" the Minister, who also has responsibility for Trade, pointed out.

The Foreign Minister indicated that the major reason for this outcome is because the EPA's implementation has focused on liberalization, thus neglecting the very foundation upon which ACP countries signed on to it; Development Cooperation as purported by Article 7 and Article 8 of the Agreement—focused on development assistance and cooperation priorities respectively. He added further, that these are not optional extras; they are the engine that was supposed to make this trade work.

"Our firms are small, operate in fragmented markets, and face prohibitive costs in energy and logis-

tics. They lack the capacity to meet EU technical standards or navigate non-tariff barriers. Without targeted, tangible assistance, we are asking our businesses to compete in a Formula One race on a bicycle," he suggested.

In looking forward, Minister Greene recommends a reset as the two sides prepare for the Second Five-Year Review of the EPA in 2026.

He added, "We must pivot from simply trading goods to building genuine sectoral partnerships. Our future is not just in bananas and rum; it's in the 70% of our economy that is services—in sustainable tourism, in digital animation and design, in health and wellness, and in maritime services."

47-year old male dies after horrific traffic accident



The police are continuing investigations into the circumstances surrounding a traffic collision on Pares Main Road that resulted in the death of 47-year-old Gregson Hixon of Grays Farm.

The incident involved a white Honda Fit motor car that was travelling from west to east along Pares Main Road.

The allegations are that the driver swerved to avoid colliding with an animal in the vicinity of Welch's Supermarket and collided with the sidewalk on the southern side of the road.

As a result, the driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle, which subsequently veered off the northern side

of the road and collided with a large stone.

The impact caused the vehicle to overturn onto its side and burst into flames.

Both the driver and the passenger were rescued from the vehicle with the assistance of fire officers and Emergency Medical Services personnel.

They were transported to the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, where Hixon later succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced dead. The driver remains in the hospital in stable condition.

The Police Administration extends sincere condolences to the family and friends of the deceased during this difficult time.

Motorists are reminded to exercise due care and attention on the nation's roads, particularly in areas that are poorly lit.

Drivers are also urged to remain vigilant for stray animals, especially along roadways bordered by densely overgrown vegetation.

Investigations into the matter are ongoing.

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Local News

NODS has closed an area of the Antigua coastline over concerns of likely contamination



The National Office of Disaster Service (NODS) has closed off an area of the western coastline of Antigua from all activities as one of its agencies carry out water and other tests to determine the level of contamination of the area from the nearby Cooks Landfill.

NODS Deputy Director Craig Cole said the decision to close the cove area was put into effect on the advice of the ministry of legal affairs, one of the constituent members of its Emergency Management Committee.

The matter stems from a report that was made to the West Indies Oil Company on Thursday stating that an oily substance was visible on the surface of the water at Hanson's Bay. The country's Marine Pollution Committee was activated and it immediately set into motion a number of mitigation actions to deal with the issue.

On the water side, it placed several buoys to contain the oily film and samples of the water were collected from various points for the purpose of conducting analysis at the government laboratory.

It was determined that the bay was affected by leakage from the Cooks Landfill and steps were taken to cut off the flow of water from the landfill away from the cove.

However, while these steps are taking place and members of the Marine Pollution Committee spent the weekend investigating the matter, Cole disclosed that another possible cause of the contamination could be the dumping of raw sewage and other waste directly into the cove by individuals and that this has been ongoing for some time.

Cole reported that reports from Solid Waste National Management Authority indicated that some op-

erators have resorted to illegal acts when told that they are not be allowed pass the gate to discharge their waste.

According to the NODS official, these acts are currently being investigated by the police.

Meanwhile, Cole said the restricted area is within the bay, with a boundary from Seaforth Beach to Pinching Bay. No fishing or any kind, sea bathing, recreational or commercial activity are to be conducted in the area until the report from the laboratory is available. The committee next meets on Friday when it hopes to have copies of the report.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

Notice is hereby given, in accordance with Section 32 of the Constitution, that the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Antigua and Barbuda Scout Association will be held at the Office of the Governor General and Chief Scout located at the Government House in St. John's, Antigua on Thursday 26th February 2026 at 5:00 p.m. The election of officers for the period March 2026 – February 2029 will also be conducted.

All Members are invited to attend punctually and to note that subscriptions for 2026 are now due and payable.

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Local News

New mobile payment system comes to Antigua and Barbuda



Prime Minister Gaston Browne, Chief Executive Officer of ClicCash, Brandon Derrick and CEO of West Indies Oil Ltd. Gregory Georges



A new mobile payment system designed to make financial transactions easier and safer, has just been launched in Antigua and Barbuda.

Chief Executive Officer of ClicCash, Brandon Derrick, said the aim of the company is to accelerate the move towards a cashless society not only in Antigua and Barbuda but eventually across the Caribbean.

"ClicCash will allow users to move safely, securely and affordably to cashless transactions as there are no monthly fees, no sign up fees and very low transaction fees. We place much emphasis on financial inclusion as all that is required is a smart-phone and a government-issued ID to sign up and create an account," Derrick explained.

ClicCash launched its first terminal where cash can be deposited or withdrawn at the West Indies Oil Company's Service Station on the Friar's Hill Road with Prime Minister Gaston Browne on hand to make the first transaction utilizing the system to purchase petrol for his vehicle.

"Let me start by commending Brandon Derrick and his team at ClicCash for successfully launching the service this morning (Monday) and I was very

happy to participate in the launch. Our

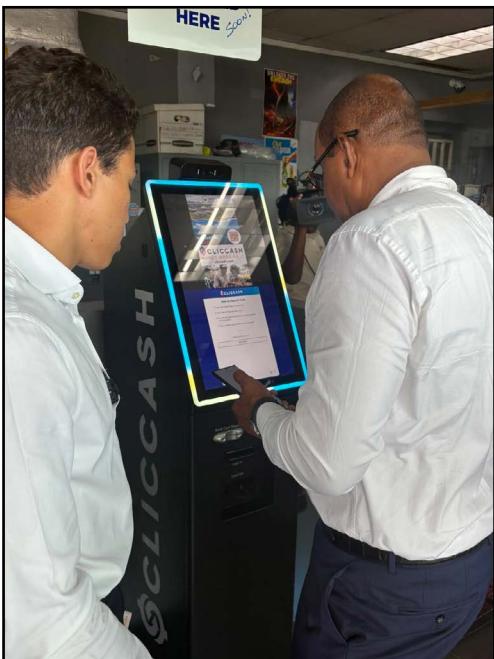
government has supported and incentivised digital payment systems as we

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recognize that it will help our country and its people. First of all, it will help us in the transition to make our country fin-tech ready and individuals will benefit from real-time transaction resulting in instant settlements. It will also assist persons to establish a digital wallets and deposit and withdraw cash

at their convenience," PM Browne observed.

The prime minister added that the new cashless system would reduce the opportunity for fraud and reduce the risk of robbery by reducing the amount of cash payments that take place among individuals and busi-

nesses. Noting that this may result in a lowering of transaction costs based on the \$15 or \$20 that commercial banks are charging for transactions.

Chief Executive Officer of WIOC, Gregory Georges said the company is proud to be the first corporate partner and the first Remote Payment Terminal (RPT) location in Antigua and Barbuda.

"Fuel retail is evolving, and we are committed to embracing technology that improves customer convenience. ClicCash allows customers to pay quickly and securely, reducing wait times and improving flow at our stations," he stated.

Meanwhile, Derrick announced plans to establish thirty (30) RPT's at various points across Antigua and Barbuda and he announced that the company's plans are to expand to other Caribbean territories over time.

Georges noted that WIOC currently operates the most service stations in Dominica and he gave a commitment to have the service extended to WIOC stations on that island.



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WITH ROGER LAKE

TOUCHLINE 7PM-9PM MON. - THURS.
WITH EPILUS

BAD COMPANY 2PM-6PM THURS. 12PM-4PM SATURDAYS
LIVE FROM THE V.I. & 1PM-5PM ON SUNDAYS

REGGAE INSPIRATION 9PM-12AM MON. THURS. SUNDAY
WITH SELECTOR KEEGAN

JAH WADADLI 7PM-9PM FRIDAYS
WITH DJ JAH WADADLI

Antigua and Barbuda Reaffirms Support for Uganda and Strengthens Bilateral Cooperation



Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, Thomas Tayebwa



The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has reaffirmed its strong support for the Government and people of Uganda, following high-level diplomatic discussions focused on political cooperation, international engagement, and expanded bilateral relations.

During a courtesy call by visiting Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, Thomas Tayebwa, Prime Minister Gaston Browne extended congratulations to President Yoweri Museveni on his recent electoral victory, noting the renewed mandate and increased public confidence demonstrated by the results. Prime Minister Browne commended President Museveni's leadership and reaffirmed Antigua and Barbuda's continued support for Uganda on the international stage.

The discussions highlighted Uganda's leadership role within the Non-Aligned Movement, with Antigua and Barbuda pledging its full support for the Movement's objectives and initiatives.

The Prime Minister also welcomed Uganda's active engagement at the United Nations, including its contributions to climate advocacy and multilateral diplomacy.

Both sides emphasized the importance of deepening cooperation between the Caribbean and Africa, particularly through strengthened people-to-people exchanges, tourism development, education partnerships, and technical cooperation. Opportunities were identified for collaboration in hospitality training, university student exchanges, and the sharing of expertise in tourism development, with Antigua and Barbuda offering support based on its well-established tourism sector.

Prime Minister Browne reminded Deputy Speaker Tayebwa of the diplomatic and business travel cooperation that exist between both countries. Under the arrangement, citizens of Antigua and Barbuda do not require a visa to enter Uganda for short stays (typically up to about 90 days) as part of the vi-

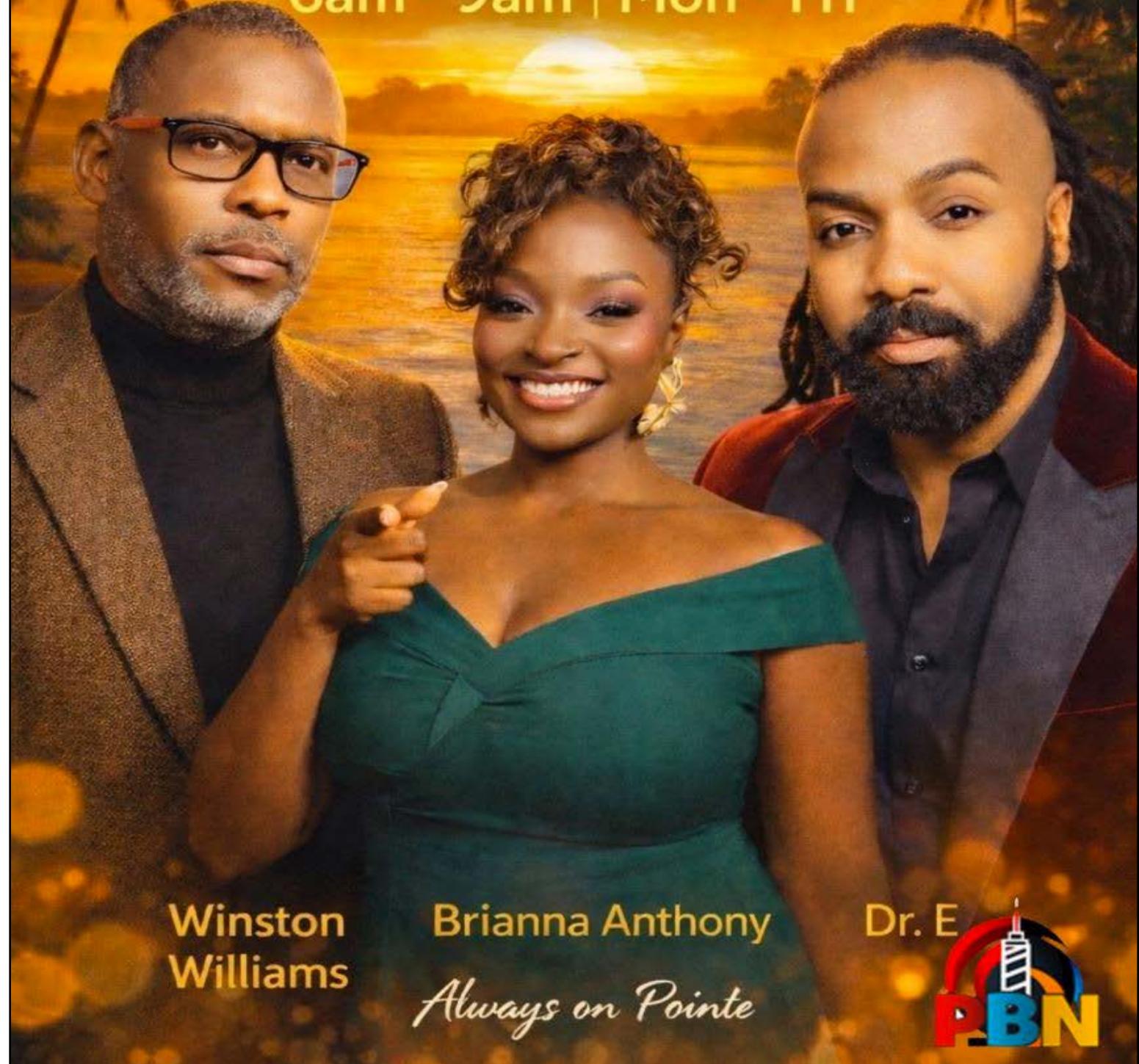
sa-exempt arrangement. This means Antiguan and Barbudan passport holders can travel to Uganda without needing to obtain a visa in advance for tourism or similar short-term visits. Conversely, Ugandan citizens also do not require a visa to enter Antigua and Barbuda for short visits. Prime Minister said this arrangement present the possibility for greater mobility and investment between the two nations.

Prime Minister Browne expressed appreciation for Uganda's commitment to strengthening relations with Caribbean states through regional mechanisms and affirmed Antigua and Barbuda's readiness to collaborate on shared priorities, including sustainable development, climate resilience, and South-South cooperation.

The meeting concluded with mutual expressions of goodwill and a shared commitment to advancing cooperation between Antigua and Barbuda and Uganda in the interest of their peoples and the wider international community.

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Roadworks on four major highways are expected to affect traffic flows this week

The Ministry of Works is advising motorists across Antigua that traffic flows are likely to be affected by ongoing roadworks on the island's on four of the island's main highways.

In a statement, the Ministry's Project Implementation Management Unit (PIMU) advises the general public that single-lane traffic will continue to facilitate ongoing infrastructure repairs on major roads.

According to the statement, the works earmarked for the **Valley Road** include road markings as well as the concrete and drainage works taking place in the vicinity of Jolly Harbour and Sugar Ridge which will continue, starting daily at approximately 8:00 a.m.

For the **Old Parham Road**, the ministry said drain cleaning and shoulder repairs will continue, starting daily at approximately 8:00 a.m.

On the **Sir Sydney Walling Highway**, road markings, concrete and drainage works and shoulder repairs will continue, starting daily at approximately 8:00 a.m.

The work earmarked for the **Anchorage Road** includes road markings which will continue, starting daily at approximately 8:00 a.m.

Motorists are also asked to note that flag persons will be employed, and motorists are encouraged to follow all instructions to ensure a cautious and



safe passageway, as heavy-duty equipment will be operating near the works.

The ministry of Works is advising that all businesses should remain open.

Both the ministry and the contractors, C.O. Williams Ltd., say they sincere-

ly regret the inconvenience. The road work is a part of the Second Road Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project being carried out by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.

The ministry wants stakeholders to adjust their travel plans to allow for delays.



Antigua and Barbuda wins the St. Croix Agri-Festival...again



Antigua and Barbuda took top honours at the annual St. Croix Agri-Fest that took place there from February 14 – 16, under the them; ‘Agriculture and Technology – An Ideal Mix for 2026’.

Antigua and Barbuda has been attending the Agri-Fest for many years and its exhibitors have always done well with several top trophies and other awards to show.

The Ministry of Agriculture said the Twinstod Booth, owned and operated by Twini Payne, won the top prize for the second year in a row. He won the prize in the Off-Island Exhibitors category ahead of exhibitors from Nevis, Grenada and St. Lucia.



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APR 18

**ART EXHIBITION AND AWARDS
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Wreckage of vessel surfaces near Canouan after U.S. lethal strike



Remnants of an alleged drug boat blown up in a lethal strike by the U.S. military last week surfaced off Canouan on Saturday.

The discovery was made by a group of fishermen from the mainland. They indicated to the publication that no bodies were seen floating in the area.

The actual location of the strike was not made clear by the U.S. Southern Command last week, only stating that forces had struck a vessel allegedly transporting drugs in the Caribbean on Friday, killing three people.

“Joint Task Force Southern Spear conducted a lethal kinetic strike on a vessel operated by Designated Terrorist Organizations,” Southern Command said in a post on X, adding that “intelligence confirmed the

vessel was transiting along known narco-trafficking routes in the Caribbean and was engaged in narco-trafficking operations.”

Fishermen who made the discovery said, the bow of the boat was still visible with the engine and most of the hull submerged.

The Nationality of those killed in the strike were not detailed by the U.S. military. However, St Vincent Times understands from several sources that three St Lucians who went out to sea last week Monday, have been missing since.

Those reports as of press time were not verified by St Lucian authorities, who promised to get back to the publication.

The location of the find raises questions about whether the boat was blown up in international wa-

ters or in the territorial waters of St Vincent.

The St Vincent government has not issued any word on the strikes or confirmed if they did indeed take place, it within its seascape.

The Trump administration has adamantly defended the strikes as necessary to stop illegal drugs from entering the U.S. Since the strikes began in September, at least 37 strikes have killed 120 people, excluding Friday’s strike, according to the Department of Defense.

The U.S. resumed boat strikes in late January after largely backing off from attacking boats in the region following the U.S. military’s Jan. 3 kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. (St Vincent Times)

Regional News

SVG Govt Eyes New Model to Treat Mental Illness



Minister of Health Daniel Cummings has characterise the mental health facility at Glen in highly critical terms, describing it as an environment that functions more like a correctional institution than a healthcare center.

“Taking a mentally ill person to Glen is like confining them to a prison”. The Minister stated that the facility is not designed to help patients, but rather to “restrict and constrain and stigmatize” them.

“The government has historically failed to provide the psychiatrists needed at the facility”. Cummings noted that for many persons sent to Glen, the medication provided is “sometimes not the right one”.

He also highlighted issues with medication not being administered regularly and suggested moving toward newer medications that last for longer periods, which would reduce the frequency of required treatments.

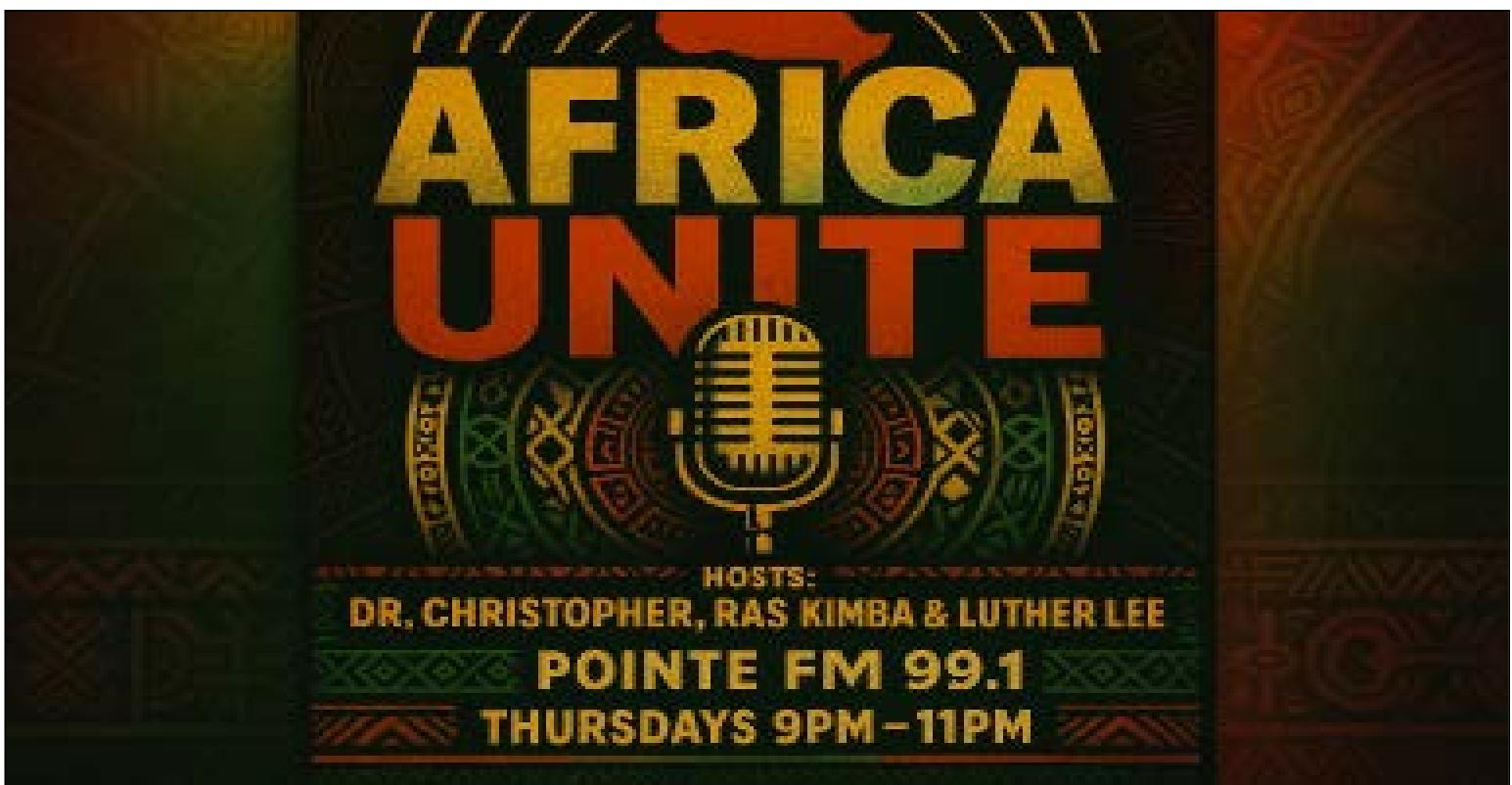
The facility has been described as a place where families “shunt people aside” or “cast aside” loved ones due to the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Cummings asserted that there is “no opportunity” for patients at the Glen facility because of its current design and purpose.

Because of these conditions, the Minister proposed moving away from the Glen model. Instead, he suggested establishing a dedicated unit in the new hospital at Arnos Vale for acute cases to be treated and released.

He also advocated for training every doctor and nurse to diagnose and treat mental health issues at the source to prevent the need for confinement at Glen.

The Minister noted that the former government has historically failed to provide necessary psychiatrists and indicated that the administration is working to recruit professional staff to fill these gaps. (St Vincent Times)



JCAA pushes back on general aviation 'collapse' claims



The Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority (JCAA) has pushed back against claims that Jamaica's general aviation sector is in collapse, outlining legislative reforms, licensing growth and ongoing infrastructure interventions it says signal an evolving, not dying, industry.

In a statement issued on February 13, the authority acknowledged concerns raised by industry stakeholders but maintained that general aviation activity remains active and diversified, supported by three air operator certificate (AOC) holders, two approved training organisations, and expanding unmanned aircraft operations.

While stakeholders had pointed to contraction within the sector, the JCAA clarified that four aircraft currently hold valid certificates of airworthiness on the Jamaican registry, with two additional aircraft progressing through certification, which would bring the total to six.

The authority confirmed that two AOC holders relinquished or suspended certificates between 2024

and 2025 but noted growth in other segments. Student pilot licensing increased to 74 licences issued in the 2024-2025 financial year, up from 49 in the previous year.

Unmanned aircraft operations have also expanded, with 247 permits issued in 2024-25, compared with 175 in 2023-24, reflecting what the authority described as a changing aviation landscape.

Addressing concerns about outdated regulatory frameworks, the JCAA said revisions to the Civil Aviation Act are advancing through the legislative process. The draft bill is currently before the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel and will subsequently proceed to the Cabinet's Legislative Committee before being tabled in Parliament.

According to the authority, the updated framework is intended to clarify certification pathways, align Jamaica's regime with international standards, and create a more responsive foundation for traditional and emerging aviation services.

A Civil Aviation Master Plan is also being developed as part of a 13-month national project that includes specific provisions for strengthening general aviation.

In response to assertions that regulatory fees are constraining operators, the JCAA stated that all regulatory fees associated with the local aviation industry were waived in 2011. The authority added that it removed the annual AOC renewal requirement in 2015, at the request of industry stakeholders, as a measure to reduce financial burden and improve operational stability.

Other operational costs frequently cited by operators, including aviation fuel, maintenance and airport-related charges, fall outside the authority's remit, the statement said.

Regarding damage to the General Aviation Terminal at the Sangster International Airport following Hurricane Melissa, the JCAA acknowledged the impact on facilities and said interim accommodation arrangements have been implemented for the affected tenants.

The authority said it has maintained oversight and coordination activities to support restoration efforts following the hurricane.

The JCAA maintained that while the aviation environment has evolved amid changing travel patterns and technological advancement, general aviation continues to play a critical role in training, emergency response and specialised aerial services.

The authority said it remains committed to maintaining a regulatory framework that balances safety with operational viability and continued engagement with industry stakeholders. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Bondi criticised after saying all Epstein files have been released

The US Department of Justice (DoJ) has said it has released all of the files required by the Epstein Files Transparency Act, but lawmakers have argued the release is insufficient.

A letter sent to members of the US Congress on Saturday from US Attorney General Pam Bondi and her deputy said all documents held by the DoJ had been released. It contained a list of names appearing in the files.

Kentucky Republican Representative Thomas Massie, who co-wrote the law, called for the DoJ to also release internal memos outlining past decisions on whether to charge Jeffrey Epstein and his associates.

Millions of new files relating to the late sex offender Epstein were released by the DoJ earlier this month. At the time, the deputy attorney general said three million pages were not released.

This was due to the existence of personal medical files, graphic depictions of child abuse or other material that would jeopardise investigations, said Todd Blanche on the day of the documents dump.

In the latest letter, Bondi and Blanche wrote: "In accordance with the requirements of the Act, and as described in various Department submissions to the courts of the Southern District of New York assigned to the Epstein and Maxwell prosecutions and related orders, the Department released all 'records, documents, communications and investigative materials in the possession of the Department' that 'relate to' any of nine different categories."

No records were withheld from the DoJ's release "on the basis of embarrassment, reputational harm, or political sensitivity", the letter added.

The individuals listed in the letter include people who "are or were a government official or politically exposed person", and whose name appeared at least once in the files, the letter says.

The names appear in the files in a "wide variety of contexts", including



some people who had "extensive direct email contact with Epstein or Maxwell" and others who were merely referenced in documents or news articles contained in the files, Blanche and Bondi wrote.

Donald Trump, Bill Gates, Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, and Bill Clinton - who are included in the list - all had documented past relationships with Epstein and Maxwell. There is no suggestion that appearing in the documents implies any wrongdoing and each has denied any involvement in Epstein's crimes.

But the list also includes the names of deceased musicians Janis Joplin and Elvis Presley.

The letter was addressed to the Senate Judiciary Committee's chairman Chuck Grassley and ranking member Dick Durbin, as well as the House Judiciary Committee's chairman Jim Jordan and ranking member Jamie Raskin.

In an interview on ABC This Week on Sunday, Massie argued that, even though the DoJ "wants to say they are done with this document production", there are more crucial files that should be released.

The DoJ was "signing deliberative process privilege in order not to release some of the documents", he said.

"The problem with that is the bill that Ro Khanna and I wrote says that they must release internal memos and notes and emails about their decisions on whether to prosecute or not prosecute,

whether to investigate or not investigate."

In response to the letter, California Democratic Representative Ro Khanna, who co-wrote the Epstein Files Transparency Act, accused the DoJ of "purposely muddying the waters on who was a predator and who was mentioned in an email".

"To have Janis Joplin, who died when Epstein was 17, in the same list as Larry Nassar, who went to prison for the sexual abuse of hundreds of young women and child pornography, with no clarification of how either was mentioned in the files is absurd," Khanna wrote on X on Saturday.

"Release the full files," he added. "Stop protecting predators. Redact only the survivor's names."

The BBC has contacted the Department of Justice for comment.

US lawmakers previously said files on Epstein were improperly redacted ahead of their release, leading to at least one document being unredacted after their criticism.

Lawyers for Epstein's victims have also said the latest tranche of files included email addresses and nude photos in which the names and faces of potential victims could be identified.

At the time, the DoJ said mistakes were due to "technical or human error" and they had taken down all the flagged files. (BBC)

Swiss train derails, injuring five



A regional train derailed early on Monday in southern Switzerland, police said, injuring five people with more than two dozen evacuated.

The accident near the town of Goppenstein occurred as the region is under its second highest avalanche warning, a level four out of five.

“According to initial findings, an avalanche may have crossed the tracks shortly before the train passed,” police stated, adding that the public prosecutor’s office has opened an investigation.

At the time of the incident, around 7:00 am (0600 GMT), 29 people were on board the train, police said.

“Five people were injured. One of them was taken to hospital,” police said, adding that the rest of the passengers had been taken to safety.

Heavy snow was falling in the village, located at an altitude of 1,216 meters (4,000 feet), later Monday, an AFP journalist observed.

The train was not immediately visible. Goppenstein, a key loading and unloading hub for road and rail transport, is located at the exit of the Lotschberg rail tunnel. The train derailed as it was exiting the tunnel, police said.

Police advised journalists not to remain at the scene due to the high risk of avalanches in the area.

The federal train operator CFF also said on its website that train traffic “is interrupted between Goppenstein and Brig” because of an avalanche.

On Thursday, an avalanche buried a section of the main road linking the Lotschental valley to the plain at Goppenstein.

Road traffic and the Lotschberg car shuttle were interrupted for several hours. The incident, however, caused no injuries or damage.

Separately, authorities issued an evacuation order Monday for several areas in the municipality of Orsieres “following severe weather and strong winds recorded,” and with heavy rain forecast for later Monday.

Switzerland is renowned for its extensive and punctual rail network, with frequent services between cities, towns and even villages.

Rail enthusiasts come from all over the world to ride on some of the most picturesque routes, or those with exceptionally steep climbs.

The Swiss are the heaviest rail users in Europe in terms of kilometres travelled per person, but accidents have fallen in recent decades even as use grows, according to government statistics.

Fifteen people were wounded when two trains derailed some 20 minutes apart during a storm near the capital Bern in 2023. (AFP)

Thursday 19th February 2026, 01:30
 ICC Men's T20 World Cup, 2026 - Match 37

Eden Gardens, Kolkata



WEST INDIES

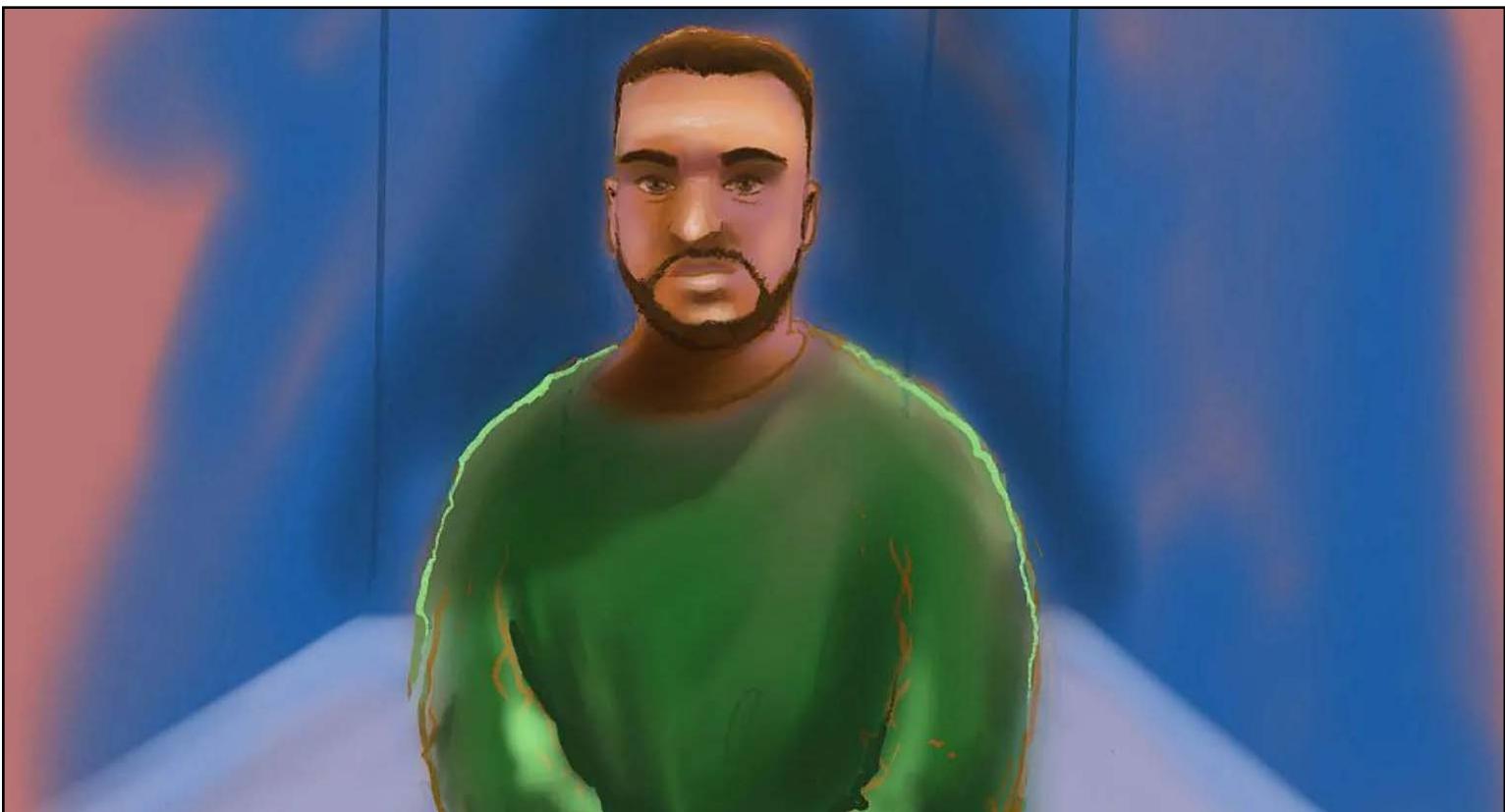


ITALY


 A tall, slender trophy with a unique, curved, and faceted design, resembling a stack of books or a series of vertical bars. It is mounted on a dark, rectangular base.

T20
ICC MEN'S T20
WORLD CUP
 INDIA & SRI LANKA 2026

Bondi Beach shooting accused faces court for the first time



Accused Bondi Beach gunman Naveed Akram faced court for the first time on Monday, two months after he and his father allegedly carried out Australia's worst mass shooting in almost 30 years.

The 24-year-old appeared in a Sydney court for about five minutes via video link from prison. He faces 59 charges relating to the Bondi Beach shooting, including 15 counts of murder and one of committing a terrorist attack.

Naveed and his father, Sajid, allegedly attacked a Hanukkah event at the famous beach on 14 December, killing 15 people and injuring more than 40.

Sajid, 50, was shot dead by police at the scene, while Naveed was critically injured and later transferred from hospital to prison.

Monday was the first time Akram had been seen on screen and spoken since his arrest – saying just one word when Deputy Chief Magistrate Sharon Freund asked if he heard a discussion about an extension of suppression or-

ders: “Yeah”.

The court orders cover the identities of those who survived the shooting, but allow the survivors to self-identify if they wish.

Outside court, Akram’s lawyer, Ben Archbold, said it was too early to say what plea his client would enter, according to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

He said Akram was doing “as well as can be expected” while in custody in Goulburn supermax prison.

“Everyone knows it’s supermax ... very onerous conditions,” Archbold told journalists.

When asked if Akram had given a police interview, he said “All we’ve done is start the process. We’re waiting for the brief to be served. There’s nothing more I can say.”

Court documents released in late December alleged that the two shooters “meticulously” planned the attack on Bondi Beach for months and visited

the location for reconnaissance two days prior.

One video - taken on one of their mobile phones in October - was described as showing the men sitting in front of an image of an Islamic State group (IS) flag.

They could be heard making statements about their motivations for the attack and condemning “the acts of ‘Zionists’”, police said.

Police said separate footage from October showed the father and son “conducting firearms training in a country-side location”, believed to be in New South Wales.

They were seen “firing shotguns and moving in a tactical manner”, officials added.

Authorities earlier confirmed that two rabbis, a Holocaust survivor and a 10-year-old girl were among the victims of the Bondi Beach attack.

Akram is next due in court in April. (BBC)

Obama clarifies views on aliens after saying 'they're real' on podcast

Former US President Barack Obama has clarified that the chances Earth has been visited by aliens is "low" after comments he made about extra-terrestrial species caught attention online.

"They're real but I haven't seen them," he told American podcast host Brian Tyler Cohen during an interview published on Saturday.

"They're not being kept in Area 51. There's no underground facility unless there's this enormous conspiracy and they hid it from the president of the United States," he added.

Obama has since said his comments were made in line with "the spirit of the speed round" of questions, adding that statistically the chances are that life is out there but he saw "no evidence" while

president.

Obama's initial comments were made during a quickfire "lightning" round of questions.

"Are aliens real?" Cohen had asked as his first question of the round for the former president.

Obama's answer was subsequently run in different media outlets and attracted attention online - prompting him to publish a clarifying statement on his official Instagram account on Sunday.

"I was trying to stick with the spirit of the speed round, but since it's gotten attention let me clarify," he wrote in a caption that accompanied the video clip from the podcast.

"Statistically, the universe is so vast that the odds are good there's

life out there. But the distances between solar systems are so great that the chances we've been visited by aliens is low, and I saw no evidence during my presidency that extraterrestrials have made contact with us. Really!"

Obama, who served as president of the United States between 2009 and 2017, has previously made comments about aliens and UFOs - telling late night TV host James Corden in 2021 that on coming into office he asked whether there was a lab "where we're keeping the alien specimens and space ship".

"They did a little bit of research and the answer was no," he said - but also pointed to records and footage of objects in the sky that had not been explained at the time. (BBC)





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Blackhawks stay on top of ABCA Two-Day Championship

The PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks extended their unbeaten run by claiming their fourth win in five matches to open up a 21-point gap over their closest rivals at the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Two-Day Championship over the weekend.

The Blackhawks maintained their lead in their quest for a fifth consecutive title by coasting to a five-wicket victory over CMW New Winthorpes Lions in a top-of-the-table clash at Ball Beef.

Set 123 to win, the Blackhawks achieved victory by scoring 128 for five in 24.1 overs. Captain Karima Gore struck 30. The Lions declared their first innings at 89 for nine off 26.3 overs after being sent in to bat.

Captain Nino Henry struck 33, while pacer Chamiqueko Landerfort snapped up four for 13. In reply, the Blackhawks tumbled to 98 all out in 35.1 overs. Gore cracked 33, while Oranel Boston bagged four for 18.

Trailing by nine runs, the Lions were all out for 131 in 32.4 overs in their second innings. Cameron Pennyfeather made 66, while leg-spinner Hayden Walsh Jr. picked up three for 18 as the Blackhawks advanced to 54 points.

The Lions slipped from second to fourth place on net run rate with 33 points, the same as Empire Nation and the Jennings Tigers in third and second places, respectively.

The Jennings Tigers moved into the runners-up position by recording their second win in five matches with a crushing innings and 216-run victory over the Bolans Blasters at Pigotts.

Deran Benta slammed a century as the Jennings Tigers declared their first innings at 410 for six declared in 52.1 overs after being sent into bat. Benta hammered 138 off 109 balls, including 13 fours and three sixes.

Captain Glenton Williams cracked 91, Paul Miller hit 67, and Amari Godridge struck 46.

In reply, the Bolans Blasters were



Karima Gore



Demari Benta

bundled out in their first innings for 118 in 55.1 overs. Orlando Peters hit 31, while Zavier Freeland claimed six for 35, and Glenton Williams bagged three for 48.

Asked to follow on 292 runs behind, the Bolans Blasters crashed to 76 all out in 31.2 overs in their second innings. Freeland grabbed four for 32, and Nicolas Tappin took three for 13.

The Empire Nation notched up their first win in five matches with an innings and 61-run victory over WES Spartans Rising Sun at Rising Sun.

Scores: WES Rising Sun Spartans 136/9 in 40.5 overs and 146 all out in 41.2 overs (Jamal Smith 48; Justin Athanaze 5/28, Micah McKenzie 3/38). Empire Nation 343/5 in 47.3 overs (Tanez Francis 111, Mavendra Dindyal 76, Dhari Francis 68, JQuan Athanaze 44, Zianni Da Silva 32).

Pigotts Crushers recorded their second win in five matches with a 246-run victory against Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) Bethesda Golden Eagles at Bethesda.

Scores: Pigotts Crushers 130 all out in

29.5 overs (Essan Warner 44, Malique Walsh 34; James Cornelius 3/18) and 275/7 declared in 43 overs (Malique Walsh 94, Essan Warner 84, Jewel Andrew 31; Kelvin Pitman 4/56). Bethesda Golden Eagles 138 all out in 36.3 overs (Mbeki Joseph 35; Kadeem Henry 3/15, Essan Warner 3/44) and 21 all out in 14.3 overs (Tyree Moore 5/8, Kadeem Henry 4/9).

All Saints Pythons claimed their first win with a 170-run victory over Tertiary Institutions and Schools at the Factory Grounds.

Scores: All Saints Pythons 203 all out in 35 overs (Raneico Smith 62, Michael Marcellin 50; Kaivalya Mishra 4/78, Isaiah Attwood 3/16) and 128/9 declared in 15.5 overs (Michael Haynes Dover 37; Kaivalya Mishra 4/44, Shawn Harris 3/31).

Tertiary Institutions and Schools 109 all out in 47.4 overs (Antwone Willock 5/17, Raneico Smith 3/30) and 53 all out in 23.5 overs (Kenrick Scott 4/15, Kenny Sutton 3/9).

Sports News

Ottos beat Flyers to stay perfect in ABBA's Division 1 League



Defending champions EZ Fit Flyers suffered their first defeat in defense of their title in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division One League at the JSC Sports Complex on Sunday evening.

After winning their first two encounters, the EZ Fit Flyers lost for the first time when they were beaten 96-90 by Daryll Matthew Ottos (formerly Full

Throttle) in the second game of a double-header.

Nick Strawter shot a game-high 31 points and distributed nine assists as Ottos maintained their perfect start to the competition by securing their third win in as many games.

In support, Danny Perez produced 25 points and five steals; Christian Walker contributed 12 points, 12 rebounds, and five assists; Pindo Drammeh sank 11 points and grabbed 11 rebounds; and Lindsay McDonald scored 10 points for Ottos.

Kenya Achom sank 25 points, and Adonis Humphreys scored 19 points and grabbed 13 rebounds to lead the EZ Fit Flyers.

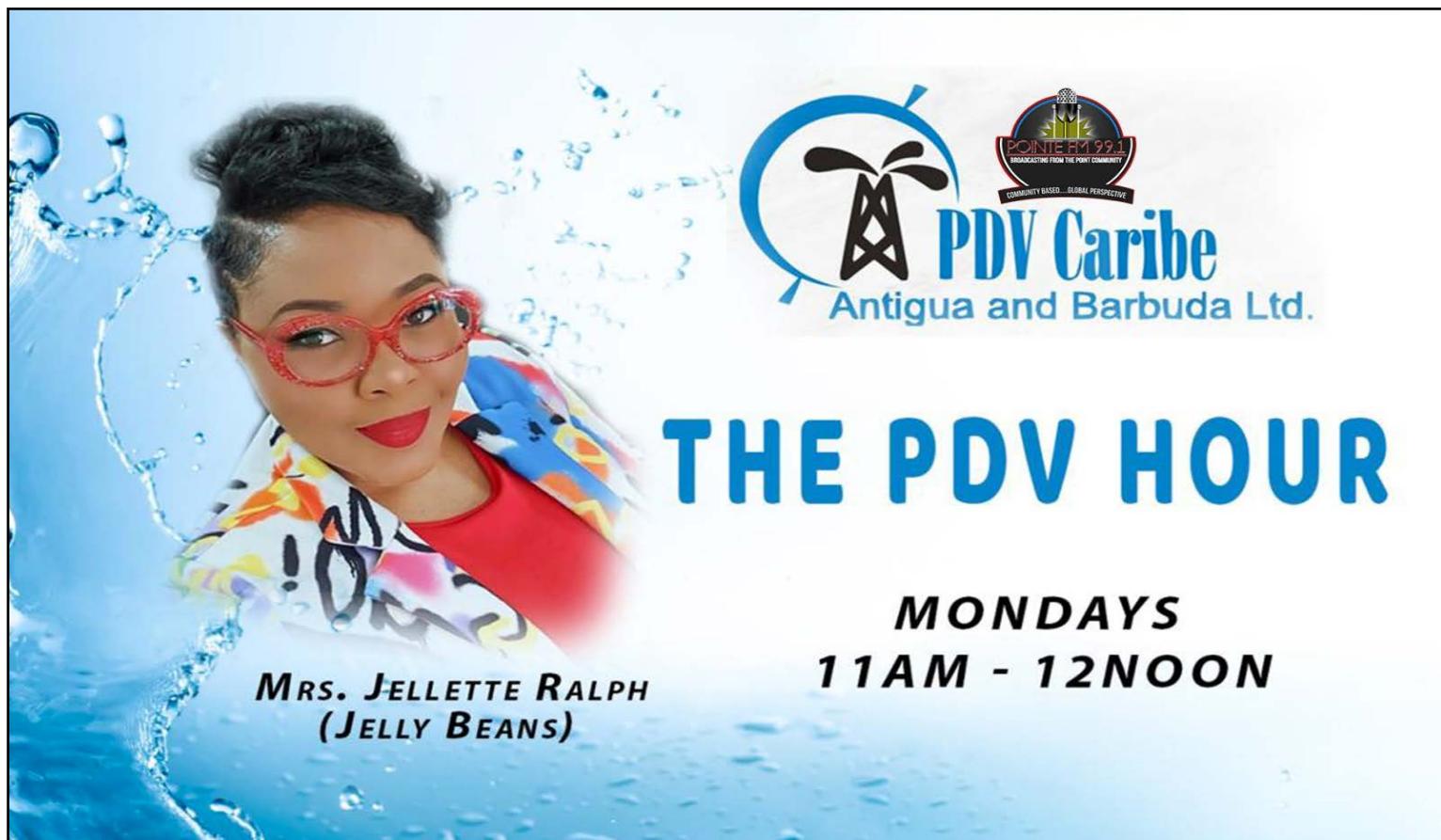
In support, TJ Willians converted 12 points and snatched seven rebounds, Javonte Daley sank 12 points, and Marlon Charles scored eight points and claimed nine rebounds for the EZ Fit Flyers.

The Lava Smoke Elite Stingerz notched up their third win in four matches with a 91-72 victory over the All Saints Slam in Sunday's opening game.

Keroi Lee produced 20 points, 18 rebounds, and seven assists, and Joshua Minner contributed 17 points, six rebounds, and six assists to lead the Elite Stingerz.

In support, Steven Matthew sank 15 points and claimed five rebounds, Kymani Powell converted 14 points, Jaheem James scored 12 points, and Darnell Azille sank nine points and grabbed 21 rebounds for the Elite Stingerz.

Andrew Daigle and Omar Durr each converted 17 points and snatched six rebounds; Wilkin Floyd scored 12 points and secured five rebounds; and Davon Fludd sank eight points and claimed 17 rebounds for All Saints Slam, who lost for the third time in four matches.



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Sports News

Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League returns to Jamaica in 2026

The Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) has confirmed that an agreement has been reached for the tournament to return to Jamaica in 2026, marking a highly anticipated homecoming for CPL cricket on the island.

The 2026 season will see the return of a Jamaica-based franchise, with four matches scheduled to be played at the iconic Sabina Park, which is one of the most historic and celebrated cricket venues in the world.

This announcement follows productive and collaborative discussions with the Government of Jamaica through the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport and the Ministry of Tourism, resulting in CPL matches being staged in Jamaica for the first time since 2019.

Pete Russell, Chief Executive Officer of the Caribbean Premier League, welcomed the agreement and highlighted its significance for the tournament.

"We are absolutely thrilled to be bringing the CPL back to Jamaica in 2026. Jamaica has a rich cricketing heritage and an unmistakable energy that makes it one of the most special destinations in the region."

"The return of a Jamaican franchise and matches at Sabina Park is something fans have been calling for, and we're delighted to be working closely with the Government of Jamaica to make this happen."

The return of the CPL is expected to deliver a substantial economic boost to Jamaica, with significant benefits across tourism, hospitality, transportation, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

The tournament will attract thousands of visiting fans, players, officials, and international media, driving increased hotel occupancy, local spending, and employment opportunities.

Beyond its economic impact, CPL's return will provide a powerful platform to showcase Jamaica to a vast



Jamaica Tallawahs fans enjoying a CPL match at Sabina Park in 2016.

global audience. The tournament's 2025 combined digital and broadcast viewership surpassed one billion for the second consecutive season, offering unparalleled international exposure for Jamaica's culture, vibrancy, and sporting heritage.

The reintroduction of a Jamaican franchise also reinforces the island's deep cricketing legacy and its ongoing commitment to elite sport and entertainment. It creates new pathways for local talent, strengthens regional sporting ties, and enhances Jamaica's reputation as a premier host destination for world-class events.

Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, the Honourable Olivia Grange, welcomed the return of the CPL and its wider impact on the country.

"The Government of Jamaica is pleased to welcome the Caribbean Premier League back to our shores. This event goes beyond cricket – it supports economic growth, promotes our culture on a global stage, and inspires our young people through sport. We look forward to hosting players, fans, and partners in 2026 and delivering an unforgettable CPL experience rooted in Jamaican excellence."

Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Edmund Bartlett said, "The return of CPL to Kingston represents more than just world-class sporting action, it signals a renewed wave of energy for our urban tourism strategy. We are committed to showcasing fresh experiences, vibrant city offerings, and even more compelling reasons for visitors to choose Jamaica as their destination."

The Government of Jamaica looks forward to welcoming the CPL family back to Jamaica in 2026, celebrating cricket, culture, and community.

President of Cricket West Indies, Dr. Kishore Shallow, said, "Everyone at Cricket West Indies is delighted to see CPL cricket returning to Jamaica. The island holds a special place in Caribbean cricket, having produced some of the finest players in our history and generations of passionate supporters who continue to inspire the game."

"The return of a franchise to Sabina Park, one of the region's most iconic venues, is an important moment not only for the tournament but for cricket across the Caribbean, and we look forward to seeing the new team entertain fans and strengthen the bond between the players and the people of Jamaica."

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Sports News

Windies Afy Fletcher set for homecoming series in Grenada



Afy Fletcher, center, celebrates with West Indies women's teammate Deandre Dottin, right, after picking up a wicket.

Grenada will take centre stage in regional cricket as the West Indies Women's team arrives for their highly anticipated home series against Sri Lanka Women from February 20 to March 3.

The moment will be even more special with the return of Grenadian stalwart Afy Fletcher in the West Indies team. A proud product of La Fillette, St. Andrew, the experienced leg-spinner will represent the West Indies on home soil for just the second time in her career.

This series presents a unique opportunity for Grenadians to see one of their own, and Cricket West Indies (CWI) is encouraging full support from the Grenadian public, schools, cricket clubs and the wider sporting community to create a vibrant atmosphere for the home team.

Over the years, the 38-year-old Fletcher has become a cornerstone of West Indies' bowling attack, representing the region at multiple

ICC World Cups and global tournaments including the team's T20 World Cup triumph in 2016.

Even after taking a step back from international duties five years ago after the birth of her son Audee, Afy subsequently returned to the side and to form, gracefully showing the world the beauty of balancing motherhood and professional sport.

More recently, she was named in the Team of the Tournament of the 2024 Women's T20 World Cup and celebrated the capture of her 100th ODI wicket against Thailand last April in Pakistan.

While her record in that format currently stands at 111 wickets from 89 appearances, she is one away from a century of T20 appearances and four shy of 100 T20 wickets. Those accolades alone make her one of the greatest international cricketers, male or female, from the Spice Isle.

Ahead of the series, Fletcher shared her delight at the opportunity to represent the region once

again.

"I'm proud to be selected again and it's even more satisfying to be playing in Grenada, in front of my home crowd. There's something truly special about representing West Indies on the world stage, but doing it here, on the soil that raised me, surrounded by the people who have supported me from the very beginning, means everything," she expressed.

"I want every little girl and boy across Grenada watching these matches to see that dreams are possible, no matter where you come from. This series isn't just about runs and wickets but also showing the next generation that Grenada produces champions."

Minister of Sport Honourable Delma Thomas described the series as a homecoming and a celebration of Grenadian excellence on the world stage.

"This series is particularly special because it brings home one of our own daughters. Afy is not merely representing the West Indies, but every young person from La Fillette, St Andrew, and every community across our tri-island state who dares to dream," she said.

"Her presence on the field, wearing maroon in front of her family, friends and loved ones, is the most powerful statement we could ever make about the heights Grenadians can reach through dedication and resilience."

"I extend my deepest gratitude to Cricket West Indies for selecting Grenada for this crucial series and I also welcome our visitors from Sri Lanka and wish them a competitive and enjoyable tour and stay."

Sports

TUESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY 2026

POINT EXPRES^S
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TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

United takes sole leadership in Premier Division League

Defending back-to-back champions All Saints United regained sole leadership of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday 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 12th win in 15 matches with a 3-1 victory against the bottom team, Ottos Rangers FC, in the opening game of a triple-header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Raheem Deterville converted a penalty kick in the 40th minute to give All Saints United a one-nil advantage at halftime. Vaughn Jackson scored twice in the second half with goals in

the 54th and 66th minutes to give All Saints United a three-nil lead.

Junior Benjamin reduced the deficit for the Ottos Rangers by scoring a consolation goal in the 84th minute.

The result allows All Saints United to remain at the top of the 12-team standings with 38 points. The Ottos Rangers remain at the bottom of the standings with four points after losing for the 13th time in 15 matches.

The Villa Lions jumped from fifth to third place by securing their 10th win in 14 matches with a 3-1 victory over Garden Stars FC in the last game on Sunday.

The result allows the Villa Lions to advance to 30 points, while the Gar-

den Stars remain in seventh place with 20 points after slumping to their fifth defeat in 15 matches.

Old Road FC and the Pigotts Bullets slipped to fourth and fifth places, respectively, after both teams fought to a goalless draw in Sunday's second game.

The result allows Old Road FC to slip from third to fourth place on goal difference by advancing to 28 points after salvaging their fourth draw in 15 matches.

The Pigotts Bullets dropped from fourth to fifth place on goal difference with 28 points after securing their first draw in 15 matches.



A starting XI of the All Saints United football team