

APUA Monthly Workers stage industrial action

Story on page 2



The YWiL participants posed for a group photo at the end of their 'House of Representatives' debate in the Parliament Chambers

APUA Monthly Workers stage industrial action over increases, safe working conditions

Scores of workers of the utility company, APUA, staged industrial action on Monday when they downed their tools and marched from the Cassada Gardens facility to the head office in St John's.

The workers are represented by the Antigua Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU) and its President, Bernard de Nully reported that following the industrial action and protest, he led a delegation including the shop stewards and other union officials in a meeting with the senior management team at APUA as well as with Utilities Minister, Meford Nicholas.

According to de Nully, Minister Nicholas has assured that all monthly workers will be paid for Monday's protest and the union and its membership within APUA will receive the final verdict on their demands by Wednesday March 11, 2026, at 4:30 pm. Therefore, he reported that the protest will now cease and workers will resume work immediately.

De Nully reported that the union's demands are;

1. 10% for Collective Bargaining Period 2025 to 2028 (Final Offer)
2. All Pensions are to be honoured and paid forthwith
3. Immediate repairs to the Transfer and Distribution Building at Cassada Gardens as health and safety are severely challenged
4. Health and Safety issues to be resolved at the R.O. plants and other branches accordingly.

The AT&LU president also reported that issues related to outstanding pensions and conditions at a number of workplaces within APUA reached the 'boiling point' and that was represented when the workers took to the street in protest.

The union also wants APUA to implement a two-man system at the RO plants at night with immediate effect noting that the practice now is for one person to manage the overnight shifts.





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Antigua and Barbuda Observes Commonwealth Day as Nation Prepares to Host CHOGM 2026

Antigua and Barbuda joined the 56 member countries of the Commonwealth in observing Commonwealth Day 2026 with a national ceremony and parade reflecting this year's theme, *"Unlocking Opportunities Together for a Prosperous Commonwealth."* The observance highlighted the importance of collaboration, partnership, and shared progress among Commonwealth nations.

Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne joined government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, students, and members of the public for the annual ceremony, which forms part of Commonwealth Day commemorations taking place across the global Commonwealth community.

Opening remarks framed the theme as a call to collective action, underscoring that meaningful opportunity and sustainable prosperity can only be achieved through cooperation and partnership among nations and peoples. Speakers reflected on the Commonwealth's enduring relevance as a network of countries working together to advance development, strengthen economic ties, and support the aspirations of younger generations across its member states.

The ceremony featured cultural and artistic contributions from Antigua and Barbuda's youth, including a performance by the St. Joseph's Academy Glee Club and a steel pan presentation that celebrated the rich cultural heritage of the Caribbean.

A highlight of the programme were remarks by Antiguan creative professional Chaneil Imhoff, designer of the official logo for the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to be hosted in Antigua and Barbuda. In her remarks, Imhoff reflected on the significance of creativity as a tool for national storytelling and global engagement, noting that the arts and creative industries play an important role in shaping how nations present themselves on the international stage.

The programme also featured a poetic presentation by Kadeem Joseph, Political and Projects Officer at the British High Commission in Antigua and Barbuda, whose original piece reflected on the nation's voice within the wider Commonwealth family.

"Today, from a small island in the Caribbean Sea, our voices travel farther than the tide," Joseph said in his performance. "Across continents, across histories, across 56 nations that together make the Commonwealth."

His poem highlighted themes of resilience, identity, and possibility, reminding the audience that the strength of nations is not defined by geographic size but by the determination of their people and their capacity to rise.

A central moment of the ceremony was the reading of the official Commonwealth Day message from His Majesty King Charles III, delivered by Sir Clare Roberts, the Governor Gen-

eral's Deputy of Antigua and Barbuda.

In the message, His Majesty reflected on the role of the Commonwealth as a force for cooperation and unity in a changing global landscape. He noted the organisation's potential to foster trade, partnership, and innovation among its member states, particularly given that nearly two-thirds of the Commonwealth's population is under the age of thirty.

The message also emphasized that the strength of the Commonwealth lies not only in the decisions made by governments but in the everyday acts of service, enterprise, and creativity carried out by citizens across its diverse nations.

Commonwealth Day celebrations in Antigua and Barbuda form part of a wider programme of activities taking place across the Commonwealth throughout the year. The observance also comes as Antigua and Barbuda prepares to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2026, bringing leaders from across the Commonwealth to the country for discussions on advancing partnerships, investment, and sustainable development.

The national ceremony served as a reminder that while Commonwealth nations differ in geography, culture, and scale, they remain connected by a shared commitment to cooperation and the collective pursuit of opportunity and prosperity.




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Antigua and Barbuda Observes Commonwealth Day as Nation Prepares to Host CHOGM 2026



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Minister Greene Continues Bilateral Meetings In The UK



Foreign Affairs, E.P Chet Greene and Minister and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Chris Elmore

Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P Chet Greene, held a productive meeting with Minister and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Chris Elmore, on the margins of official engagements in London.

During the meeting, Minister Greene expressed sincere appreciation to the United Kingdom for the security and project management support already being provided in preparation for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2026, which will be hosted by Antigua and Barbuda in November.



The Honourable E. P. Chet Greene (second from left), Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, with CARICOM Foreign Ministers at Westminster Abbey for the Commonwealth Day Service, including the Foreign Minister of Belize, the Honourable Francis Fonseca; The Bahamas, the Honourable Fred Mitchell; Jamaica, the Honourable Kamina Johnson-Smith; St Kitts and Nevis, the Right Honourable Dr Denzil L. Douglas; Saint Lucia, the Honourable Alva Romanus Baptiste; and St Vincent and the Grenadines, the Honourable Dwight Fitzgerald Bramble.

Minister Elmore reaffirmed the United Kingdom's continued commitment to supporting Antigua and Barbuda's preparations for CHOGM and discussed the possibility of providing additional security and technical assistance as required to ensure the successful staging of the event.

Both Ministers underscored the longstanding and positive relationship between Antigua and Barbuda and the United Kingdom and reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthening cooperation across a range of mutual interests.

Foreign Minister Greene noted that Antigua and Barbuda looks forward to welcoming Com-

monwealth leaders to St. John's later this year, emphasising that CHOGM 2026 presents an important opportunity to deepen partnerships within the Commonwealth family.

"CHOGM provides an opportunity not only to showcase Antigua and Barbuda but also to spark new, fresh and vibrant relations among Commonwealth partners," Minister Greene stated.

The meeting forms part of Minister Greene's programme of engagements in the United Kingdom surrounding the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting and activities marking Commonwealth Day.

Antigua and Barbuda's CHOGM Envoy Sir Vivian Richards Keeps Busy Schedule In London



Sir Viv Richards gifts a cricket bat to the King and Queen during the annual Commonwealth Day reception at St James's Palace in London (Aaron Chown/PA)

Antigua and Barbuda's and West Indies cricket icon, Sir Vivian Richards, who the government has named as its CHOGM Envoy has had a packed schedule of events during his current trip to the United Kingdom.

Sir Vivian accompanied Foreign Minister, E.P Chet Greene on the trip, but has had several events including media interviews and other similar engagements separate and apart from the events involving the minister.

Perhaps the highlight of the

engagements was a visit to St. James's Palace on Monday for a CHOGM Bat Signing ceremony, one of which he presented to His Majesty, King Charles as a souvenir.

Along with attending events such as the Commonwealth Day Service at Westminster Abbey and the Commonwealth Reception, Sir Vivian also made himself available to be interviewed by *Diplomat Magazine* and the *Press Trust of India*. He also visited Bedford School in London, which offers a number

of scholarships for promising young cricketers from Antigua and Barbuda. At the moment, there are several young Antigua and Barbuda cricketers attending the prestigious school.

His final official engagement of the trip, is a special night of entertainment to be hosted by the Antigua and Barbuda High Commissioner, Karen-Mae Hill for members of the Antigua and Barbuda diaspora in the UK. The Heritage Evening event takes place this evening in London.

All-Female Debate In Parliament Chambers Described As 'Awesome'



President of the Antigua and Barbuda Senate, Alincia Williams-Grant is expressing her great delight with the standard of debate that took place in the Parliament Chambers on Monday as part of her Young Women in Leadership (YWIL) Initiative.

The debate was the culmination of several weeks of training with young women as part of an overall programme to encourage young women to take up leadership roles throughout the society, including in politics.

A motion; *Be it resolved that this Parliament establish a joint Select Committee to conduct a comprehensive review of all cannabis-related legislation* was the subject of debate. The morning session mirrored a regular sitting of the House of Representatives with speakers representing each of the seventeen constituencies.

“The young ladies really stepped up; they represented well with their ideas; their concepts behind the resolution were very well articulated as the arguments were presented in cogent and effective manner. I feel they should be proud of themselves with what they accomplished today. This is only the

Volunteers Needed

There is still time to be a part of CHOGM 2026!

If you have been thinking about volunteering for the historic Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2026), to be hosted in St. John's, 1-4 November 2026, now is your chance!

Antigua and Barbuda's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Barbuda Affairs continues to invite enthusiastic, motivated, and professional individuals aged 18 or older to volunteer for this world-class event. Do not miss your chance! It is a unique opportunity to contribute your time and skills to the event's success, gain experience, and expand your network.

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Local News



start, and it's a win for all women in the region, not just here in Antigua and Barbuda," she remarked.

In the role of Prime Minister Makayla Henry noted that when the Cannabis Act and the Amendments to the Misuse of Drugs Act (2018) came into effect, the intention was to create an inclusive and regulated approach to cannabis, adding that she believes that the legislation reflects that initial goal. However, she is of the view that the legislation is in need of 'a peer review committee that focuses on data collection and analysis'.

"Greater emphasis must be placed on localised research into the effects of cannabis within our society, particularly through the application of a human rights and gender-responsive lens," she declared.

In her response, 'Leader of the Opposition', Victoria Dyer called the proposed review 'a classic case of legislative procrastination'.

"Madam Speaker, we are told that we need 'a Joint Select Committee' to understand the impacts of cannabis on our people. But I ask you, Honourable Members, how many times must we study the same struggle before we decide to resolve it? The citizens of this country do not need another twelve months of 'reporting' and 'consult-



ing'. They need immediate legislative fixes and direct financial support now, not a year from now," she emphasized.

The 'representative' of Barbuda, Shaznie Beazer, complained that the people of the sister isle are yet to ben-

efit from the provisions of the legislation and she called for a balanced approach to keep the youth safe while enabling Barbudan farmers to lead in a regulated medicinal markets.

"Madam speaker, medicinal access is not yet equitable by geography. The government could host scheduled medical outreach clinics in Barbuda, bringing doctors, pharmacists and cannabis specialists to explain benefits and risks face to face," she suggested.

The YWiL Initiative is a joint undertaking of the Caribbean Women in Leadership (CIWiL) in association with ParlAmericas and the Parliament of Antigua and Barbuda.

The motion was adopted by the House with an overwhelming majority and later when it went before the Senate, that body also gave it a 'thumbs up'.

In the House, Starr George performed the role as the Speaker and in the Senate, Silesia Joseph served as president.

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Cabinet Sets 2nd April for Start of Immigration Amnesty Programme

The government of Antigua and Barbuda has agreed that a national immigration amnesty programme will begin on 2nd April, 2026 and run for a three-month period, as officials prepare to finalise amendments to the proposed immigration legislation.

Director General of Communications in the Office of the Prime Minister, Maurice Merchant, said the matter will return to Parliament on 23rd March, when lawmakers will review and debate recommendations outlined in the Immigration Amendment Bill.

Merchant explained that Cabinet has already examined several proposals aimed at shaping the framework for the amnesty programme, which is intended to regularise the status of qualifying undocumented residents.

According to the government's review, the amnesty will apply primarily to individuals who have been living in



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

Antigua and Barbuda for four years or more. Officials believe this threshold is sufficient based on research indicating that most persons likely to seek amnesty have resided in the country for at least that length of time.

Cabinet also agreed that applicants

must provide a police record from their country of origin covering at least the last two years while residing in Antigua and Barbuda.

Another significant change involves the cost associated with the application process. While the original bill proposed a processing fee of \$500, Cabinet has recommended reducing the fee to \$250 to make the programme more accessible to those seeking to regularise their immigration status.

Under the proposed framework, the Chief Immigration Officer will have the authority to approve and sign off on applications submitted through the amnesty process.

Merchant noted that these recommendations form part of the ongoing legislative review and that further discussion and possible amendments will take place when the bill is debated in Parliament on 23rd March, 2026.



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Foundation Mixed School wins 2026 RCA's Reading Competition



Major Emanuel of Foundation Mixed School emerged as the top performer at the Rotary Club of Antigua's 2026 Book Reading Competition, securing first place with an impressive score of 135 points. The competition, held on Saturday, brought together primary school students from across Antigua and Barbuda to celebrate literacy, confidence, and the power of storytelling.

Major Emanuel's outstanding reading performance and presentation skills placed him ahead of a competitive field of young readers, highlighting the strong literacy culture being nurtured at Foundation Mixed School and within the wider education community.

The competition challenged primary school students to demonstrate strong reading ability, comprehension, and stage presence while engaging with the book 'Tete's Butterfly' by Antiguan and Barbudan author Floree Williams-Whyte. The event highlighted the importance of local literature in helping young readers connect with Caribbean culture, storytelling,



and shared experiences.

In the first round, students read selected passages from the book, while the second round required participants to present a segment in the style of a news presenter, testing their clarity, confidence, and expression before the panel of judges.

Competition Results

1st Place: Major Emanuel – Foundation Mixed School – 135 points

2nd Place (1st Runner-Up): Jayhem Joshua – TOR Memorial School – 125 points

3rd Place (2nd Runner-Up): Eidrik Piper – Five Islands Primary School – 117 points

President of the Rotary Club of Antigua, Elisa Graham, emphasized the importance of reading in shaping young minds. She noted that literacy initiatives like the Book Reading Competition provide opportunities for students to build confidence and develop a lifelong appreciation for books.

“Reading is one of the greatest gifts we can give our young people. Through books, students learn to think critically, to dream boldly, and to see the world through different perspectives. Events like this competition help nurture confidence and inspire a lifelong

love for reading,” said President Graham.

She also highlighted the value of celebrating local authors, noting that Caribbean stories allow students to see their own culture and experiences reflected in literature.

“When our students read stories written by Caribbean authors, they see themselves in the pages. They recognize that their stories, their language, and their heritage matter,” she added.

Sponsors and Donors

The Rotary Club of Antigua expressed sincere gratitude to the sponsors and donors whose generous contributions helped make the event possible.

- ACB Caribbean, Cricket West Indies, Brydens, Frank B Armstrong, Harper's Office Depot, JMVI Realty, Paper Clips, Tucker-on-the-Grill, Floree Williams-Whyte (Author), PAG/PP Evangeline Allen, President Elisa Graham, President-Elect Anastasia Wilson, Sergeant-at-Arms Kirk Francis, Rotarian Barbara Jarvis, Past President Ilean Ramsey, and Past President Michael Spencer.

Through initiatives like the Book Reading Competition, the Rotary Club of Antigua continues its commitment to strengthening education, empowering youth, and promoting literacy throughout the country.

MBS Pharmacy Opens Today at Glanvilles Polyclinic



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

Residents in the eastern section of the island will benefit from expanded healthcare services when the newest Medical Benefits Scheme Pharmacy opens today at the Glanvilles Polyclinic.

The announcement was one of several updates Health Minister Sir Molwyn Joseph provided to members of the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda last week.

The new pharmacy will allow patients to receive prescription medications closer to home, and will eliminate the journey to other dispensaries.

It is part of a broader effort by the Ministry of Health to decentralize medical services and improve access to care, particularly for residents in rural and eastern communities. The Glanvilles Polyclinic already serves as an important hub for primary health-



care, offering services such as general medical consultations, dental care, laboratory services, and diagnostic testing.

Officials say the addition of a pharmacy will make the facility more efficient and convenient for patients, especially those managing chronic illnesses that require regular medication.

A similar pharmacy was operationalized at Villa Polyclinic last year to serve residents in that section of the island.

In addition to the pharmacy, the Health Minister also revealed that emergency medical capacity in the area will soon be strengthened. An ambulance is expected to be stationed

at the Glanvilles Polyclinic by the end of March, providing faster response times for medical emergencies in surrounding communities.

The introduction of both services is expected to significantly enhance healthcare delivery in St. Philip and nearby districts by reducing travel time for patients and improving emergency response capability.

Health officials say the continued expansion of services at polyclinics is part of a long-term strategy to reduce pressure on the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre while ensuring that residents across the island have easier access to essential medical care.



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More Than 150 Women Attend IWD Event

Over 150 women were in attendance for a brunch-themed day focused on Flourishing, Confidence and Connection at an International Women's Day event hosted author, Counselor and Consultant Koren Norton

The occasion was the 4th Annual VIP Women's Conference at the John E. St. Luce Conference Centre, which brought together women of all ethnic backgrounds, varying cultural and religious beliefs for a day of empowerment, self-development and self-love discussions.

Dr. Monica Osborne-Stevens offered an unorthodox introduction to welcome the audience. Her written piece saw three women displaying the process of planting a seed into a plant pot and watching as it would grow through watering and nurturing. This set the tone for the day that saw very powerful women in their own right.

The conference welcomed home Antigua and Barbuda's Jubilee Queen of Carnival and Jaycees Queen, Tashka Lavann. Lavann who delivered a pore-raising speech recalling her journey of healing, discovery, tenacity and obstacles sent to destroy. Through her own journey, her flourishing advice and message was clear: to never allow anyone to tell you what you can and cannot do and even in the midst of challenges, you are still enough.



Senator Jamilla Kirwan, the second speaker, was tasked with speaking on "Connections". In its rawest form, the independent senator, mom of two, recent cancer survivor, raised the bar by alluding to the importance of the right connections not just in professional spaces but the right village to walk through the varying levels of personal growth and development. Kirwan attributed her success story in her cancer battle to the women who travelled with her, sat in chemotherapy sessions and picked up the pieces with her children as needed. The importance of a village.

The final guest speaker was Jamai-



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can native Juliet Bodley. An engineer, a masterful content creator under the alias “Julie Mango” challenged the audience to her topic confidence.

Not a dry eye was left in the room, as Bodley recounted her face to face battles in her personal and professional life that challenged how she viewed herself. Bodley often questioned her own confidence and beliefs. Over time, through growth, healing and renewed sense of spirit, Julie Mango found her passion and pursuit, connecting with many women across the world through content creation and TedxTalks globally. Every woman stood to their feet and cheered the many speeches of the day that resonated with their own personal stories.

Entertainment was provided by Zahra Airall, Karen Brooks and Kelly Richardson, who moved the audience with their performances.

Norton and her team remain committed to providing a space for women to network, collaborate and recharge through Empowerment Sessions such as this.

The 5th Annual VIP Women’s conference is slated for 2027 and all in attendance committed to returning to the life altering experience.



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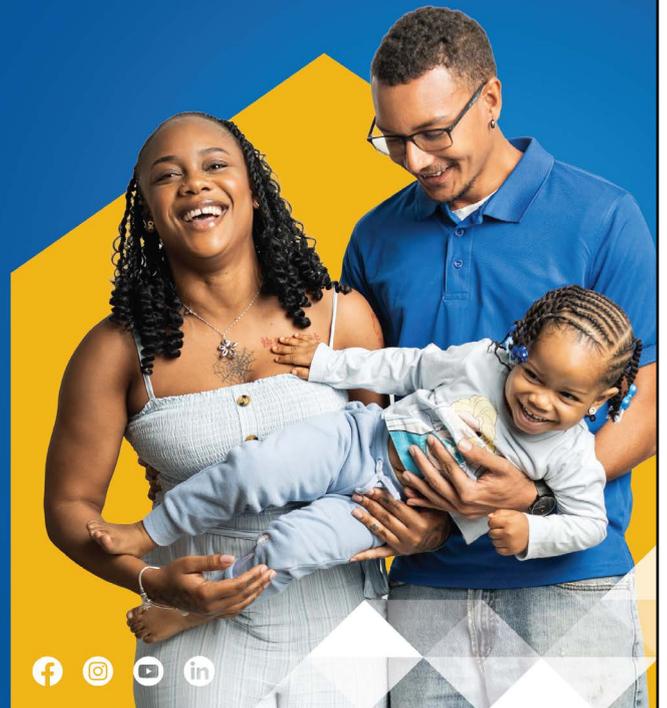


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Thirteen Delegates Revealed for Upcoming Labour Queen Pageant



Organizers of the highly anticipated Labour Queen Pageant have officially revealed the thirteen delegates who will compete for the coveted title this year. The pageant, which celebrates talent, confidence, and community representation, is expected to attract strong public interest as delegates prepare to showcase their abilities and represent their respective communities.

Among the delegates announced are;

Treveisha Adams- St. John's Rural West

Aliyah Andrew- St. John's Rural East

Jolisa Cato- St. John's City West

Jonelly Encarnacion- All Saints East & St. Luke

Mia Griffith- St. John's City West

Iszarea Lloyd- St. Phillip's North

Andreia Lewis- All Saints West

Nakierra Martin- St. George

Tonya Phillips- St. John's Rural South

Maydoria Smith- St. John's Rural West

Julissa Stoute- St. Paul

Jessica Tracey- St. John's Rural North

Queenela Williams- St. Mary's South

The Labour Queen Pageant is scheduled to take place on May 2, where the delegates will compete in a series of segments.

Organizers have indicated that the official photoshoot will be released soon, giving the public an opportunity to learn more about each contestant and follow their journey leading up to the pageant night.

Photo Essay

Antigua and Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra & Inspire Choir



Photos courtesy: Wayne Mariette

Photo Essay

Antigua and Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra & Inspire Choir



Photos courtesy: Wayne Mariette

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Holness to receive AFUWI Legacy Award

The American Foundation for The University of the West Indies (AFUWI) is set to honour Prime Minister Dr Andrew Holness with the Legacy Award, one of the organisation's highest honours, at its 29th Annual 'The Legacy Continues' Awards Gala on April 17.

The gala is to take place at 538 Park Avenue at 63rd Street in New York City.

The annual gala unites leaders from business, academia, public service, and philanthropy to support scholarships that increase access to higher education for outstanding Caribbean students at The University of the West Indies (UWI). Proceeds from the event fund AFUWI scholarships, helping talented students from across the Caribbean turn academic potential into university degrees and, ultimately, into productivity and development.

Holness is being recognised for his leadership and ongoing commitment to education, economic resilience, and regional collaboration as fundamental pillars of Jamaica's national development. His recognition reflects AFUWI's tradition of honouring leaders whose work significantly advances the Caribbean and its global diaspora.

"The Legacy Continues Gala celebrates leaders whose vision and service help shape the future of our community and region," said Dr Cyrus McCalla, chairman of AFUWI. "Through their leadership, and the generosity of those who support this event, we can open doors of opportunity for talented, but financially disadvantaged Caribbean students whose aspirations for higher education deserve every chance to flourish."

The evening will honour a distinguished group of leaders whose accomplishments and service to com-



munity and country serve as a strong example for the next generation, especially the students of The University of the West Indies, highlighting the transformative power of education and leadership. Each honoree embodies the core principle AFUWI represents, that when talent is supported by opportunity, the impact can change communities, nations, and even generations.

Anthony and Gregory Belinfanti, a father-and-son duo, will receive the Pathfinder Award for Generational Impact in Education, acknowledging their combined dedication to enhancing educational opportunities across generations. Anthony is a retired educator, while Gregory Belinfanti is the president of One Equity Partners, a middle-market private equity firm.

The Pelican Award – a UWI alumni peer award – will be presented to Dr Kevon Rhiney, PhD, whose scholarship and leadership exemplify the transformative power of Caribbean higher education.

Two distinguished leaders in academic medicine and institutional governance will also be honoured. Dr Wayne A. I. Frederick, president of Howard University, will receive the Caribbean Luminary Award, recog-

nising his notable career and visionary leadership in higher education and healthcare.

Dr Wayne J. Riley, president of SUNY Downstate Health Science University, will be awarded the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Institutional Impact, applauding his exceptional contributions to academic medicine and institutional development.

Camille Joseph-Goldman, group vice president at Charter Communications, will receive the Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Public Service and Community Impact, recognising her commitment to strengthening communities and expanding opportunities.

Looking toward global leadership and innovation, Jacky Wright, recipient of honorary doctorates from the University of Bath and Aston University, will receive the Phoenix Award for Global Digital Leadership in recognition of her influential work in global technology transformation.

The distinguished Honoree Class of 2026 also includes Dr A. Norman Sabga, LL.D. (Hon.) UWI, the executive chairman of the ANSA McAL Group of Companies from the twin-island republic of Trinidad and Tobago. He will receive the Chancellor's and Corporate Awards for Excellence in Global Business Leadership, recognising his visionary leadership and the value-driven enterprise he has built.

"The Legacy Continues' is more than just a theme, noted AFUWI Executive Director Ann-Marie Grant – "it's a declaration that investing in education today helps secure the Caribbean's leadership, innovation, and resilience for future generations." (Jamaica Gleaner)

Ex MP sounds alarm over stalled wells, desalination plans



Former Finance Minister Camilo Gonsalves has expressed significant concern regarding the potential discontinuation or pausing of vital water security projects by the new administration.

Gonsalves said these projects were established under the ULP government to address critical needs for water stability and resilience across St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Under the Volcano Emergency Project (VEP), he said the focus was on sourcing groundwater in North Windward, specifically in Tourama and north of the Dry River.

Gonsalves said it involved the construction of solar-fed wells intended to link into the national water network. At the time of the administration change, these wells had already been dug and tested, and pipes were in the process of being laid to connect them to surrounding villages and catchment areas.

He said under the Hurricane Beryl Project a similar initiative was aimed at enhancing water resilience in the Grenadines through the implementation of solar-powered desalination plants and additional wells.

“The importance of these projects is underscored by the fact that St. Vincent and the Grenadines has already

begun experiencing water rationing and these projects are essential for “stability and security,” particularly as new hotels increase the demand for

water catchments”, he said.

Gonsalves’ criticism stems from the observation that the new administration has already “paused or discontinued” numerous other projects and incentives from the previous government. A primary example cited is the discontinuation of a 5% supplementary income for nurses, which the speaker uses to illustrate a pattern of the new administration reversing previous commitments.

While Gonsalves expresses a “sincere hope” that the water projects are being continued, he raises the alarm that if they are treated like other discontinued initiatives, it would be detrimental to the country’s farmers and households who rely on these showers of blessing for daily needs. (St Vincent Times)

NOTICE

TO: THE LICENSING MAGISTRATE
 Magistrate’s Court
 Gray’s Farm
 St. John’s
 Antigua

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

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A TAVERN LICENCE FOR
 BUSINESS REGISTERED AS**

“IVY VYBES”

I, Jonathan Pigott, DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE, that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the Liquor Licence Court to be held at the Magistrate’s Court, High Street, St John’s Antigua on Thursday 2nd April, 2026 next ensuing for a (Tavern/ Bottle) license in respect of premises known as “IVY VYBES” situated at Lower Redcliffe Street, Pigott’s Wharf, in the Parish of St. John’s, Antigua pursuant to Section (11) (3) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act Cap 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda, Revised Edition 1992.

**Dated the 27th day of January, 2026
 JONATHAN PIGOTT
 268-764-0068**

CXC prepares for historic gathering of Caribbean education stakeholders in Jamaica

More than 300 education leaders, policymakers, and practitioners from across the Caribbean – including regional ministers of education – are set to converge in Jamaica next week to discuss the future of teaching, learning, and assessment in the digital age.

The Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) in partnership with Jamaica's Ministry of Education, Skills, Youth and Information, will host a Regional Education Conference and Ministerial Forum from March 16 to 19 at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel in Kingston. The four-day event brings together some of the most influential voices in Caribbean education to chart a path forward as the region grapples with rapid technological change.

The conference was originally scheduled for October 2025 on Jamaica's north coast but was postponed following the disruption caused by Hurricane Melissa. Pointing to the significance of the moment, Dr Nicole Manning, CXC's director of operations noted that enthusiasm for the gathering has remained strong.

"CXC is facilitating this meeting of the finest minds in Caribbean education at a time when the region is seeking to scale efforts to equip in-school learners with electronic devices, adapt to generative Artificial Intelligence, and embrace electronic assessment and teaching via online modalities", said Dr Manning.

Dr Eduardo Ali, pro-registrar and



Deputy CEO of CXC, who is leading the organisation of the Ministerial Forum, highlighted CXC's ongoing engagement with regional employers through its Skills and Employability Signalling System. CXC will sign a partnership engagement agreement (PEA) with a Consortium of Caribbean employer groups at the Forum.

"As global open education systems evolve, it is critical that we factor in the counsel and inputs of our employer stakeholders to effectively implement an integrated approach for the teaching and assessment of our learners in our digital environment", noted Dr Ali.

The Forum has received the endorsement of Dr Dana Morris-Dixon, Jamaica's minister of education, skills, youth and information, who will de-

liver a keynote address.

"Jamaica welcomes this timely conference by CXC with our fellow educators from across the region", said Dr Morris-Dixon. "The goals of this regional meeting are in alignment with Jamaica's TREND (Transformation Education for National Development) education strategy, where the use of ICTs within the education system is a key pillar to achieve our national goals for world class education and training, and a technology enabled society", she added.

A distinguished roster of speakers will anchor the programme, including Professor Hilary Beckles, chairman of CXC; Deputy Chair of Council, Dr Marcia Potter; Dr Wayne Wesley, CXC registrar; Professor Paloma Mohamed Martin, vice chancellor of the University of Guyana; Dr Luz Longworth of Sandals Corporate University; Alison Drayton, assistant secretary general for human and social development at CARICOM; and Professor Peter Scott, president and CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning and members of his team.

In addition to the partnership support by Jamaica's Ministry of Education, the Regional Education Conference is being sponsored by Stephen Austin & Sons Ltd, Hachette Learning, Vretta Inc, Wizdom, CRM Caribbean Ltd, Liberty Business, and the Association of Chartered Accountants (Caribbean). (Jamaica Gleaner)

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Rihanna's Beverly Hills home hit by gunfire, police say

The Beverly Hills home of pop superstar Rihanna has been hit by gunfire, police say.

Officers from the Los Angeles Police Department responded to reports of gunfire at 13:15 local time (21:15 GMT) on Sunday. A suspect was located and taken into custody.

A police official told the BBC's US partner, CBS News, that the home targeted belonged to Rihanna and that assault rifle casings were found at the scene.

No one was injured in the incident. Rihanna was in the mansion at the time, a law enforcement source told the Los Angeles Times.

Police say the suspect, a woman in her 30s, stopped in a car outside the home and fired seven shots before speeding away.

Her vehicle was located about eight miles (12km) away from the singer's home, where the woman was taken into custody. She has not yet been publicly identified.

Last September the star gave birth to her third child, a girl, with partner A\$AP Rocky.

The couple, who also share two sons Riot and RZA, announced Rihanna's latest pregnancy at last year's Met Gala.

The couple's baby news was not the first time they made headlines in 2025. In February, A\$AP Rocky was found not guilty of firing a gun at a former friend, in a trial that saw Rihanna bring her two sons to court.

The Barbados-born celebrity, whose real name is Robyn Fenty, rose to prominence in the early 2000s with hits like Pon de Replay and Umbrella. She recently celebrated 20 years since the release of her first album.

During that time, Rihanna has launched multiple businesses, including her popular makeup range Fenty



Beauty and a lingerie company. The 37-year-old's net worth has been estimated by Forbes at over a billion dol-

lars. The BBC has contacted Rihanna's representatives for comment. (BBC)

NOTICE

TO:THE LICENSING MAGISTRATE
Magistrate's Court
High Street
St. John's
Antigua

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

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A TAVERN LICENCE FOR
BUSINESS REGISTERED AS
"RED SCORPION BAR"

I, Terence Phillips, DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE, that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the Liquor Licence Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, High Street, St John's Antigua on Tuesday 7th April, 2026 next ensuing for a Tavern license in respect of premises known as "RED SCORPION BAR" situated at Sutherland Development, in the Parish of St. John's, Antigua pursuant to Section (11) (5) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act Cap 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda, Revised Edition 1992.

Dated the 9th day of February. 2026
Terence Phillips
268-773-9812

G7 nations to hold emergency meeting on oil as stock markets fall



G7 nations will hold an emergency meeting on Monday to discuss surging oil prices as crude jumped above \$100 a barrel and shares fell over the escalating US-Israeli war with Iran.

Finance ministers from leading industrialised countries, including UK Chancellor Rachel Reeves, will gather to discuss the economic impact of the conflict.

The oil price reached nearly \$120 over fears of a lengthy disruption to supplies through the key Strait of Hormuz shipping route, triggering stock market sell-offs across the US, Europe and Asia.

According to reports, the G7 meeting will discuss a joint release of petroleum from reserves, overseen by the International Energy Agency (IEA).

If reserves are released by G7 countries, as reported by the Financial Times, it would be the first time since 2022 following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Major disruption to energy supplies from the region threatens to push up prices for consumers and businesses around the world. Rising inflation could lead to fewer interest rate cuts by central banks.

About a fifth of the world's oil supply is usually shipped through the Strait of Hormuz. But traffic through the narrow passage has all but halted since the war started more than a week ago.

The US and Israel launched fresh waves of airstrikes across Iran over the weekend, hitting multiple targets including oil depots.

Meanwhile, Iran targeted energy infrastructure in neighbouring Gulf states. Overnight, Saudi Arabia said it had intercepted and destroyed two waves of drones heading towards a major oilfield.

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Last week the markets had been relatively relaxed about the seemingly nightmare scenario of millions of barrels of crude and liquefied gas trapped in the Gulf.

But the escalations over the weekend, alongside scenes of destruction of energy infrastructure both in Iran and across the Gulf, saw the markets take rapid fright.

On Monday morning in Asia, the price of Brent crude jumped by more than 25% to touch \$119.50 a barrel at one point before falling back to around \$102.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude saw similar movements and was trading at about \$101 a barrel.

“The question everyone is asking themselves is, what is the duration of this conflict?” Paul Gooden, head of natural resources at NinetyOne Asset Management, told the BBC’s Today programme.

“The longer it goes on, the more nervous the oil markets are going to be.”

He added that the oil price could rise to a level where “you see so-called demand destruction”, where consumers cut back their consumption of oil, which he considered to be \$120-\$150 a barrel.

“I think temporarily you could see an oil price in that range. I don’t think it can stay there... at some point there’ll be a resolution.”

Gas prices also jumped. UK gas prices for month-ahead delivery surged by

nearly 25% to 171p a therm when trading started on Monday, before slipping back to about 149p a therm.

Gas prices have now almost doubled since before the war in Iran began, although they remain well below the 640p peak reached in 2022 following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

US stock markets opened lower, with the S&P 500 and Dow Jones Industrial Average both down by about 1.4% in opening trading.

In Europe, Germany’s Dax index dropped 1.3% while France’s Cac 40 fell 1.8%.

London’s FTSE 100 fell to its lowest level for nearly two months, but the rise in oil prices lifted shares in energy giants BP and Shell.

Earlier, Japan’s Nikkei 225 index had dropped 5.2%, while South Korea’s Kospi index closed down 6%.

UK government borrowing costs have continued to rise as markets re-think the prospects for interest rates.

Before the conflict, rate cuts had been expected this year but given the expected impact of the oil price surge on inflation financial markets now think there is a chance of a rate rise by the end of the year. The UK interest rate is currently 3.75%.

On Monday, the yield - or interest rate - on two-year government bonds, which indicates how much it would cost to borrow money for two years, rose to 4.09% from 3.87%.

The yield on benchmark 10-year bonds has now risen to 4.73%, up from a rate of about 4.3% before the conflict began.

Adnan Mazarei from the Peterson Institute for International Economics said the jump in oil prices was expected, given how production has been halted in some Gulf countries and the signs of a prolonged conflict in the region.

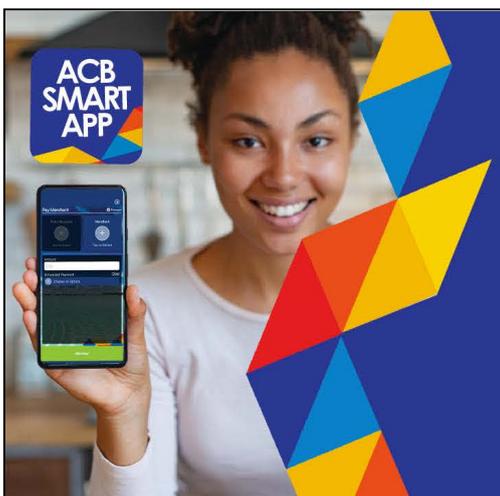
“People are realising that this won’t end quickly,” he said, adding that the promises of insurances and objectives laid out by the US are “becoming more unrealistic.”

US President Donald Trump, who campaigned on bringing down the cost of living, has repeatedly dismissed concerns about rising oil prices.

On Sunday, he posted on his Truth Social platform: “Short term oil prices, which will drop rapidly when the destruction of the Iran nuclear threat is over, is a very small price to pay for U.S.A., and World, Safety and Peace. ONLY FOOLS WOULD THINK DIFFERENTLY!”

His Energy Secretary, Chris Wright, told US broadcasters on Sunday that Israel, not the US, was targeting Iran’s energy infrastructure, amid some concern about rising domestic pump prices caused by the war.

Data from motorists group AAA showed the average price for regular gasoline in the US rose 11% last week to \$3.32 a gallon. (BBC)



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Energy prices soar to levels not seen in years as Iran names new supreme leader



Oil prices spiked near US\$120 per barrel before falling back Monday as the Iran war intensified, threatening production and shipping in the Middle East and pummeling financial markets.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, surged to US\$119.50 per barrel early in the day but later was trading near US\$106 per barrel, up 14%, before the opening bell.

West Texas Intermediate, the light, sweet crude oil produced in the United

States, soared above US\$119.48 per barrel but fell back closer to US\$103.

Meanwhile, Iran named the hard-line Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei to succeed his late father as supreme leader on Monday, signaling no letup in the war launched by the United States and Israel.

The secretive 56-year-old cleric has close ties to the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which has been firing missiles and drones at Israel and Gulf Arab states since Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei, who had ruled Iran for 37 years, was killed during the war's opening salvo.

The appointment marked a new sign of defiance by Iran's embattled leadership after more than a week of heavy US and Israeli bombardment, suggesting Tehran is not close to giving up on what it considers a fight for the Islamic theocracy's survival.

The war's toll on civilian targets grew as Bahrain accused Iran of striking a desalination plant vital to drinking water supplies. Bahrain's national oil company declared force majeure for its shipments after an Iranian attack set its refinery complex ablaze. The legal declaration releases the company of contractual obligations because of extraordinary circumstances.

Oil depots in Tehran smoldered following overnight strikes by Israel.

Oil prices have surged as the war, now in its second week, ensnares countries and places that are critical to the production and movement of oil and gas from the Persian Gulf.

Prices moderated after the Financial Times reported that some members of the Group of Seven industrial nations were considering releases of strategic






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oil reserves to alleviate pressure on the markets.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Monday that “the use of strategic reserves is an envisaged option.” He said G7 leaders could meet this week to coordinate a response to climbing energy prices. France currently holds the rotating presidency of the G7 group. Separately, finance ministers from the G7 nations are meeting Monday by video conference to discuss the repercussions from the war.

On Saturday, President Donald Trump downplayed the idea of turning to America’s Strategic Petroleum Reserve, saying US supplies were ample and prices would soon fall.

Roughly 15 million barrels of crude oil — about 20% of the world’s oil — typically are shipped every day through the Strait of Hormuz, according to independent research firm Rystad Energy.

The threat of Iranian missile and drone attacks has all but stopped tankers carrying oil and gas from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Iran from traveling through the strait, which is bordered in the north by Iran.

Iraq, Kuwait and the UAE have cut oil production as storage tanks fill due to the reduced ability to export crude. Iran, Israel and the United States also have attacked oil and gas facilities since the war started, worsening supply concerns.

The surge in costs for oil and natural gas is pushing fuel prices higher, cascading through other industries and jolting Asian economies that are especially vulnerable due to the region’s heavy reliance on imports from the Middle East.

Iran exports roughly 1.6 million barrels of oil a day, mostly to China, which has called for an immediate end to the fighting. Beijing may need to look elsewhere for supply if Iran’s exports are disrupted, another factor that could increase energy prices.

“All parties have their responsibility

to ensure stable and smooth energy supplies,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said in a briefing Monday. “China will take necessary measures to safeguard its own energy security.”

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung warned Monday of strict penalties for refiners and gas stations caught hoarding or colluding on prices, saying it would be wise to find alternatives to supplies that must travel through the Strait of Hormuz.

Across Southeast Asia, the spike in prices has led to long lines outside filling stations.

“Higher oil and gas prices will affect everyone and our economy,” said Le Van Tu, who was waiting outside a gas station in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi. “All activities, including those using petrol based transportation will be affected.”

South Korea’s Kospi tumbled 6% to 5,251.87.

The last time Brent and US crude futures traded near the current level was in 2022, after Russia invaded Ukraine.

Higher energy costs push inflation higher, straining household budgets and denting the consumer spending that is a main driver of many big economies. Those worries have spilled into financial markets, pulling share prices sharply lower.

In the US the average price of a gallon of regular gasoline rose to US\$3.48 as of early Monday, up nearly 50 cents from a week earlier, according to AAA motor club. Diesel, used heavily in shipping, sold for about US\$4.66 a gallon, a weekly increase of more than 80 US cents.

The price of natural gas in the US also has climbed during the war, though not by as much as oil. It was selling for about US\$3.34 per 1,000 cubic feet early Monday. That’s up from Friday’s closing price of US\$3.19. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Police release images of Oslo US embassy explosion suspect

Police in Norway have released pictures of a suspect linked to an explosion outside the US's embassy in Norway's capital Oslo on Sunday.

Two heavily pixelated images taken from surveillance footage show a person with their face concealed, dressed in dark clothing and carrying a backpack.

Police said in a statement on Monday that their investigation had so far showed the explosion was caused by an improvised device that was placed at the building's entrance. The blast caused minor damage and no injuries were reported.

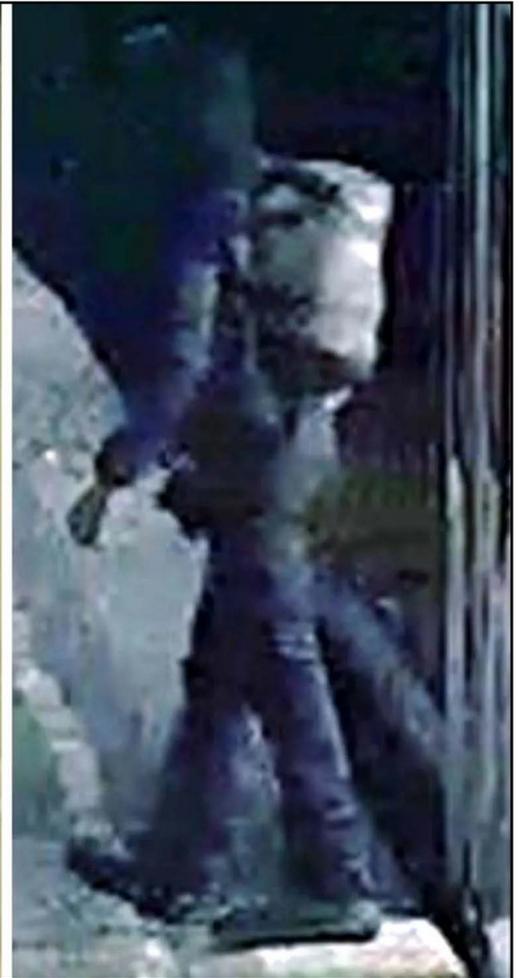
Police previously said it was possible the explosion was an act of terrorism. They said in their latest update that they had no developments on the attacker's motive.

As well as the images, investigators were also examining a video published on Google Maps around the time of the incident, police said.

The now-deleted video featured Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, local media reported. He was assassinated last month during joint US-Israeli strikes on Tehran.

Police said the investigation into the embassy blast was being treated as high priority and that dogs, drones and helicopters had been used to carry out investigations at the scene of the explosion.

They appealed to anyone with information about the suspect, as well as



anyone who noticed anything unusual in the area between midnight and 02:00 local time (01:00 GMT) on Sunday, to contact them.

Emergency services were dispatched to the embassy, on Morgedalsvegen street in the Ullern district of Oslo, at about 01:00 on Sunday.

Following the incident, photos posted on social media showed shattered glass in the snow outside the entrance

to the embassy's consular section, cracks in a glass door and dark marks on a tiled floor.

Norwegian authorities described the incident as "unacceptable", with Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide stressing that "the security of diplomatic missions is very important to us".

A US State Department spokesperson said it too was investigating the incident. (BBC)

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Resident British Commissioner Commends Young Athletes at CARIFTA Trials

To help celebrate Commonwealth Day 2026 the British High Commission collaborated with the Antigua and Barbuda Athletics Association to highlight the role of youth and sport in the Commonwealth.

On 5 March the High Commission and ABAA organised a Commonwealth-focused initiative bringing together several former Commonwealth athletes and more than 60 young athletes for a special meet-up at YASCO. Commonwealth Games veterans gave the next generation of Antiguan and Barbudan athletes an inspiring presentation about their rich experiences in multiple Games.

Speaking to the athletes Resident British Commissioner to Antigua and Barbuda, John Hamilton, said,

“Antigua and Barbuda will be hosting the prestigious Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting later this year. You have demonstrated a strong interest in the work of the Commonwealth, the legacy of the Commonwealth Games, and the importance of collaboration across our nations. I hope the encouragement from athletes who have represented Antigua and Barbuda in the past will serve as inspiration in your own sporting journeys”.

The High Commission was happy to provide some support for the CARIFTA trials on 7 and 8 March. Over 150 athletes took part in a highly competitive competition. All participants had received a certificate recognising their achievements and information about the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth Games, taking place this year in Glasgow, Scotland.

Antigua and Barbuda will host the largest event in the Commonwealth calendar in November this year, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Hamilton thanked the diligent team at the Athletics Association for their help in in-



cluding lessons about the 56-member grouping over recent days.

Heavy rain disrupts ABCA Two-Day Championship

Rainy and wet conditions severely disrupted the eighth round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Two-Day Championship over the weekend.

Play was only possible in two of the five scheduled fixtures, in which three matches were forced to be abandoned without a ball being bowled due to wet pitches and outfielders.

Wet conditions caused the abandonment of the match between Empire Nation and All Saints Pythons at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

The rainy weather conditions also forced the abandonment of the match at the Factory Grounds between Tertiary Institutions and Schools and the Bolans Blasters as well as the encounter at Rising Sun between WES Rising Sun Spartans and the Bethesda Golden Eagles.

However, although being affected by the rainy weather, there was sufficient play at Ball Beef in Liberta to allow unbeaten leaders and defending champions PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks to claim first-innings honours against the Pigotts Crushers in a drawn encounter.

The Pigotts Crushers were all out for 152 in 44 overs after winning the toss and opting to bat. Opener Uri Smith hit 52, Xaveek Toppin struck 44, Amahl Nathaniel scored 16, and Miandre James made 15.

Off-spinner Rahkeem Cornwall grabbed five for 51, and captain and



Kofi James hits an unbeaten century for the Liberta Blackhawks in their drawn disrupted eighth-round match against the Pigotts Crushers in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Two-Day Championship at Ball Beef in Liberta over the weekend. (File photo)

left-arm spinner Karima Gore claimed four for 39.

In reply, the Liberta Blackhawks reached 172 for two in 25 overs when rain brought an early end to the match. Opener Kofi James slammed an unbeaten century, hitting 115 not out off 78 balls.

James struck nine sixes and nine fours during his innings. Fellow opener Brent Joseph struck 23, and Karima Gore was not out on 14. Jalen Harris took one for 45, and Jared Jno Baptiste had one for 47.

Play also took place in New Winthropes, where CMW New Winthropes Lions also claimed first-innings honours against the Jennings Tigers in another drawn encounter.

The Jennings Tigers were 67 for three in 17.1 overs in their second innings when rain brought an early end to the match.

Deran Benta hit 27, and Glenton Williams was not out on 25. Fast bowler Alzarri Joseph claimed two for 14, and Orandel Boston picked up a wicket without conceding a run.

The Jennings Tigers were still trailing by 69 runs when rain stopped play after the New Winthropes Lions declared their first innings at 233 for six in 33.2 overs.

Captain Nino Henry slammed 54 off 17 balls, which included eight sixes. Bartlette Henry struck 51, Cameron Pennyfeather cracked 48, Alzarri Joseph made 39 off 21 balls, and opener Tyrone Williams Jr. scored 28.

Left-arm spinner Glenton Williams claimed five for 101, and Zavier Free-land picked up one for 82.

The Jennings Tigers were dismissed in their first innings for 97 in 35.3 overs after being sent in to bat. Glenton Williams hit 24, Kief Baltimore struck 18, captain Jahiem Africa scored 13, and Deran Benta made 12.

Orandel Boston captured four for 20, Demari Benta took three for 25, and Ishmael Peters claimed two for 22.



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Sports News

Four teams embroil in tight battle for ABBA's Division 1 League title



Four teams are embroiled in a tight battle for supremacy in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division 1 League.

Defending champions EZ Fit Flyers, Daryll Matthew Ottos, Cuties Ovals Ojays, and Lava Smoke Elite Stingerz all have identical records of five wins

and two losses after the latest round of matches at the JSC Sports Complex on Sunday.

The Stingerz claimed their fifth win in seven games with a hard-fought 91-86 victory over Ottos.

Keroi Lee converted 23 points and grabbed 17 rebounds, Joshua Minner produced 22 points, nine rebounds, and five assists, and Alexis Jackson sank 14 points and snatched 14 rebounds for the Stingerz.

Nick Strawter shot a game-high 25 points and dished out 10 assists, Christian Walker sank 24 points, and Danny Perez converted 21 points and claimed nine rebounds for Ottos, who slumped to their second loss in seven games.

The EZ Fit Flyers notched up their fifth win in seven games by soaring to an 89-82 victory over the Cuties Ovals

Ojays.

Xavier Meade produced 22 points, seven rebounds, and six assists; Kwame Brathwaite sank 18 points and claimed nine rebounds; Adonis Humphreys converted 14 points and grabbed 22 rebounds; Kenya Ahcom narrowly missed out on achieving a triple-double with 13 points, 10 rebounds, and nine assists; and Marlon Charles scored 12 points for the Flyers.

Jalen Owens shot a game-high 24 points and claimed five rebounds and five steals; Jabari Smith produced 21 points, 10 rebounds, and five assists; and Sam Taylor chipped in with 14 points, seven steals, five rebounds, and five assists for the Ovals Ojays, who lost for the second time in seven games.



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Iraq urges FIFA to postpone World Cup playoff match due to Iran war



Iraqi's head coach Graham Arnold sits on the bench at the start of the 2026 World Cup play off first leg soccer match between UAE and Iraq in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Friday, Nov. 14, 2025. (AP)

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq head coach Graham Arnold has issued an urgent plea to soccer's international governing body to postpone his team's intercontinental qualifier for the World Cup because of disruptions caused by the escalating Iran war.

The Iraq squad faces major logistical issues ahead of a winner-takes-all playoff against either Suriname or Bolivia, scheduled for March 31 in Monterrey, Mexico.

With Iraqi airspace closed until April

1 due to the escalating conflict, Arnold's squad, containing predominantly players from the domestic league, is unable to fully gather.

Players haven't secured visas for the playoff tournament in Mexico due to foreign embassy closures, and Arnold is stranded in the United Arab Emirates due to the conflict.

"Please help us with this game because right now we are struggling to get our players out of the country of Iraq," Arnold, a former coach of Aus-

tralia's national team, told the Australian Associated Press.

The turmoil has already forced the postponement of a planned training camp in Houston. Arnold said fielding a team comprised only of overseas-based players is not a viable option.

"It wouldn't be our best team and we need our best team available for the country's biggest game in 40 years," he said.

Arnold has proposed a strategic delay to the playoffs schedule, suggesting FIFA allow Suriname and Bolivia to play their preliminary match this month but postponing the final playoff until a week before the World Cup begins.

"In my opinion, if FIFA were to delay the game it gives us time to prepare properly," Arnold said.

"In my opinion, it also gives FIFA more time to decide what Iran is going to do."

"If Iran withdraws we go into the World Cup, and it gives the UAE, who we beat in qualifying, the chance to prepare for either Bolivia or Suriname.

"Our federation's president Adnan Dirjal is working round the clock trying to plan and prepare to make everyone in Iraq's dream come true, so we need this decision made quickly."



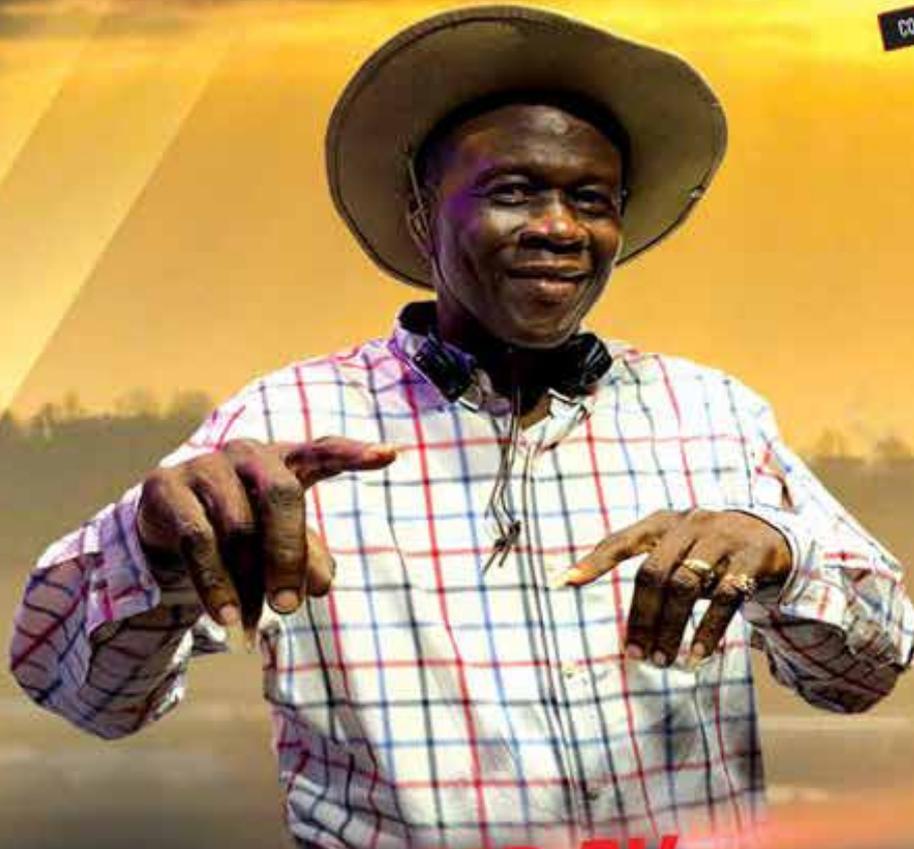
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Abramovich to fight any UK attempt to seize Chelsea sale money



Roman Abramovich

LONDON (Reuters) - Lawyers for Russian businessman Roman Abramovich warned the British government on Monday that he would fight any attempt to seize the 2.5 billion pounds (US\$3.34 billion) from the sale of Chelsea soccer club, saying the money belongs to him.

The British government sanctioned Abramovich in a crackdown on Russian oligarchs following Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, triggering a rushed sale of the Premier League club in 2022.

Almost four years later, the money remains frozen in a British bank account because of a dispute over how the money would be used. The British government warned Abramovich last year he must release the cash, or he could be taken to court.

Abramovich's lawyers at Kobre & Kim said the money from the sale remains "wholly owned" by their client and accused the government of "politically charged and highly publicised statements" on him.

They said Abramovich remains fully committed to using the money for charitable purposes and the government's restrictions on how it can be spent were to blame for the delay.

"The UK government appears to be treating this proposed donation as a form of punitive measure against Mr. Abramovich," the lawyers said in the letter, seen by Reuters.

In response to the letter, Britain's foreign minister Yvette Cooper, said, "It is time Roman Abramovich does the right thing but if he won't we will act."

Britain wants the money spent only in

Ukraine in line with a wider European push for Moscow to foot the bill for the vast destruction and deaths triggered by its invasion.

Abramovich wants more flexibility over how the money would be spent, according to sources.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said in December that "the clock is ticking" over finding a resolution.

Abramovich's lawyers said if the government opens formal confiscation proceedings it would be contested in court.

"The proposal to donate these proceeds was initiated by Mr Abramovich prior to the imposition of sanctions, and he remains fully committed to ensuring that the funds are used for charitable purposes," the letter said.

Villa Lions trounce John Hughes in Premier Division

The Aston Villa Lions recorded the biggest margin of victory in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday.

The Villa Lions consolidated their third-place position by securing their 11th win in 15 matches with a 9-1 drubbing of John Hughes FC in the second game of a double-header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Josue Arias, Orel Edwards, and Isaac Hughes each scored twice in the match in which the Villa Lions roared to a five-nil lead at halftime.

Arias struck in the seventh and 40th minutes, Edwards scored in the ninth and 16th minutes, and Isaac Hughes had conversions in the 75th and 90th minutes.

Tyrik "Castro" Hughes converted a penalty kick in the 63rd minute, while the other two goals were scored by

Jacques Obas in the 25th minute and Kwame "Munchie" Kirby in the 52nd minutes.

Bryan Burton scored a consolation goal for John Hughes FC in the 66th minute.

The result allows the Villa Lions to advance to 33 points, while John Hughes FC remains third from the bottom of the standings with 10 points after losing for the 12th time in 16 matches.

Old Road FC and Green City FC battled to a 2-2 draw in Sunday's opening game.

Green City FC made a poor start to the match with the expulsion of goalkeeper Zaiem Scott, who received a red card in the ninth minute.

His teammate Carllon Warner also picked up a red card in the 76th minute and was also expelled as Green City FC finished the match with nine players.

Old Road FC also finished the match

with 10 men after Max Flericien received a red card and was expelled in the 84th minute.

Chantomoi Taylor gave Old Road FC the lead with an 18th-minute conversion, and Elijah Whyte scored in the third minute of added time to equalize for Green City FC as both teams reached halftime level at 1-1.

Old Road FC regained the lead via a conversion by Rakeem Joseph in the 58th minute, and Kieron Richards scored an equalizer in the 83rd minute for Green City FC to salvage a draw for Green City FC.

The result allows Old Road FC to remain in fourth place by advancing to 29 points after securing their fifth draw in 16 matches.

Green City FC remains in eighth place by moving on to 19 points after salvaging their fourth draw in 16 matches.



Players of the Villa Lions starting XI