ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
POINT EXPRESS
TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS
WEDNESDAY 11TH MARCH 2026 | VOLUME 9 ISSUE 05 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

The Commonwealth can be the basis for Mark Carney's alliance of middle powers

Story on page 2

King Charles (left) greets Governor General Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Williams as St. James's Palace

Story on page 5

The Commonwealth can be the basis for Mark Carney's alliance of middle powers

By the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne

With the unfolding events in the Middle East, Canadian prime minister Mark Carney's recent speech on middle powers takes on a new relevance: how should countries that are not one of the world's superpowers best navigate, prosper, and keep themselves – to paraphrase Carney – "at the table, so they are not on the menu?"

Some answers are emerging quicker than expected. They are driven by the realisation that it is dangerously naïve to think there will be a return to the "factory settings" of global structures and mindsets under future US administrations. The geopolitical order is changing, and that change is here to stay.

Critically, the most clear-headed vision of middle power collaboration does not include proposals to retreat behind regional trade blocs. Quite the opposite: in recent days PM Carney visited far-flung Australia to discuss closer cooperation between these two "strategic cousins", both Commonwealth realms which maintain King Charles III as head of state within the 56-member Commonwealth of Nations (which today mostly contains republics).

The solutions being proposed are noticeably cross-party: Canada's opposition leader was in London last week outlining his support for CANZUK, a popular proposal for a closer, freer trade, and freedom of movement alliance between the Commonwealth countries Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

Today, as we celebrate Commonwealth Day, it is an opportune moment to consider where this leaves countries such as my own Antigua and Barbuda – at the same time both a small island state in the Caribbean and a Commonwealth Realm. Later this year, we will assume the two-year rotating Chair-in-zone of the organisation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which we will host in our capital, St. John's.

Small island states have all benefited immeasurably from the existence of the rules-based international system because, self-evidently, we would not have the capacity to wield power freely in a dog-eat-dog world. Antigua and Barbuda's high-income levels (we enjoy the highest UN Human Development Index status in the Caribbean) would qualify

us for middle power status – were it not for our very small population.

How alliances of far larger middle powers rise to strengthen ties between each other and, arguably, replicate the worldwide framework in which most of us have lived our lives is therefore of existential importance to our future.

For that reason, it is time to turn again to the potential of those international organisations which, because they endured, have too often been overlooked. What makes our Commonwealth relationships so valuable is that they are not caused by geography but made through choice and underpinned by the values we share. They are what has made the Commonwealth so perdurable yet overlooked and under considered at the same time.

For decades there have been discussions about the future of the organisation. How might it become a more elective platform for intra-member trade, and how it might move from an elective but loose club of friends to something more potent? Despite interest, all its leading members have maintained their focus elsewhere – Britain to the European Continent, Canada to its southern neighbour, Australia to the Pacific, and India to its regional sphere of influence. The Commonwealth was a benefit, but never perhaps enough to make for an opportunity.

Now the world has changed. That alliance of "strategic cousins" which prime ministers Carney and Albanese commended in Canberra has many more potential members. There is a no more obvious place where such cousins can be found than amongst the current members of today's Commonwealth.

Already we benefit, by nature of our common histories and political systems, from a "Commonwealth Advantage" where the cost of trade between us is, on average, 21 per cent lower than between non-members. But we can do so much more.

This is now a moment to bring our nations closer together, to bring down non-tariff barriers such as overlapping standards and customs delays and strive to create common standards to smooth trade between Commonwealth cousins. All of this is within our power to change.

We are also similarly united on the other great issues of our times. The need to adapt to and mitigate for climate change, to enhance the cause of democracy, and to defend a world where rules – not might – are right. Before, we may have first sought to bring the most powerful countries along with us on these issues as much as possible. It now would seem as rational to first collaborate amongst ourselves to bolster and advance these causes wherever we can.

To an extent, this is already happening: in recent years the Commonwealth has operated as a group to issue joint statements at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. Commonwealth foreign ministers regularly meet to agree common statements and to push mutual agendas wherever possible within and across other intergovernmental organisations. This is the starting point from which greater geopolitical collaboration could be achieved.

There are also new signs of greater Commonwealth collaboration on joint research projects and the sharing of technology: a Centre of Excellence for Oceanography and the Blue Economy based in Antigua and Barbuda researches and advises member nations on this growing sector; the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment assists smaller members in enhancing digital customs and commerce systems to smooth intra-Commonwealth trade with larger ones. Such initiatives are important, though merely a fraction of what is possible – if only we were to cooperate.

In a world of shifting global power structures, there is an obvious need for a coalition of compatible middle and small nations together magnifying their influence globally. Indeed, if in the world today there were not such a group of like-minded, predominantly English-speaking free-trade-supporting rules-based nations, one would need to be created. Fortunately, with the Commonwealth, we already have one. The question now is what we do with it.

Antigua and Barbuda Talks CHOGM At Bilateral Meetings In the UK

The November 1 to 4 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which Antigua and Barbuda will host, featured prominently in discussions in London between Foreign Minister E.P Chet Greene and his counterparts during bilateral meetings in the UK.

Minister Greene returns to St. John's today following several days of intense discussions and other engagements; first at the Commonwealth Foreign Minister meeting followed by activities to mark Commonwealth Day on Monday and a series of bilateral meetings with other foreign affairs ministers in London for the talks.

Following a meeting with the Minister and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Chris Elmore, Minister Greene met with Foreign Ministers from Singapore, Malta, Cyprus and Bangladesh at the margins of the main event.

In his meeting with Minister Greene, the Bangladeshi Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Hasan Mahmud Rahman underscored the enduring importance of the Commonwealth as a platform for cooperation among developing countries, noting its continued relevance in promoting shared values, sustainable development, and collective resilience among member states. He emphasised Bangladesh's strong commitment to strengthening collaboration with fellow Commonwealth partners, including Antigua and Barbuda.

During the discussions, Minister Rahman expressed Bangladesh's willingness to support Antigua and Barbuda in several practical areas of

cooperation.

With the Ambassador and Special Envoy for Multilateralism for the Republic of Cyprus, Andreas Kakouris, FA Minister Greene not only talked about CHOGM, but he also highlighted plans for a high-level side event on 'Blue Finance and Innovation', which will explore opportunities for sustainable ocean development, including marine conservation, sustainable fisheries, ocean-based renewable energy, and investment in blue economy sectors.

Recognising Cyprus' strong maritime heritage and growing focus on the blue economy, Minister Greene welcomed potential collaboration with Cyprus, including technical expertise and participation from Cypriot institutions and experts in the upcoming policy dialogue. The two officials also discussed opportunities for technical cooperation in the lead-up to CHOGM 2026, including the sharing of best practices in conference management, multilateral event coordination, and programming related to sustainable development and ocean governance.

During the meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Borg of Malta, Foreign Minister Greene discussed Antigua and Barbuda's preparations to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and explored opportunities for cooperation in support of the upcoming event.

Both officials discussed the possibility of Malta supporting the technical requirements of the Commonwealth Youth Forum, one of the key forums held alongside CHOGM.

Dr. Borg welcomed Antigua and Barbuda's leadership in hosting the 2026 meeting and expressed Malta's willingness to support preparations where possible. Both ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the Commonwealth and expressed confidence that CHOGM 2026 will be a successful and impactful gathering for the Commonwealth family.

Permanent Secretary for Law and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore, Luke Goh conveyed Singapore's willingness to lend support to Antigua and Barbuda's preparations for CHOGM through the provision of technical assistance and training, drawing on Singapore's experience in governance, public administration, and the organisation of major international events.

Minister Greene welcomed Singapore's offer of support and underscored the importance of partnerships within the Commonwealth and beyond to ensure the successful hosting of CHOGM 2026.

Governor General and Lady Williams attend Commonwealth Day Activities in London

The Antigua and Barbuda delegation of Sir Rodney Williams, Lady Williams, Sir Vivian Richards and Foreign Minister E.P Chet Greene are greeted by King Charles and Queen Camilla at St. James's Palace in London

The Governor General Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Sandra Williams are concluding their official visit to the United Kingdom where among other things they attended Commonwealth Day-related events as well as having a private audience with King Charles.

As Patron and President of the Royal Commonwealth Society (Antigua Chapter) respectively, Sir Rodney and Lady Williams are invited to the UK each year to participate in events marking Commonwealth Day, along with other high level officials of the 55 countries of the Commonwealth. The event is organized by the Royal Commonwealth Society Headquarters in London.

Sir Rodney and Lady Williams, who are habitually seated a row behind the Royal Household, emphasized the importance of representing their nation's chapter, which allows them the opportunity to explore partnerships and exchange workable ideas.

Sir Rodney expressed that "this year was particularly important for networking, as there were many questions being posed about the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) scheduled in Antigua and Barbuda this November."

King Charles as Head of the Commonwealth, remarked in the Commonwealth Day Service Magazine: "As we look ahead to [CHOGM] in Antigua and Barbuda later this year, we are reminded that the great gatherings of our nations are strengthened by the daily endeavors of their people. What distinguishes the Commonwealth is not only what our Governments resolve together, but what our people do each day in countless acts of service, enterprise and creativity. When leaders meet, they do so on behalf of millions whose quiet determination, resilience and generosity give true meaning to our shared endeavour."

Lady Williams reported that their schedule involved several follow up meetings, including those with the Royal Commonwealth Society Headquarters, The Royal Drawing School, the King's Foundation, certain newspapers and magazine editors, the Commonwealth Foundation, the West India Committee (of which Sir Rodney is Chairman), and a private meeting with His Majesty the King.

Five-member delegation is at the UN for talks on women empowerment and gender issues

A delegation led by Minister of Social and Urban Transformation, Rawdon Turner is representing Antigua and Barbuda at the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) taking place from March 9 – 19 at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Also included in the delegation of high-ranking officials attending the annual meeting of the global intergovernmental body is Leader of Government Business in Parliament's Upper House and Minister of State in the Ministry of Housing and Works, Senator Shenella Govia.

The two members of Parliament are joined by Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation Sarah Stuart, Executive Director of the Directorate of Gender Affairs, Jamie Saunders and Project Officer of the Directorate of Gender Affairs, Ashlea Ambris.

The members of the delegation will spread themselves across a packed agenda of meetings that are advocating for gender equality and the empowerment of women across the globe.

The meetings address a range of issues on which members of the delegation will articulate Antigua and Barbuda's position, including advancing women's economic empowerment, strengthening protections against gender-based violence, and promoting policies that expand opportunities for women and girls. This landmark session of CSW however will bring particular focus on its priority theme of "Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls." As a result crucial goals of legal system reform, the elimination of discriminatory laws and structural barriers will be central to the discussions occupying the time of the Antigua and Barbuda delegation.

The high-level ministerial segments, which will be attended by both Minister Turner and Senator Govia, will also focus on advancing progress on several key issues. These include gender equality, the empowerment of older women, the full and effective participation of women in all spheres of society, and the elimination of violence against women and girls as essential steps toward achieving gender equality.

The Executive Director of the Directorate Gender Affairs will also attend a number of side events to include one on Advancing Climate Justice through Gender-Responsive Climate Finance. He will deliver a statement at another side event that will be seeking Responses to gender based digital violence against women.

The Permanent Mission is also coordinating bilateral discussions between the delegation and partner countries that will explore collaborative initiatives on advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Antigua and Barbuda.

Minister Turner reports to UN on Antigua and Barbuda's strengthened legal protections for women and girls

Minister of Social and Urban Transformation, Rawdon Turner, told the United Nations on Tuesday afternoon, of his Government's commitment to strengthening legal protections for women and girls across Antigua and Barbuda.

He joined several countries from around the globe in delivering their national statements at the UN General Assembly on the occasion of the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Minister Turner used the opportunity to highlight a series of legislative measures that Antigua and Barbuda has pursued and adopted in advancing gender equality, improving access to justice for all women and girls and addressing the threat of gender based violence.

"The Government of Antigua and Barbuda fully recognizes the indispensable role that legislation plays in advancing gender equality and social inclusion. As such, we have enacted laws that are both gender-responsive and transformative, aimed at addressing structural barriers that hinder justice and equality," Minister Turner declared.

He pointed to the Domestic Violence Act of 2015 as a prime example of a legislative framework that is working in the interest of ensuring women and girls are protected. The Act, Minister Turner noted, broadens the definition of domestic violence to include various forms of abuse outside of the traditional scope.

"Additionally, the Sexual Offences Act of 1995 criminalizes sexual violence, while the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act, strengthened through amendments in 2010 and 2015, enhances penalties and protections related to human trafficking. We have also enacted the Electronic Crimes Act of 2013, which addresses emerging forms of violence in digital spaces," he further outlined.

Minister of Social and Urban Transformation, Rawdon Turner

But while recognizing the considerable strides, Minister Turner was quick to point out that the work is far from over. He said this was among the reasons why the Government in 2019 established a Model Sexual Offences Court.

"This specialized court structure was created to address deficiencies within the justice system, including delays in sensitive cases, while improving case management and strengthening support mechanisms for vulnerable complainants," he explained to the global gathering at the United Nations.

He stated these initiatives clearly reflect Antigua and Barbuda's commitment to continuously strengthening the country's justice system while closing any prevailing gaps that may impede fairness and accessibility for all women.

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.

Interested? Complete the volunteer application form at the following link for a fulfilling and worthwhile experience:

https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/h7bf39zPzT

Please note that the QR code is attached.

ABEC Commences Training for St. Philip North By-Election Workers

The Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) commenced training sessions on Monday for election workers in preparation for the **by-election in St. Philip North**, which will take place on **Monday, March 16, 2026.**

The training sessions, which are taking place at the Glanville's Community Centre, are being facilitated by **Returning Officer Avonella Benjamin**.

The training is designed to equip election day workers with the knowledge and procedures required to efficiently manage polling operations on election day. Participants include presiding officers, poll clerks, customer service representatives and other polling staff, who will play key roles in ensuring that the electoral process is conducted smoothly and in accordance with established electoral laws and procedures.

Supervisor of Elections **Ian S. Hughes** underscored the importance of comprehensive preparation for all election personnel.

"Training is a critical component of the electoral process. By ensuring that every election worker understands their responsibilities and the procedures they must follow, we strengthen the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the voting process. The Commission is committed to ensuring that the St. Philip North By-Election is administered to the highest standard."

The sessions will cover a range of topics including polling station procedures, voter identification protocols, ballot handling, counting procedures, and the proper completion of official election documentation. Emphasis is also being placed on maintaining transparency, accuracy, and professionalism throughout the electoral process.

SLBMC Reaffirms Zero Tolerance for Threats or Violence Against Healthcare Workers

Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) has launched a formal investigation into reports of threatening behavior directed toward healthcare staff within the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Hospital management initiated the probe immediately following a formal report of the incident, in accordance with established safety protocols.

SLBMC maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy toward violence, threats, or harassment. Healthcare professionals must be permitted to carry out their duties in an environment that is safe, respectful and free from threats, intimidation and harassment.

The NICU is a highly specialized area where teams support families through emotionally sensitive circumstances. SLBMC remains committed to ensuring this unit and along with all other hospital departments operate as a secure and supportive space for both patients and the professionals entrusted with their care.

While the hospital will not comment on specific details at this time, we wish to reassure the public that this matter is being treated with the utmost seriousness it deserves.

Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre remains committed to providing safe, compassionate, quality care for every person who walks through our doors.

National Secondary Schools Theatre Festival Takes Place Next Month

The annual staging of the popular National Secondary Schools Theatre festival will take place from April 13 to 18 with several schools already confirming their participation.

In a media release, the Department of Culture said the highly anticipated national event will bring together the creative brilliance of Antigua and Barbuda's youth, who will represent ten (10) secondary schools in the dance component and six (6) secondary schools in the drama component of the festival.

This year's event promises to be a vibrant showcase of storytelling, movement, culture and innovation as students take to the stage to demonstrate artistic excellence, youth expression, discipline, collaboration and cultural pride.

As the government continues to expand opportunities through the creative industries sector, organizers are confident that events such as the National Secondary Schools Theatre Festival will serve as a launching pad for future actors, playwrights, choreographers, directors, educators and cultural ambassadors.

Members of the general public are encouraged to support the festival by attending all of the activities.

Further details regarding venue, performance schedules and ticketing will be announced shortly.

Medical Benefits Scheme Opens Pharmacy at Glanville's Polyclinic

The Medical Benefits Scheme, operating under the Ministry of Health, has officially opened a new Medical Benefits Pharmacy at the Glanville's Polyclinic, expanding access to essential medications for residents in Antigua's eastern corridor.

The pharmacy was formally commissioned during a ceremony on Tuesday at the facility.

Among those in attendance were Sir Molwyn Joseph, Minister of Health, Wellness, Environment and Civil Service Affairs; Senator Michael Joseph, Minister of State within the Ministry; Chairman of the Medical Benefits Board Sir Lionel Hurst; Chief Executive Officer of the Medical Benefits Scheme Kevin Silston; Acting Permanent Secretary Marsha Joseph; Chief Medical Officer Dr. Kamaria DeCastro; other Senior Technical Staff both within the Ministry of Health and the Medical Benefits Scheme.

Speaking at the ceremony, Minister Joseph emphasized that the addition of the pharmacy represents another important step in strengthening primary healthcare services and improving access to medications within communities.

"The addition of this pharmacy means that patients receiving care at this clinic will now be able to access their medications more conveniently and efficiently, without having to travel into St. John's or to other locations," the Minister stated. "For many residents, particularly our elderly and those managing chronic illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes, this will significantly improve access to essential medications and make managing their health much easier."

Minister Joseph noted that the establishment of the pharmacy forms part of the Government's broader effort to decentralize healthcare services and improve access to pharmaceutical care across Antigua and Barbuda.

Glanville's Pharmacy opening ceremony

The official party at Tuesday's opening of a new pharmacy at the Glanville's Polyclinic

He also highlighted the importance of expanding the country's pharmacy workforce in order to sustain such services. The Minister pointed to the Government's decision to revive the national pharmacy training programme in 2017 after it was halted in 2010. The programme has since produced 30 graduates, helping to strengthen the pool of qualified pharmacists available to serve the country.

The opening of the Glanville's pharmacy follows the commissioning of a Medical Benefits Pharmacy at the Villa Polyclinic in June 2025, which similarly expanded access to medications for residents in that community.

With the addition of pharmaceutical services at the Glanville's Polyclinic, residents of Glanville's, Pares, Seatons, Willikies and surrounding communities will now benefit from more convenient access to medications while receiving care within their own community.

The pharmacy will operate on a same-day basis on Mondays to Fridays from 8:00am to 3:00pm.

Photo Essay

POINT EXPRESS
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

Walk Against Gender Base Voilence 2026

Photos courtesy: Kieron Murdoch

POINT EXPRESS
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

Photo Essay

Photos courtesy: Kieron Murdoch

Photo Essay

POINT EXPRESS
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

Photos courtesy: Kieron Murdoch

GRATITUDE

CUBA

A friend INDEED

is now a friend IN NEED

MAKE YOUR GENEROUS DONATION

IN CASH, OR IN CHEQUE WRITTEN *TO:*

Williams and Associates Dental Ltd

Take your donations to

Williams and Associates Dental Clinic

at Deanery and get a receipt,

Weekdays 8:30 am until 5:00 pm;

Saturdays until 12:00 noon

THE FRIENDS OF CUBA in Antigua

and Barbuda are raising funds for

***URGENTLY NEEDED** supplies for*

Cuban Hospitals.

HAVE A HEART!

Give as willingly as you've been given.

REGGAE IN THE PARK 15
ZAMBAI AND FRIENDS
BLESS EYE
LUCIANO
THE STRAYS
THE CLIMAX BAND
TUE 21 APR
EARLY BIRD $80
GENERAL $120
PAY MORE AT THE GATE
FALMOUTH RECTORY GROUNDS @ 7:00PM UNTIL
FOOD AND DRINKS ON SALE
TICKET OUTLETS
Landing Strip, Weatherill's, Pink Mongoose Studio, Roti King,
Rivers by Quintessence (Redcliffe Quay),
Quintessence Variety Plus (QV+, Friars Hill Road)
ticketing
TICKETS AVAILABLE
CLIMAX SOUND
ZERO DEGREES MARINE
Theatric LIGHTING
English Harbour Antigua Rum
Heineken

Antigua Barbuda
FESTIVALS COMMISSION

JULY 25 TO AUG 04 2026

REGISTRATION IS OPEN

FOR THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

- Business Floats
- Calypso Monarch
- Cheerleaders
- Individual Mas
- J'ouvert Tropes Band
- Junior Calypso Monarch
- Junior Carnival Private Mas
- Junior Carnival School Mas
- Junior Party Monarch
- Mas Band
- Monday Wear
- Mr. & Miss Teenage Pageant
- Party Monarch
- Prince & Princess
- Queen of Carnival
- Road March
- T-Shirt Mas
- Vendors

Where to Collect Forms:

National Festivals Office, 1st Floor, Cecil George-John Building, Corn Alley & Redcliffe Street
Ministry of Creative Industries, Old Parham Road (Upstairs KFC/INET Building)

Hours:

Monday - Thursday: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Friday: 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Request forms via email at info.nof@ab.gov.ag or WhatsApp at (268) 727-9201. For inquiries, call (268) 462-4707.

Submission Details:

Completed registration forms must be returned to:
NATIONAL FESTIVALS OFFICE, 1ST FLOOR, CECIL GEORGE-JOHN BUILDING, CORN ALLEY & REDCLIFFE STREET

Antigua Carnival @antiguafestivalsofficial

CARICOM Private Sector Organization commends Afreximbank's $5 billion commitment to boost trade and investment in CARICOM

The CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CPSO) has expressed strong support for the African Export-Import Bank's (Afreximbank) recent decision to boost its financial commitment to the Caribbean, increasing its investment from US$3 billion to US$5 billion.

This move is viewed as a significant step forward in fostering greater trade, investment, and economic collaboration between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the African Union (AU), as per a CPSO release.

This development was announced during a meeting on February 24, 2026, held in Saint Kitts and Nevis, where Afreximbank President Dr. George Elombi engaged with CARICOM Heads of Government.

CPSO reports that during the discussions, Dr. Elombi presented Afreximbank's strategic plan to deepen economic ties with the Caribbean region and to support initiatives that aim to boost trade and investment exchanges.

Dr. Patrick Antoine, CEO and Technical Director of CPSO, commented on the significance of the bank's increased commitment, stating,"This expanded commitment by Afreximbank represents a major milestone in strengthening economic cooperation between the African Union and the Region."

He also emphasized the opportunities this presents for CARICOM's private sector, noting that it could lead to increased trade prospects, more investment partnerships, and enhanced capacity-building for private enterprises and infrastructure projects linking the two regions.

One of the key projects highlighted was the development of the Afreximbank Caribbean Trade Centre in Bridgetown, Barbados. This facility will function as the bank's regional hub and include conference amenities and a luxury hotel. Construction of the centre is scheduled to commence later this year.

According to the CPSO, Afreximbank also expressed its openness to supporting the creation of a Caribbean Export-Import Bank, envisioned to bolster the region's ability to finance trade and investment activities. Such an institution aims to enhance regional financial infrastructure and support economic growth.

The bank has been actively collaborating with regional central banks to establish the CARICOM Payment and Settlement System (CAPSS). This initiative seeks to streamline cross-border transactions through a regional clearing mechanism, thereby reducing dependence on foreign currencies and promoting regional financial independence.

In addition, Afreximbank underscored the importance of physical connectivity in advancing trade. It also stated that it has committed to assisting with financing projects that improve air and maritime links between the Caribbean and Africa—an essential step toward unlocking the full potential of AU-CARICOM trade and investment relations.

Furthermore, the CPSO, Afreximbank, and the Africa Business Council have previously signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish the African Caribbean Business Council (ACBC). This platform is designed to facilitate structured private sector cooperation, including trade and investment forums, B2B matchmaking, investment facilitation, financial sector collaboration, and capacity-building programs.

Reportedly, the focus is particularly on empowering small and medium-sized enterprises, women, and youth entrepreneurs. The framework also aims to deepen institutional ties and explore long-term opportunities for expanding AU-CARICOM trade and economic partnerships.

Dr. Antoine expressed enthusiasm for ongoing collaborations, stating,

"The CPSO looks forward to deepening its collaboration with Afreximbank and the Africa Business Council, working alongside regional governments, financial institutions and private sector stakeholders to advance the implementation of these initiatives, including through the Africa Caribbean Business Council."

He reaffirmed CPSO's commitment to ensuring that the benefits of the strengthened partnership translate into tangible outcomes—enhanced trade, increased business opportunities, and sustainable economic development across the Caribbean. (Dominica News Online)

Students in hurricane-hit areas to benefit from JPS exam prep

Some 1,000 students in Westmoreland and St Elizabeth are to benefit from a targeted education-recovery effort led by the Jamaica Public Service (JPS), as rebuilding continues after Hurricane Melissa.

The programme, delivered with the Ministry of Education and regional officers, will support pupils preparing for the Primary Exit Profile (PEP) and the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC). It will offer "energy exam marathons" and structured extra lessons across participating schools.

JPS president and chief executive, Hugh Grant, announced the initiative during the commissioning of the company's emergency mobile power unit in Bethel Town.

"What we have learned over the past few months is that recovery is ultimately about people," he said. "It is about the mother managing her household while rebuilding. The farmer working to restore productivity. The shop owner trying to reopen. It is about the student trying to study for exams after months of disruption. As a country, we cannot allow that disruption to define our children's future."

Over three weeks, pupils will receive focused instruction in all PEP subject areas. Secondary students will receive help in mathematics, English language and one additional subject selected by their schools, ensuring the support matches actual need. Recognising that recovery is both academic and emotional, the programme also includes psychosocial support to help children regain confidence after months of upheaval. The aim is to close learning gaps, strengthen exam readiness and ease pressure on families while restoring a sense of stability in recovering communities.

To maximise its impact, JPS is partnering with several organisations, including the National Education Trust, Wisynco Group Limited, Jamaica Broilers Group, Food For the Poor Jamaica, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Digicel Foundation.

"JPS has always had an active presence in communities across the island, and this time is no different," said Marilyn McDonald, the company's manager for community renewal. "The last couple of months have really demonstrated the power of support, and what it means when we rally around each other for the greater good. We will continue to do that until every customer is restored."

The company describes the initiative as another layer of community-renewal support, complementing its work to rebuild the electricity network and restore supply–part of what it says is an ongoing commitment to customers, communities and families during the recovery effort. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Cuban exit backup plan

The Ministry of Health and Wellness is making a plea for the public's patience and cooperation as it assesses the islandwide impact, and implements contingencies to mitigate disruptions caused by the impending severance of ties with Cuban health professionals providing their services in Jamaica.

At the start of this month, there were 260 Cuban healthcare workers in the public healthcare system, the bulk of whom operate in the South East Regional Health Authority (SERHA), which is served by 97 of them, according to data from the ministry.

There are 50 Cuban health professionals operating in the Western Regional Health Authority (WRHA); 33 in the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA); 31 at the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI); and 18 attached to St Joseph's Hospital's Jamaica-Cuba Eye Care Programme. Seven Cuban nationals also operate in the Government's public health lab, and one at Bellevue Hospital.

While the contracts with the healthcare workers are slated to come to an official end later this year, Health Minister Dr Christopher Tufton said offers have been made via the Cuban ambassador to provide direct contracts to Cuban healthcare professionals willing to remain on the island.

"We do not see the termination as a decision to discontinue the relationship. It is really around the format of the relationship. In the days and weeks to come, while we determine what level of take-up may come from that offer, we have started to put alternative arrangements in place to deal with the gaps that exist," he said, adding that Cabinet has approved several contingency strategies.

The plans have been grouped into short-, medium-, and long-term strategies should all Cuban health professionals decide to leave Jamaica, he explained.

Maintaining critical services is the immediate priority. Measures include extending overtime and work hours, revising duty rosters and triage arrangements, and redeploying staff from low-demand to high-demand areas.

Outsourcing services to the private sector is another short-term strategy approved by the Cabinet, Tufton said, listing radiotherapy and cataract surgeries – particularly those linked to the Cuban eye-care programme at St Joseph's Hospital in Kingston – among the primary focus areas.

Tufton was addressing a press conference late yesterday afternoon, updating the nation on health service plans following the end of technical cooperation with Cuba.

The briefing followed unrest at St Joseph's Hospital, where anxious patients gathered in large numbers seeking to capitalise on the Jamaica-Cuba Eye Care Programme before its discontinuation.

Regarding that programme, Tufton said its operation will continue with the Cuban team until March 20. For the remainder of the programme, services will be limited to surgeries and post-operative care.

Other services previously offered under the programme will be routed through other public facilities, the ministry said. Approximately 140 patients have already been prepared and are awaiting surgery.

"Those procedures will take place. So those who have those appointments should not worry – they will take place," Tufton said, noting that post-surgery care using the same Cuban staff will also continue.

Patients are therefore encouraged to keep their appointments, he added, noting that the Government is also working on contingencies to ensure the continuation of the critical programme.

For the medium term, Tufton said invitations have been extended to Jamaicans and other professionals in the diaspora to take up specialist posts locally.

So far 140 applications have been received, with 70 persons shortlisted for interviews. The interview process is expected to begin within two weeks,

he said, noting that applicants include nurses currently working in the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, and Ghana. They are expected to come on stream within the next three months.

"We are also expecting an additional 48 nurses and 33 doctors, who were recipients of the Barry Wint Scholarship. That scholarship was announced to do exactly what we are trying to do now – to train Jamaicans who qualify in areas where we have gaps and integrate them back into the system," he said. "We will begin to see the results of that this year."

Last week, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade announced that Jamaica would discontinue its medical cooperation programme with Cuba, ending a five-decade relationship under which healthcare workers from the communist nation filled key gaps in the local public health system.

"This comes as both governments were unable to agree on the terms and conditions of a new technical cooperation arrangement, following the expiration of the previous agreement in February 2023," the ministry, led by Senator Kamina Johnson Smith, said in a statement.

It continued: "The Government of Jamaica has taken the decision to discontinue the current arrangement concerning the deployment of medical professionals in the public health sector by the government of Cuba."

Jamaica's decision comes as the United States intensifies economic pressure on Cuba and forces long-standing partners to revisit their relationship with the island nation. Washington has also accused Cuba's overseas medical missions of constituting forced labour and human trafficking – allegations rejected by Caribbean leaders.

In a statement over the weekend, however, the Jamaican foreign ministry revealed that during a review last year, it became aware of issues with the programme that presented labour and legal concerns, including the Cuban healthcare workers not being in possession of their own passports, and payments being made by Jamaica to the Cuban authorities rather than the workers.

According to the foreign ministry, the changes to the programme proposed by the Jamaican Government failed to receive an adequate response from the Cuban authorities.

"Unfortunately, the continued lack of response had the practical effect of preserving an arrangement that Jamaica could not justify," the ministry said in its statement issued on Saturday night. "Given our legal obligations, our duty to ensure fairness to workers in Jamaica, and the need for compliance with our own laws and international conventions, the Government ultimately concluded that continuation on the existing terms was untenable." (Jamaica Gleaner)

Caribbean nations enhance demographic data to improve strategic planning

National statistical agencies and government officials from various Caribbean nations are enhancing their capabilities to collect and utilize sophisticated population data. This effort aims to improve planning for development initiatives, climate adaptation strategies, and social service provision, as shared in a joint press release.

This week, regional experts and policymakers are gathering in Barbados for a specialized workshop focused on Population Modelling, Small-Area Population Estimates, and the application of the Degree of Urbanisation (DEGURBA).

The event is designed to provide participating countries with practical tools to produce more accurate demographic data and to analyze how populations are distributed within rural, peri-urban, and urban zones—information vital for effective national planning processes.

The five-day session, scheduled from March 9 to March 13, 2026, and hosted at the Hotel Indigo in Bridgetown, brings together regional and international partners. These include the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WorldPop, the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the European Union (EU), and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (EU-JRC).

Jenny Karlsen, Deputy Director and Acting Head of the UNFPA Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean, emphasized how emerging tools are expanding possibilities in population data analysis. She noted that newer methods such as population modelling and small-area estimation are increasingly supplementing traditional census approaches. She also highlighted the DEGURBA methodology as a globally accepted system for categorizing areas as rural, peri-urban, or urban.

Karlsen further explained that since 2023, UNFPA, with backing from the EU and other partners, has been assisting countries in applying this methodology, reaching nearly 50 na-

tions through various regional and national workshops.

"What makes this work particularly powerful is regional coordination. No single country or institution can address these challenges alone. This workshop builds on the strong spirit of collaboration within CARICOM, creating opportunities for National Statistical Offices to learn from one another, share expertise, and collectively explore new technologies and approaches," she said.

Organizers assert that accurate and timely population data is important for Caribbean nations as they face a complex development landscape characterized by climate change, migration, mobility, and shifting demographic patterns. By improving their capacity to produce detailed small-area and grid-based population estimates, countries can gain a clearer understanding of settlement patterns and community dynamics, facilitating more targeted policy responses and investments.

During the initial days of the workshop, participants are working on developing and validating small-area population estimates using census data, survey inputs, projections, and modeling techniques. The latter part of the program introduces the DEGURBA framework, a globally recognized classification system based on settlement density and spatial configuration.

Jennifer Hunte, the Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office responsible for Economic Affairs and Planning, underscored the importance of robust population data for all government sectors.

"Population data informs economic planning, infrastructure development, fiscal policy, and the design of health and education systems," said Hunte.

"This workshop is about strengthening the capacity of our national statistical systems to produce more granular, timely, and actionable data so development policies respond to the needs of all populations," she added.

Historically, differing definitions of urban and rural areas across countries have hindered cross-national data comparison and trend analysis. The DEGURBA approach offers a harmonized, people-focused framework that enables governments to generate comparable data while aligning with national classifications.

Dr. Armstrong Alexis, Deputy Secretary-General of CARICOM, highlighted the significance of standardized population data for regional planning and resilience.

"I am confident that the knowledge and skills gained during this workshop will enable member states to produce more precise, comparable, and relevant data, strengthening planning, resilience, and development outcomes for all citizens of our Caribbean community."

According to the release, by integrating population modeling with settlement classification, the workshop equips national statistical agencies with practical tools to produce policy-relevant data. This information can inform investments in infrastructure, social services, and protection programs, especially for vulnerable groups such as girls, adolescents, youth, and women.

The initiative also exemplifies the increasing importance of regional cooperation in fortifying statistical systems.

Through partnerships involving governments, regional bodies, and international technical agencies, the aim is for Caribbean nations to build more resilient population data infrastructures that support informed decision-making grounded in evidence. (Dominica News Online)

Uber rolls out women-only option in the US

Uber has launched a feature allowing female drivers and passengers across the US to request trips with other women on the ride-hailing app.

The feature was piloted in the US last year and led to women feeling "more comfortable in the back seat" and "more confident behind the wheel", Uber said.

The rollout comes despite an ongoing class action lawsuit in California, filed by Uber drivers who argue the move discriminates against men.

Uber said around one-fifth of its drivers in the US are women, although the ratio varies by city.

Uber's Women Preferences was launched on Monday in response to women riders and drivers who told the firm they wanted "more control over how they ride and earn".

Women can reserve a trip with a woman driver in advance or set their preference in the app to increase the likelihood of being matched with a woman.

In cities where teen accounts are available, teens and their parents can also request women drivers.

Two California Uber drivers have accused the company of violating California legislation, by potentially giving female drivers access to a wider pool of passengers.

News agency AP reported that Uber has filed a motion to stop litigation and move the case to private arbitration, citing an agreement the drivers signed when joining the app.

In the motion, Uber disputed that its new feature violates the Unruh Act - which prohibits sex discrimination by businesses - and said it "serves a strong and recognized public policy interest in enhancing safety".

Ride-sharing app Lyft is also facing a discrimination lawsuit over its feature introduced in 2024 allowing riders and drivers to prioritise women and non-binary matches.

Last month, a US court ordered Uber to pay $8.5m (£6.2m) to a woman who said she was raped by a man driving for Uber in a legal ruling that could influence the outcome of thousands of other cases against the company.

Uber had argued that it should not be held liable for criminal acts by drivers using its platform, who it says are independent contractors and are subject to background checks as part of the vetting procedure.

The San Francisco-based company said it intended to appeal against the verdict.

Uber already offers the woman-matching option for drivers in more than 40 countries and for riders across seven countries, including Spain, Brazil and Saudi Arabia. (BBC)

Iranian assembly selects son of slain cleric as new Supreme Leader, oil prices spike in US

Iran has officially announced Mojtaba Khamenei as the new Supreme Leader, succeeding his father, Ali Khamenei.

The elder Khamenei was killed on February 28, during US-Israeli strikes on the capital city of Tehran.

With this development comes the continued dominance of hardline factions within the country, amid escalating regional tensions and a recent surge in global oil prices, asserts a news piece by Reuters.

Ongoing conflict between Iran, the United States, and Israel, which has now entered its second week, has driven oil prices above $100 per barrel.

Mojtaba Khamenei, described as a cleric with significant influence within Iran's security apparatus and extensive business interests under his father's reign, was reportedly considered a leading contender prior to the vote. The Assembly of Experts, an 88-member body of clerics responsible for selecting Iran's Supreme Leader, convened on Sunday to choose the successor.

Despite threats targeting the body, the assembly proceeded with the vote, declaring Khamenei "third Leader of the sacred system of the Islamic Republic of Iran," shortly after midnight Tehran time.

Iran's security chief, Ali Larijani, confirmed the meeting's outcome on state television.

The new leader's authority grants him the final say over all state matters in Iran. State media reports indicate that Iran's armed forces have pledged their allegiance to Mojtaba Khamenei, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps issued a statement affirming their readiness to follow his directives.

The appointment is expected to provoke strong reactions from Western leaders, particularly U.S. President Donald Trump, who on Sunday expressed that Washington should have a say in Iran's selection process.

"If he doesn't get approval from us, he's not going to last long," Trump stated in an interview with ABC News.

The Reuters article indicated that Israel, prior to the announcement, threatened to target whoever was chosen as Iran's new leader.

Amidst the turmoil, the U.S. military reported that a seventh American service member has died from wounds sustained during Iran's retaliatory strikes a week ago. This comes a day after President Trump oversaw the return of the remains of six other U.S. soldiers killed in the conflict.

Intensifying hostilities have led to significant destruction in Tehran, with residents reporting thick black smoke over the city following strikes on Iranian oil storage facilities. Further reports of black acid rain have made the air "unbreathable", said a young teacher as quoted by a Time article.

Meanwhile, in an interview with the Times of Israel, Trump chose not to comment directly on the appointment, merely stating, "We'll see what happens."

He also indicated that the resolution of the conflict would be a "mutual" decision with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The ongoing war has had a profound impact on global oil markets. According to Yahoo Finance, oil prices surged approximately 8%, reaching a peak of $119.50 per barrel — the largest single-day increase in dollar terms.

The highest record price was a little over $147 per barrel, which was recorded in July 2008. (Dominica News Online)

Family of child injured in Canada school shooting sues OpenAI

The family of a girl critically injured during a mass shooting at a Canadian school is suing ChatGPT-maker OpenAI, claiming it had been aware the suspect had been planning an attack but failed to alert the authorities.

Twelve-year-old Maya Gebala was shot in the neck and head in the attack in Tumbler Ridge on 10 February and remains in hospital.

An initial ChatGPT account linked to the suspect, 18-year-old Jesse Van Rootselaar, was banned by OpenAI in June 2025 due to the nature of her conversations with the chatbot, but Canadian police were not notified.

OpeanAI told the BBC it was committed to making "meaningful changes" to help prevent similar tragedies in the future.

Eight people were killed in the attack, including five young children and the suspect's mother, in one of the deadliest shootings in Canadian history.

The civil lawsuit, brought by Gebala's mother Cia Edmonds, alleges Rootselaar set up an account with ChatGPT before she turned 18 - something users can do with parental consent.

The plaintiffs allege no age verification took place on the site.

The lawsuit claims the suspect saw the chatbot as a "trusted confidante" and

described "various scenarios involving gun violence" to it over several days in late spring or early summer 2025.

Twelve OpenAI employees then reportedly flagged the posts as "indicating an imminent risk of serious harm to others" and recommended Canadian law enforcement was informed, the lawsuit alleges.

Instead, it is alleged the request to contact the authorities was "rebuffed" and the only action taken was to ban Rootselaar's account.

OpenAI has previously said it did not alert police because the account did not meet its threshold of a credible or imminent plan for serious physical harm to others.

The suspect was able to then open a second ChatGPT account, despite being flagged by OpenAI systems in the past, and "continue planning scenarios involving gun violence".

The lawsuit claims the company "had specific knowledge of the shooter's long-range planning of a mass casualty event," but "took no steps to act upon this knowledge".

The plaintiffs state as a result of the company's conduct, Gebala, who was shot at three times after trying to lock a library door to keep out the shooter, has suffered a "catastrophic brain injury".

In a statement to the BBC, an OpenAI spokesperson called the events an "unspeakable tragedy", adding its thoughts remained with the victims, their families and the community.

"OpenAI remains committed to working with government and law enforcement officials to make meaningful changes that help prevent tragedies like this in the future," a spokesperson said.

On 4 March, the CEO of OpenAI, Sam Altman, virtually met Canada's artificial intelligence minister, Evan Solomon, and the premier of British Columbia, David Eby.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Altman "pledged to strengthen protocols on notifying police over potentially harmful interactions" and to apologise to the Tumbler Ridge community.

In an open letter to Canadian officials on 26 February, penned by OpenAI's vice-president of global policy and shared with media outlets, the company said it had implemented a series of changes in recent months, including enlisting the help of "mental health and behavioural experts" to assess cases and making the criteria for referral to police "more flexible".

Because of the changes, OpenAI said it would have reported the suspect's ChatGPT account under the new guidelines.

"We commit to strengthening our detection systems to better prevent attempts to evade our safeguards and prioritize identifying the highest risk offenders," the company wrote.

OpenAI said it would also establish a direct point of contact with Canadian law enforcement so it can quickly flag any possible future cases with "potential for real world violence".

Canada's AI minister Evan Solomon said on 27 February that while legislators saw a willingness by the tech firm to improve its protocols, "we have not yet seen a detailed plan for how these commitments will be implemented in practice". (BBC)

Lebanon calls for talks with Israel on plan to end Hezbollah conflict

Lebanon's president has called for direct negotiations with Israel as part of a proposal to end the escalating conflict with Hezbollah, while sharply criticising the Iran-backed group for dragging the country into a wider regional war.

A spokesperson for President Joseph Aoun told the BBC that Lebanon was ready to negotiate, but not while the country remained under Israeli fire.

Speaking during a virtual meeting with senior European Union officials on Monday, Aoun outlined what he described as a path towards "permanent security and stability arrangements on our borders".

Israeli officials have shown little sign of backing negotiations, and the government did not immediately comment.

Under the Lebanese president's four-point plan, a "complete truce" would coincide with the disarmament of Hezbollah, and international assistance for the Lebanese Armed Forces to help them regain control of "areas of tension".

"And simultaneously, Lebanon and Israel [to] begin direct negotiations under international sponsorship, in order to execute the aforementioned plan," a statement said.

Aoun said the war had taken a devastating toll on Lebanon, with more than 700,000 people displaced, including 200,000 children, and hundreds killed in Israeli strikes

over the past nine days, according to the United Nations.

"Some of them are on the roads. They have no shelter and not even the most basic necessities of life," he said.

The president also delivered unusually blunt criticism of Hezbollah, accusing the Shia Muslim militia and political movement of acting against Lebanon's national interests.

Referring to Hezbollah as an "armed faction", Aoun said it gave "no weight to Lebanon's interests or to the lives of its people", and wanted the "collapse of the Lebanese state under aggression and chaos".

The remarks follow the government's declaration last week that Hezbollah's military operations were illegal, though the state currently lacks the capacity to disarm the group on its own.

Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the Lebanese government directly on X, writing: "It is your responsibility to enforce the ceasefire agreement and it is your responsibility to disarm Hezbollah."

Joshua Zarka, Israel's ambassador to France, said on Tuesday that Beirut had not taken meaningful steps toward disarming the group.

"At this stage, I'm not aware of any decision to enter negotiations to end this war," he said. "What would end it is the disarmament of Hezbollah - and that is a choice for the Lebanese government."

Although a ceasefire was agreed to between Israel and Lebanon in November 2024 under US and French mediation, it has largely failed to hold.

Israel has continued near-daily strikes in Lebanon, accusing Hezbollah of trying to rearm and rebuild its presence.

Two days after the start of the joint US-Israeli attack on Iran, Hezbollah entered the conflict by firing a number of rockets and drones into northern Israel.

The group said it was retaliating for the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the continuing Israeli strikes.

But Aoun described it as a deliberate ambush set for Lebanon and its army, designed to draw the Israeli military into another incursion.

Israel said Hezbollah's attack justified launching a broader campaign against the group, including repeated air strikes and commando raids inside Lebanese territory. It has said the campaign will continue until Hezbollah is disarmed.

Hezbollah has said it will continue to attack Israel, whatever the cost.

At least 486 people have been killed in Israeli attacks in Lebanon since then, according to the Lebanese health ministry.

Two Israeli soldiers have been killed in combat in southern Lebanon, according to the Israeli military.

For families caught in the crossfire, the escalation has brought renewed fear.

Ahmed al-Halabi, a father of two from the Dahieh area of south Beirut, fled with his extended family in the middle of the night as missiles struck nearby.

"We were running away from the bombing! There's no safety!" he told the BBC. "I have little kids and the living conditions were already bad. You can only imagine how it is during wartime. I just want to keep my kids safe."

Ahmed is now living in a school in the centre of the capital that has been turned into a shelter.

"This is the second time my kids have experienced this and they have developed psychological trauma. The adults can live with this. The kids cannot." (BBC)

More success for Ovals Ojays in Division 2 basketball league

The Cuties Ovals Ojays 2 achieved more success in their latest outing in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Monday.

The Cuties Ovals Ojays claimed their sixth win in seven encounters with a commanding 76-58 victory over the Ramco Pharmacy Fearless Crew in the second game of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Tajahron Davis shot a game-high 25 points and provided five assists; Dajon George sank 15 points; and Theo Blair chipped in with 13 points, six steals, and five assists for the Ovals Ojays 2.

Jesus Lopez sank 20 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, Emeka Emujuru-Oupe converted 15 points and claimed 16 rebounds, and Romel Diggs scored 15 points and snatched 10 rebounds for the Fearless Crew, who slumped to their fourth loss in eight games.

The EZ Fit Flyers 2 recorded their first win in this season's second division league. After losing all previous six matches, the EZ Fit Flyers 2 notched up their first win in seven outings with a 112-77 drubbing of Square One Construction United in Monday's opening game.

Hansel Piper produced 17 points, seven rebounds, and seven steals; Gabrielle DeSuza had 14 points and five steals; and Tyrese White scored 13 points as the leading performers for EZ Fit Flyers 2.

In support, Elijah Charles sank 12 points; Zende Dorsette produced 11 points, nine rebounds, and five steals; Royal Samuel converted 10 points and grabbed 10 rebounds; Derek Perez had 10 points and eight assists; and Delroy Foster chipped in with 10 points and seven rebounds for the EZ Fit Flyers 2.

Dwayne Samuel shot a game-high 29 points and claimed six rebounds, and Tyndale Telemaque sank 25 points and claimed five rebounds for United, who lost for the sixth time in as many games.

NOTICE

TO:YOUR WORSHIP
St: John's Magistrate Court
Gray's Farm
St. John's
Antigua

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

Dear Sir/Madame,

Re: Notice- Application for Tavern License

WI,Saran T. Luke, with registered business situate Mathew Road St. John's Antigua and Barbuda DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE, that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the Liquor Licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court at High Street, St John's Antigua on Tuesday 7th April, 2026 next ensuing for a Liquor licensing pursuant to Section (11) (5) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act Cap 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as "Stickz Bar & Restaurant" situated at Mathews Road parish of St.John's, Antigua and Barbuda.

Dated the 10th day of March 2026
Saran T. Luke
268-722-9633

Grenades stay in touch with United at the top of Premier Division

The Sandals and APUA Inet Jennings Grenades moved within three points of leaders and back-to-back champions All Saints United at the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Monday.

Barrington Blake struck a first-half hat trick as the Jennings Grenades consolidated their second-place position by recording their 12th win in 15 matches with a 5-2 victory against the bottom team, the Ottos Rangers FC, at the ABFA Technical Center.

Blake had conversions in the 40th, 43rd, and 45th minutes, while the other goals for the Jennings Grenades were scored by Malcolm Stewart in the 58th minute and Troy Jules in the 69th minute.

Howayne James scored both goals for the Ottos Rangers, including the opening goal of the match in the 36th minute before converting his second with a strike in the 47th minute.

The result allows the Jennings Grenades to advance to 38 points, three adrift of All Saints United. The Ottos Rangers remain at the bottom of the standings with four points after losing for the 14th time in 16 matches.

Meanwhile, the Guydadli Jets maintained their unbeaten run to consolidate their position at the top of the ABFA's Second Division League.

The Guydadli Jets notched up their 13th win in 15 matches with a 3-1 victory against Belmont FC at Cashew Hill.

Nicholas Clarke scored twice with strikes in the 12th and 40th minutes to give the Guydadli Jets a two-nil lead at halftime. Iandre Hodge reduced the deficit for Belmont FC with a 49th-minute conversion, but his teammate Michael Woode scored an own goal to seal victory for the Guydadli Jets.

A starting XI of the Jennings Grenades football team

The result allows the Guydadli Jets to maintain their six-point lead at the top of the Second Division by advancing to 41 points. Belmont FC remains in 13th place with 14 points after suffering their ninth defeat in 15 matches.

The Young Lions of Old Road stayed in second place and within six points of the Guydadli Jets by recording their 11th win in 14 matches with a 3-1 victory against the Urlings Golden Stars at the Old Road playing field.

The Young Lions had to overcome a one-nil deficit after Derrick Pryce scored in the 20th minute to give the Urlings Golden Stars a one-nil lead at halftime.

But Stefan Smith struck twice, snatching the equalizer with a 68th-minute conversion and scoring a second in the 73rd minute to give the Young Lions a 2-1 lead.

Calique Shaquan Simon scored a third goal for the Young Lions in the 74th minute to wrap up the win.

The result allows the Young Lions of Old Road to move on to 35 points, while the Urlings Golden Stars remain in 10th place with 20 points after slumping to their sixth defeat in 14 matches.

However, Sea View Farm FC lost ground on the front-runners after dropping more points in a 2-3 loss to Police FC at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

The Police scored three times in the second half to overcome a two-goal deficit and snatched victory after Justin Hilaire scored twice with conversions in the fifth and ninth minutes to give Sea View Farm FC a two-nil lead at halftime.

Jamary Galloway struck twice with conversions in the 53rd and 62nd minutes after teammate Dimitri Scotland scored in the 52nd minute to snatch victory for the Police.

The result allows Sea View Farm FC to remain in third place on goal difference with 32 points after succumbing to their second defeat in 14 matches.

Police FC jumped from seventh to sixth place by advancing to 30 points after recording their ninth win in 13 matches.

Action continues in Inter-Schools' Netball League

COOL & SMOOTH We Supply EVERYTHING!

MINISTRY OF SPORTS

Joma CARIBBEAN

Schools Netball Competition

The Ministry of Sports Inter-Schools' Netball League continued with matches in the 13 and under secondary division at the YMCA Sports Complex on Monday.

Jennings Secondary School snatched a narrow 6-4 victory over Sir Novelle Richards Academy. Goal shooter Philika Haynes sank four of her six shots for Jennings Secondary School, while goal attack Anna Thompson scored three of her eight attempts for Sir Novelle Richards Academy.

Clare Hall Secondary School pulled off a 6-5 victory against the first team of the Antigua Girls High School (AGHS-1). Goal shooter Sa Sheel Lewin converted six of her 10 shots for Clare Hall Secondary School, while goal shooter Shay Martin scored four of her 10 tries for AGHS-1.

All Saints Secondary School prevailed 7-2 against Pares Secondary School. Goal attack Jahmyra Thomas scored four of her eight tries, and goal shooter Aleccandra James converted three of her 14 attempts for All Saints Secondary School. Goal attack Luchean Smith sank two of her three shots for Pares Secondary School.

The third team of the Antigua Girls High School (AGHS-3) secured a 6-5 victory against Pares Secondary School. Goal shooter Deshanna Morgan scored five of her 11 shots for AGHS-3, while goal attack Luchean Smith sank four of her six attempts for Pares Secondary School.

The second team of the Antigua Girls High School (AGHS-2) claimed a 3-1 victory over All Saints Secondary School. Jamelia Anglin scored two of her five attempts for AGHS-2.

All Saints Secondary School clinched a 6-4 victory over Jennings Secondary School. Goal attack Jahmyra Thomas scored five of her 11 tries for All Saints Secondary School, while goal shooter Philika Haynes sank three of her five shots for Jennings Secondary.

The fourth team of the Antigua Girls High School (AGHS-4) notched up a 9-4 victory over Jennings Secondary School.

Goal shooter Tina Graham converted seven of her 13 shots for AGHS-4. Goal shooter Natalie Salano sank both of her two attempts, and goal attack Philika Haynes sank two of her three shots for Jennings Secondary School.

Sir Clive claims Sammy needs help

Sir Clive Lloyd, widely regarded as the greatest West Indies captain of all time, has called on Cricket West Indies (CWI) to provide current head coach Daren Sammy with some much-needed help going forward.

While admitting that the regional team had a commendable showing at the recently concluded ICC Men's T20 World Cup where they were eliminated at the Super Eights stage, Sir Clive said Sammy, who was appointed all-formats head coach last April, could not achieve the desired results by himself.

Speaking in a recent interview on i95.5 FM, the 81-year-old Lloyd said while CWI would have the final say on whether Sammy remains in charge of all three formats, he believes they are several persons across the region who are well equipped to assist him in his capacity as head coach.

"It's entirely up to the board. It's a performance-related situation; you get performance-related pay and it's the same thing with your standing as a coach. Is he doing a good job, is he not doing a good job? The board has got to make that decision.

"I still would like to see him getting help from other people; have a selection of people there, guys who understand the game because he alone will take all the stick if they don't do well," Sir Clive explained.

"We have 14 islands, so we have to please a lot of people, so I think he needs help…because if you're not doing well then it's obvious people will want to put the blame on somebody."

Meanwhile, Cricket West Indies has been forced to abandon plans for an ICC-organised charter flight and secure commercial travel for its squad members stranded in India, ending a nine-day wait that had become "increasingly distressing" for players and staff.

In a statement released on Tuesday, CWI confirmed that after repeated delays to charter arrangements handled by the International Cricket Council (ICC), it was no longer prudent to wait.

The charter, intended to transport both the West Indies and South Africa teams home following their involvement in ICC events, was hit by ongoing uncertainty stemming from global tensions and aviation regulations.

"As is customary for both men's and women's ICC World Cups, all travel and accommodation arrangements for participating teams are coordinated and managed by the ICC," the CWI statement noted.

However, with the squad having already spent nine days in India after completing their playing commitments, patience wore thin.

"The ongoing uncertainty surrounding the ICC-organised charter made the situation increasingly distressing," CWI explained.

"In the interest of the well-being and safety of its players and support staff, Cricket West Indies advised the ICC that it was no longer prudent to continue waiting."

Multiple approaches have since been made through CWI, players, and other partners, in coordination with the ICC, to secure commercial travel to facilitate the squad's safe return.

Some members of the touring party have already departed, with the remaining contingent scheduled to fly out on Tuesday, March 10, and Wednesday, March 11.

CWI expressed gratitude to fans and stakeholders for their concern throughout the ordeal, thanking everyone for their support and patience as the situation was finally resolved.

Sports

WEDNESDAY 11TH MARCH 2026

POINT EXPRESS ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

Browne wins opening race of 2026 domestic cycling season

Young sensation Tahje Browne has won the first race of the 2026 domestic season of the Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation (ABCF).

Browne was the standout performer of the day, winning the 38.25-kilometer Annual Jenel Warner Road Race, which comprised one lap from the Pan Am Base in Coolidge to Willikies Village and back, on Sunday.

With the best total time of one hour, six minutes, and 49.89 seconds, Browne staved off a strong challenge from Jomari King to win the Elite Male category and emerged as the overall winner of the race.

King pushed Browne all the way to clinch second place, crossing the finish line approximately one second later in an overall time of one hour, six minutes, and 50.25 seconds.

Newell Mack came in third from a field of nine competitors with a time of one hour, seven minutes, and four seconds. However, veteran cyclist Jyme Bridges did not finish the race.

Aiden Tonge won the Junior Male category by clocking one hour, six minutes, and 51.32 seconds. Elite Thomas took second place in one hour, 12 minutes, and 09.75 seconds.

Benjamin Carr stole the show to win the 11-14 Cadets category, which competed over a shorter course than the other classes in the race.

Carr clocked a total time of 52 minutes and 42.51 seconds, and D'Jani Richards came in second by clocking 52 minutes and 49 seconds.

Tiziano Rosignoli retained his title in the Masters category with a total time of one hour, seven minutes, and 31.65 seconds. His experience was evident as he finished approximately two minutes ahead of Randy Simon, who took second place, and Jamel Gloade in third.

Cornel Hughes won the Sports Class category with a time of one hour, seven minutes, and 32.76 seconds. Tiger Tyson came in second, and Dexter Simmons captured third place.

Lone competitor Telesha Choy took the female category with a time of one hour, 38 minutes, and 04.93 seconds.

A total of 28 cyclists, three less than last year, participated in the opening race of the new ABCF's domestic season.

Champion Tahje Browne, fourth right, on the starting line during the Jenel Warner Road Race at the Pam Am Base in Coolidge on Sunday, March 8, 2026. (Photo courtesy of the ABCF)

Editor: Everton Barnes. Published by Pointville Communications, Lower North Street, St. John's, Antigua
Tel: (268) 562-4989 Editorials and Reporting: evertonbarnes@gmail.com; advertising: Sales@pointville.ag.