

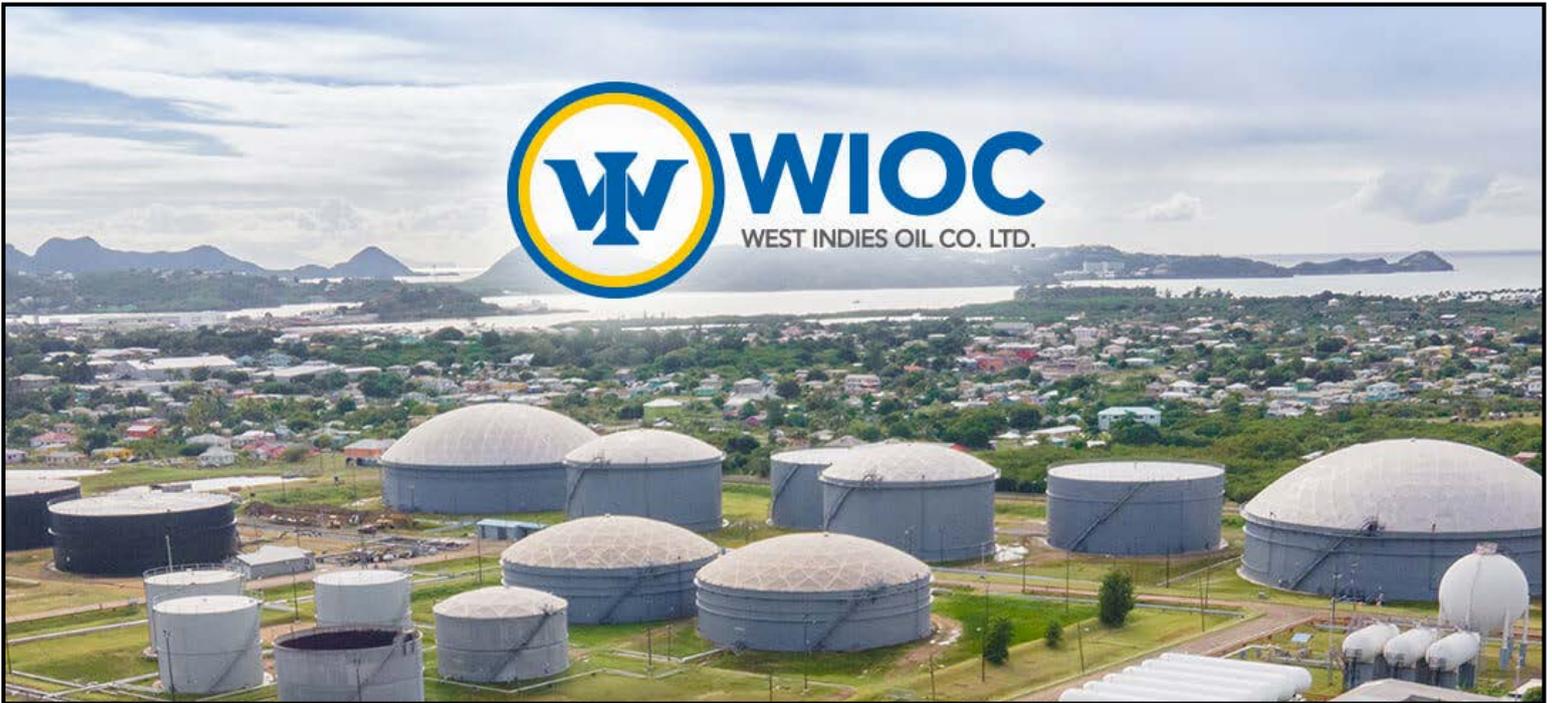
WIOC Tells Consumers ‘Don’t Panic!’

Story on page 2



Left to right: Newly appointed Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sharon Stevens, Foreign Affairs Minister E.P Chet Greene, new Peruvian Ambassador Gustavo Lembcke, Director General of Foreign Affairs, Ann Marie Layne and Deputy Permanent Secretary, Karen Cabrall

WIOC Assures Public of Adequate LPG Supply



West Indies Oil Company Limited (WIOC) advises the public that it has observed a sudden and significant increase in the purchase of LPG cylinders across the island, amid unnecessary public concern and speculation.

WIOC wishes to assure all customers that there is an adequate supply of LPG and sufficient cylinder availability to meet normal consumer demand. There is no shortage of product or cylinders, and there is therefore no need for members of the public to stockpile at this time.

WIOC also wishes to clarify that there have been no discussions with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda concerning any increase in the price of LPG cylinders.

The Company is monitoring the situation closely and is taking the necessary measures to ensure the continued reliable supply and distribution of LPG throughout Antigua and Barbuda.

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Cabinet Accepts Minimum Wage Recommendation

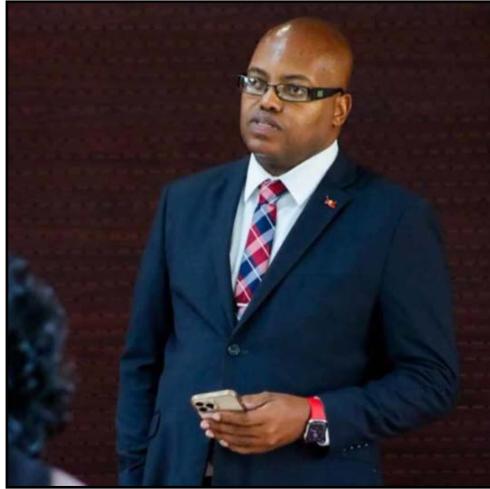
The Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda has accepted a recommendation to increase the national minimum wage from \$9 to \$13 per hour, following a presentation by the National Minimum Wage Advisory Committee.

During Thursday's Post-Cabinet Press Briefing, Director General of Communications Maurice Merchant said the Cabinet received the committee's report during its weekly meeting on Wednesday and formally considered the findings and proposals aimed at adjusting the country's current minimum wage.

He explained that the committee—comprising representatives from government, employers' federations and trade unions—was tasked with reviewing the adequacy of the existing wage structure. The group examined stakeholder feedback and conducted an assessment of the current economic environment before arriving at its recommendation.

He told reporters the committee concluded that the present minimum wage of \$9 per hour no longer adequately reflects the realities faced by workers, particularly amid rising living costs. As a result, it recommended an increase to \$13 per hour to better align wages with prevailing economic conditions.

After reviewing the report and the consultations undertaken by the com-



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

mittee, Cabinet agreed to adopt the recommendation. However, the wage adjustment will be implemented gradually over a three-year period rather than as an immediate increase, it was noted.

The Director General of Communications said the phased approach is intended to give businesses sufficient time to adjust to the higher wage while ensuring that workers receive steady and meaningful improvements in their earnings.

"The Cabinet has agreed that the adjustments should be implemented in phases over a three-year period," Merchant explained, noting that the approach is designed to balance the interests of workers and employers.

Cabinet has also requested that the

National Minimum Wage Advisory Committee undertake further consultations with a wider cross-section of stakeholders before finalizing how the increases will be structured across the three-year timeline.

Possible options include incremental adjustments—such as moving from \$9 to \$10, then to \$11, and eventually reaching \$13—though Merchant emphasized that the final structure will depend on the committee's forthcoming recommendations.

To support its work, the committee is expected to meet with several specialists who can provide expert advice on wage policy and economic impact. The aim, Merchant stated, is to ensure that the adjustments deliver the greatest possible benefit to workers while minimizing potential disruption to businesses and the broader economy.

Members of Cabinet acknowledged the importance of striking a fair and sustainable balance between improving workers' standard of living and maintaining a stable and competitive business environment in Antigua and Barbuda.

Merchant said the government remains committed to policies that promote fair wages, support economic growth and improve the overall quality of life for the people of Antigua and Barbuda.



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Students in Cuba 'Faring Well' Despite Challenges, Government Says

A government spokesman has dismissed reports circulating in some sections of the public that Antiguan and Barbudan students studying in Cuba are in severe distress.

Contrary to such reports, Director General of Communications, Maurice Merchant, has confirmed that the students themselves have indicated they are managing despite ongoing challenges being experienced in Cuba.

Responding to a request for an update on the students' wellbeing at Thursday's Post-Cabinet Press Briefing, Merchant said the government has maintained regular communication with the students, adding some reports had painted an inaccurate picture of the situation.

"There was some malicious information that was in the media about them being in dire straits and that they need help and so forth," Merchant stated.

He outlined that the government has been closely monitoring the situation and has been in direct contact with Antiguan and Barbudan students currently pursuing studies in Cuba.

"The government has been in constant communication with our students in the Republic of Cuba," Merchant said. "The students have indicated that while there are challenges, they are faring very well."

According to him, the government has also implemented several measures to mitigate the impact of conditions currently being experienced in Cuba, including shortages and infrastructure challenges.

"Government has put in place a number of measures to ensure that as a re-



sult of certain conditions within Cuba, they are not affected significantly," he explained, acknowledging that students have reported difficulties including shortages of some basic products as well as intermittent utility services.

"They have reported that there are shortages in some products, there are electricity outages, water suppression and so forth," he said.

Despite those issues, Merchant said the students remain committed to continuing their academic programmes.

"However, they are coping very well and are pursuing their studies and they are anxious to continue," he noted.

He added that several students are also preparing to complete their programmes later this year.

"Those who are scheduled to graduate this coming semester, later on this year, they are also anxious to complete their studies and to return to Antigua and Barbuda to give service," Mer-

chant said.

The government reiterated its commitment to maintaining contact with the students and ensuring that they receive the necessary support while studying abroad.

Tighter sanctions imposed by the United States continue to strain Cuba's economy and disrupt key imports, including oil supplies.

In early February, the government in Saint John's informed the general public that rather than acting independently, it was working as part of a coordinated regional approach through CARICOM to assess conditions on the ground in Cuba. That collaboration it was noted, produced contingency and emergency response plans designed to protect students from across the region, including those from Antigua and Barbuda. Safety protocols and support frameworks were also developed to address a range of scenarios, should conditions further deteriorate.

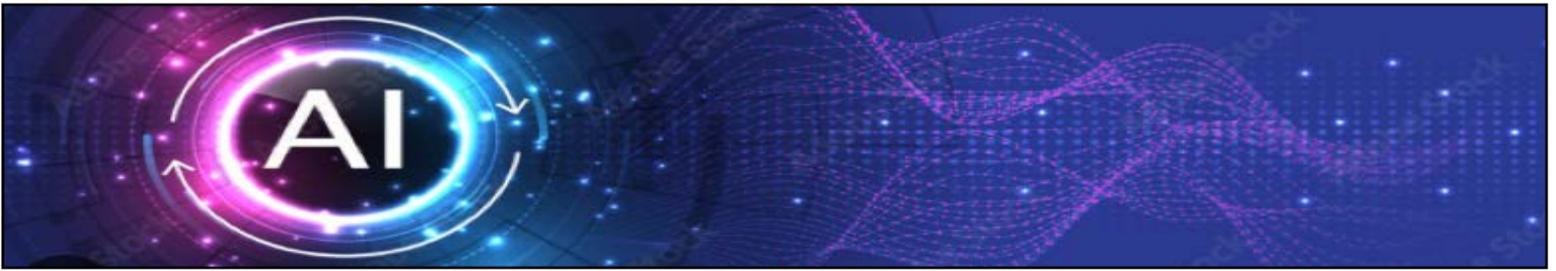


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- Integrate AI services and internal systems through secure APIs.
- Deploy and manage containerized services using Kubernetes and DevOps practices.
- Maintain system monitoring, documentation, and operational procedures.
- Ensure systems operate in accordance with security and governance standards.

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Software Engineering, Artificial Intelligence, or a related field (or equivalent experience).
- Minimum 3 years' experience in DevOps, software engineering, or AI systems development.
- Hands-on experience with Kubernetes and containerized applications.
- Experience with workflow automation platforms (e.g., n8n, Zapier, Make, or similar).
- Experience integrating AI or LLM APIs into operational systems.
- Strong knowledge of API development, REST services, and system integrations.
- Experience with version control systems (Git) and CI/CD pipelines.

Preferred Skills

- Experience developing AI agents or intelligent automation workflows.
- Familiarity with vector databases and retrieval-augmented generation (RAG).
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Selection Process

Shortlisted candidates may be required to present a technical proof of concept demonstrating their ability to design and implement AI-driven automation solutions relevant to the role.

Application Process

Applications should be submitted to hrtalentmanagement268@gmail.com no later than 20th March 2026

Antigua and Barbuda Urges Deeper Relations With Peru



Antigua and Barbuda wants to foster deeper relations with the Republic of Peru, the Spanish-speaking country of western coast of South America.

This intention was articulated on Thursday by Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Chet during a courtesy call by the new Peruvian Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda, Gustavo Lembcke.

Minister Greene noted that while diplomatic ties between the two countries were established back in 1985 not

much has happened in both ways and the only engagements of significance were on the margins of the annual UN General Assembly in September.

“I hope that your appointment will be the beginning of renewed relations between our countries as we are practically neighbours being part of the Americas. We have supported your initiatives at the UN but I believe that the time is now for us to do more,” the minister stated.

He identified areas of concern such as climate change, noting that Antigua

and Barbuda, being a smaller country disproportionately is impacted immediately from climate change. Minister Greene noted that with the presence of the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus there is the potential for relations with universities in Peru for such things as student exchanges as well as the teaching of Spanish to Antigua and Barbuda students.

In response, Ambassador Lembcke announced that his country is seeking to broaden its footprint in the Caribbean. He noted that already his coun-



try has two embassies in two Spanish-speaking countries – Cuba and the Dominican Republic – and in one English-speaking country, Trinidad and Tobago.

He revealed that he has been assigned to Antigua and Barbuda and three other Caribbean countries, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis and Haiti. The Port of Spain embassy will have responsibility for Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia.

“We believe that this will strengthen our position in the Caribbean allowing us to strengthen our ties with this part of the region and to promote the establishment of political mechanism at the bilateral and regional levels,” he indicated.

He recalled that Peru had submitted a MOU to the government back in 2022 for its consideration and Minis-



ter Greene gave a commitment that the government will take a fresh look at it and to see how soon it can be signed and implemented.



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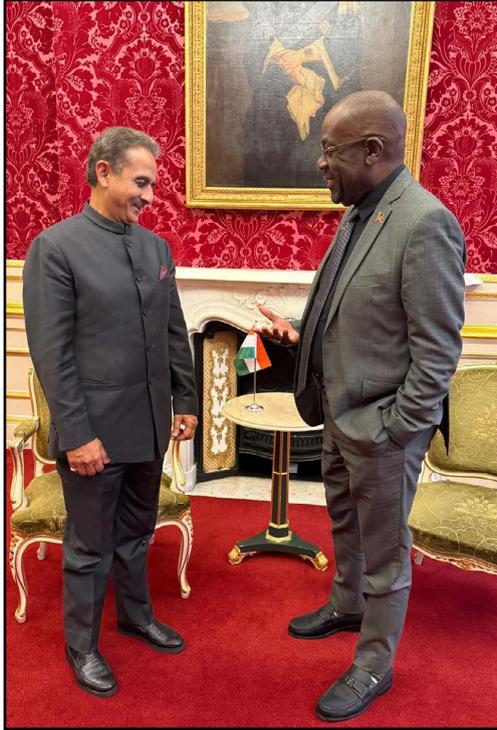
Antigua and Barbuda, India Advance CHOGM 2026 Cooperation

Antigua and Barbuda and India continue to discuss matters of mutual interest especially the country’s hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in November this year.

During this week’s visit to the United Kingdom, Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene held bilateral discussions with the Indian Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

The discussions focused on fortifying bilateral relations and advancing practical cooperation in preparation for CHOGM which Antigua and Barbuda will host from 1st to 4th November 2026 in St. John’s.

Minister Greene expressed appreciation for India’s longstanding partnership with Small Island Developing States and highlighted Antigua and Barbuda’s priority areas of support in the lead-up to CHOGM 2026. These include maritime security coopera-



Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene held bilateral discussions with the Indian Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

tion, assistance with procuring mo-

torcycles to enhance security mobility and motorcade operations, and technical support for audiovisual systems at the main conference venue to ensure world-class meeting facilities for Heads of Government.

Both Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to deepening cooperation in security, technology, and capacity building. They agreed to maintain close technical coordination to advance the identified areas of collaboration.

Minister Greene welcomed India’s continued engagement within the Commonwealth of Nations and expressed confidence that India’s partnership would contribute meaningfully to the successful hosting of CHOGM 2026.

Foreign Minister Greene was accompanied to the bilateral by UK-based High Commissioner, Karen-Mae Hill, and Minister Counsellor, Chantal Philip.

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CHOGM Envoy Sir Vivian Makes a Splash in the UK

Cricket icon and Antiguan and Barbudan national hero Sir Vivian Richards represented Antigua and Barbuda at the 2026 Commonwealth Day celebrations in London, participating in a series of high-level engagements that highlighted the country's role as host of the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2026.

Observed annually, Commonwealth Day brings together leaders, diplomats, and citizens from across the 56 member states to celebrate shared values of democracy, cooperation, and development. This year's observance included a ceremonial flag-raising at the UK Parliament, a wreath-laying ceremony at Memorial Gates in Hyde Park, the traditional multi-faith service at Westminster Abbey, and a reception hosted by the Commonwealth Secretary-General at St James's Palace. The 2026 Commonwealth Day theme, "Unlocking Opportunities Together for a Prosperous Commonwealth,"



highlights the collective commitment of member states to strengthening cooperation, advancing sustainable development, and creating opportunities for citizens across the Commonwealth.

Sir Vivian's presence formed part of Antigua and Barbuda's diplomatic engagement surrounding the celebrations and the promotion of the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be hosted in



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the country later this year. As the official Envoy for CHOGM 2026, he engaged with Commonwealth officials, members of the diplomatic corps, and international media, helping to spotlight Antigua and Barbuda's preparations to welcome leaders from across the Commonwealth.

Reflecting on the significance of the occasion, Sir Vivian Richards stated, "The Commonwealth represents a family of nations united by shared values, history, and opportunity. It is an honour to represent Antigua and Barbuda as we prepare to welcome the world for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Sport, particularly cricket, has long connected people across the Commonwealth, reminding us of the power of unity, respect, and shared purpose."

The visit was coordinated by the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission in London, reflecting its continued role in advancing the country's diplomatic outreach and strengthening engagement with Commonwealth partners in the lead-up to the historic summit. There was also kind support given by the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA), whose partnership remains instrumental in elevating Antigua and Barbuda's profile internationally.

Antigua and Barbuda will host the 29th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting from 1st to 4th November 2026, marking a historic mo-

ment for the twin-island nation as it prepares to welcome leaders from all Commonwealth countries to deliberate on key global and regional issues.

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.



Antigua Carnival 2026 Official Launch Event Set for April 11!

The Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission (ABFC) has officially announced the launch event for Antigua Carnival 2026, inviting residents and visitors to experience the first major moment of the Carnival season on Saturday, 11th April 2026, at the Rising Sun Grounds.

Held under the theme *“Feel the Rhythm,”* the launch will mark the beginning of the celebrations for what is proudly known as “Antigua Carnival - The Caribbean’s Greatest Summer Festival.” Designed as an engaging cultural experience, this event will transform the venue into a lively space where the music, traditions, and creative expressions that define Antigua Carnival take centre stage. The event is free to the public and starts at 2:00 PM, offering an afternoon and evening filled with culture, music, and community engagement.

The Commission has planned the launch to be more than just a traditional announcement of the Carnival calendar. Patrons will be welcomed into the Carnival Rhythm Village, an immersive cultural environment that captures the spirit and energy of the festival. The village will include food and artisan vendors, a children’s zone, cultural drumming demonstrations, DJ-mixed rhythmic sets, steelband showcases, and traditional iron band performances. Patrons will also be able to enjoy interactive elements such as pulse-themed photo stations and vibrant Carnival installations, while Carnival costume and T-shirt mas displays will offer patrons an ear-



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ly glimpse of the upcoming season’s creativity, along with opportunities for discounted early registration.

As the evening advances, the celebration will transition into a lively stage production beginning at 7:00 PM, highlighting the musical and cultural features of Antigua Carnival. A special tribute segment will honour legendary Calypsonians whose music has helped shape the festival’s identity. The tribute will celebrate the legacy of King Short Shirt, Calypso Joe, King Obstinate, and King Swallow, whose timeless contributions continue to inspire generations of performers and Carnival fans. The evening will also showcase the next generation of Antiguan talent with appearances from several young performers and pageant representatives, including Junior Calypso Monarch Ruez Titre, Junior Soca Monarch (Groovy) Ava Magloire, Junior Soca Monarch (Jumpy) Jontae Francis, Mr. Teenage Antigua William Christian, and Miss Teenage Antigua Tekyra Richards. The programme will

also feature the introduction of the 2026 Queen of Carnival delegates, alongside the reigning Queen of Carnival 2025, Kia Kirwan. Adding to the excitement, the audience will enjoy performances from the 2025 Carnival champions, including Calypso Monarch G’Eve, Road March Champion Soca Villan, and Party Monarch Tian Winter, whose acts will bring the energy and spirit of Antigua’s soca and calypso traditions to the stage.

Speaking on the significance of the launch, Elizabeth Makhoul, Chairperson of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission, noted that the event signifies an important cultural milestone for the nation. *“The official launch of Antigua Carnival marks the start of a season that celebrates the very essence of our identity as a people. This year’s theme, Feel the Rhythm, captures the heartbeat of our culture, from the drum and steelpan to calypso and soca, bridging generations through music and celebration. The Rhythm Village experience will enable attendees to fully immerse themselves in the sights, sounds, and spirit of Carnival as we begin the exciting journey towards Antigua Carnival 2026.”*

The Commission affirms that the launch aims to set the tone for the Carnival season by celebrating cultural heritage, national pride, people’s participation, and the vibrancy of Antigua and Barbuda’s creative industries. In 2026, Antigua and Barbuda will not merely host Carnival; we will *“Feel the Rhythm.”*

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ANTIGUA Carnival 2026

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Government announces the Closure of St. John's Public Cemetery

The government has announced that the St. John's Cemetery which has been the country's main site for burials for many decades, will be effectively closed from the end of this month.

This comes as the government commissioned a new public cemetery, Tranquility Park, located on the Sir Sydney Walling Highway last year and where most burials take place today.

The closure of the St. John's Cemetery and the opening of Tranquility Park come after it was reported that the cemetery had long since reached its carrying capacity.

Chief Government spokesman, Director of Communications, Maurice Merchant announced that under the new arrangement, **no new burials will be permitted at the cemetery.** However, Cabinet has agreed that **family members who have existing tombs or burial plots within the cemetery will continue to be allowed to inter**



relatives in those family tombs.

This measure is intended to manage

space constraints while maintaining respect for families who already have established burial sites.



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Canadian Female Visitor Remanded On Drug Charges

A Canadian female visitor to the country has been remanded to His Majesty's Prison after she appeared in the magistrate's court on charges of possession and importation of 67 pounds of cannabis into the country.

48-year old Roselyne Pamela Sia Crisistomo was intercepted on Tuesday by alert customs officials at the airport. She has been charged with possession of cannabis, possession with intent to transfer, importation of the substance as well as trafficking.

These are indictable offences and these matters must now be referred to the High Court.

The police have determined that the 67 pounds of cannabis are valued EC\$536,000.00.



Crisistomo has been remanded to HMP pending committal proceedings as she is considered to be a flight risk with no ties with the

country.

Her next court appearance is on May 13, 2026.

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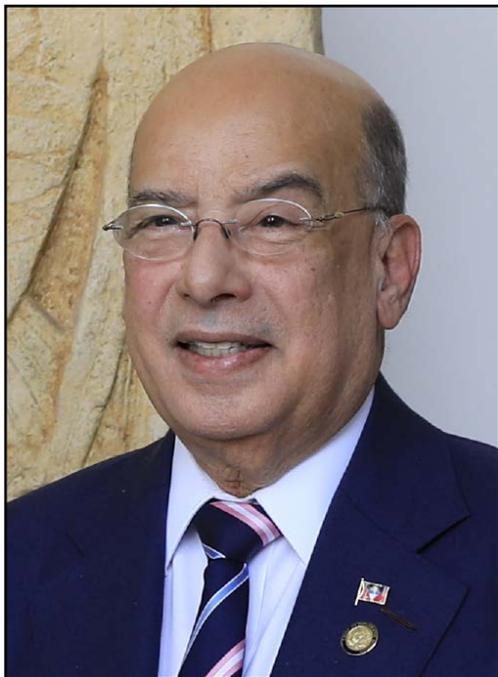
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Commentary

Haitians should not be forgotten or left stranded



By Sir Ronald Sanders

Amid the current turmoil in the world, it is important that, in the Americas, we should not forget the urgent humanitarian and political crisis confronting the Haitian people.

For many years, the United States has been the principal destination for Haitians seeking refuge, security, and opportunity beyond their homeland. It has done so while contending with migratory pressures from other parts of the world that strain border systems, public services, local administrations and domestic politics. In those circumstances, it is understandable that the present U.S. administration should seek firmer control over immigration policy.

The Caribbean should acknowledge that reality plainly. It is neither fair nor

prudent to speak as though the United States has an unlimited obligation to absorb the consequences of Haiti's prolonged collapse. Every state has both a sovereign right and a public duty to manage migration in an orderly way and with proper regard to its own resources and social stability.

Caribbean governments should also approach the issue with some humility. Our own record does not suggest any broad readiness to receive large numbers of Haitians.

The Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, has for years responded to Haitian migration with increasingly restrictive measures. People may differ on aspects of those policies. But one fact is plain: a country closest to Haiti's daily reality has concluded that its own capacity has limits, and that the pressures arising from Haiti's collapse cannot be absorbed without serious domestic consequences.

Similar caution is evident within CARICOM. Haiti is a valued member of the Community, and there is sympathy across the region for the suffering of the Haitian people. But sympathy has not translated into any broad willingness to open borders widely to Haitian migration. The smaller states of the Caribbean do not have the economic resilience, institutional strength, or social infrastructure to absorb significant inflows from a country as large and as distressed as Haiti.

That is not indifference. It is recognition of hard facts. In several CARICOM countries, even modest mi-

gration inflows can place pressure on housing, education, health care, employment, and public order. Caribbean governments understand this only too well, and that understanding should make them more appreciative of the pressures felt in the United States.

Still, sympathy for the American position cannot settle the matter.

The issue before the United States Supreme Court is whether Temporary Protected Status should be ended for large numbers of Haitians while Haiti remains in profound crisis. The question is not about the United States' right to regulate immigration, nor about whether TPS was ever meant to be permanent. The real issue is whether Haiti is now in a condition that allows the safe and dignified return of substantial numbers of people. On any serious view of present realities, the answer is no.

Haiti remains trapped in a crisis that is at once political, humanitarian, and criminal. Armed gangs continue to control or contest major areas. Public institutions remain fragile. Large numbers of people have been displaced. Daily life is marked by insecurity and fear. The country has not recovered even the minimum stability that would justify confidence in largescale return.

Nor is it true that the international community has simply ignored Haiti. The problem is not awareness but the absence of an effective response equal to the scale of the crisis.

The United Nations Security Council has acted. The Secretary General of the Organization of American


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Commentary

States (OAS) has produced a roadmap. CARICOM's Eminent Persons Group helped facilitate the arrangements that led to the Transitional Presidential Council. Yet the security presence remains too small and underfunded. The OAS roadmap has not attracted the mobilisation of resources it requires. The mandate of the Haiti Transitional Council ended without resolving the major issues it was meant to address, including basic security and a credible path to elections.

Haiti has since drifted back into rule by decree under an unelected administration, amid continuing political discontent and the persistent dominance of armed gangs.

What is required now is not vague appeals to international goodwill, but proper financing and execution of measures already identified: stronger security support, firmer action against the gangs' arms supply, practical backing for political transition, and economic and humanitarian assistance directed inside Haiti itself.

The effort should be aimed at reducing the causes of flight in Haiti, not only debating which countries must bear the consequences.

That is the wider context in which the present American legal proceedings should be judged. The United States is entitled to say that it has carried a disproportionate share of Haiti's burden. It is also entitled to seek a more orderly immigration system. But if Haiti is still in no condition to receive substantial numbers of returnees safely, then caution is not weakness. It is sound judgement.

Haiti has not lacked plans, meetings, mandates, or declarations. What it has lacked is decisive and coherent effect. The country resembles an outclassed boxer in the ring, taking blow after blow, bloodied but still upright. From time to time, those at ringside keep him from falling. But no one has yet found a way to stop the beating and restore his strength.

That image, stark though it is, cap-

tures the present truth. Haiti is still standing, but standing is not recovery. Survival is not stability. Endurance, however admirable, is not a substitute for effective policy.

This is why the present moment calls for realism. The United States deserves understanding for the burden it has borne. The Caribbean should be candid about its own inability to absorb a larger Haitian exodus. But neither reality alters the essential fact that Haiti is still in no condition to sustain substantial repatriation without risking deeper disorder.

The answer, therefore, does not lie in moral reproach, nor in inviting small Caribbean states to assume burdens

they plainly cannot carry. It lies in recognising that Haiti's recovery must be pursued where it can be most effective: in security, in political legitimacy, in humanitarian relief, and in economic support within Haiti itself.

Until Haiti is made safer, better governed, and more capable of sustaining its own people, prudence requires that protection abroad not be withdrawn before conditions at home justify return.

(The author is the Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the United States and the OAS, and Chancellor of the University of Guyana. Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronaldsanders.com)



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Regional News

Farmers at Spencers, Christ Church, are concerned over what they claim to be the dumping of septic waste on the agricultural land that they cultivate.

Barbados Nation: The farmers say the matter has been a long-standing struggle, with septic trucks travelling to the site and unloading their waste at one of the entry points to the farmland.

Farmer Orlando Haynes and others on site said they have seen trucks enter the area and dump the waste at least once a month. He said that sometimes the load is so heavy that the effluence leaks onto the main road and onto the tracks that farmers drive through.

“When it’s raining it’s worse because the smell is stronger. It smells terrible. I would like them to stop dumping it there and find somewhere else to dump that,” Haynes said.

Vendor Amanda Oxford expressed concerns about the sanitary conditions of the effluence in the area, not-

ing that the smell has intensified since Monday when the trucks returned twice in one day to dump their waste into the area.

“I have to bring tarp down to block the smell and I have to keep a mask on. It’s not healthy, something has to be done,” Oxford said.

They throw it every year, but to me, it’s smelling worse this year. They dumped it two times on Monday and then if the sun is hot the smell is more intense,” she said.

Farmer James Matthews said even though the stench does not reach his side of the plantation, it is still a problem for travellers along the main road and anyone entering the field.

“At this moment it is not an issue for us in the interior but as long as you’re



passing in here, you have to deal with it. You can smell it from the time you get off the bus, it would have you catching bad feels, it is definitely devastating,” he said.

A health inspector who asked not to be named and was on the site when the **DAILY NATION** team visited the area, said it was the first time that the incident was reported

and that an assessment of the situation would be conducted.

In an interview with **Starcom Network**, attorney and farmer Amoy Gilding-Bourne called for the longstanding matter to be addressed, noting that the conditions were not ideal for agricultural work.



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Regional News



Robinson: \$10B Sugary drinks tax will hurt consumers



Jamaica Gleaner: Opposition Spokesman on Finance, Julian Robinson has cast doubt on the government's claim that the imposition of a \$10 billion tax on sugary drinks for the next fiscal year is a public health measure intended to reduce the consumption of sweet drinks.

While acknowledging that high sugar intake constitutes a real health concern and requires serious policy attention, Robinson said where the opposition parts ways with the government is whether this levy is genuinely about resolving that problem.

In his contribution to the 2026/2027 Budget Debate in Gordon House this afternoon, Robinson said if the Government's concern was about reducing sugar consumption and improving health outcomes, it has a more effective instrument available to it.

According to Robinson, the administration could require local manufacturers to reformulate their products, to reduce the sugar content, and provide a time period within which to do so.

He said introducing that measure would directly reduce the amount of sugar people consume, but instead, the

administration chose to impose a tax.

Noting that the Government is the largest provider through the school feeding programme, Robinson said steps could be made to reduce sugar content for students in schools.

The people who consume sugary drinks in the highest volumes, said Robinson, are not necessarily doing so out of an attachment to sugar, but because the alternatives, including natural juices, coconut water, and other healthier options, are priced out of their reach.

The opposition spokesman insists that a tax genuinely designed to reduce consumption would project declining revenues as behaviour changes.

He said the Government would be looking at a shrinking revenue line, not a \$10 billion one.

opposition spokesman on finance, has cast doubt on the Government's claims that the imposition of a \$10 billion tax on sugary drinks for the new fiscal year is a public health measure intended to reduce the consumption of sweet drinks.

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Suspected gunman involved in Michigan synagogue shooting is dead, media reports



A suspect crashed his truck into the hallway of a Detroit-area synagogue where children were at preschool on Thursday and was killed in a confrontation with security personnel, with no one else seriously injured, authorities said.

Michigan State Police reported an “active shooting” incident at about 12:30 p.m. local time (1730 GMT) at Temple Israel Synagogue in the Detroit suburb of West Bloomfield.

It was unclear from early news briefings by law enforcement whether the suspect was armed. CBS News reported the suspect had a rifle, citing two sources, which Reuters could not immediately verify.

“We can’t say what killed him at this point, but security did engage the suspect with gunfire,” Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard told reporters. A law enforcement official told Reuters the perpetrator was shot dead. Whether he took his own life or was killed by security was not immediately confirmed.

Bouchard said the suspect, who was not immediately identified, crashed his truck through the doors to the synagogue and drove the

vehicle through a hallway before he encountered security. One security officer was struck by the vehicle and briefly knocked unconscious.

“We have no victims, other than one of the lead security people who was hit by the car and was taken to the hospital for treatment. That individual should be OK,” the sheriff said.

Temple Israel issued a statement saying all 140 students from its early childhood center were safe.

SPIKE IN ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS

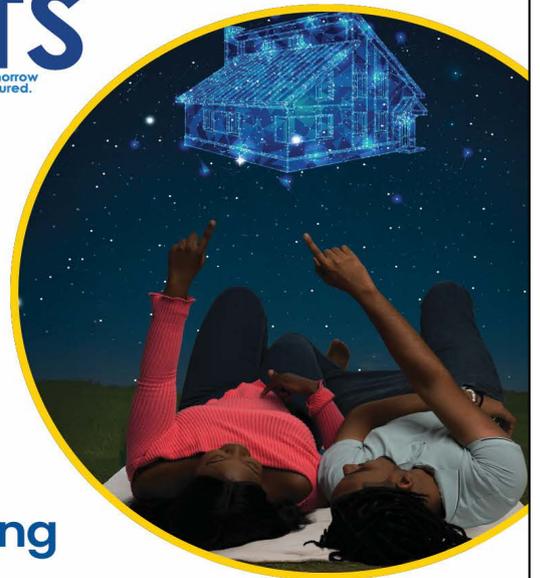
The incident comes amid a spike in antisemitism in the U.S. over the last two years, with anti-Jewish incidents accounting for nearly two-thirds of 5,300-plus religiously motivated hate crimes since February 2024, according to FBI data.

“Antisemitism has no place in Michigan and cannot be tolerated,” Michigan’s attorney general, Dana Nessel said in a statement. “In moments like these, it’s more important than ever that we come together, stand with our neighbors, confront hate whenever it appears, and build stronger communities.”



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Iran's new supreme leader vows to keep Hormuz shut in defiant first remarks



Iran will fight on and keep the Strait of Hormuz shut as leverage against the United States and Israel, new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said on Thursday in the first comments attributed to him since he succeeded his slain father.

Khamenei did not appear in person and the remarks were read out by a state television presenter. No images have been released of him since an Israeli strike at the start of the war that killed much of his family, including his father and wife.

Thursday's statement struck a defiant tone, with Khamenei calling on Iran's neighbours to shut U.S. bases on their territory and warning that Iran would continue to target them.

"I assure everyone that we will not neglect avenging the blood of your martyrs," said the hardline cleric, who is close to Iran's top military force.

"The popular demand is to continue our effective defence and make the enemy regret it. The lever of blocking the Strait of Hormuz must continue to be used," Khamenei added, referring to the shipping route through which a fifth of global oil normally passes along Iran's coast.

State television offered no explanation for why the message was read out rather than delivered in person. Iranian officials have said Khamenei was lightly wounded in the initial February 28 airstrikes, but the extent of his injuries is unclear.

The prospect that one of the most severe disruptions ever to hit global energy supplies could drag on sent oil prices surging back above \$100 a barrel, after falling earlier in the week on hopes of a swift end to the conflict.

TANKERS ABLAZE IN IRAQI PORT

There was uncertainty about the strait. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said some ships could still pass through if they coordinate with Iran's navy.

"After the current events, generally we cannot return to conditions before February 28," Baghaei said in comments carried by Mehr news agency, referring to the start date of the war.

Ghana to submit UN resolution on slavery reparations; eyes broad support

Ghana intends to propose a United Nations resolution recognising transatlantic slavery as the “gravest crime in the history of humankind” and calling for reparations, and expects broad support despite resistance in Europe.

The West African nation, a prominent advocate of reparations, opens new tab on the continent, plans to table the proposal at the U.N. General Assembly, possibly as early as this month, its Foreign Ministry said in a statement to Reuters.

The plan marks a new step in Africa’s efforts to seek accountability for historical injustices by former colonial powers, and the country hopes it will “enjoy the support of many member states”.

“The proposed resolution seeks to recognise transatlantic slave trade as the gravest crime in the history of humankind, taking into account its scale, duration, legalisation and enduring consequences,” it said.

While calls for reparations have gained momentum in recent years, there is also a growing backlash.

Several European leaders have opposed even discussing the subject, with critics arguing today’s states and institutions should not be held responsible for historical wrongs.

Asked if it expected opposition, the



ministry said: “A backlash against truth is one that we hope would not occur. Ghana is not seeking to reopen old wounds but to heal those wounds with truth.”

PUSH FOR REPARATIONS

African and Caribbean nations have been seeking to establish a special U.N. reparations tribunal, with lawyers noting previous tribunals had been created by resolution or by the Security Council.

The African Union (AU) last year set

out to create a «unified vision» among its 55 member states on what reparations may look like, from financial compensation and formal apologies to policy reforms. AU leaders endorsed the proposed resolution at a summit last month.

Member states of the Caribbean Community, which has outlined its own reparations plan, are also expected to support it



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Teams draw latest matches in Secondary Schools Cricket

Two fixtures ended in draws during the latest round of matches in the Under-19 Boys Division in the Ministry of Sports Secondary Schools Cricket Championship.

Rain forced the match between Clare Hall Secondary and Princess Margaret School to finish in a draw at Rising Sun.

Clare Hall Secondary School made 120 all out in 42.4 overs. There was a contribution of 27 extras.

Jaydon Joseph and Norman Bell each made 20, captain Jayden Charles scored 16, and Kiscean Francis made 11.

Kerique Mentore grabbed four for 20, Ondre Peters claimed two for 13, and Akez France picked up two for 21.

In reply, Princess Margaret School reached 50 for one in 3.2 overs when the match ended. Captain JQuan Athanaze slammed 48 off 17 balls, including five sixes

and three fours.

The match between Jennings Secondary and Sir Novelle Richards Academy at Antigua Grammar School's playing field also ended in a draw.

Jennings Secondary School won the toss and batted, scoring 117 all out in 23.5 overs. Estan Hill struck 36, and Giovanni Thomas smashed 32 off 22 balls, including four fours and two sixes.

Keion Knight contributed

13, Dillon Joseph scored 11, and Oziah Robertson scored 10. Rohan John grabbed six wickets for 30 runs, and Clayton Joseph picked up three for 23.

In reply, Sir Novelle Richards Academy crashed to 42 all out in 12.1 overs. Evrick Chambers scored 13, and captain Shaun Balgobin made 11.

Estan Hill snapped up six wickets for 11 runs, and Tiquan Tonge captured three for 25.

Gunners stay unbeaten in Division 2 basketball league



The Cedar Grove Gunners maintained their unbeaten run in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Wednesday evening.

The Gunners shot their way to their seventh win in as many matches by cruising an 81-54 victory over Da Project 2 in the second game of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Iornie Joseph produced 16 points, 18 rebounds, and five steals; Olivee Morris converted 13 points; John Rolland Jr. scored 10 points and grabbed 12 rebounds; and Tyras Grayman sank seven points and claimed 16 rebounds for the Cedar Grove Gunners.

Nathan Matthew produced 23 points, eight rebounds, and five steals, and Israel Clarke scored nine points and grabbed 13 rebounds for Da Project 2, who lost for the fourth time in eight games.

The Cuties Ovals Ojays claimed their

seventh win in eight encounters with a commanding 99-48 victory over Navigators 2 in the opening game of Wednesday's double-header.

Tajahron Davis produced 30 points, seven assists, five rebounds, and five steals; Theo Blair contributed 19 points, eight steals, and five rebounds; Orion Seraphine had 16 points, nine rebounds, and five steals; and Yohan Nicholas scored 13 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for the Ovals Ojays 2.

Henry Dorsette sank 13 points and claimed five rebounds, Raheem Sawyer converted 11 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, and Abdul Wadud scored nine points and snatched 14 rebounds for Navigators 2, who lost for the sixth time in eight games.



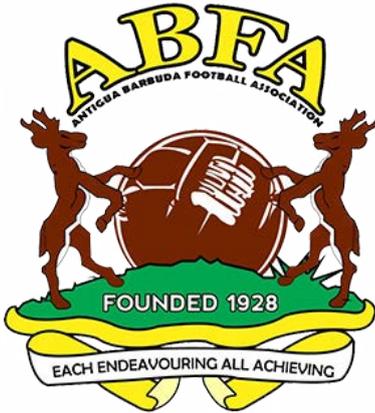
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Sports News

Wins for West Ham and Blackhawks in Second Division



Point West Ham FC and the Liberta Blackhawks recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League on Wednesday.

Point West Ham FC claimed their sixth win in 12 matches with a 3-1 victory over neighbours Blackburn Palace FC at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

Jayvin Ambrose scored in the third minute to put Blackburn Palace ahead, and Lloyd Sheppard scored an equalizer for Point West Ham with a 22nd-minute conversion as both teams reached halftime level at 1-1.

But Point West snatched victory by scoring twice in the second half via goals by Anderson Herbert in the 75th minute and Jahmarley Barzey in the third minute of added time.

The result allows Point West Ham FC to jump from 12th to 10th place by advancing to 20 points. Blackburn Palace will remain in fifth place with 31 points after slumping to their fourth defeat in 15 matches.

The Liberta Blackhawks notched up their fourth win in 15 matches by pulling off a 3-1 victory against Bethesda FC at the Freemans Village playing field.

Kazi Quinland scored in the 30th minute to give Bethesda FC a one-nil lead at halftime. Teammate Orville Christopher scored an own goal in the 56th minute to allow the Liberta Blackhawks to equalize.

Bethesda FC continued their own demise, being reduced to 10 players after Kyano Goodwin received a red card and was expelled in the 57th minute.

The Liberta Blackhawks capitalize on their one-man advantage to score twice and secure victory. Michael Greaves had a 59th-minute conversion, and Malique Martin scored their third goal in the 70th minute.

The result allows the Liberta Blackhawks to remain in 15th place on goal difference by advancing to 13 points. Bethesda FC remains in ninth place with 23 points after crashing to their fifth defeat in 14 matches.



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CWI names unchanged Windies women squad to face Australia



The West Indies women's cricket team. (CWI Media)

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced the West Indies Women's squad for the highly anticipated T20 International series against Australia women's national cricket team, set to take place from March 19–23 at Arnos Vale Cricket Ground in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The West Indies will field an unchanged squad as they prepare to take on the world's top-ranked side in what promises to be an electrifying contest on Caribbean soil.

The series forms a key part of the team's build-up to the ICC Women's T20 World Cup later this year in the United Kingdom, offering the perfect opportunity for the regional side to test their strength against one of the game's most dominant teams.

The upcoming clash follows a competitive home tour against Sri Lanka women's national cricket team, which provided valuable match experience for the Caribbean outfit.

Sri Lanka secured the three-match ODI series 2–1, but the West Indies responded in style in the final

encounter when captain Hayley Matthews produced a superb century to lead the team to a memorable six-wicket victory and prevent a clean sweep.

The squad blends proven match-winners with exciting young talent. Senior stars Stafanie Taylor, Deandra Dottin, and captain Hayley Matthews bring experience and firepower, while wicketkeeper-batter Shemaine Campbelle stands on the verge of a milestone, expected to earn her 150th T20 International cap during the series.

Emerging prospects Eboni Brathwaite (17) and Jahzara Claxton (19) add youthful energy as the West Indies look to challenge Australia's dominance and build momentum in a pivotal year of white-ball cricket.

Head Coach Shane Deitz welcomed the opportunity to face the world's best in Caribbean conditions.

“We're really excited about the opportunity to play the number one ranked ODI and T20 team in the world. It's just before the World

Cup, so it's a great opportunity to see where we are in our preparation. Playing against the best team in the world, we can see where our deficiencies are and where things are working well as we look forward to the tournament in June in England.

“It's going to be a very tough series, but the players are up for the challenge. We haven't played them in a competitive match since October 2023, so it'll be good to see the progression of the team since that last meeting, namely in how much we've improved in certain areas and where we still need to improve moving forward.

“Our players are ready to show their skills and demonstrate the talent in this West Indies group. It's going to be a fantastic tour and entertaining for everyone.”

Following the T20Is, the teams will travel to Warner Park in St. Kitts and Nevis for a three-match ODI series.

West Indies Women's T20 Squad: Hayley Matthews (captain), Chinelle Henry (vice-captain), Aaliyah Alleyne, Eboni Brathwaite, Shemaine Campbelle, Jahzara Claxton, Deandra Dottin, Afy Fletcher, Jannillea Glasgow, Shawnisha Hector, Zaida James, Qiana Joseph, Mandy Mangru, Karishma Ramharack, and Stafanie Taylor.

Team Management Unit: Head Coach Shane Deitz; Team Manager Sheena Gooding; Assistant Coach Ryan Austin; Assistant Coach Damien Wright; Assistant Coach Shane Dowrich; Physiotherapist Ashley Stephens; Strength & Conditioning Coach Hector Martinez Charles; Performance Coach Dr. Nadine Sammy; and Media & Content Officer Nicholas Maitland.

Sports

FRIDAY 13TH MARCH 2026

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
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TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

Volleyball club championships set to commence this weekend



The ABI Insurance and Cool and Smooth Pytonz men's volleyball team



Caribbean Alliance Insurance Da Squad women's volleyball team

The 2026 Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABA-VA) Local League is set to serve off at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex this weekend.

Following last year's inauguration, a male category will once again complement the female section in the second division, which was incorporated into the 2024 local league competitions in the ABAVA's quest to continue its development of young players.

Five teams, one more than last year, will participate in this year's men's second division league. Sharks, Chargers Momentum, and Invaders will be joined by newcomers Stingers and Schools. After contesting last season's competition, Stoneville will not be

participating in the 2026 men's second division league.

However, only five teams, four less than last season, will compete in this year's female second division. Newcomers Schools and Chargers Falcons will join Chargers Eagles 2, Dynasty Queens 2, and Starz 2 Juniors, who will all return to participate in the Female Division 2 competition.

Seven teams, one more than last year, will be contesting the Female Division I competition. Among them are newcomers UWI Women and reigning four-peat champions Caribbean Alliance Insurance (CAI) Da Squad, who will be defending their title.

The Chargers Eagles 1, which contested last year's second division, will step

up to take part in the Female Division 1 competition. Four of the other five teams that contested last year's competition will once again be participating this year.

They are Stoneville, Starz 1 (Seniors), Jets, and Royal Cruisers. But perennial and former champions, Paragons, have pulled out of this year's contest.

Eight teams, one more than last year, will be competing for the coveted national men's Division 1 league title, which was won for the first time by Pytonz in 2025.

Newcomers UWI men will be making their debut, while Chargers Velocity will return to the top division after contesting the second division last year.

The other six teams that contested last year's competition will once again be competing for the men's division 1 league title. Among them are perennial champions Stoneville and defending champions Pytonz.

The other returning teams are the High Flyers, the Renegades, the Invaders, and the Top Ranking Storming Lions.

The national Division 1 club championship will commence with a double header at the volleyball stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex on Saturday.

UWI Women will face CAI Da Squad in the female Division I at 7 pm, while the UWI Men will tackle the Pytonz in the men's Division I at 8 pm.