

Pringle's Leadership Of The UPP Questioned

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Prime Minister Gaston Browne (second from left) with Regent Dr. Nwachukwu Anakwenze and his delegation that paid a courtesy call to the Prime Minister's Office

Pringle's Leadership Of The UPP Questioned

Opposition Leader Jamale Pringle is likely facing a major test of his political career following Monday's by-election defeat in St. Philip's North, with local and regional analysts stating that the result has triggered a moment of reckoning for both his leadership and the future of the United Progressive Party.

The scale of the victory by the governing Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party has not only reshaped the immediate political narrative but also intensified scrutiny on whether Pringle remains the right figure to lead the opposition into the next general election.

Barbadian political scientist Peter Wickham described the outcome of the especial election as extraordinary, pointing to both the margin of victory and the broader political message it sends.

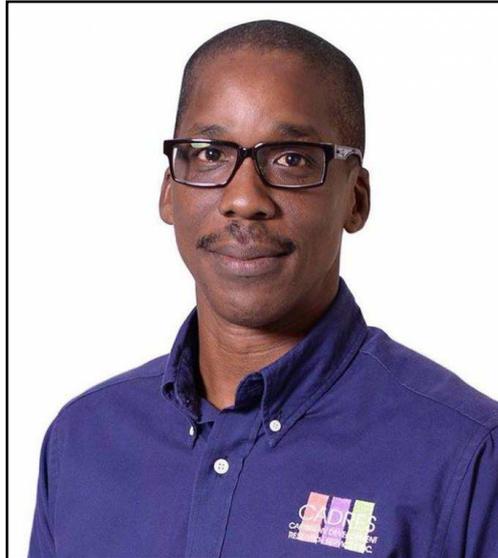
"I think that everything is impressive about this victory," Wickham said. "He's on 70 per cent... it is among the highest levels of support that the ABLP has ever gotten in that constituency."

The ABLP's candidate, Randy Baltimore, secured what Wickham characterised as a "fairly high note" entry into national politics, buoyed by a 16 per cent swing toward the governing party.

"This is essentially almost a reversal of what the ABLP experienced in the last general election... and certainly a reversal of what they would have experienced in that constituency," Wickham explained. "So it sets a tone that the ABLP is definitely back."

The result is made more significant by the legacy of former MP Sir Robin Yearwood, whose decades-long tenure defined the constituency.

"To be alive and still be able to see that this is the manner in which the constituency has responded to his successor is something fairly impressive,"



Peter Wickham



Opposition Leader Jamale Pringle

Wickham added, describing the moment as a rare political tribute.

Voter turnout, which approached 70 per cent, further reinforced the nation-

al importance of the contest. According to Wickham, the engagement level signalled that "Antigua and Barbuda took this election pretty seriously."



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Beyond the constituency, Wickham was unequivocal about the broader implications.

“Clearly, the UPP is on the back foot. This is the weakest that they have been in a while,” he said. “Certainly, as you’re going into a fourth term, there are going to be few opportunities that will be as attractive as this for ABLP.”

The regional pollster went further, suggesting that if he were advising the government, he would consider moving swiftly.

“If I were in a position to press the electoral button, I would be attempting to call it for right now,” he said, signaling that the political timing may favour an early general election.

With the ABLP experiencing a resurgence, much of the post-election discourse has centred on Jamale Pringle’s leadership and whether he can recover from this latest setback.

“In our Westminster system, invariably when a party leader leads a party into a defeat such as this, I think the honourable thing to do is to offer your resignation,” Wickham stated. “Give the party the opportunity to decide whether they want to stick with you or whether they want to move on.”

He added that the loss must be viewed in the context of a series of challenges for the opposition, noting previous electoral defeats and internal strains.

“So Jamale Pringle now has to ask himself about his own political fu-

ture,” Wickham said. “Tonight was as much about Jamale Pringle as it was about Randy Baltimore... and Randy Baltimore won—and he won well.”

Educator and political analyst Derrick Nicholas, who is aligned with the United Progressive Party echoed Wickham’s sentiments and painted a bleak picture of the main opposition party and its leader.

“As the leader goes, so does the party,” Nicholas said. “As much as we articulate policy positions and all of that, if the leadership of the party is not seen to be an attractive person... then the party itself is doomed... from the very beginning.”

Nicholas stressed that leadership is not merely administrative but deeply tied to public perception and the ability to mobilise support.

“If I were to give Mr. Pringle any advice... I would ask him to seriously consider all of the ramifications—and the numbers don’t lie,” he said. “Maybe resignation as the leader of the party might be the proper thing to do, and allow the party the free will to go forward.”

He warned that the UPP now finds itself in a weakened position, requiring urgent reassessment.

“The party is certainly in a much weaker position than it was yesterday,” Nicholas added, cautioning that political conditions are shifting rapidly and demand swift strategic response.

Political historian and former UPP MP Bertrand Joseph placed the result within a broader trajectory of decline for the opposition.

“From since the by-election in Parham, we have seen a precipitous decline... within the party politics,” Joseph said, maintaining that the St. Philip’s North result reinforces a troubling trend.

He emphasised that the implications extend far beyond a single seat.

“It is the implication for this result across the political landscape in Antigua and Barbuda,” Joseph noted.

Joseph also underscored the importance of leadership credibility within the Westminster system.

“When you are a leader of a political party, the broad perception... has to be that you can lead the party to victory and become the next prime minister,” he said. “If that is an issue... it spells a difficult situation for that organization.”

Joseph also highlighted the strategic nature of the ABLP’s campaign, noting that the party mobilised nationally to ensure not just victory, but dominance.

“It could not just be a simple victory—it had to be a statement,” he said, adding that the result is intended to “ripple across the country” and shape voter perceptions ahead of the next general election.



Prime Minister Browne Congratulates Randy Baltimore On Emphatic Victory



Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne has extended heartfelt congratulations to Randy Baltimore on his resounding victory in the 2026 St. Philip North by-election held on Monday, March 16, 2026.

Mr. Baltimore, representing the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, secured an emphatic win over Alex Browne of the opposition United Progressive Party, demonstrating the overwhelming confidence and support of the people of St. Philip North.

Prime Minister Browne noted that this decisive outcome reflects the electorate's continued trust in the policies, leadership, and development agenda of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party Government, and he warmly welcomed Mr. Baltimore to the ABLP benches in Parliament.

"The people of St. Philip North have spoken clearly and decisively," Prime Minister Browne stated. "I congratulate Randy Baltimore on this significant victory and welcome him to the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party team in Parliament. His success is a testament to his commitment to service and the confidence the people

have placed in him."

The Prime Minister further pledged the Government's continued commitment to the development of the St. Philip North constituency, building on the legacy of representation following the resignation of long-serving parliamentarian Sir Robin Yearwood.

Prime Minister Browne encouraged Mr. Baltimore to embrace his new responsibilities with dedication and purpose, noting that he now joins the Government in fulfilling the aspirations of the people.

"You now officially take your place among a team committed to delivering progress and prosperity for our nation. Together, we will continue to fulfill the wishes of our people and advance Antigua and Barbuda as a modern economic powerhouse," the Prime Minister added.

"Working hand-in-hand with the newly elected Member of Parliament, we will ensure continued progress and improve the quality of life for the residents of St. Philip North and all citizens of Antigua and Barbuda," said Prime Minister Browne.



PM Browne Calls For A Realignment of African, Caribbean Economies TO Benefits Their Peoples

Prime Minister Gaston Browne, a devoted Pan Africanist, wants African and Caribbean leaders to change their respective economic systems to make them more beneficial to their peoples.

The call came as the prime minister welcomed a delegation led by Dr. Nwachukwu Anakwenze, the Regent of Abagana Kingdom located in Anambra State, Nigeria, who will soon be installed as King of Abagana Kingdom.

“We have not reached our full potential because of the plundering that took place in Africa and here in the Caribbean where most economies were turned into ‘extractive’ economies with the wealth of the lands (minerals of Africa and the crops of the Caribbean) is what created generational wealth in Europe and elsewhere while at the same time creating poverty in both regions (Africa and the Caribbean),” PM Browne observed.

The Antigua and Barbuda Prime minister wants to see ‘a deliberate effort’ by African and Caribbean leaders to change the economic systems to ensure that they operate to the benefit of the people of Africa and the Caribbean.

As an example, PM Browne recalled the situation a few years ago when two major Canadian banks decided to move out of the region and to sell their local branches external to Antigua and Barbuda.

He reported that it was the government that stepped in and told the bank owners that they must sell locally. “I said to them this is our time to own these branches so that the profits that they generate would remain in the local economy to fund the development here in Antigua and Barbuda. It was not a ‘sexy’ idea and I was threatened and called names including ‘Dictator’, but I held firm noting that as Finance Minister the law required that I should sign the Vesting Order and I told them



under no circumstances would I sign those orders,” he related in some detail.

According to the prime minister the branches were eventually sold to two local banks which are now bigger and more profitable with their profits being retained in the local economy.

“This is the time of bold leadership that is required because the banks and other special interests are not going to give up easily; we have to be prepared to be resolute in our decision-making,” he added.

The nation’s leader explained that the European powers enslaved African peoples in the Caribbean and destabilized the economies of Africa and through slavery and colonialism kept the peoples impoverished.

“It is not too late for us to redesign our economies to move them from ex-

tractive economies to productive economies whose revenues and economic benefits will go toward the nationals of the respective regions and change this economic system through which we are plundered,” he suggested.

The prime minister said he was ‘very pleased’ to welcome Regent Dr. Anakwenze, and his delegation to Antigua and Barbuda and expressed a desire to visit the-soon-to-be installed monarch in his Kingdom on the African continent sometime in the near future.

Owner of fire-destroyed Kaikoconut floating bar to rebuild

The resolute owner of the Kaikoconut floating bar that was destroyed by fire on Sunday night is to start the rebuilding process imminently.

Glen Hector says there is “no question” that his luxurious party vessel - which attracted hundreds of revellers a week earning a place on numerous tourists’ must-do lists - will be back in business as soon as possible.

The total devastation of the two-level, 175-person catamaran, kitted out with restaurant, waterslides and trampoline, amounts to more than EC\$2 million in losses.

“My boat that took me three years to build, and every cent I had, burnt in less than 30 minutes,” Hector said.

The reason for the inferno is “baffling”, he continued, explaining that his team had followed the usual procedure for closing the vessel down for the night, shortly after sunset. No one was on board when the blaze broke out.

“I am 100 percent rebuilding; there is absolutely no question about that. I have insurance but even if I have to rebuild from scratch, I will do it,” Hector said. “I estimate it will take around a year.”

Hector was at home with his three-month-old son when he received two calls from friends who could see flames at Kaikoconut’s location near Valley Church Beach. Hector’s daughter Noemie, who manages the bar and lives close by, went to investigate.

“It was already engulfed in fire. I told her to stay far away. There was EC\$35,000 worth of alcohol on board which meant there was a high chance of an explosion,” he said.

Kaikoconut had earned a solid reputation as one of Antigua’s leading excursion companies, and a five-star rating on TripAdvisor, since its launch in



January 2024.

“We had got some major cruise ship contracts and 50 confirmed events in the coming months. The day after it burnt down, we had 200 people booked to come. I have already started to refund over EC\$120,000 in deposits paid,” Hector said.

The business was also booked to appear at a leading cruise industry event in Miami next month, to showcase its offerings to some of the world’s biggest cruise lines.

Hector, who also built his excursion company Creole Antigua Tours from the ground up more than two decades ago, conceptualised the floating bar many years before work began.

No sooner had he started Kaikoconut’s construction, the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Suddenly, Creole Antigua Tours was forced off the water, crippling his finances.

Still, he persevered through the unexpected loss of income, along with materials shortages and supply chain headaches, to complete his dream.

Hector described completing Kaikoconut as “backbreaking” and the “biggest challenge” of his life.

“I have worked so hard to build up a brand. This year was set to be my best yet thanks to all the events we had booked and the business from the cruise ships,” he said.

The disaster also leaves eight staff currently out of work, with Kaikoconut’s wrecked remains now on the seabed. The insurance company is due to salvage the vessel within the coming days to assess the next steps.

“I have seen the wreck underwater and honestly I don’t know how to feel,” Hector sighed. “But this has been my dream for so many years, and I will never let it die. My kids will have Kaikoconut and their kids after them.”

A statement posted to the company’s Instagram page on Monday described the fire as “truly heartbreaking” and thanked the community for its support, adding: “Your love and encouragement mean more than you know.”



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- Deploy and manage containerized services using Kubernetes and DevOps practices.
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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).
- Experience building secure systems handling sensitive data.
- Knowledge of data protection frameworks.

Key Competencies

- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills
- Attention to security and operational standards
- Ability to translate operational needs into automation solutions
- Effective documentation and communication skills
- Collaborative approach across technical and operational teams

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

Local News



Fatal Stabbing Victim Identified As Daniel Lewis

The Police have formally identified the male victim who died as a result of an alleged stabbing incident at Lion's Estate in New Field as 38-year-old Daniel Lewis of Glanville's.

Preliminary investigations indicate that the incident occurred sometime during the early hours of Monday, 16 March 2026.

It is alleged that the deceased entered the home of a resident in the New Field area, during which a confrontation ensued.

During the altercation, Mr. Lewis reportedly sustained a wound to the lower part of his body. Emergency personnel later responded to the scene; however, he was pronounced dead at approximately 8:38 a.m.

Police investigations into the circumstances surrounding this incident are ongoing.

Anyone with information that may



assist with the investigation is asked to contact the Criminal Investigations Department at 462-3913 or call the Crimestoppers anonymous hotline at 800-TIPS (8477).

The Police Administration extends sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Daniel Lewis during this difficult time.

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Registration Deadline Nears For Queen of Carnival 2026

As excitement grows for Rhythm of Pageantry, the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission is reminding all aspiring contestants that the registration deadline for the esteemed Queen of Carnival 2026 competition is rapidly approaching.

The deadline for submission of registration forms is **Friday, March 20, 2026**.

Prospective hopefuls who have already collected registration forms are strongly encouraged to return their completed applications as soon as possible. Individuals wishing to register for the 2026 competition may collect and submit their forms at the National Festivals Office, 1st Floor, Cecil George-John Building, Corn Alley & Redcliffe Street, St. John's, during the following hours:

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

Registration forms may also be requested via email at info.nof@ab.gov.ag or via WhatsApp at (268) 727-9201. For further inquiries, please call (268) 462-4707.

The Queen of Carnival competition remains one of the most distinguished and highly anticipated events of Antigua Carnival, celebrating intelligence, talent, poise, and cultural pride. The Commission encourages young women across Antigua and Barbuda to seize this opportunity to embark on an empowering and transformative journey.

Join the excitement, **Feel the Rhythm, Antigua Carnival 2026**, and prepare for an unforgettable experience.




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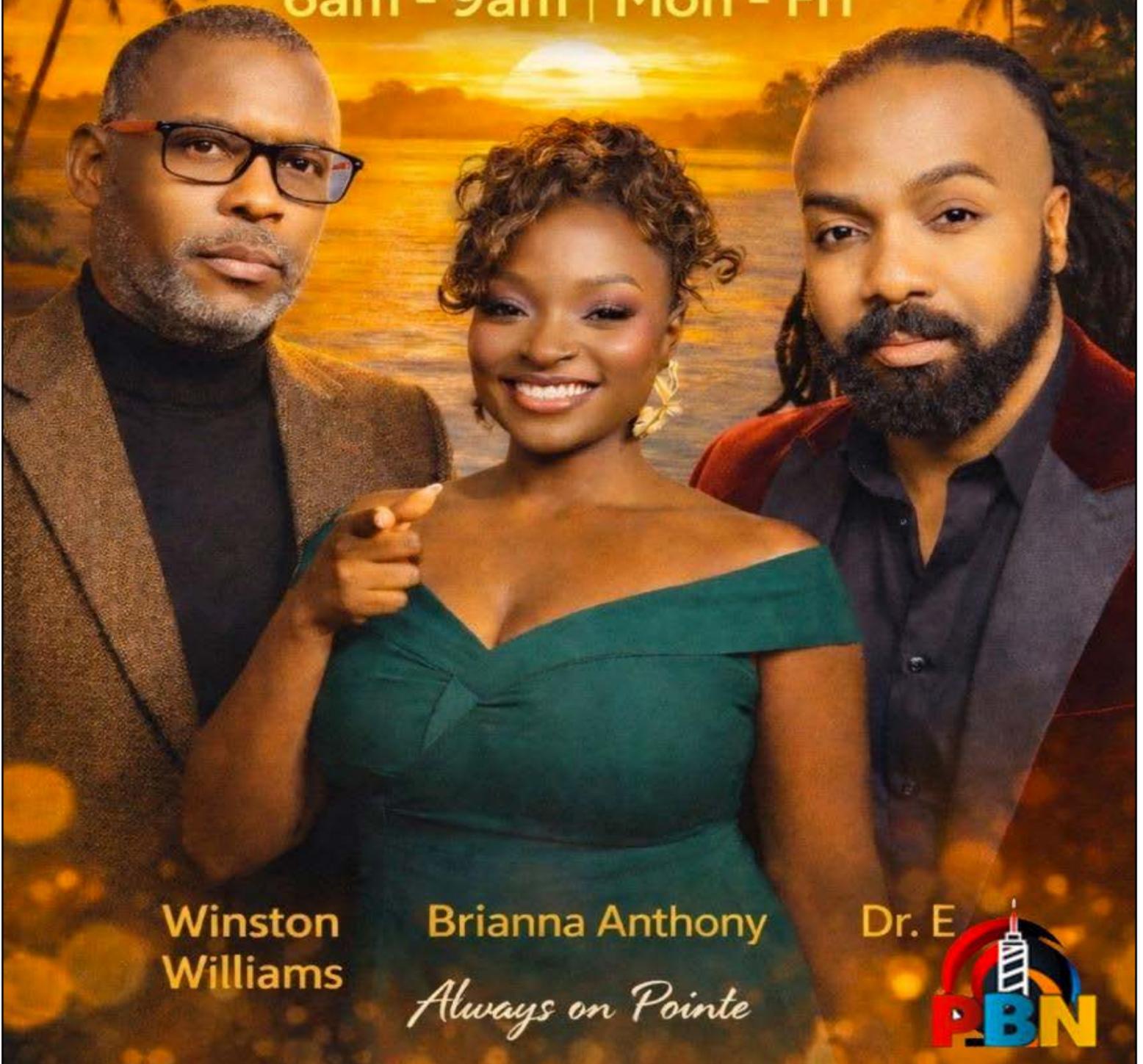
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Juelle Colaïre
Guest Experience Manager
Signature Aviation Antigua

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that time, she met guests from around the world and quickly realized that her greatest fulfillment came not from transactions, but from forming genuine connections, listening to stories, understanding needs, and creating warm, meaningful interactions.

As a young woman, Juelle always admired the aviation industry and once envisioned herself becoming a flight attendant. Recognizing her passion for aviation and service, her mother encouraged her to apply for a position at Signature Aviation when she learned of the opportunity. Though Juelle knew very little about Aviation, she took a courageous leap of faith and submitted her application.

On September 1, 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, she officially joined Signature Aviation as a Customer Service Representative. Entering the aviation sector during such an uncertain global period required resilience and adaptability.

Driven by a passion for service, Juelle Colaïre has built her career around making people feel welcomed and valued within Antigua and Barbuda's aviation and hospitality industry.

Her hospitality journey began with a simple yet powerful desire: to make people feel comfortable, valued, and

genuinely cared for. What started as a love for connecting with others has grown into a commitment to creating meaningful and memorable guest experiences.

Juelle began her professional career as a Sales Representative at a jewelry store in Heritage Quay, where she worked from 2018 to 2020. During

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Determined to grow, she immersed herself in learning aviation operations, coordinating aircraft arrivals, managing Port Health requirements, handling immigration and customs documentation, arranging ground transportation, delivering VIP meet-and-greet services, overseeing billing systems, and ensuring every aspect of the guest journey flowed seamlessly.

One of the defining moments in Juelle's career has been her willingness to take initiative. Rather than waiting for direction, she consistently stepped forward to address what needed to be done. Her proactive approach quickly caught the attention of management, who began entrusting her with greater responsibilities early on, recognizing her natural leadership ability.

In early 2024, under the mentorship of General Manager Kenyatta Thomas, Juelle continued investing in her professional development by completing several LinkedIn learning courses provided by the company, strengthening both her leadership skills and operational expertise.

Today, Juelle proudly serves as Guest Experience Manager at Signature Aviation Antigua, leading with empathy, precision, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Her philosophy is simple: small details create unforgettable experiences. Each day, she ensures that every guest receives a seamless and personalized "Signature" welcome upon arrival.

Her message to young people who may feel uncertain about their career path is simple but powerful: take the leap of faith: *"Don't remain in one position out of comfort. When you take that leap of faith, you grow, you learn, and you gain a deeper understanding of your field. Get educated on what you want to pursue. If you try something and discover you enjoy it, take the time to learn more about it. Do your research. Don't stay in one position, push yourself to elevate. Believe that you will find your footing."*

Through her leadership and service, she remains honored to contribute to Antigua and Barbuda's hospitality industry, ensuring every guest who lands on the island experiences hospitality at its finest.

Watch the stories unfold—each episode unveils every two weeks on Tuesday and Thursday on ABHTA's **YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram platforms (@Antigua-Hotels)**. Join us in celebrating the people who shape and strengthen Antigua and Barbuda's hospitality industry.

Watch Juelle Colaire's Hospitality Story Here: <https://youtu.be/82A1OWyaRxc>

A Modern Day Siege: Cuba, the Caribbean, and the Architecture of Coercion



*By Professor C. Justin Robinson
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal,
The UWI Five Islands Campus*

In medieval warfare, the siege was the weapon of patient cruelty. Armies did not need to breach the walls, they simply encircled the city, cut off its food, its water, its fuel, and waited. The logic was elegant in its brutality, starving the population until it surrendered its leaders, its sovereignty, its will. The siege required no declaration of war, no formal hostility beyond the act of encirclement itself, it was violence administered through denial. What is unfolding in Cuba today is a siege, not in metaphor, but in method.

Since January 2026, the United States has imposed what amounts to a fuel blockade on the island of eleven million people. Following the removal of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, Cuba's primary oil supplier was eliminated at the source. An executive order signed on January 29th declared a national emergency and authorized tariffs against any country that dares to sell oil to Havana. Mexico, Russia,

and others have been warned. The result is that no meaningful oil shipment has reached Cuba since early January. On March 16th, the entire national electrical grid collapsed, plunging every home, hospital, and school into darkness, the third island-wide black-out in four months.

The consequences cascade with the remorseless logic of siege warfare. Over eighty percent of Cuba's water-pumping infrastructure depends on electricity. Intensive care units are compromised, vaccines and blood products spoil. The rationing system that feeds the most vulnerable has broken down. Crops cannot be harvested because there is no fuel for the machinery. Garbage piles in the streets of Havana because collection trucks sit with empty tanks. Airlines have been told that Cuba can no longer provide jet fuel. The Cuban government has shortened the work week, closed schools, and restricted transport. Experts warn of "zero hour," the total depletion of reserves, if no fuel arrives this month. This is not collateral damage; this is the design.

What makes this moment particularly alarming is not merely the severity of the pressure, but the candour with which its architects describe their intentions. The United States has openly confirmed that regime change is the objective, with officials stating that the Cuban government should "make a deal before it's too late." President Trump has mused publicly about having the "honour of taking Cuba," adding with characteristic bluntness, "Whether I free it, take it, I think I

could do anything I want with it." Asked whether a military operation was contemplated, the response was: "I can't tell you that."

Let us sit with that language for a moment. "Taking" a sovereign nation. Doing "anything I want" with it. This is not the vocabulary of diplomacy; it is not even the vocabulary of Cold War containment. It is the language of acquisition of property, of possession. It belongs to a tradition that Caribbean people know intimately, because it was once applied to us. Our islands were "taken" too, their peoples and resources treated as things to be disposed of at the pleasure of imperial capitals. That we can hear such language in 2026 and respond with anything less than profound alarm speaks to either the depth of our amnesia or the completeness of our accommodation.

The Caribbean's relationship with Cuba is not an abstraction. For over half a century, Cuba has sent doctors and teachers across our region. Caribbean students have trained in Cuban universities. In 1972, Guyana, Barbados, Trinidad, and Jamaica broke with Washington's hemispheric consensus to recognize Cuba diplomatically, an act of sovereign assertion that helped define what an independent Caribbean foreign policy could look like. Cuba holds observer status at CARICOM and has maintained embassies across the English-speaking Caribbean. Critically, Cuba has never interfered in the internal politics of any CARICOM state, never attempted to overthrow a Caribbean government, never sent troops uninvited onto Caribbean soil.



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Here is the uncomfortable truth that Caribbean leaders must confront. The principle at stake in Cuba is not whether one approves of Cuba's political system. It is whether a great power has the right to deliberately immiserate an entire civilian population to force a change of government. If the answer is yes, then every small state in this hemisphere exists at the sufferance of Washington. The precedent being set is not about Cuba alone, it is about the architecture of coercion in the twenty-first century, an architecture in which sovereignty is conditional, international law is advisory, and the suffering of millions is an acceptable instrument of policy.

The United Nations General Assembly has voted overwhelmingly, year after year, to condemn the Cuba embargo. UN human rights experts have described the current fuel blockade as "a serious violation of international law and a grave threat to a democratic and equitable international order." The UN's own Resident Coordinator in Havana has warned of "acute humanitarian risks" and potential "collapse." These are not radical assessments; they represent the settled view of the international community and yet they carry no force against the will of the besieger.

Caribbean people, of all people, should understand this dynamic. Our history is a chronicle of the gap between international norms and imperial practice. We were colonized in defiance of every principle later enshrined in international law. We fought for independence precisely because we understood that sovereignty without economic self-determination is ceremonial. And now we watch as that lesson is taught again, ninety miles from our shores to a people who are our neighbours, our partners, and our kin.

There is a further dimension that Caribbean analysts and policymakers cannot afford to ignore. The siege of Cuba is, at its core, a demonstration

project. It demonstrates that in the current geopolitical moment, the United States is prepared to use the full weight of its economic power to achieve regime change in the Western Hemisphere. This is not a departure from historical pattern; it is its refinement. The method has been updated, but the logic is unchanged, small states that displease great powers can be made to suffer until they comply.

For CARICOM nations that depend on imported energy, imported food, and the goodwill of larger trading partners, this should concentrate the mind considerably. If Cuba, a nation of eleven million with a functioning state apparatus, a trained military, and deep reserves of national pride, can be brought to its knees by an oil blockade, what protection does any Caribbean microstate truly enjoy? The answer, as

it has always been for small states, lies not in military capacity but in collective action, in the strength of regional institutions, and in the willingness to insist, publicly and repeatedly, that international law applies to everyone or it applies to no one.

A siege ends one of two ways, the gates open, or the people inside perish. Cuba's gates are being held shut by the most powerful nation on earth, and eleven million people are being told that their suffering will continue until their government ceases to exist. The siege of Cuba is not Cuba's problem alone. It is a Caribbean problem, a hemispheric problem, and a test of whether the international order means anything at all when power decides it does not. History will record not only what was done to Cuba, but who spoke, and who was silent.

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Regional News



Petrol Price Hikes for SVG Despite Storage Buffer

St. Vincent and the Grenadines will experience a time-lagged but inevitable rise in petrol and energy costs due to the ongoing geopolitical conflict in the Middle East.

While the country is better positioned than in the past, the “knock-on effect” of global price spikes is unavoidable, Opposition Leader Ralph Gonsalves said on Monday.

Gonsalves said St. Vincent has significantly increased its fuel resilience by establishing over three months of storage capacity at the Hugo Chavez Storage Plant at Lowmans. This he said is a major upgrade from the seven to nine days of storage the country had previously.

Despite the three-month buffer, a lag exists before consumers feel the full impact at the pump and in utility bills.

“For instance, Vinlec will eventually see an increase in its fuel surcharge due to the rising cost of imported fuel, but this will likely not appear in the current month’s billing cycle, instead showing up in the next”.

The price of Brent crude recently reached \$104 per barrel, up from the \$70s. The local pricing mechanism is tied to international benchmarks (spe-



cifically the Shell West price), meaning higher global costs will eventually be reflected locally.

The conflict has severely impacted the Strait of Hormuz, a critical shipping lane. Traffic through the strait dropped from 1,229 passages in a comparable period last year to just 77 passages in early March 2026. This disruption is driving up global energy prices and affecting the cost of other essential goods like food and fertilizers.

Gonsalves cites IMF analysis suggesting that a persistent 10% rise in oil prices adds significantly to global

inflation.

“Locally, the government has previously used a rolling three-month average for fuel prices to help “iron out” sudden highs and lows for consumers, but if prices remain high for an extended period, the average will inevitably rise as well”.

Gonsalves describe the current global economic outlook as one of “stagflation” a combination of economic depression and high inflation which is expected to place intense “economic and social pressure” on local workers. (St Vincent Times)

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CARPHA collaborates with GOARN to launch intensive outbreak response scenario programme aimed at strengthening Caribbean emergency preparedness



The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), in partnership with the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN), has officially inaugurated the GOARN Regional Outbreak Response Scenario Programme at The Brix, Autograph Collection.

A CARPHA press release said that this pioneering initiative highlights its dedication to developing innovative, region-specific strategies to enhance public health emergency preparedness and response efforts throughout the Caribbean.

The programme is financed through CARPHA's Pandemic Fund Project, with CARPHA acting as the executing body and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) serving as the implementing agency.

The Caribbean's distinctive environment—characterized by numerous small, highly interconnected islands, open borders, heavy dependence on tourism, and climate change-related vulnerabilities—poses significant challenges for containing the swift spread of infectious diseases. These factors, combined with disparities

in surveillance and laboratory infrastructure, increase the region's susceptibility to health emergencies. In recent years, the Caribbean has faced a surge in complex crises, including destructive hurricanes and outbreaks of diseases such as measles, dengue, chikungunya, and cholera. As travel, tourism, and migration continue to rise, the need for a well-trained, coordinated, and multidisciplinary emergency response system becomes ever more pressing.

The press release stated that this intensive five-day simulation exercise, scheduled from March 16 to 20, 2026, involves 24 public health experts from CARPHA and seven member states. These professionals hail from various fields, including risk communication, logistical support, disease surveillance, laboratory services, clinical management, and infection prevention and control, illustrating the multifaceted nature of outbreak response.

The global GOARN team includes specialists from the United States and European Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the University of Western Australia, Fundação Oswal-

do Cruz (Fiocruz) in Brazil, the UK Public Health Rapid Support Team (UK-PHRST), and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Moving beyond basic orientation, this programme emphasizes operational simulation, immersing participants in a realistic outbreak scenario designed to evaluate their ability to respond effectively under sustained pressure.

The Honourable Dr. Lackram Bodee, Minister of Health of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Lisa Indar, Executive Director of CARPHA and The Honourable Dr. Rishad Seecheran, Minister in the Ministry of Health. Photo: CARPHA

During the opening ceremony, CARPHA's Executive Director, Dr. Lisa Indar, underscored the programme's importance in bolstering the Caribbean's capacity to manage outbreaks.

She stated, "The Caribbean's dynamics demand a well-trained, coordinated, rapid, and multidisciplinary response, reminding us that an outbreak can arise with little warning, and the timeliness and effectiveness of our response can determine whether it remains a contained event or escalates into a public health crisis capable of overwhelming national health systems. The Caribbean context also forces us to recognize the need for an even more effective response to the next crisis and the continued need to strengthen our deployable workforce, operational coordination, and emergency response systems at CARPHA and across the region. This programme reflects not only the expanding recognition of the Caribbean's and CARPHA's role in global health security, but also our collective commitment to strengthening the region's preparedness and response capacity."

Regional News



Armand Bejtullahu, the Manager of GOARN, highlighted the significance of such initiatives in enhancing regional response capabilities. He stated, “Effective outbreak response depends on a ready, well-coordinated workforce. Through our partnership with CARPHA, GOARN is working to strengthen regional expertise and ensure responders have the tools and capabilities needed to act rapidly in emergency settings. Through these efforts, GOARN continues to operationalise WHO’s Global Health Emergency Corps (GHEC) framework, strengthening national capacities while linking responders regionally and globally for faster and more coordinated responses to public health events.”

The Honourable Dr. Lackram Bodo, Trinidad and Tobago’s Minister

of Health, also expressed his appreciation for the initiative, remarking that it “marked not simply the start of another training exercise, but the continuation of a shared journey toward resilience, unity, and preparedness in the face of global health threats.”

This Outbreak Response Scenario Programme marks the second phase of the esteemed GOARN initiative. It follows the inaugural Regional GOARN Tier 1.5 Orientation to National and International Outbreak Response Workshop held in August 2025 in Trinidad & Tobago, which involved 34 participants. That foundational training aimed to bolster core deployment skills among CARPHA staff and responders from ten member states.

By enhancing the expertise of a diverse group of public health professionals across the Caribbean, this

programme aims to strengthen the region’s overall outbreak response workforce. Participants will develop their ability to support swift, coordinated interventions against emerging infectious diseases, thereby bolstering both national and regional resilience.

According to CARPHA, as the Caribbean faces ongoing threats from infectious diseases—whether new or re-emerging—investments in workforce development, regional cooperation, and international partnerships remain essential. Through initiatives like the Regional GOARN Outbreak Response Scenario Programme, CARPHA is actively reinforcing the region’s preparedness infrastructure and its capacity to respond decisively to future public health emergencies. (Dominica News Online)



DAILY PROGRAMMING




| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| EARLY VIBRATIONS | 6AM-10AM MON. - FRI. |
| WITH GREMSTA | |
| THE RUSH HOUR SHOW | 5PM-7PM MON. - FRI. |
| WITH ROGER LAKE | 6AM-9AM SATURDAYS |
| TOUCHLINE | 7PM-9PM MON. - THURS. |
| WITH EPILUS | |
| BAD COMPANY | 2PM-6PM THURS. 12PM-4PM SATURDAYS |
| LIVE FROM THE V.I. | & 1PM-5PM ON SUNDAYS |
| REGGAE INSPIRATION | 9PM-12AM MON. THURS. SUNDAY |
| WITH SELECTOR KEEGAN | |
| JAH WADADLI | 7PM-9PM FRIDAYS |
| WITH DJ JAH WADADLI | |

Caribbean Development Bank collaborates with 2X Global to promote gender-focused investment in the Caribbean



The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) has partnered with 2X Global Limited, a prominent international organization dedicated to promoting gender lens investing, to develop a specialized toolkit aimed at integrating gender considerations into investment practices across the Caribbean.

A CDB press release said this collaboration also seeks to enhance regional capacity to incorporate gender perspectives throughout the entire investment process.

This effort is part of the broader Caribbean GEMS: Gender Equality for Market Sustainability initiative, which aims to build a robust ecosystem for gender-sensitive investing and broaden the scope of impact investment within the region.

The CDB says that although women in the Caribbean have made significant progress in education and workforce participation, they still encounter substantial obstacles in securing financing. Institutional barriers, societal norms, and the absence of gender-re-

sponsive investment frameworks have contributed to persistent inequalities in the growth and funding of women-owned and women-led businesses. The partnership between CDB and 2X Global intends to tackle these issues by providing investors and financial institutions with practical tools and knowledge to embed gender considerations into their decision-making processes.

According to the release, the project is backed by a US\$350,000 technical assistance fund, financed through the Bank's Special Development Fund (SDF) and aligned with its Gender Equality Action Plan. This funding will enable 2X Global to create a Gender Lens Investing Acceleration Toolbox specifically tailored for the Caribbean context.

The toolkit will compile actionable tools, templates, and advisory methodologies designed to increase access to investment and support services for women entrepreneurs in the region, aligning with the globally recognized standards established

by 2X Global.

Furthermore, the initiative will feature the documentation of Caribbean-specific case studies and best practices, supporting five companies or funds to undergo the 2X Certification process. These case studies will illustrate the pathways, challenges, and successes encountered when incorporating a gender lens into investment practices, providing scalable models for replication across the Caribbean.

Announced on March 5, just prior to International Women's Day, the program also involves the development of a Caribbean-focused Digital Academy and regional training platform. This online resource will deliver educational content and training sessions designed to bolster the capacity of investors, financial institutions, intermediaries, and policymakers to adopt the 2X Global criteria and advance gender lens investing across the region.

Lisa Harding, Division Chief of the Private Sector Division at CDB, emphasized the significance of this initiative, highlighting its alignment with the Bank's Private Sector Strategy to address issues related to gender disparities in access to finance, capacity development, and network building.

"Through the Caribbean GEMS project, the Caribbean Development Bank is putting women entrepreneurs at the heart of economic transformation, empowering them to scale, innovate, and build resilient enterprises.

This initiative also leverages our strategic partnership with 2X Global to amplify results," she stated.

Jessica Espinoza, CEO of 2X Global, expressed enthusiasm about deepening their collaboration with CDB. She noted, "Deepening our partnership with the Caribbean Development Bank through this initiative is an exciting step for 2X Global. By developing practical tools, supporting companies through the 2X Certification process, and building regional training platforms, we aim to strengthen the gender lens investing ecosystem and support women-owned and women-led enterprises across the Caribbean to access the capital they need to scale and thrive."

In 2023, CDB joined the global network of 2X Global, reinforcing its commitment to increasing both the volume and impact of investments that promote women's economic empowerment worldwide.

Through this partnership, CDB states that it aims to accelerate the development of gender-responsive investments, support women-led businesses, and promote inclusive economic growth throughout the Caribbean. The Bank also added that the collaboration aligns with its broader mission of fostering inclusive and sustainable development and complements existing initiatives such as the Bank's SheTrades Caribbean Regional Hub, which is dedicated to empowering women entrepreneurs. (Dominica News Online)

Teens sue Musk's xAI over Grok's pornographic images of them

Elon Musk's artificial intelligence company is facing a lawsuit from teenagers who say the company facilitated child pornography by allowing the creation of sexually explicit images of them.

The lawsuit against xAI was filed Monday in a federal California court by three young women whose images and videos were altered by a Grok user without their knowledge to show them nude or in otherwise overtly sexual ways.

Grok is a chatbot developed by xAI and hosted on Musk's social media platform X. xAI did not respond to a request for comment made via its parent company.

The legal action is part of the fallout since last year's controversial release of new Grok features that X called "spicy" mode.

Lawyers for the young women said Grok's ability to alter images and video had been created and released by xAI solely to drive use of the chatbot and X.

They likened the way images of the young women were changed to "a rag doll brought to life through the dark arts".

"xAI—and its founder Elon Musk— saw a business opportunity," the complaint says. "They knew Grok could produce such results, including by using the images and videos of children, and publicly released it anyway."

The young women are



seeking unspecified damages, as well as an immediate order barring Grok from creating such images.

"Their lives have been shattered by the devastating loss of privacy, dignity, and personal safety", lawyers for the young women said in their complaint.

Two of the teenagers behind the lawsuit are under the age of 18, but all three are withholding their names from the public in order to protect their privacy.

One of the young plaintiffs said she found out about the imagery after she received an anonymous message on Instagram pointing her toward images and videos, including her high school yearbook photo, which had been altered to show her in sexually explicit actions and full nudity.

The material was being shared on a Discord server, a private chat space on that platform, and included similar imagery that had also been altered using Grok

of at least 18 other women who were minors, according to the complaint.

The other two women who are suing xAI also found fake sexually explicit imagery of them online, which was found to have been created via Grok.

Grok was launched in 2023 by Musk's xAI. The company, along with X, is now part of Musk's SpaceX company, which took over xAI last month.

Last year, xAI released what it called Grok Imagine or "spicy mode", with features that allowed Grok users to prompt it to create fake images that were more sexual in nature.

The mode even carried out the "undressing" of real people using their images online, from Taylor Swift to more average users.

In less than two weeks, Grok had created millions of sexualized images, including more than 20,000 of children, according to

a sampling of the images conducted by the Center for Countering Digital Hate.

Musk initially downplayed Grok's ability to create fake sexualized content, saying in January he was "not aware of any naked underage images generated by Grok. Literally zero," and putting the blame on users of the feature.

"Obviously, Grok does not spontaneously generate images, it does so only according to user requests", Musk wrote on X.

As such online abuse continued this year, however, UK watchdog Ofcom, the European Commission and California each launched investigations into the feature's ability to create sexualized images of real people, particularly children.

By mid-January, X said that it would implement "technological measures" to stop Grok's ability to undress people in photos.

Eventually, the perpetrator behind the Discord server mentioned in the new lawsuit was arrested. He was not named in the lawsuit but is part of a separate police investigation.

That investigation discovered he had hundreds of AI-generated and altered sexual abuse images of minors, which were traded on the messaging platform Telegram and on the file-sharing platform Mega, according to the lawsuit. (BBC)

US west coast prepares for 'dangerous' heatwave in early spring

A significant and unusually early heatwave is building across the south-western US this week, bringing temperatures more typical of early summer than mid-March.

In Phoenix, Arizona, the National Weather Service (NWS) forecasts temperatures could exceed 100F (38C) as soon as Wednesday, the earliest arrival of triple-digit heat to the city in nearly four decades.

A strong, slow-moving high-pressure system - often called a heat dome - is trapping hot air over the region, pushing temperatures 20–30F above normal in parts of California, Nevada, and Arizona.

The heat is expected to persist for several days, with limited overnight cooling adding to the strain. Millions are likely to be affected.

Highs are expected to reach well above 90F in many areas, including typically cooler coastal regions, while inland and desert locations could exceed 100F, with some spots approaching or surpassing 110F, challenging long-standing March records.

NWS has issued heat advisories for parts of California, including the Bay Area and central coast, where temperatures could reach around 90F.

Residents in the affected areas are being warned to check on the elderly and other at-risk groups as temperatures climb, and to schedule events around peak heat.

“Extreme early-season heat coupled with high tourism rates will make this heat very dangerous, particularly for those not acclimated to the heat and/or traveling from



cooler climates,” the Las Vegas, Nevada NWS office said.

Forecasters warn this could be a prolonged event, with only gradual relief possible by the weekend or early next week, raising concerns about health risks and broader environmental impacts.

The heatwave also poses a serious threat to California’s already below-average snowpack, accelerating melt at a time when it would normally build or decline slowly.

With temperatures running far above normal, snow in the Sierra Nevada is likely to melt weeks earlier than usual, reducing the amount of water that can be gradually released into reservoirs later in the year.

This rapid runoff increases the risk of summer water shortages - since snowpack provides roughly a third of the state’s water - and leaves landscapes drying out sooner, heightening the potential for a longer and more intense wildfire season.

Wildfire risk remains relatively

low across much of the Southwest despite the heatwave, as lighter winds in these regions are expected to limit the rapid spread of fires.

High temperatures and dry conditions alone are insufficient to drive large, fast-moving fires when wind speeds are low, providing a modest buffer for many communities.

Conditions are different further east, however, particularly from areas near the Rockies to the High Plains, where dry air, parched vegetation, and persistent breezes could create a much more favourable environment for wildfires to ignite and spread.

This developing heatwave follows recent blizzards and frigid conditions in the Midwest and Great Lakes, along with heavy thunderstorms and tornado threats towards the East Coast.

By the end of the week and into next week, above-average temperatures are expected to spread across much of the United States. (BBC)

Utah mother who wrote book about grief found guilty of poisoning husband

A mother who published a children's book about grief after the sudden death of her husband has been found guilty of his murder.

A jury found that Kouri Richins, from Utah, killed her husband in March 2022 by poisoning him with a fentanyl-laced drink. The jury deliberated on the case for about three hours before reaching its verdict on Monday.

During the trial, the court heard how Richins, 35, had racked up millions of dollars in debt, taken out life insurance policies on her husband and was having an extramarital affair.

Prosecutors called more than 40 witnesses, including the woman who said she sold the drugs used to kill Eric Richins.

Her defence team chose to not call any witnesses, and rested their case without having her take the stand to testify in her own defence.

Richins was also found guilty of fraudulently claiming insurance benefits after her husband's death at their home outside the ski resort town of Park City. Prosecutors said during the trial that she falsely believed she would inherit his estate worth more than \$4m (£3m) after he died.

They also said she was planning a future with another man with whom she had been having an affair.

Officials said Richins was found to have poisoned her husband's sandwich in an earlier incident, nearly killing him, before later increasing the dosage until he died. She was also found guilty of attempted murder over the initial incident.

Richins pleaded not guilty to all the charges. The most serious, aggravated murder, carries a sentence of 25



years to life in prison.

"She wanted to leave Eric Richins but did not want to leave his money," said Summit County prosecutor Brad Bloodworth.

Richins was arrested in March 2023 - two months after she published the picture book *Are You With Me?*, which she said was designed to help people - including her three children - cope with the death of a loved one.

"We wrote this book and we're really hoping that it provides some comfort for not just obviously, our family, but other families that are going through the same thing," she told radio station KPCW in an interview before her arrest.

She dedicated the book to her husband, calling him "my amazing husband and a wonderful father".

Between December 2021 and February 2022, Kouri Richins texted a person who had previously been arrested on drug charges asking for prescription pain medication, according to court documents.

She received hydrocodone pills, the court documents said, before she requested something stronger - "some

of the Michael Jackson stuff", asking specifically for fentanyl.

Three days after she allegedly obtained the drugs, she and her husband had a Valentine's Day dinner, after which he fell ill.

"Eric believed that he had been poisoned," the court documents said. "Eric told a friend that he thought his wife was trying to poison him."

Two weeks later, according to the court documents, Richins acquired more fentanyl.

Prosecutors said that on 4 March 2022, Richins called the police in the middle of the night to say she had found her husband unresponsive.

She told authorities she had served her husband a mixed vodka drink in bed and then went to sleep with one of her young children who was having a night terror.

She later returned to her husband in their room where she said she found him "cold to the touch".

A medical examiner later found Eric Richins died from a fentanyl overdose. He had five times the lethal dosage of the drug in his system. (BBC)

Participants successfully complete ABAVA National Referee Course



Facilitator Brian Charles, center, engages with participants at the ABAVA National Referee Course at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex on Wednesday, March 14, 2026. (Photo Courtesy of the ABAVA)

Several participants successfully completed the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association (ABAVA) National Referee Course, which was held from Sunday, March 11, to Wednesday, March 14, at the YMCA Sports Complex.

The course was facilitated by International Referee Brian Charles, whose extensive experience and dynamic teaching style made the sessions highly informative, interactive, and engaging for all participants.

During the four-day programme, participants explored several key areas essential to effective volleyball officiating.

They include Rules of the Game 2025–2028; Characteristics of the Referee; Manual Score Sheet and Libero Control Sheet; Rules to be tested in tournaments in 2026; Work and Responsibilities of Line Judges; Practical Refereeing Sessions; and additional discussions on officiating standards and match management.

The course combined classroom learning with practical on-court training, allowing participants to strengthen their understanding of the rules while gaining valuable hands-on officiating experience.

The Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association extends sincere thanks to Brian Charles for sharing his expertise, as well as to all participants who dedicated their time and effort to enhancing the standard of volleyball officiating in Antigua and Barbuda.

This initiative forms part of ABAVA’s ongoing commitment to developing technical officials and strengthening the overall standard of volleyball across the nation.

The ABAVA also expresses congratulations to all participants on successfully completing the course.

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Princess Margaret School wins senior boys basketball league title



The Princess Margaret School teams which won the Senior Boys Division league title in the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball Championships at the JSC Sports Complex on Monday, March 16, 2026. (Photo courtesy of the Inter-School Basketball League)

The Princess Margaret School (PMS) captured the Senior Boys Division league title in the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball Championships on Monday.

Princess Margaret School prevailed 45-37 against Antigua Grammar School in the league championship decider at the JSC Sports Complex.

Gabriel De Suza sank 17 points for Princess Margaret School, while Raheem Sawyer shot a game-high 19 points and Derick Perez scored 13 points for Antigua Grammar School.

Clare Hall Secondary School prevailed 63-51 against Island Academy

in another Senior Boys Division encounter.

Jahaziel Santana sank 16 points, Richard Anthony converted 15 points, and Tajahron Davis scored 11 points for Clare Hall Secondary School. Tristan Thibou shot a game-high 35 points for Island Academy.

Clare Hall Secondary School won the Junior Boys League title by coasting to a commanding 76-41 victory over Princess Margaret School in the championship decider.

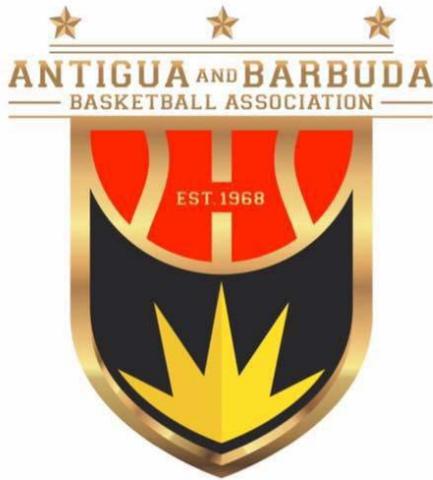
Tajahron Davis shot a game-high 33 points, Jahaziel Santana sank 18 points, and Luis Ozuna scored 16 points for

Clare Hall Secondary School. Elijah Charles converted 21 points for Princess Margaret School.

The Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS) maintained their unbeaten run by pulling off a 37-13 victory over Clare Hall Secondary School in the senior girls' division.

Jodaliah Constant shot a game-high 15 points, while Aliana Jack and Valenciana Burnette each converted eight points for ABCAS. Katelyn Pasula also scored eight points for Clare Hall Secondary School.

Cedar Grove Gunners extend unbeaten run in Division 2 basketball



The Cedar Grove Gunners extended their unbeaten run to remain leaders in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Monday evening.

The Gunners notched up their eighth

win in as many matches by pulling off a 94-72 victory against the bottom team, Square One Construction Cristos United, in the opening game of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Keady Martin produced 19 points, 10 rebounds, seven assists, and five steals; Iornie Joseph sank 18 points and grabbed 22 rebounds; John Rolland Jr. converted 16 points and snatched 14 rebounds; and Tyras Grayman scored 14 points and claimed 17 rebounds for the Gunners.

Dwayne Samuel shot a game-high 44 points and grabbed eight rebounds, and Bruce Whyte scored 11 points and claimed five rebounds for Cristos United, who remain winless and at the bottom of the nine-team standings after losing for the eighth time in as

many games.

Michael Joseph Phoenix recorded their sixth win in nine matches by soaring to a 72-66 victory over the EZ Fit Flyers 2 in Monday's second encounter.

Adrian Carnegie sank 21 points and snatched six rebounds, Shalom Bloodman converted 17 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, and Gary Harrison scored 15 points and claimed 17 rebounds for the Phoenix.

Tyrese White sank 14 points and snatched five rebounds, Piper Hansel produced 11 points, seven assists, and five rebounds, and Delroy Christopher chipped in with 10 points, six rebounds, and five steals for the EZ Fit Flyers 2, who suffered their eighth defeat in nine games.



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Iran negotiating with FIFA to move World Cup games to Mexico



TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran's football federation is in discussions with FIFA about moving their World Cup matches to Mexico from the United States of America (USA) due to concerns about the safety of their players, Iranian football President Mehdi Taj said on Monday.

Iran's participation in the global showpiece event was thrown into doubt after co-hosts the USA launched joint airstrikes on the country along with Israel.

USA President Donald Trump said last week that Iran were welcome to participate but suggested it might not be appropriate for them to play in the USA "for their own life and safety."

"When Trump has explicitly stated that he cannot ensure the security of the Iranian national team, we will certainly not travel to America," said Taj in a post on the Iranian embassy in Mexico's X account.

"We are negotiating with FIFA to hold Iran's World Cup matches in Mexico." World soccer's gov-

erning body did not confirm any specifics.

"FIFA is in regular contact with all participating member associations, including IR Iran, to discuss planning for the FIFA World Cup 2026. FIFA is looking forward to all participating teams competing as per the match schedule announced on 6 December 2025," a FIFA spokesperson told Reuters.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said during a daily press conference that her country would have no problem hosting Iran's World Cup matches, if FIFA agrees to it.

Iran secured a trip to a fourth successive World Cup by topping their group in the third round of Asian qualifying last year.

The tournament is due to kick off on June 11 in the USA, Canada, and Mexico, with Iran scheduled to play two group matches in Los Angeles and one in Seattle. Belgium, Egypt, and New Zealand are Iran's opponents in Group G.

The organising committees for matches in Los Angeles and Seattle did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside normal USA business hours.

The prospect of shifting Iran's fixtures to Mexico would mark a significant logistical switch for the tournament, though relocating matches for security or geopolitical reasons is not unprecedented.

In September last year, Scotland secured a 2-0 World Cup qualifying win over Belarus at Zala-

gerszeg near the Austrian and Slovenian borders, after a ruling by UEFA over the role of Belarus as a staging ground for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In other sports, soured political relations between India and Pakistan means the nuclear-armed neighbours only face each other at neutral venues in multi-team cricket tournaments.

India refused to travel to Pakistan for last year's Champions Trophy and were allowed to play all their matches in Dubai instead.

Should FIFA reject a switch of venue to Mexico, it seems unlikely that Iran would travel to the USA and take part in the tournament while at war with one of the co-hosts.

Iran's sports minister said last week it was not possible for the Iranian players to participate after the USA launched airstrikes alongside Israel against Tehran, killing the Islamic Republic's supreme leader.

An official withdrawal would be the first in the modern era and leave FIFA with the urgent task of finding a replacement. The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) said on Monday that it had not received any notification that Iran will withdraw from the event.

"At the end of the day, it's the federation who should decide if they're playing, and as of today, the federation has told us that they are going to the World Cup," AFC General Secretary Windsor John told reporters in Kuala Lumpur.

Bullets and Garden Stars share points in Premier League

The Pigotts Bullets and Garden Stars FC shared points in their latest outing in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Monday.

Both teams fought to a 2-2 draw in their keenly contested affair at the ABFA Technical Center.

Goals by Ngozie Harvey in the 16th minute and Joshua Samuel in the 30th minute to give Garden Stars a two-nil lead. But Garden Stars were reduced to 10 players in the 55th minute when Sadique Adams was expelled after picking up a second yellow card.

The Bullets capitalize on their one-man advantage to salvage the draw by scoring twice via conversions by Akeem Isaac in the 57th minute and Javier Wilmott in the 70th minute.

The result allows the Pigotts Bullets to remain in fifth place by advancing to 29 points after securing their second draw in 17 matches.

The Garden Stars remain in seventh place with 22 points after salvaging their seventh draw in 17 matches.

Meanwhile, Sea View Farm FC moved from fourth to third place by picking up some important points in their latest outing in the ABFA's Second Division League on Monday.

Sea View Farm notched up their 11th win in 15 matches with a 6-2 drubbing of Belmont FC at Sea View Farm.

Nigel Graham and Caron Lewis each scored twice, while Akeem



Players of the Pigotts Bullets football team starting XI

Warrick and Barry Samuel each converted once for Sea View Farm FC. Iandre Hodge and Joshua Blenman were the goal scorers for Belmont FC.

The result allows Sea View Farm FC to move into third place on goal difference by advancing to 35 points, the same as second-placed Young Lions and Kelton Dalso Real Blizzard, who dropped into fourth place.

Belmont FC remains in 13th place with 14 points after suffering their 10th defeat in 16 matches.

Blackburn Palace and Police battled to a 2-2 draw in their encounter at the Fort Road playing field.

The result allows Blackburn Palace to remain in fifth place with 32 points after securing their second draw in 16 matches.

Police FC will also remain in sixth place with 31 points after salvaging their fourth draw in 14 matches.

Point West Ham FC and the Urlings Golden Stars also played to a 2-2 draw at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

Amill Williams scored in the 16th minute, and Taeim Tonge had a 71st-minute conversion for the Urlings Golden Stars. Anderson Herbert converted a penalty kick in the 57th minute, and Lloyd Sheppard scored in the 66th minute for Point West Ham FC.

The result allows Point West Ham FC to remain in 10th place on goal difference with 21 points after securing their third draw in 13 matches.

The Urlings Golden Stars remain in 11th place on goal difference with 21 points after salvaging their third draw in 15 matches.