

# New Operating Hours For Voter ID Cards Renewal

Story on page 2



*Cybersecurity officials from the sub-region are gathering in Antigua and Barbuda, for a two-day workshop under the theme; "Cyber Governance Collaboration in the Eastern Caribbean."*

## New Operating Hours For Voter ID Cards Renewal



**Supervisor of Elections, Ian S Hughes**

The Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) will extend its operating hours effective today (March 24) in anticipation of a sharp rise in the number of persons who are applying to renew their Voter ID Cards.

This comes as prime minister Gaston Browne announced Saturday that general elections are ‘less than 90 days’ away as he urged members of the public to renew their Voter ID Cards in order to qualify to vote.

Supervisor of Elections, Ian Hughes said all registration booths operated by ABEC will open until 7:00 pm Mondays to Fridays with shortened hours on the weekend. Since the prime minister’s announcement, there has been a noticeable rise in the number of people applying to renew their Voter ID Cards and Hughes expects this number to rise as the election date approaches.

On the issue of the state of preparedness ahead of the pending poll, Hughes expressed confidence in the organization’s ability to deliver a successful general election when that day is announced.

“We are always in a state of preparedness and we are currently awaiting the official announcement

of a date for general elections from the prime minister. Our plan is to tap into our resources by utilizing the Returning Officers who served during the 2023 general elections as much as possible. Additionally, we anticipate that we will also conduct some training ahead of election day,” he remarked.

Most Voter ID Cards expired in 2025 and the government choose to

having voters renew their ID cards rather than having a complete re-registration of all voters. However, the process has been quite slow with an estimated 20-thousand persons yet to apply for new cards.

Prime Minister Browne has led a chorus of officials calling on voters to renew their ID cards as this is critical if they intend to vote.



**Antigua & Barbuda**  
ELECTORAL COMMISSION

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**EXTENDED OPENING HOURS**

Effective Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026, our Head Office will be opened from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm and all Registration Units from 8:30 am to 7:00 pm (Monday to Friday). Both the Head Office and Registration Units will be opened on Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm until further notice.

**PLEASE TAKE NOTE**

All offices will be closed on the following days

- Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2026 (Palm Sunday)
- Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2026 (Good Friday)
- Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2026
- Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2026 (Easter Sunday)
- Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2026 (Easter Monday)

Please be guided accordingly!

Stay connected with us!

+1 (268) 562-4191    www.abec.gov.ag    @Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission

## Electricity Rates to Remain Stable Amidst Rising Oil Prices

The cost for electricity will remain stable for now, despite ongoing concerns about fluctuating global oil prices and their potential impact on utility costs.

Utilities Minister, Melford Nicholas, told state television that Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) is not currently passing on fuel-related increases to consumers.

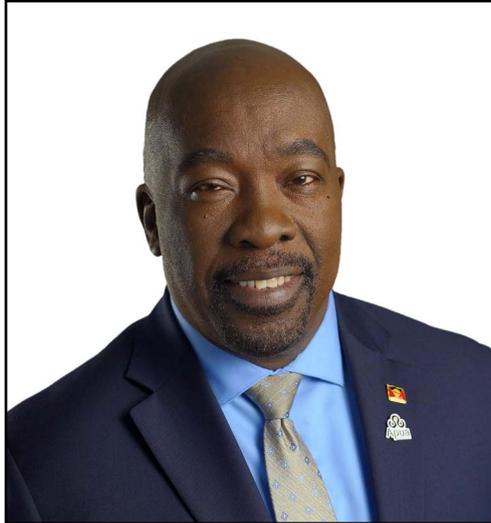
“We are holding prices stable for now,” Nicholas stated, noting that while global energy markets remain volatile, APUA has opted to absorb the pressures in the short term.

He cautioned, however, that the situation could change if oil prices were to rise sharply. “We wouldn’t be able to say if the problem exacerbates and, let’s say, a barrel of oil were to go to \$200, what impact that may have,” he explained. “But as it stands now, APUA is going to hold the line for a while longer.”

The minister pointed out that a similar approach was taken during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the government and the utilities company worked together to shield consumers from external economic shocks and rising costs.

“We are aligned with the government in terms of keeping the inflationary impact of these external shocks away from the population for the time being,” he added.

The announcement comes on the heels of the government announcing that it will absorb any rising cost of



**Utilities Minister, Melford Nicholas**

fuel at the pump at least in the short term, a welcomed relief for vehicle owners and operators.

Looking beyond cushioning the cost of electricity to consumers, the utilities minister revealed that the long-term solution to the issues being experienced lies in reducing the country’s dependence on fossil fuels. He highlighted ongoing efforts to expand renewable energy infrastructure, including solar and wind power.

Among the initiatives is the rehabilitation of a solar plant near the V.C. Bird International Airport, along with plans for an additional facility in the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium area. These developments are expected to improve energy resilience and introduce battery storage into the grid.

Nicholas revealed that the government is aiming to significantly expand solar capacity over the next three to

four years, targeting up to 50 megawatts of solar energy production.

“That really will take a bite out of the cost that we have for purchasing fuel,” he said.

The utilities minister pointed to the success of Barbuda’s hybrid energy system, which has already achieved approximately 25 percent savings in fuel consumption. He believes replicating similar efficiencies in Antigua could translate into savings of roughly \$60 million for APUA, funds that could be reinvested into further renewable development.

Currently, electricity production costs in Antigua remain among the highest in the region, estimated at about US\$0.42 per unit—significantly higher than in oil-producing countries where costs can fall below US\$0.10, Minister Nicholas pointed out, noting that the high energy costs affect multiple sectors, including water production and major infrastructure projects. He cited a new health facility under development that is incorporating its own renewable energy systems to offset operational expenses.

Minister Melford Nicholas expressed confidence that transitioning to renewable energy will not only stabilize electricity costs but also enhance economic competitiveness and deliver environmental benefits.

“If we can remove our dependence on fossil fuels, we will see wider economic benefits and positive environmental impacts,” he said.



**Curry House**

ANTIGUA

Open Daily –  
12:00pm – 10:30pm

 [currytandoorihouseanu](#)
 [curryhouseanu](#)
 (268) 736-7165

## Pringle Rejects Exit Rumours, Reaffirms Leadership of UPP

Political Leader of the United Progressive Party (UPP) and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Jamale Pringle, has dismissed reports suggesting he intends to step down, describing them as deliberate attempts to destabilize the party.

In a statement on Monday, Pringle assured party members, supporters, and the wider public that he remains committed to his role writing, "I am not resigning".

"I remain your Political Leader. I remain committed to holding the Gaston Browne Administration accountable, and to building this party into an organization worthy of leading this nation."

He also reaffirmed the commitment of senior party figure Harold Lovell, noting that Lovell remains dedicated to both the UPP's broader mission and his constituency of All Saints West. Pringle called on supporters and "right-thinking persons" to unite behind the party as it prepares for the next general election.

Addressing criticism surrounding the recent St. Philip's North by-election, Jamale Pringle pushed back against what he described as a "dishonest narrative" being constructed about the party's performance.

He stressed that the UPP's participation in the contest was part of a broader strategy to demonstrate support for its candidate, Alex Browne, and to signal its ongoing engagement with constituents seeking change.

"The UPP has never held that constituency in 50 years," Pringle noted, arguing that using the by-election result as a measure of leadership failure was both misleading and unfair.

He further described attempts to leverage the outcome as a means of challenging his leadership as "disingenuous" and "an insult to the intelligence of the public," while also dismissing such interpretations as a



**Opposition in Parliament, Jamale Pringle**

fundamental misunderstanding of the party's long-term strategy.

On the party's internal affairs, Pringle acknowledged that concerns exist regarding the United Progressive Party's direction and pace of renewal, but

stressed that open dialogue remains essential.

"To those within our ranks who have concerns, my door remains open," he said. "Genuine disagreement, openly expressed, is healthy in any democratic organization."

The UPP leader reaffirmed his party's commitment to strengthening its role as a credible opposition, insisting that the people of Antigua and Barbuda deserve more robust representation.

"You deserve a credible, united, and focused Opposition," Pringle said. "The Antigua Labour Party has earned no blank cheque, and the citizens of this country deserve much more than they are now receiving."

He declared that the work of his party will continue, and he intends to continue with it.





**HON. CHARLES 'MAX' FERNANDEZ**  
St. John's Rural North

GET  
*Reddy*

UPDATE YOUR VOTER ID

WHAT TO BRING

- Expired Voter ID
- Government-issued ID
- Proof of address
- Marital status documents (if applicable)

REGISTRATION UNIT

Yorks Community Centre  
(Opposite the basketball court)

HOURS

Monday - Friday  
8:30 AM - 6:00 PM

FOR ASSISTANCE  
764-4340



## Ministry of Agriculture Spends Millions On New Equipment

The Ministry of Agriculture is spending millions of dollars to acquire new equipment with the focus being on drastically increasing food production in the country.

Agriculture Minister, Anthony Smith Jnr., revealed to so far the ministry has expended more than \$5 million to acquire tractors and heavy-duty equipment as it assumes responsibility to not only assist farmers clearing of lands but additionally, it is now tasked with helping to build access roads to and from farming areas.

The minister said Cabinet made a decision to allow the ministry to acquire its own equipment in its expanded role beyond the building of dams and ponds to include building access roads recognizing that the Ministry of Works is currently engaged in road construction and rehabilitation in other parts of the country.

Minister Smith came as the ministry took possession of four new tractors that it hopes to deploy into the sector shortly.

“Today marks a significant milestone as the Ministry begins receiving new heavy-duty equipment and tractors to strengthen our agricultural sector.

This development is a major step in building out our heavy-duty equipment department, allowing us to better support our farmers across Antigua and Barbuda.

With these new resources, we will be able to scale up critical work such as land clearing, building ponds and dams, land preparation, and repairing farm roads,” he explained.

He said this all part of the ministry’s broader plan to boost agricultural productivity, support farmers, and strengthen food security for the nation.



## Cybersecurity Officials Meet in Antigua and Barbuda



Cyber Resilience Group 2026

Cybersecurity officials from the sub-region are gathering in Antigua and Barbuda, for a two-day workshop under the theme; “Cyber Governance Collaboration in the Eastern Caribbean.”

The Antigua and Barbuda government is partnering with the Organization of American States (OAS) and with the support of the Government of the United Kingdom, to host the workshop.

It brings together policymakers, technical experts, legal professionals, diplomats, and cybersecurity practitioners from across the Caribbean to strengthen national and regional cyber resilience through enhanced coordination, communication, and collaboration.

Delivering opening remarks, Director of Cyber Security within the Ministry of ICTs, Utilities and Energy, Gordina Hector-Murrell, emphasized the urgency of collective action: “Cybersecurity is no longer a question of if, but when. Our ability to detect, respond, and recover—together—will define the resilience of our nations.” She highlighted the importance

of preparedness, particular-

ly for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and the need for coordinated responses at both national and regional levels.

Geraldine White, Administrative Technician at the Office of the Organization of American States (OAS) General Secretariat in Antigua and Barbuda, underscored the importance of coordination, noting that effective response — not just prevention — determines impact. She emphasized the need for clear communication channels, defined roles, and proactive planning.

## Midweek Deals

TUESDAYS / WEDNESDAYS

**-Leg and Thigh**  
**-Biscuit**  
**-Medium Drink**

**\$17.99**

**\$19.99**  
**-Burger**  
**-Medium Drink**

@KFCANU



United Kingdom High Commissioner, John Hamilton, highlighted the growing complexity of cyber threats within the context of global “hybrid threats”, where cyber incidents can quickly escalate into broader economic and national security challenges. He noted that strong coordination enhances deterrence and minimizes disruption.

Representing Minister of ICTs, Melford Nicholas, Permanent Secretary Olivette Williams reaffirmed that cybersecurity must be treated as a national strategic priority. She stressed that sustained collaboration—locally, regionally, and internationally—is essential to effectively combat cyber threats.

The workshop aims to enhance cyber resilience by focusing on:

1. Strengthening coordination between policy, technical, and operational stakeholders
2. Protecting Critical Infrastructure (CI) and Critical Information Infrastructure (CII)
3. Establishing effective information-sharing mechanisms
4. Improving national and regional incident response frameworks

5. Promoting international cooperation and diplomatic engagement in cybersecurity

Participants will examine international best practices, including

the United Kingdom’s cyber incident management approach, as a model for strengthening national systems. Discussions will focus on core cyber resilience concepts, identifying vulnerabilities, national response structures, and governance frameworks to support effective decision-making during incidents. Emphasis will also be placed on practical response, including incident detection, escalation, inter-agency coordination, and information sharing.

This initiative represents a significant step towards strengthening cybersecurity resilience in the Caribbean through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and sustained partnerships

**STATE INSURANCE**  
COMPANY LIMITED  
Live in a better State of mind

LIFE & MEDICAL INSURANCE

**LET LIFE BREEZE BY - WE'VE GOT YOU.**

ANTIGUA (268) 481-7800/04    BARBUDA (268) 727-7422    www.sicfinancial.com

## ABCAS Performing Arts Students Merge Creativity and Entrepreneurship In Roots and Rhythm Showcase



The Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS) came alive with culture, creativity, and entrepreneurial energy on Sunday evening (March 22) as Performing Arts students presented their dynamic community event, *Roots & Rhythm*, at the Dr. Alister Francis Campus.

The showcase formed part of Unit One of the CAPE Performing Arts programme, which focuses on business for the creative arts, including entrepreneurship, marketing, financing, and project execution. As part of their School-Based Assessment (SBA), students are required to conceptualize and produce a community event grounded in research, applying both creative expression and practical business principles.

This year's production was led by students Marjorie Galvez and Ronique Dharangit, who successfully brought their vision to life through a vibrant and engaging cultural showcase. Their work reflected a deeper understanding of what it means to operate within the creative industry, moving beyond performance to embrace the realities of planning, promoting, and managing

a live event.

Course Facilitator Tavia Hunte expressed immense pride in the students' accomplishments, noting that the process presented real-world challenges.

*"They faced real-life obstacles throughout the process, particularly in areas such as financing and promotion, but they remained diligent and committed. Even in moments where they felt like giving up, they pushed through. I am extremely proud of their efforts and growth,"* she shared.

The evening featured a diverse lineup of performances, including performances by the Pandemonium Steel Orchestra, UWI Five Islands Campus Singers, ABCAS Steel Band, ABCAS Theatre Students, Let's Dance Academy, Shiva's School of Dance, as well as guest performers Soca Villian and Island Prince.

Also in attendance was Zahra Aïrall, External Examiner for the CAPE Performing Arts programme, who observed the students' successful execution of a community-driven production that effectively bridged theory and practice.



Each year, the event takes on a different shape, driven by the vision and interests of the students. The success of *Roots & Rhythm* continues to demonstrate the transformative impact of integrating business strategy with artistic creativity.

ABCAS hopes to build on this momentum by establishing the showcase as an annual staple, highlighting the talent within the institution while creating meaningful opportunities for creative expression and innovation.

## WISH and Hopeful Hearts Foundation Unveil “More Good Days, Together” Mural



The Wadadli Initiative for Self-Care and Healing (WISH), founded by Chaneil C. Imhoff, and the Hopeful Hearts Foundation have jointly completed the installation of a vibrant community mural on the walls of the historic Antigua Recreation Grounds. Developed as part of WISH’s “More Good Days, Together” campaign in partnership with Going Together for Youth Creativity and Well-Being,

and with support from ABI Insurance Company Ltd, the project represents a significant milestone in collaborative community driven mental health advocacy.

Painted on a bold yellow background and featuring tropical imagery including hibiscus blooms, birds of paradise, and hand-lettered typography, the mural carries the message: *Be Kind to Your Mind*. The choice

of location is deliberate. As one of Antigua and Barbuda’s most recognised

and historically significant public spaces, the Antigua Recreation Grounds ensures



# Local News



that the message reaches the widest possible cross-section of the community, from residents and commuters to visitors and youth.

The initiative responds to a documented need. Research conducted by WISH indicates that young people across Antigua and Barbuda are experiencing elevated levels of stress and emotional strain, with limited access to safe spaces for expression. While mental health dialogue has grown in formal environments, public spaces have largely remained silent on the issue. This mural directly addresses that gap.

“This mural is about creating a space where people feel seen, where creativity meets purpose, and where community becomes part of the story,” said Imhoff. “Watching everyone come together reminded me why this work matters so deeply.”

The installation forms the physical anchor of a broader coordinated activation, which includes the rollout of the WISH Mood Tracker digital platform, dissemination of national survey findings, production of

multi-voice public service announcements, and school-based poster distribution. Together, these components are designed to convert public visibility into meaningful engagement and action.

Kristina Louisa of the Hopeful Hearts Foundation described the collaboration as both a community achievement and a personal milestone. “It was an incredibly rewarding experience to help bring Chaneil’s vision to life and be part of something so positive, creative, and community driven,” she said. “Being able to

include the Hopeful Hearts Foundation reflects the kind of impact that is possible when NGOs come together with a shared purpose. This truly feels like the beginning of something bigger.”

The project supports three parallel national priorities: prevention and early engagement, youth empowerment, and public education to reduce stigma. Both organisations have expressed intention to expand the mural programme and explore future collaborations with community partners across the country.

**Hello Antigua!**  
**Early Bird Sale**  
 Liat Air is taking you to...

 <b>St. Kitts!</b> as low as <b>US\$111</b>	 <b>Jamaica!</b> as low as <b>US\$220</b>	 <b>Grenada</b> as low as <b>US\$156</b>
---	---	--

Terms and conditions apply. All fares are one-way, taxes included.

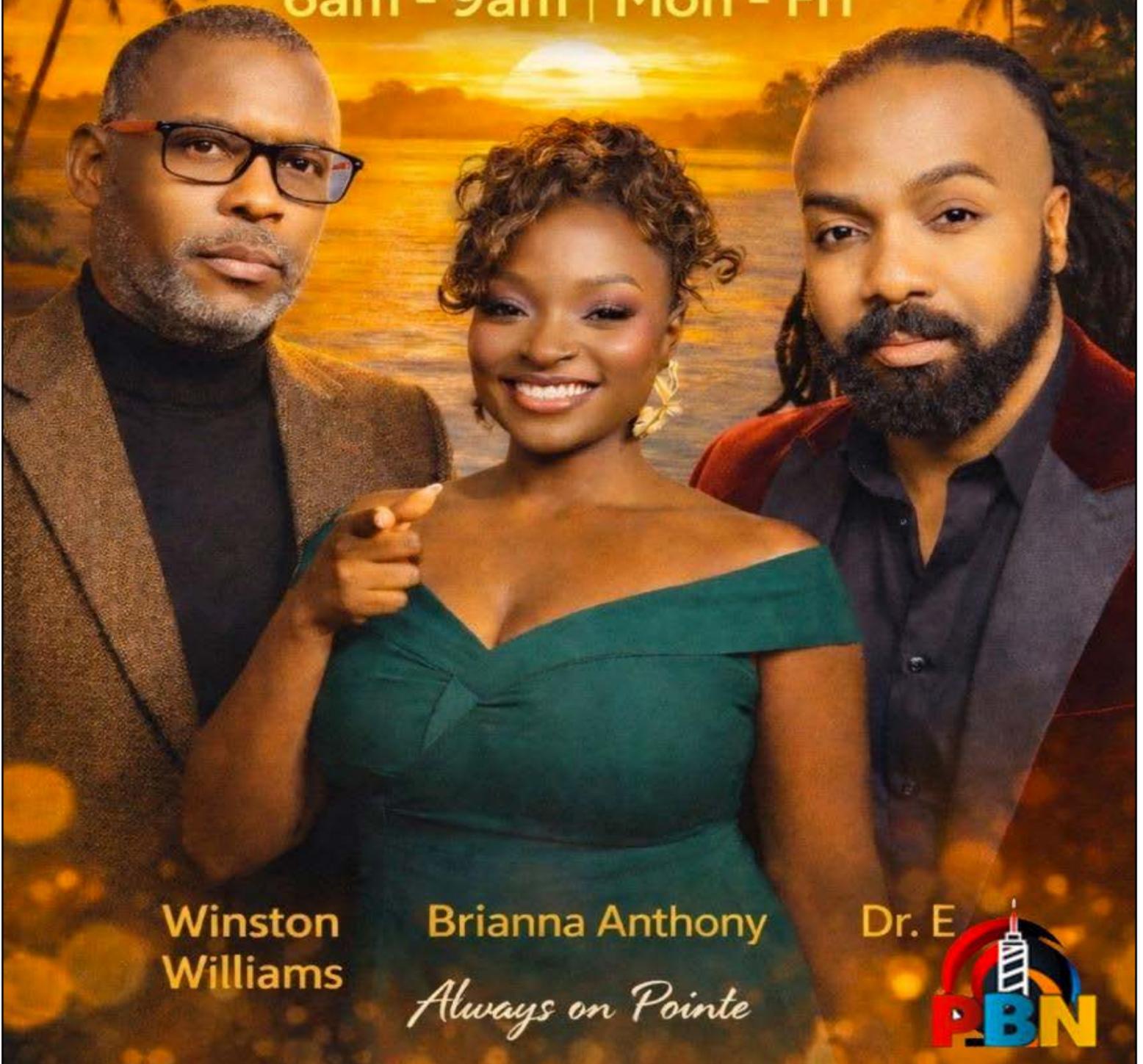
**BOOK NOW**  
[www.flyliatair.com](http://www.flyliatair.com)

1 268 713 5428  
 @flyliatair

**Liat Air**  
 Pride of the Caribbean

# The MORNING P<sub>•</sub>OINTE Show

Coming January 2026  
6am - 9am | Mon - Fri



Winston  
Williams

Brianna Anthony  
*Always on Pointe*

Dr. E



## International aid convoy reaches Cuba amid humanitarian crisis

By Jean-Michel Hauteville (Fort-de-France, correspondent)

More than 500 people from around 30 countries in Latin America, North America and Europe are expected in Cuba over the weekend, as part of an international solidarity operation in support of the island. The crowd, which includes left-wing political figures, long-standing human rights defenders, but also trade unionists, artists and influencers, is converging on Cuba, which is facing a severe energy crisis made worse by the oil blockade imposed in January by the US government.

The first members of this humanitarian caravan, named “Nuestra America” (“Our America”) – the title of an essay by Cuban independence hero and thinker José Martí (1853-1895) – arrived in Havana on Wednesday, March 18. This group of around 100 activists, mainly from Europe, handed over 5 metric tons of medicines and medical equipment to the Cuban authorities for use in hospitals.

They were joined over the week by other groups, arriving by plane or boat in the Cuban capital. “There are power outages all the time. This is unconscionable (...) And it is causing people to die from not having operations they need, not having medicines they need,” said Medea Benjamin, co-founder of the US peace organization CodePink:



Women for Peace, speaking by phone. US President Donald Trump’s policy toward Cuba “doesn’t represent the American people,” said this feminist activist, whose NGO is one of the or-

ganizers of the international convoy and chartered two planes to make the short crossing from Miami to Havana on Friday.”

**REGGAE  
IN THE  
PARK**

**15**

**SAVE THE DATE**

**TUE 21 APR**

## Strong regional turnout for Competitive Weekend at AYC Regatta

### Zoë Carlton

Twenty-six boats lined up at Antigua Yacht Club for a weekend of close racing across ILCA and Optimist fleets, with sailors representing four Caribbean nations.

Out on the water in Falmouth Harbour, sails cut clean lines across the bay as the boats lined up for a weekend of close, competitive racing. With sailors travelling in from Saint Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to join sailors from Antigua and Barbuda, the 2026 Budget Marine ILCA and Optimist Open Regatta once again drew a strong regional field—and delivered on it.

Racing across the fleets was tight. Starts mattered, mark roundings mattered more, and there was little room to recover from mistakes. It was serious sailing, but never without its lighter moments back on shore.

One of the clearest signs of the event's strength came from the Green Fleet. Designed to bring younger sailors into competition, it offered a first taste of racing in a supportive but structured environment. Tyrone Richardson Jr took first place, with Ziggy Brookes second and Bowden Pierini third—early results, but promising ones.

In the Optimist Open fleet, Greyson Burrell finished first, navigating the kind of conditions that test both confidence and decision-making. The ILCA 4.7 class saw Tyden Jones add another win to a name already familiar on the local circuit.

The ILCA 6/7 fleet, as expected, was the most closely contested—and it was here that Shanoy Malone came out on top. Omani Lafond followed in second, with Diego Ewinger third,



**Shanoy Malone Leads ILCA6/7 Fleet at Antigua Yacht Club Regatta**

rounding out a competitive podium.

For Malone, the result carries added significance. In 1994, his father, Shaun Malone, won the same regatta. This year, the name returns to the winners' list—this time through the next generation.

“I always say I work hard—and every time I go out, I try to work twice as hard,” Malone said after racing. “It’s been a long time coming. I still feel like I have unfinished business.”

Reflecting on the win, he pointed back to where it began.

“I thank God for the opportunity, and my coaches who’ve been there since I was six. That’s when I came down here after school and said I wanted to do it. I just want to keep working.”

That long-term development is something Karl James has helped shape. Having organised the regatta for many years, he has seen the standard steadily rise.

“It was an amazing weekend,” he said. “The best sailors came out, and the competition was tight. It’s good to see it continuing to grow.”

He also highlighted efforts to keep the event accessible, particularly for younger sailors, even as last-minute challenges prevented one competitor from the British Virgin Islands from attending.

“I’m just happy to see all the kids come out and enjoy it,” he added.

Support from Budget Marine helped drive the event, with Barbie’s Restaurant keeping sailors and spectators fed between races. A special prize was also awarded to Jo-Ann Brown, recognising contribution beyond the results sheet.

By the end of the weekend, as boats came ashore and results were finalised, the broader picture was clear. From Green Fleet to ILCA, the pathway is active, competitive, and producing results.

And at the centre of it, Antigua Yacht Club continues to provide the space where that progression happens—quietly, consistently, and with the kind of racing that keeps sailors coming back.



# ANTIGUA Carnival 2026

**EVENT LAUNCH**

FEEL THE  
RHYTHM

APRIL 11 2:00 PM

RISING SUN GROUNDS

**FREE**



# GRATITUDE



## CUBA

*A friend **INDEED***

*is now a friend **IN NEED***

**MAKE YOUR GENEROUS DONATION  
IN CASH, OR IN CHEQUE WRITTEN TO:**

***Williams and Associates Dental Ltd***

***Take your donations to***

***Williams and Associates Dental Clinic***

***at Deanery and get a receipt,***

*Weekdays 8:30 am until 5:00 pm;*

*Saturdays until 12:00 noon*

***THE FRIENDS OF CUBA*** *in Antigua*

*and Barbuda are raising funds for*

***URGENTLY NEEDED*** *supplies for*

*Cuban Hospitals.*

***HAVE A HEART!***

***Give as willingly as you've been given.***

# REGGAE IN THE PARK 15

ZAMBAI AND FRIENDS

BLESS EYE

LUCIANO

THE STRAYS

THE CLIMAXX BAND

TUE **21** APR

EARLY BIRD

**\$80**

GENERAL

**\$120**

PAY MORE AT THE GATE

**FALMOUTH RECTORY GROUNDS @ 7:00PM UNTIL**

FOOD AND DRINKS ON SALE

### TICKET OUTLETS

Landing Strip, Weatherill's, Pink Mongoose Studio, Roti King, Rivers by Quintessence (Redcliffe Quay), Quintessence Variety Plus (QV+, Friars Hill Road)





# Thank You

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Management and Staff, we would like to express our sincerest gratitude to our loyal customers for your continuous support and trust throughout the years. Thank you for being a part of this journey with us.

WIOC looks forward to serving the people of Antigua & Barbuda for many more years.

## Caribbean education finds its voice in Kingston

For four days, some 400 educators, policymakers and thought leaders from 27 countries, converged at a landmark covenant with Caribbean learners.

The CXC's Inaugural Regional Education Conference and Ministerial Forum sought to frame a defining moment for the region's educational story.

"Ten out of ten." That was how Teenisha Heath-Adams, an educator from Trinidad and Tobago, summed up her experience at the close of the CXC Inaugural Regional Education Conference and Ministerial Forum last week in Jamaica that brought together nearly 400 of the Caribbean's sharpest minds in education governance and practice.

"The fact that this conference was so relevant. And so, actionable, I feel like we are heading in the right direction. So, honestly, it's just a 10 out of 10 experience for me and the entire thing wowed me," said Heath-Adams as she spontaneously responded in one of the many feedback sessions at the conference structured around education policy, pedagogy and practice.

The plenaries and workshops ranged from the use of generative AI in Caribbean classrooms to persistent gaps in literacy and numeracy; from flexible education pathways for learners who need alternative routes to qualification, to the landmark signing of a Partnership Engagement Agreement with a consortium of Caribbean employer groups – a formal declaration that preparing learners for the world of work is not CXC's mandate alone.

From the first notes of the CARICOM Song that opened the proceedings on Tuesday morning to the formal commencement of the Ministerial Forum on Thursday, the gathering crackled with the energy of a



region that has decided it is high time for action on digital equity for relevant examinations, and for education systems that honour the full range of Caribbean talent.

The conference, originally planned for October 2025 on Jamaica's north coast, was upended by the passage of Hurricane Melissa. Yet, even as the storm rewrote the calendar, Dr Wayne Wesley, CXC's registrar and CEO, pointed out that the enthusiasm for the gathering never wavered. "This tells you something about the hunger that exists for this kind of regional conversation", observed Dr Wesley.

He told the guests, who were in their numbers at the ballroom of The Jamaica Pegasus hotel in Kingston, that education is the only human invention that compounds across generations. "Every other resource – wealth, land, technology – can be hoarded or hacked, bombed or destroyed. But knowledge, once transmitted, multiplies. A teacher reaches 30 students. Those students reach thousands more. The compounding never stops. You are here because you believe Caribbean education can

and must be better."

The breadth of the gathering was itself a statement. 13 serving Caribbean ministers of education participated in the regional gathering. Delegates travelled from 27 countries, including Malta, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands.

In her keynote address, Dana Morris Dixon, minister of education, skills, youth and information, described the conference as an example of Jamaican resilience, praising the determination of the Education Ministry's Permanent Secretary Kasan Troupe; Chief Education Officer Terry-Ann Thomas-Gayle and her entire team. "Our education systems across the Caribbean are being tested, and reshaped by new technologies, and we have to be bold to reimagine our realities all at once", she encouraged the educators. "In the midst of this AI whirlwind, we must preserve what is most human and essential in education – curiosity, character, critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and purpose – we cannot lose sight of those goals," she added.

Her views were shared by Guyana's minister of education and new chair of CARICOM's Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD), Sonia Parag, who counselled that, in embracing the technological changes to learning and teaching, the literacy and numeracy model adopted by the Region and Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) must not be abandoned. She said slower learners still stand to benefit from the classroom interaction with teachers and traditional learning.

"If a child cannot read with comprehension, then an e-library offers little value, and, if a student cannot reason with numbers, then the promise of coding, data analysis and digital innovation becomes inaccessible. As such, digitisation must not distract us from these fundamentals, it must strengthen and promote them. It is essential that we work closely with the Caribbean Examinations Council to ensure that our system of teaching, learning, and assessment remain aligned and fit for purpose", said Minister Parag in her feature address to the meeting.

For CXC's part, Wesley said the conference and ministerial forum were an expression of the new "activist CXC" – an organisation that has long since outgrown its role as examination administrator and stepped fully into the arena of Caribbean educational advocacy.

"We are listening. We are engaging. We are responding," he declared, his voice carrying the weight of an institution at a pivot point. "Equity is the new excellence. Every Caribbean learner deserves a chance to shine, and CXC is equal to the moment."

The conference was organised weeks after CXC made history by administering fully electronic and hybrid examinations across 17 Caribbean states in the January 2026 cycle – more than 10,000 candidates and nearly 18,000 subject entries. The re-

sults, Dr Wesley reported, were unambiguous: Caribbean students are ready for e-examinations. "Our Gen Z and Alpha learners are digital natives," he said. "Learning and assessment systems must be congruent with how they process knowledge."

Nicole Manning, director of operations at CXC and conference chair, also challenged the educators to pivot on the inherent strengths in the Caribbean's educational ecosystem, and to decisively adapt to the demands of the digital era to transform instruction and learning in the classroom.

"This is a covenant with our children, our communities, and the Caribbean future we choose to build",

said Manning.

Sheree Deslandes, CXC's director of corporate services, in her concluding remarks, summed up the conference as "a clarion call" challenging every actor in Caribbean education to embrace excellence as not a destination for the few, but as a birthright for every Caribbean learner.

"The rivers meet," said Deslandes. "The CXC Inaugural Regional Education Conference and Ministerial Forum have given us analysis, dialogue, and shared conviction. Now, this moment of confluence begins, where that conviction must become commitment, and commitment must become policy." (Jamaica Gleaner)

## NOTICE

**TO: THE LICENSING MAGISTRATE  
MAGISTRATE'S COURT  
HIGHT STREET  
ST. JOHN'S  
ANTIGUA.**

**TO: THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE  
POLICE HEADQUARTERS  
AMERICAN ROAD  
ST. JOHNS  
ANTIGUA.**

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

**REGISTERED AS**

**"D GREEN LOUNGE ESCAPE"**

**I, Franklyn Knowles, DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE, that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the Liquor Licence Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, High Street, St. John's Antigua on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2026 next ensuing for a Tavern License in respect of premises known as "D'GREEN LOUNGE ESCAPE" situated at Langford Development, in the Parish of St. John's, Antigua pursuant to Section 11 (5) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act CAP 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda, Revised Edition 1992.**

**Date the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2026  
Franklyn Knowles  
268-722-5040**

## UWI gives platform to close-in-age defence debate

From the benches of Parliament to the debating society at The University of the West Indies (UWI), arguments for and against legalising consensual sex among minors continue to stir opposing views, particularly an accompanying Jamaicans For Justice (JFJ) recommendation of a 'close-in-age' defence, which could absolve adults, up to age 19, of having sexual relations with 14-year-olds.

Exactly three days before addressing the Joint Select Committee of Parliament reviewing the 2018 Child Diversion Act on March 3, attorney-at-law Priscilla Duhaney, spokesperson for Hear The Children Cry (HTCC), was among Team Opposition - on the invite of UWI's Debating Society - arguing the topic which had re-emerged in the public domain through a JFJ report, 'Civil Society Review of the Diversion of Alternative Measures for Children in Conflict with the Law in Jamaica'.

Joining Duhaney in opposition were criminologist and police officer, Dr Jason McKay, and Dekardiego Nelson, president of the University of Technology's Debating and Public Speaking Society, for the debate titled, 'Children, Consent and the Law'.

Team Proposition comprised Glenroy Murray, executive director, Equality For All Foundation, Dr Nadene Spence, and student-debater Kimani Leslie, president of Excelsior High School's debating society.

An involved audience listened as Murray led off for Team Proposition, arguing that criminalising consensual sexual activity between minors undermines the objectives of the Child Diversion Programme, which was launched in 2020 to redirect children in conflict with the law away from the courts, instead pointing them towards rehabilitative interventions.

"Section 10 of the Sexual Offences Act of 2009 makes it an offence for anyone to have sexual intercourse with



a person under 16 years of age. Sexual intercourse is defined as penetration of the vagina by the penis.

"Consequently, other sexual acts such as cunnilingus, fellatio or digital penetration are covered by Grievous Sexual Assault under section 4 of the Act. Section 4(3)(b) makes it an offence if those acts, among others, are carried out on a person under 16.

"It is these sections that have the effect of criminalising not only cases where adults take advantage of minors, but also where two persons under 16 engage in sexual activity with each other," posited the 2018-2019 Chevening Scholar and 2022 nominee for the Prime Minister's Youth Award for Excellence.

"It is this latter scenario that we are confronted with," Murray argued, pointing to a 2025 report by JFJ, which states that, for the three-year period of 2022-2024, of 710 children arrested for crimes, 107 faced charges for grievous sexual assault, 121 for sexual intercourse with a person under 16 and 43 for indecent assault.

"These offences made up almost 40 per cent of the cases of arrest," Murray summarised, taking a shot at Team

Opposition's McKay, adding that his opponents wanted to maintain criminalisation of consensual sex between minors to "make the work of the police easier" instead of undertaking proper investigative procedures.

McKay, responding for Team Opposition, reminded of the realities facing females as young as 13 years old, especially in Jamaica's many garrison communities controlled by gang members, many of whom constitute "the perfect, agile gunman" at 17, an age which falls within JFJ's proposed close-in-age exemption.

"Jamaica is said to have 13 garrison communities controlled by gangs. However, within those 13 garrisons, there are scores of enclaves each run by two or three opposing gangs. These are areas in which the only value gangs attach to females are their bodies," said McKay, who has served as a police officer for 22 years and is attached to the St Catherine South Special Operations Unit.

"The boys are recruited to the gangs from as early as age 12. The females start attracting the attention of the gunmen, who are as young as 17, at age 12 or 13. Which family member

will be bold or brave enough to step forward to intervene without backing of the law criminalising the offence?" McKay asked, warning Team Proposition that they were "heading down a slippery slope", which, if followed, "Jamaica would quickly pay dearly".

Spence, arguing "unapologetically through the lens of women's rights and gender justice", reiterated Team Proposition's position, citing other jurisdictions to include comparative Commonwealth experience.

"In Canada, the age of consent is 16, but the Criminal Code provides a close-in-age exemption. Youth aged 12 and 13 may engage in consensual sexual activity with someone less than two years older. Youth aged 14 and 15 may do so with someone less than five years older. Crucially, the exemption does not apply where there is exploitation, trust, authority, or dependency," Spence pointed out before outlining Team Proposition's close-in-age stance.

"Where two adolescents are no more than two years apart and engage in consensual activity, no offence is committed. Where the age gap is greater, the younger person must be no less than 12 and the other no more than four years older, with a defence available only where there is no authority, dependency, or coercion," she said.

"Mr Speaker, blanket criminalisation clogs our justice system and risks entrenching disadvantage but reform without safeguards would betray our daughters. The path forward must do both, reduce unnecessary criminalisation and strengthen protection against abuse," she added.

Duhaney, addressing the recent sitting of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament, argued that faced with pressure for sex, young girls in some inner-city communities often deliberately go missing to escape predators. She also warned against health issues should the floodgates of decriminalisation be flung open.

"There is a greater health issue that

government will have to deal with - STIs (sexually transmitted infections), teenage pregnancies and mental health - from which we must protect children. We have to protect them from self-inflicting harm," Duhaney pointed out, adding that scientific studies confirm that minors are incapable of making rational decisions because of underdevelopment of the brain.

Nelson also sought to drive home Team Opposition's point regarding the dangers of allowing minors the freedom of consensual sex.

"Adolescence is a period of high vulnerability, especially for girls, who believe they have the need to 'belong' in

certain circumstances. The law stands as a bright line. What Proposition is proposing is that the burden of risk should be shifted from institution to minors," Nelson argued.

At the end of the debate, Jermaine Barrett, founder and executive director, Jamaica Association for Debating and Empowerment, said he was impressed by UWI's Debating Society thrashing out a matter in the public domain, and added that there might be need for a follow-up debate on the topic, especially in relation to the close-in-age exemption being proposed for Parliament's consideration. (Jamaica Gleaner)

## NOTICE

**TO: YOUR WORSHIP  
ST. JOHN'S MAGISTRATE COURT  
HIGH STREET  
ST. JOHN'S  
ANTIGUA.**

**TO: THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE  
POLICE HEADQUARTERS  
AMERICAN ROAD  
ST. JOHNS  
ANTIGUA.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

### Re: Notice- Application Bottle License

**I, Rolston Knight of York's Village, with a registered business situated at York's Village, St. Johns, Antigua and Barbuda, DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the liquor licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court at High Street, St. John's, Antigua on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026, next ensuring for a Liquor Licensing Pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (Intoxication Liquor) Act Cap.249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as "R&J Superette" situated York's Village the parish of St. Johns, Antigua and Barbuda.**

**Dated the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2026.**

**....Rolston.....Knight.....**

# Regional News



## Caribbean agencies review response to Hurricane Melissa, identify gaps



The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), in collaboration with Jamaica's Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) and regional partners, recently hosted a three-day After-Action Review (AAR) to assess the region's response to Hurricane Melissa.

The review brought together disaster officials, regional bodies, UN agencies, security forces, civil society and development partners to evaluate successes, identify gaps and strengthen future responses.

Hurricane Melissa, one of the most powerful storms in the region's history, made landfall in Jamaica on October 28, 2025, as a Category 5 system. It caused widespread damage across Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, Haiti, The Bahamas, and the Turks and Caicos Islands, with Jamaica bearing the brunt of the destruction, particularly in western parishes.

CDEMA activated its Regional Coordination Plan ahead of the storm and maintained regional response efforts through early 2026, issuing multiple situation reports to guide deci-

sion-making.

The review examined early warning systems, coordination among regional and national agencies, and response effectiveness across key sectors such as health, shelter, logistics, telecommunications and recovery. It also assessed financing and the transition from emergency response to recovery.

ODPEM Director General, Commander Alvin Gayle, described the exercise as a critical opportunity for the region to reflect and improve.

"This review allows us to assess what worked, identify gaps, and take practical steps to strengthen regional coordination and disaster response," he said.

CDEMA Executive Director Elizabeth Riley commended the overall response but acknowledged areas needing improvement, including logistics, staffing, and the alignment of relief supplies with actual needs.

She said the review will help guide the development of a stronger, more coordinated Regional Response Mechanism.

Findings from the exercise will be presented at CDEMA's Technical Advisory Committee meeting in April and will inform efforts to enhance disaster preparedness and resilience across the Caribbean. (CMC)



## PAYING SCHOOL FEES? IT'S AS EASY AS ACB, AND HASSLE FREE!

Use the ACB Smart App and pay fees on the go. With our instant ACB Merchant Payment or EFT Options, **we've got you covered!**

follow us on for the list of schools

## Pilot and co-pilot killed in collision at US airport

A pilot and a co-pilot were killed and several others badly hurt when an Air Canada regional jet struck a fire truck on a runway while landing at LaGuardia Airport in New York, officials say.

The two were killed in the late Sunday night collision, which crushed the nose of the aircraft, while around 40 passengers and crew members were taken to area hospitals, some with serious injuries. Most have since been released from treatment, authorities said Monday.

Two Port Authority employees who were traveling in the fire truck also suffered injuries that were not believed to be life-threatening, said Kathryn Garcia, executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the airport.

The pilot and copilot were both based out of Canada, Garcia said during a news conference.

The airport will remain closed until Monday afternoon to facilitate the investigation, which is being led by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

The fire truck was traveling across the runway to respond to a separate incident aboard a United Airlines flight, whose pilot had reported “an issue with odour,” said Garcia, who deferred additional questions about the sequence of events leading up to the crash to the NTSB.

There were 72 passengers and four crew members aboard the aircraft, a Jazz Aviation flight operating on behalf of Air Canada, according to a statement from the airline. The flight originated at Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport, the major airport serving Montreal.

Photos and videos from the scene showed severe damage to the front of the aircraft, with cables and debris hanging from a mangled cockpit. Nearby, a damaged emergency vehicle



lay on its side.

Stairways used to evacuate passengers from the aircraft were pushed up to the emergency exits on the jet, a Bombardier CRJ. The impact left the jet with its crumpled nose tilted upward.

In the moments before the crash, an air traffic controller could be heard on a radio transmission giving clearance to a vehicle to cross part of the tarmac, then trying to stop it.

“Stop, Truck 1. Stop,” the transmission says. The controller can then be heard frantically diverting an incoming aircraft from landing.

Air traffic controllers are not impacted by the partial government shutdown that has caused long delays at airport security checkpoints in recent days. They have been affected by past shutdowns.

As passengers straggled out of the airport into the dark early Monday, some described having arrived at LaGuardia hours before their flight, hoping to beat the lines.

Arturo Davidson said his Miami-bound flight was on the tarmac

Sunday night when fellow passengers saw the collision or its aftermath and reactions rippled through the cabin.

The passengers were soon told there had been an accident. About 20 minutes later, they were informed the airport was closing and they must return to the terminal, he said later Monday, gazing at a departure board filled with cancellations.

“I don’t think we’re going at two,” he sighed, referring to the time Monday afternoon that officials gave as the earliest for reopening LaGuardia.

LaGuardia was 19th busiest in 2024 out of more than 500 US airports, with over 16.7 million passengers boarding there, according to a 2025 FAA database.

The airport, which opened to commercial traffic in 1939, covers 680 acres (275 hectares) and borders Flushing and Bowery bays in Queens. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey describes it as “one of the nation’s leading domestic gateways for business and leisure travel” in its 2024 Airport Traffic Report. (Jamaica Gleaner)

## France's Socialists hold on to power in major cities in election boost for mainstream



Socialists and allies held on to power France's big four cities - Paris, Marseille, Lyon and Lille - on a local election night that offered hopes for mainstream parties in next year's presidential elections.

The new aspirants of the far-left and far-right also made gains – notably in Nice for an ally of Marine Le Pen and Roubaix in the north for the France Unbowed (LFI) party.

But the big lesson of the evening was the failure of alliances between mainstream left and LFI, with voters turning to the centre and right in long-time Socialist Party (PS) strongholds like Clermont-Ferrand and Brest.

On the contrary, in cities like Paris, Marseille and Lille – where incumbent Socialists steered clear of the far-left because of accusations of sectarian anti-Semitism in its ranks – left-wing administrations were comfortably returned.

Lyon – where the ecologist mayor Gregory Doucet did ally himself with LFI and still won – was seen as a case apart, because the right-wing challenger, businessman Jean-Michel Aulas, ran a poor campaign.

“My conclusion from tonight is that the LFI wins nothing – and what is worse it is the LFI that brings about

defeat,” said Pierre Jovet, PS secretary-general.

There had been calls for a boycott of LFI after one of its parliamentary assistants was charged with incitement to murdering a far-right student in Lyon. The party's firebrand leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon also enraged his enemies when in a speech he seemed to joke about the Jewishness of the late sex-offender Jeffrey Epstein.

But after round one of voting a week ago, many Socialist and Green candidates decided to overlook their objections to the far-left party and formed what the right then termed “alliances of shame” in order – they hoped – to

## NOTICE

**TO: The Licensing Magistrate  
Magistrate Court  
High Street  
St. John's  
Antigua**

**TO: Commissioner of Police  
Police Headquarters  
American Road  
St. John's  
Antigua**

### **NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A BOTTLE LICENCE FOR BUSINESS REGISTERED AS “TML MINI MART”**

**I, Elias Katrib, DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the liquor licence Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, High Street, St. John's Antigua on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2026 next ensuing for a bottle license in respect of premises known as “TML Mini Mart” situated at Coolidge, in the parish of St. George's, Antigua pursuant to section 11(3) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act Cap 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda, Revised Edition 1992.**

**Dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February. 2026  
Tel :1268-726-4400  
Elias Katrib**

secure victory.

The alliances between left and far-left also failed to perform in Toulouse, Strasbourg, Poitiers, Limoges and Tulle. The last is the electoral fief of the former PS president François Hollande, whose calls for a boycott of LFI went unheeded there.

But reacting to the results Sunday evening the LFI's Manuel Bompard pointed to the party's first-round victory in the northern Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, as well as Sunday's win in Roubaix.

"Tonight we have made the demonstration that nothing can stand in the way of a people on the move. Next year the new France will sweep away the world of [President] Macron and his nefarious policies," he said

Grégoire's win in Paris was in line with opinion polls and confirmed the capital's reputation as a mainly left-wing city. His predecessor Anne Hidalgo had made her mark with vigorously anti-car policies which were in general supported by voters.

Right-wing Rachida Dati – a pugnacious former minister under presidents Nicolas Sarkozy and Emmanuel Macron – proved to be a divisive candidate, and her impending trial for corruption will have swayed some voters against her. The same is true of the backing she received in between the rounds from the far-right's Sarah Knafo, after she withdrew from the race.

The far-right National Rally (RN) – by far the most popular party in pre-presidential opinion polls – failed to win its targets in Marseille and Toulon, after its opponents rallied against it. In Marseille the Republicans (LR) candidate stayed in the race and split the right-wing vote.

But in Nice Eric Ciotti, leader of the UDR party, won a clear victory over the incumbent Christian Estrosi, a former LR member who defected to the Macronite centre. This was hailed by the RN as a sign of an emerging new right, no longer held back by any taboo about working with Le Pen.

The RN also showed its strength in

small provincial towns, with victories in Montargis, Carcassonne and La Seyne-sur-Mer, though it lost the mayoralty of Villers-Cotterets north of Paris.

But the big winners of the evening were the mainstream parties of left, right and centre.

The pro-Macron party Renaissance scored a morale-boosting win in Bordeaux, with former minister Thomas Cazenave – with the backing of the centre and right - expected to overthrow the incumbent Green.

And there was an important moment in the Normandy city of Le Havre, where Macron's former prime minister Edouard Philippe was declared the winner. Philippe is strongly tipped as a centrist candidate in the 2027 presidential election, but had promised

only to run if he was elected in his home city.

In general, the elections have confirmed the growing strength of the far-left in the peripheries of big cities, where there are concentrations of the immigrant working class as well as the so-called "intellectual proletariat".

And the far-right RN has confirmed its presence in provincial France, outside of the big cities.

But in the end it was the mainstream parties that scored by far the most victories – giving them reason to hope that in any presidential run-off against a candidate of the extremes, the mainstream will win.

The big worry is: what if - in a presidential run-off - there are two candidates of the extremes? (BBC)




## GET

# Reddy

**UPDATE YOUR VOTER ID**

**WHAT TO BRING**

- Expired Voter ID
- Government-issued ID
- Proof of address
- Marital status documents (if applicable)

**REGISTRATION UNIT**

**St. Philip's Post Office**

**HOURS**

**Monday - Friday**  
8:30 AM - 6:00 PM

**FOR ASSISTANCE**  
**464-4242**



## UN issues new climate warning as El Niño looms

The Earth's climate is further out of balance than at any time in recorded history, the UN's weather agency has warned.

The World Meteorological Organization says that our planet is gaining much more heat energy than it can release, driven by emissions of warming gases such as carbon dioxide.

This record "energy imbalance" heated the ocean to new heights last year and continued to melt our planet's ice caps.

And scientists fear that a natural warming phase called El Niño – expected to begin later this year – could soon bring further heat records.

In response to the report, UN Secretary General António Guterres reiterated his call for countries to move away from fossil fuels to renewable energy to "deliver climate security, energy security and national security".

"Planet Earth is being pushed beyond its limits. Every key climate indicator is flashing red," he warned, in a typically punchy video address.

The last 11 years were the Earth's 11 warmest years in records stretching back to 1850, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) says.

In 2025, global average air temperatures were about 1.43C above those of "pre-industrial" times – before humans started burning large amounts of fossil fuels

A temporary cooling from the natural La Niña weather



pattern meant that 2025 was not quite as hot as 2024, which was boosted by the opposite El Niño phase.

Line graph showing annual global average air temperature between 1850 and 2025. There is some fluctuation from year to year, but the trend since around the year 1970 has been consistently upwards. The last few years are far above anything seen since records began.

But last year was still one of the three warmest years since records began. Many scientists now believe that warming is accelerating, although they say temperatures are broadly within the range of long-term predictions.

And the WMO points to a wealth of other evidence showing that the climate is changing faster than we have ever seen before.

Perhaps the most comprehensive measure is the amount of extra heat energy being taken up by the Earth.

This "energy imbalance" ultimately drives climate change and reached a new high last year, the WMO says.

While scientists are still working out exactly why

the Earth has accumulated so much extra heat over the past decade or so, they have no doubt that heat-trapping greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) are the root cause of the imbalance.

Levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere are at their highest for at least two million years, the WMO says, due to human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels.

Some of the extra energy trapped by these gases warms the atmosphere and the land, as well as melting the planet's ice.

The world's glaciers had one of their five worst years on record in 2024/25, according to provisional data, while sea ice at both poles was at or near record lows throughout most of 2025.

But more than 90% of the Earth's extra energy heats the oceans, which in turn harms marine life, drives more intense storms and contributes to sea-level rise.

The heat stored in the upper 2km (1.2 miles) of the global ocean reached a new high last year, the WMO says. Over the past two decades, it has been warming more than twice as quickly

as during the late 20th Century.

"Human activities are increasingly disrupting the natural equilibrium and we will live with these consequences for hundreds and thousands of years," said Prof Celeste Saulo, secretary general of the WMO.

The report points to the impacts of rising temperatures today, which are helping to intensify many types of extreme weather and aiding the spread of diseases such as dengue.

The south-west US is currently in the midst of a record-breaking early-season heatwave, with temperatures exceeding 40C in places over recent days – about 10-15C above average.

Rapid analysis by scientists at the World Weather Attribution group on Friday found that intensity of heat would have been "virtually impossible" without human-caused climate change.

Researchers are also closely watching the Pacific Ocean, with long-term forecasts strongly suggesting that a warming El Niño phase could form in the second half of 2026.

An El Niño – on top of the background human-caused warming trend – could push temperatures to new heights into 2027.

"If we transition to El Niño we will see an increase in global temperature again, and potentially to new records" said Dr John Kenne- dy of the WMO. (BBC)

## Flyers and Stingerz soar to wins in ABBA's Division 1 League



*Elite Stingerz guard Joshua Minner attempts a lay-up against Cuties Ovals Ojays when both teams met in the first round in the ABBA Division 1 league at the JSC Sports Complex in February 2026. (Photo courtesy of the ABBA)*

Defending champions EZ Fit Flyers and Lava Smoke Elite Stingerz secured wins against fellow strong contenders when the top four teams met once again in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) First Division League on Sunday evening.

The Flyers claimed their eighth win in 10 matches by soaring to a 68-60 victory over Daryll Matthew Ottos in the second game of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

TJ Williams had 13 points and seven rebounds; Adonis Humphreys produced nine points, 13 rebounds, and six assists; Nicholas Moore scored nine points and claimed six rebounds;

and Xavier Meade sank nine points and snatched five rebounds for the Flyers.

Warren Bogle shot a game-high 22 points and claimed five rebounds; Danny Perez converted 16 points and snatched eight rebounds; Christian Walker sank nine points and grabbed 14 rebounds; and Nick Strawter chipped in with eight points, eight rebounds, and five assists for Ottos, who lost for the third time in 10 games.

The Lava Smoke Elite Stingerz secured their seventh win in 10 games by pulling off a 96-91 victory against the Cuties Ovals Ojays in Sunday's opening encounter.

Joshua Minner produced 25 points,

six rebounds, and five assists; Steven Matthew had 24 points and five rebounds; Keroi Lee sank 16 points and claimed six rebounds; and Brycen Thomas chipped in with 11 points and 10 assists for the Stingerz.

Jabari Smith sank 21 points and claimed six rebounds, and Tajahron Davis scored 20 points as the top scorers for the Ovals Ojays.

In support, point guard Sam Taylor produced 12 points and six assists; Kareem Edwards also scored 12 points and grabbed six steals; and Jalen Owens scored 11 points for the Ovals Ojays, who lost for the fourth time in 10 games.

## New Winthorpes Lions dethrone Blackhawks as two-day champs



The CMW New Winthorpes Lions celebrate after winning the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's Two-Day Championship at Ball Beef in Liberta on Sunday, March 22, 2026. (Photo courtesy of the ABCA)

The Caribbean Motor Works (CMW) New Winthorpes Lions ended four-peat winners PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks' bid for a fifth consecutive title in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Two-Day Championship over the weekend.

West Indies cricketer Alzarri Joseph produced a fine all-round performance to lead the New Winthorpes Lions to the coveted title by claiming first innings honours over the Blackhawks in the final, which ended in a draw at Ball Beef in Liberta.

Set 223 runs to win, the Liberta Blackhawks conceded victory after reaching 61 for four in 10.2 overs in their second innings. Michael Greaves struck 35, while Ishmael

Peters took two for 25.

The New Winthorpes Lions made 183 all out in 37.5 overs in their first innings after losing the toss and being sent in to bat. Joseph missed out on a century, hitting a top score of 97.

The right-handed Joseph faced 74 balls and smashed 10 sixes and five fours. Opener Tyrone Williams Jr. hit a patient 46 off 73 balls, with five fours and a six.

Demari Benta, with 18, and Peters, who scored 12, were the only other Lions' batsmen to reach double figures. Left-arm pacer Javier Spencer claimed three for 31, off-spinner Kofi James took two for 20, and captain and left-arm spinner Karima Gore captured two for 63.

In reply, the Blackhawks conceded

a 37-run first innings lead after being dismissed for 146 in 42 overs. Elroy Francis Jr. struck 38, opener Kofi James hit 26, and Michael Greaves scored 21. Alzarri Joseph grabbed eight wickets for 24 runs in 15 overs.

The Lions continue to pile on the pressure, making 185 all out off 46 overs in their second innings. Alzarri Joseph once again starred with the bat, hitting a topscore of 61 off 31 balls, including eight sixes and a four.

Demari Benta struck 42, Jedidiah Martin smashed 24, and Tyrone Williams Jr. made 23. Off-spinner Rahkeem Cornwall gabbled five for 42, and Karima Gore picked up three for 34.

## Success for PMS in schools' cricket under-19 boys T20 competition

The Princess Margaret School (PMS) achieved success in the latest round of matches in the Ministry of Sports Secondary Schools Under-19 Boys T20 competition.

Princess Margaret School claimed a crushing 78-run victory against Sir Novelle Richards Academy by 78 runs at Antigua Grammar School.

Princess Margaret School made 149 for three off 15 overs. Captain JQuan Athanaze slammed 89 off 41 balls, including 13 fours and five sixes.

Opener Jariek Francis struck 33 off 37 balls, with seven boundaries, and there was a contribution of 21 extras. Rayquan Charles captured two for 32.

In reply, Sir Novelle Richards Academy was restricted to 71 for five of their 15 overs. There was a contribution of 31 extras. Captain Shaun Balgobin struck 11, and Rohan John made 10 not out. Tyran Francis claimed two for 10.

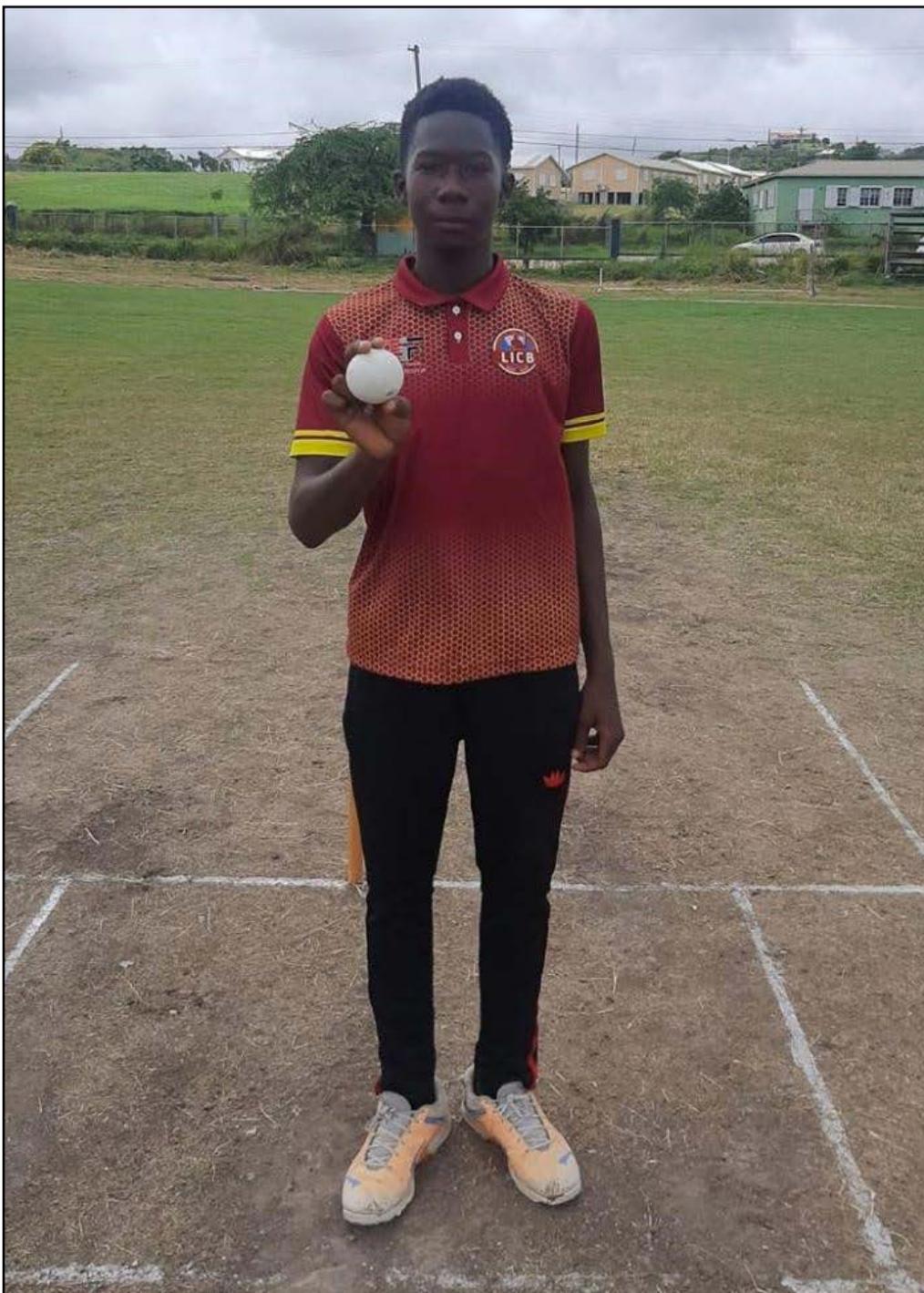
Meanwhile, Jennings Secondary School got off to a successful start in the under-15 boys' 30 overs competition by snatching a one-wicket victory over Ottos Comprehensive School at Rising Sun.

Ottos Comprehensive School made 28 without losing a wicket, and Jennings Secondary School achieved victory by scoring 31 for nine.

Miller claimed four wickets for nine runs, Ross captured two wickets without conceding any runs, and Ian picked up two wickets for eight runs.

But the opening encounter between Antigua Grammar School and Sir Novelle Richards Academy at Antigua Grammar School was abandoned due to rain.

Chasing 99 runs to win, Antigua



**JQuan Athanaze hits a half century for PMS**

Grammar School reached 30 without losing any wickets off 3.2 overs when rain came and brought a premature end to the match.

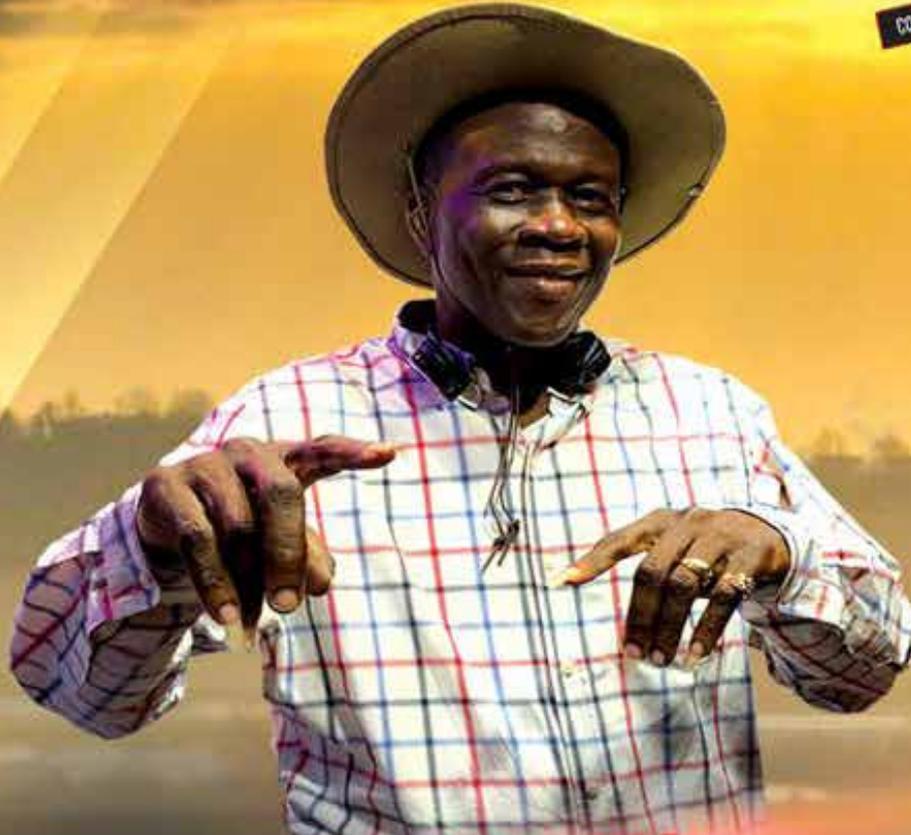
Isiah Harris was not out on 17 off 13 balls, with three boundaries. There was also a contribution of 13 extras.

Sir Novelle Richards Academy

made 98 for eight off 20 overs. There was a contribution of 45 extras. Ayden Bazil hit 18, Rohan John struck 13, and Clayton Joseph scored 11.

Shakeir Thomas bagged three for 15, and Irvin Smith claimed two for 15.

**SUNDAYS  
10AM - 1PM**



**HOSTED BY  
BEN WEN**

# **COUNTRY ROAD TRIP**

**CALL: 562-3989 OR 562-2991 | US: 718 285 7889  
FACEBOOK LIVE @ POINTE FM99.1**

**WE ARE GETTING STRONGER**

## McCullum to continue as England head coach, says ECB



England head coach Brendon McCullum plays with a soccer ball before the start of the first T20 cricket match between India and England at Eden Gardens in Kolkata, India, Jan. 22, 2025. (AP)

LONDON (Reuters) - Brendon McCullum will continue as England's head coach in all three formats, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said on Monday, despite the team's lacklustre performances and lingering questions about their dressing-room culture.

Ben Stokes will remain as test captain with Harry Brook his vice-captain and Rob Key will stay as managing director of England's men's cricket following an ECB review centred around a humbling Ashes series.

England suffered a 4-1 defeat in Australia this year and the criticism included their casual preparations for the marquee series.

They lost to eventual champions India in the semi-finals of the Twenty20 World Cup this month led by Brook, whose altercation with a nightclub bouncer in New Zealand last year con-

tinued to be a distraction.

Allrounder Liam Livingstone has also criticised the team culture, saying the current regime does not care about players outside the core group.

"I've seen the driving ambition and determination that we're lucky enough to have within our leadership group to take the lessons from the Ashes and move forward," ECB chief executive Richard Gould told the BBC.

"These are all individuals that have got other things that they can do in their lives. They are all committed to doing the best for England and to learning the lessons that are evident."

British media have also reported that former New Zealand captain McCullum's bond with test captain Stokes had frayed during the Ashes series, though the duo have publicly backed each other.

McCullum is contracted to over-

see the team until the end of the 50-over World Cup in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia next year. England host New Zealand for a three-test series in June before eight limited-overs matches at home to India.

Key, whose position had also come under scrutiny, told Sky Sports on Monday that McCullum was the best man to lead England.

"Ultimately, it's about who do the players, who do we think can take English cricket forward? Who's the

one that can get the best out of the best players in this country? And for me, that's Brendon McCullum," Key said.

"There's been some really, really good stuff done. You know, it was a winter that did not go well, which would be an understatement, but that doesn't mean they're bad leaders."

Asked if McCullum needed to abort the ultra-aggressive, front-foot style known as Bazball after it was found wanting in the Ashes and at home to India last year, Key said it was more a matter of evolution.

"There's no point in keeping Brendon McCullum if you want him to completely change and become someone else," Key said. "If you lose authenticity as a coach, captain, leader in any business, you're done. Brendon has not done that, and I don't want him to do that."

## Villa Lions strengthen third-place position in Premier Division



Players of the Villa Lions starting XI

The Aston Villa Lions FC beat Old Road FC in a nine-goal thriller to consolidate their third-place position in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday.

The Villa Lions recorded their 12th win in 17 matches by snatching a 5-4 victory against Old Road FC in the second game of a double-header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Old Road got off to a poor start, losing their coach, Chesley Browne, who received a red card and was expelled in the 11th minute.

Eroy Gonsalves achieved a hat trick to lead the Villa Lions to their victory. Gonsalves scored in the 30th minute, got his second with a strike in the 57th minute, and completed his hat trick by converting a penalty kick in the second minute of added time.

The other goals for the Villa Lions

were scored by Samuel Brazier in the 67th minute and Orel Edwards in the 89th minute.

Rakeem Joseph and Joe-Dean Taylor each scored twice for Old Road FC. Joseph scored with a strike in the 35th minute and got his second by converting a penalty kick in the 61st minute. Taylor had conversions in the 47th and 68th minutes.

Both teams finished the game with 10 players after Verne Williams of Old Road FC and Samuel Brazier of the Villa Lions both received red cards and were expelled in the fifth minute of added time.

The result allows the Villa Lions to remain in third place by advancing to 36 points. It left Old Road FC in fourth place with 32 points after slumping to their fourth defeat in 18 matches.

Green City FC also consolidated

their position in ninth place on goal difference by securing their sixth win in 18 matches with a 4-1 victory over struggling Ottos Rangers FC in Sunday's opening game.

Omarion Barrett put Green City ahead with a 14th-minute conversion, and Marmarlaque Davidson equalized for the Ottos Rangers with a strike in the 18th minute as both teams reached halftime level at 1-1.

But Green City scored three times in the second half to secure victory. The goals were scored by Mali Johnson in the 56th minute, Elijah Whyte in the 65th minute, and Samuel Semper in the fifth minute of added time.

The result allows Green City FC to advance to 22 points, the same as seventh-placed Garden Stars FC and eighth-placed Attacking Saints FC.

The Ottos Rangers remain second from the bottom of the 12-team standings with seven points after suffering their 15th defeat in 18 matches.

Meanwhile, the Swetes Vipers FC moved from fourth to third place by recording their 10th win in 19 matches with a 3-0 victory against the Cedar Grove Blue Jays at Cedar Grove.

Johndale Jno-Lewis scored in the 19th minute to give the Swetes Vipers a one-nil lead at halftime. Lyndon Goodwin had a 58th-minute conversion, and Khalid Adams scored an own goal in the 75th minute.

The result allows the Swetes Vipers to advance to 35 points, while the Cedar Grove Blue Jays remain second from the bottom of the standings with 11 points after slumping to their 14th defeat in 19 matches.