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PM Browne Urges Creatives to Embrace AI

Story on page 2



More photos from Tuesday's launch of the How to Make a Commonwealth Quilt initiative where the focus will be on the creative industries at the People's Forum of CHOGM

PM Browne Urges Creatives to Embrace AI



Prime Minister Gaston Browne wants members of the creative community to embrace new technologies such as AI (Artificial Intelligence) which he described as ‘exceptional tools’ that can be used to enhance the works/products of the sector.

PM Browne, who produced an album of songs through collaboration with a producer who deployed AI tools in the production, is encouraging artists of every kind to embrace the technologies that are available, while maintaining local content in their productions.

“Whatever you do, whatever aspect in which you are involvement, even if it’s the digital aspect of the production and creative process, you must take technology into consideration; use it, don’t abuse it. I will add that it is also important to maintain some local content; to have that local story-telling as part of whatever creative product that you are producing,” PM Browne stated.

More broadly, the prime minister said the government is putting in place the necessary infrastructure to support the country’s creatives. He referenced the millions of dollars that have been allocated to completely refurbish the old Deluxe Cinema on High Street that is being converted into the National Performing Arts Centre.

PM Browne noted that the creative

sector requires significant investment noting that this cannot be borne by the government alone, urging more support from the private sector in the form of sponsorship. “We are putting a comprehensive infrastructure in place to facilitate a very exciting ecosystem for those involved in the creatives.

Already we are looking at legislation to protect intellectual property of the creatives following discussions with stakeholders and this should go before parliament within a couple of months,” he indicated.

The prime minister described culture as ‘a pillar of development and transformation’ as well as a driver to create economic activities in the country. “As I said before, it is part of the overall infrastructure where we will have creative arts incubators where the creatives can develop their skills,” he explained.

The prime minister’s vision for the sector involves close ties with the tourism industry as he indicated that the government is willing to assist artists/creatives develop their skills which he noted must to be at a level that make these products easily marketable locally, regionally and internationally.

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WHO, A&B To Co-Host First Global Eye Health Summit



The World Health Organisation (WHO) will co-host with Antigua and Barbuda the first Global Eye Health Summit on November 2 this year alongside the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which runs from November 1 to 4 in Antigua and Barbuda.

The announcement was made on Wednesday by Prime Minister Gaston Browne while speaking via video link to a gathering at St James Palace in London. According to Prime Minister Browne the challenge related to eye health 'is not only a profound human challenge - it is an economic one'.

He emphasised that investment in eye health are not only felt at the in-

dividual level, they are felt at the national level as well. "The evidence is clear: Expanding access to vision care could generate hundreds of billions of dollars in economic returns annually, It would create millions of jobs, and unlock substantial gains in education, productivity and wellbeing. Investing in eye health is not charity. It is an investment in inclusive growth, resilience and shared prosperity - particularly for small states like Antigua and Barbuda," he indicated.

The prime minister said he was particularly pleased that WHO will partner with Antigua and Barbuda in hosting this inaugural summit.

"I am also delighted to announce that

the World Health Organization will serve as co-host of the Summit - reflecting the global significance of this issue. I understand that Ms. Dévora Kestel will speak further to the World Health Organization's ambition for the Summit and we welcome their support for this important gathering," he noted.

PM Browne urges immediate global action to tackle what he termed as 'preventable' vision loss and other eye health issues across the globe.

Commenting on the Global Summit for Eye Health Peter Holland, Chief Executive of International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) said "Five years on from the UN Resolution on Vision, the Summit will focus on practical commitments that expand access to affordable, quality eye care services and strengthen health systems to meet rising demand.

Holland continued by saying "By bringing leaders together in Antigua and Barbuda we hope that countries, businesses and civil society make formal public commitments to take specific actions, allocate resources, or achieve measurable targets in pursuit of our shared goal of ending avoidable sight loss. We hope the Summit will serve as a clear expression of political and organisation will, providing a benchmark for accountability long into the future."

Prime Minister Browne used the opportunity provided by the launch and as co-host to extend an invitation to Heads of Government, ministers, and business leaders to join together in St Johns to prioritise eye health.

An advertisement for Curry House restaurant. The top half shows several colorful bowls of Indian curries and chutneys. The text "Curry House" is written in a stylized red font. Below the image, it says "Open Daily - 12:00pm - 10:30pm". At the bottom, it lists "ANTIGUA" and provides social media handles for Facebook (currytandoorhouseanu), Instagram (curryhouseanu), and a phone number (268) 736-7165.

Ministry of Health Observes World Hearing Day 2026

The Ministry of Health joined the global community in observing World Hearing Day 2026, celebrated annually on 3rd March. This year, it is being observed under the theme “From communities to classrooms: hearing care for all children”.

The observance, first established in 2007 as International Ear Care Day was later renamed by the World Health Organization in 2016.

Hearing is one of the body’s most critical senses. Beyond enabling communication, it plays a central role in brain stimulation, balance, speech development, and cognitive growth. The ear is comprised of the outer, middle, and inner ear and works through a delicate system of bones, fluid, and nerve impulses to transmit sound and regulate balance.

Given its importance, early detection of hearing challenges is essential, particularly

among children. There are three primary types of hearing loss: conductive, sensorineural, and mixed.

Conductive hearing loss occurs when sound is unable to pass efficiently to the inner ear due to blockage or dysfunction. Sensorineural hearing loss results from damage to the inner ear or the vestibulocochlear nerve. Mixed hearing loss combines elements of both.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 60 percent of childhood hearing loss is preventable through simple, cost-effective public health measures.

However, hearing issues in young children are often difficult to detect without proper screening.

The Ministry of Health continues to prioritise early identification through the newborn hearing screening programme implemented by the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, which enables healthcare professionals to de-



tect hearing impairments shortly after birth. The screening process is simple, safe and painless, using a small device that checks the newborns hearing while they are sleeping. Families receive the results promptly and those requiring further testing are given to follow-up care and support. Early diagnosis allows for timely intervention, significantly improving speech, language, and developmental outcomes.

According to Dr. George Roberts, ENT specialist, “hearing loss can affect childhood development, especially during their early years of life; specifically, between the ages of one to four years.

He further stated that “if a child is unable to speak during those years, they may never be able to speak properly while noting that at times, children who are born without hearing problems may struggle with hearing loss which may be temporary or permanent due to genetic defects, infections, medications or tonsil issues.”

Dr. Roberts noted however, even when it is not permanent, hearing loss does have a negative impact on the child; “Hearing loss affects children in more ways than one: it can cause low grades in school, isolation, inattentiveness and being labelled as a “dunce”.

He further stated that everything deteriorates with age, so too does a person’s hearing; “This can pose a problem to many older people as conversations become infrequent for those who are embarrassed to say they didn’t hear or understand, especially when there is noise in the background. These circumstances can drive many to become reclusive and age rapidly. Even with moderate hearing loss, they are prime targets for dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.”

In addition, Dr Roberts emphasised “the effects of hearing loss can be felt by those who once worked in factories, on the tarmac, or were exposed to loud music. As hearing is a critical stimulator of the brain, once the brain is not being stimulated, it deteriorates.”

Dr Roberts added that “other factors leading to hearing loss are wax build-up, ear infections and tumours in older people.”

Thanks to modern technology and the invention of hearing aids, permanent hearing loss can be treated. There are now attractive, non-bulgy hearing gadgets available to assist hearing-impaired persons.

Sunrise Airways Inaugurates New Service to Santo Domingo



Sunrise Airways has just introduced a new non-stop service connecting Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (SDQ) with Antigua and Barbuda (ANU), further strengthening intra-Caribbean air connectivity.

At a welcome ceremony saluting the new service, Minister of Tourism, Charles Fernandez, noted that this new nonstop service between Santo Domingo and Antigua represents a meaningful advancement in strengthening regional connectivity and integration. He highlighted the US\$50 million infrastructural upgrades at the V.C. Bird International Airport, demonstrating the Government of Antigua and Barbuda's commitment to increased airlift and tourism growth.

"We recognise the strategic importance of Antigua and Barbuda as a hub in the Caribbean, and so we are especially delighted that

Sunrise Airways has added another route to Antigua. Our central location within the region makes Antigua and Barbuda an ideal gateway for travel, business and tourism across the Caribbean. We now also have an international airport in Barbuda, allowing arriving passengers the opportunity to easily experience Barbuda as well."

Sunrise Airways Eastern Caribbean Representative Colin Piper, remarked on the importance of the expansion as part of the airline's growing Santo Domingo hub and its broader commitment to bringing the Caribbean closer together.

Piper in his address said, "For Sunrise Airways, Antigua and Barbuda is not simply another destination. It is a strategic pillar within our Eastern Caribbean network. Since expanding into the Eastern Caribbean in May 2024, we have

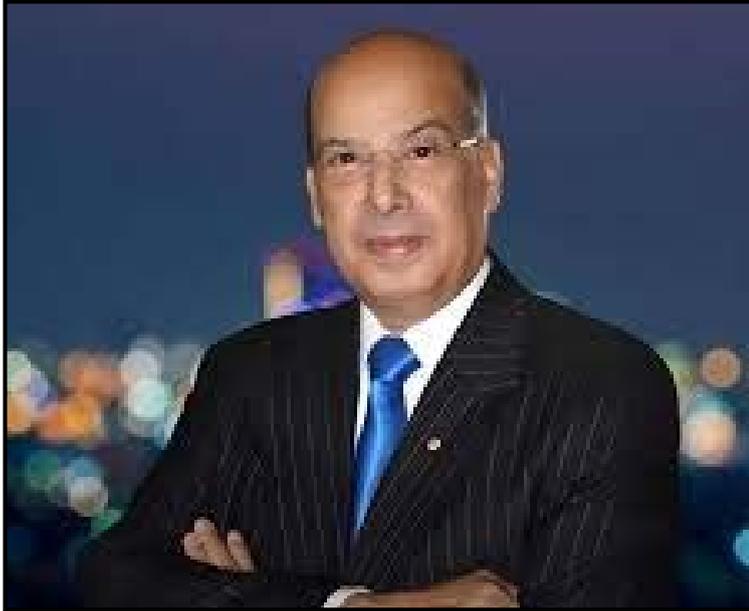
been deliberate in building a route structure that strengthens regional connectivity in practical and sustainable ways. Antigua's geographic position, strong aviation infrastructure, and globally recognized tourism product make it a natural partner in this vision."

Also extending congratulations to Sunrise Airways on the launch of their new route on behalf of the Board, Executive Management and staff of the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority was Acting CEO of the Airport Authority Philmore Andrew. "The decision for Sunrise to invest in this route demonstrates confidence in our

country and the continued growth of V.C. Bird International as a regional hub. We value the partnership and look forward to the benefits that will arise from this increased connectivity", said Andrew.

The twice-weekly service will operate on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Tuesday flights depart Santo Domingo at 1:00 p.m., arriving in Antigua at 2:35 p.m., with the return service departing Antigua at 3:20 p.m. Saturday flights depart Santo Domingo at 9:00 a.m., arriving at 10:35 a.m., with the return service leaving Antigua at 11:20 a.m.

More Recognition For Sir Ronald Sanders Over UG Chancellor Appointment



Two months after his appointment as Chancellor of the University of Guyana, Sir Ronald Sanders, continues to be lauded by his peers in the academic community.

In its latest publication, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICWS) offered congratulations to Sir Ron, a former fellow, on his elevation to the post of Chancellor of UG noting that the appointment marks a historic milestone for the university as it welcomes a diplomat of international stature to its governing body.

The Council of the University of Guyana announced in December the official appointment of Sir Ronald Sanders, KCMG, KCN, AM, MA, as the 11th Chancellor of that nation's premier tertiary institution. The appointment follows the formal assent of the University Council.

Sir Ronald, a son of Guyanese soil whose career has spanned the heights of inter-

national diplomacy, scholarship and broadcast journalism, succeeds a legacy of distinguished Chancellors. His appointment comes at a transformative era for the University of Guyana as it seeks to expand its cutting-edge programmes, research footprint and international partnerships.

Sir Ronald Sanders currently serves as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Antigua and Barbuda to the United States and to the Organization of American States (OAS), having previously served (twice) as High Commissioner to the UK, and Ambassador to the European Union and the World Trade Organization. Throughout his life of service, he has embodied the core ideals of Caribbean diplomacy: principled advocacy, intellectual rigour, and an unshakable belief in the value of regional and international cooperation.

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Liberty Caribbean Champions ‘Connectivity’ for Women



As the global community prepares to celebrate International Women’s Day on March 8, leading telecoms provider Liberty Caribbean is highlighting the transformative power of connectivity to help empower women and girls.

The operators of Flow, Liberty Business and BTC, says industry focus on reliable networks, affordable access and purpose-built digital services will open more doors for women and girls to access education, healthcare, economic opportunity, and a stronger civic voice.

“Connectivity changes life trajectories every day, and by ensuring women and girls can access information, services and opportunities safely and reliably, we are helping to create conditions for stronger families, more resilient communities and wider economic participation,” said Inge Smidts, Chief Executive Officer, Liberty Caribbean.

The company has produced a special campaign in support of this year’s theme, #GiveToGain, that includes a

video series on in its LinkedIn page featuring twelve extraordinary women from across the business. These short films will share real stories of leadership, innovation, and community impact, illustrating how talent and connectivity combine to drive progress.

Local markets are also mobilising practical support by partnering with women-focused organisations and community groups. Teams across the region are collecting feminine products and essential toiletries for donation to local NGOs, community-based organisations, shelters and schools, ensuring vulnerable women and girls receive direct, tangible support.

“We will continue to leverage our platforms, partnerships, and investment to reduce digital barriers and promote programmes that equip women and girls, especially in the Caribbean, with the tools they need to learn, work and lead. We are committed to turning the promise of #GiveToGain into measurable out-

comes that strengthen opportunity and inclusion across the communities we serve,” added Smidts.

Across the Caribbean and Latin America, connectivity is steadily reshaping opportunities for women and girls, though some critical gaps remain.

Encouragingly, recent data from leading ICT industry publication Telecom Review Americas shows the gender gap in mobile internet adoption has effectively closed, declining from 5% in 2017 to zero by 2024. This signals major progress in digital inclusion and reflects years of investment in mobile infrastructure, affordability initiatives, and digital literacy programs.

Device ownership remains a key factor influencing meaningful participation in the digital economy. While the gender gap in mobile phone ownership in Latin America has narrowed to about 1%, a 4% gap persists in smartphone ownership, translating to approximately eighty million women without smartphones.

Statement from the Cuban Embassy in St. John's

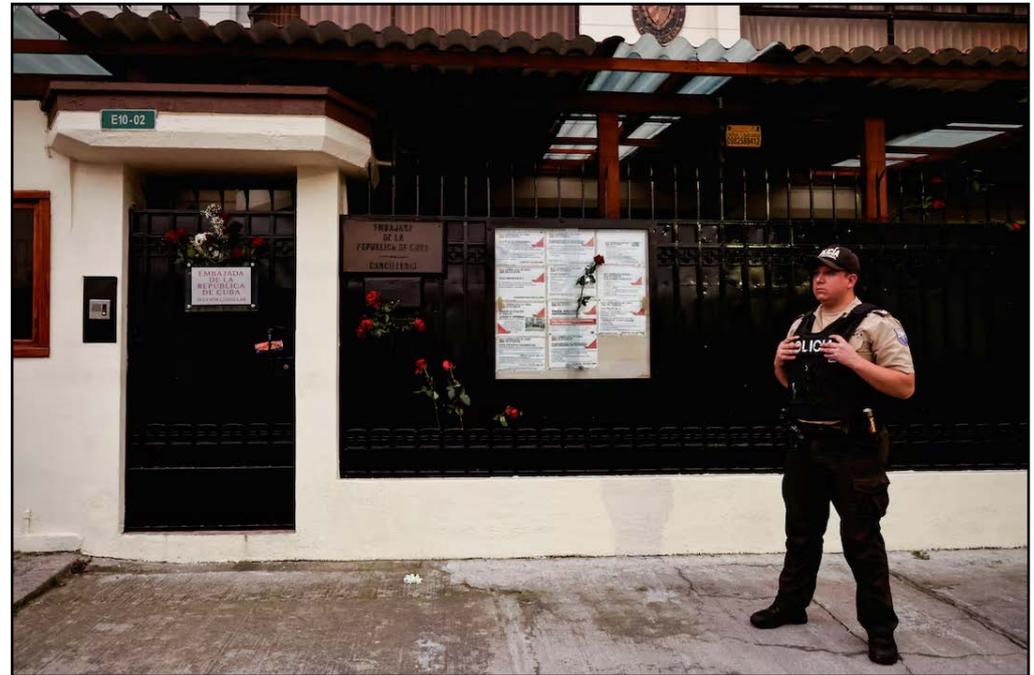
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba rejects in the strongest terms the arbitrary and unjustified decision by the government of Ecuador to expel all personnel from the Cuban Embassy in that country.

On March 4, 2026, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of the Republic of Ecuador informed, through a Verbal Note, of its decision to declare all diplomatic, consular, and administrative personnel of the Cuban Embassy in Quito persona non grata, without providing any justification, and gave them 48 hours to leave Ecuadorian territory.

This is an unfriendly and unprecedented act that significantly damages the historic relations of friendship and cooperation between both countries and peoples.

This action also demonstrates the current Ecuadorian government's disregard for the diplomatic practices and courtesies observed by the international community.

The Ministry categorically reaffirms that the staff of the Cuban Embassy in Quito, as established by the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, has strictly complied with Ecuador's laws and regulations without interfering in the internal affairs of that State.



It does not seem coincidental that this action has been taken in a context characterized by the intensification of U.S. aggression against Cuba and strong pressure

from the U.S. government on third countries to join in this policy, just days before the summit convened in Miami on March 7 with a small group of representatives from governments in the region.

Cuba is convinced that the Ecuadorian people will defend their ties of solidarity and brotherhood with Cuba.

Havana, March 4, 2026



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International Women's Day Feature: Celebrating Senator Shenella Govia

By Aneka Lee

As we continue our International Women's Day series, we are pleased to shine a spotlight on a woman who reflects both a natural capacity for leadership and careful mentorship that birthed political excellence in Antigua and Barbuda: Senator Shenella Govia.

My first introduction to Shenella Govia was not in the Senate, but on a political platform in St. John's City East leading up to the 2014 General Elections. The atmosphere at the rally was electric and then she stepped forward to speak. As her powerful, confident bellows reverberated from the speakers it was evident that she was not someone simply content to participate. She was preparing to lead. She spoke with clarity and conviction beyond her years.

Senator Shenella Govia was appointed to the Senate of Antigua and Barbuda pursuant to the 2014 General Elections outcome, making history as the youngest person ever appointed to the Senate in Antigua and Barbuda. That distinction alone signaled a generational shift in leadership and trust. As a Senator in the Parliament of Antigua and Barbuda, Senator Govia has been a thoughtful contributor and steady voice in national discourse. Her historic appointment as Leader of Government Business in the Senate marked a defining moment, making her only the second woman in the nation's history to hold this post. The first was her predecessor, Senator C. Mary Claire Hurst, whose own tenure paved the way for greater female representation in parliamentary leadership.

In assuming this role, Senator Govia continues a legacy of women shaping governance at the highest levels. Making it evident that leadership in



Senator Shenella Govia

the Senate is no longer an exception for women, but an expectation.

Extending her service beyond the Senate floor, Senator Govia's stellar performance in the Upper House led to her appointment as Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry of Education, Creative Industries and Sports in 2023, which was subsequently upgraded to Minister of State in 2024. As the result of a portfolio shuffle, Senator Govia was appointed as Minister of State within the Ministry of Housing and Public Works. Senator Govia has played a key role in advancing initiatives that nurture cultural expression, advance youth empowerment and strengthen national infrastructure. Her work demonstrates a dedication and an understanding that nation-building requires both vision and practical execution.

Prior to her senatorial appointment, Senator Govia's leadership was nurtured through her involvement with the Central Youth for Labour and JCI Antigua. Her involvement in these organizations reflects her commitment to cultivating young leaders equipped to drive positive change.

Senator Govia assumed the leadership of the Central Youth for Labour in 2014; a role she has held for 12 years. Longevity in leadership often signals trust, consistency, and the ability to keep a movement energized.

Through JCI's platform she has climbed the ranks championing empowerment, skills development, and civic engagement, nurturing the very pipeline of leadership that strengthens our society.

Youth advocacy and empowerment have always been central to who she is, shaped by her early involvement with the 18th Antigua Girl Guides and Rangers, her leadership as a captain and member of the Mahico Steel Orchestra, and her active participation in her church's youth group.

Her rise is also reflective of a broader commitment within the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, which has consistently fostered and elevated women who aspire to excellence. From parliamentary leadership to ministerial portfolios, the party has cultivated an environment where women are not symbolic participants but strategic decision-makers.

Senator Shenella Govia's achievements embody that ethos. It is with competence, preparation, and confidence in equal measure that she is able to perform successfully.

On this International Women's Day, we honour Senator Shenella Govia not only for the titles she holds, but for the example she sets. She represents a generation of Caribbean women who serve diligently and inspire broadly. If her trajectory thus far is any indication, the history books of Antigua and Barbuda will have much more to record.

Justice for All Must Mean Justice for All



UN CRPD

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

“Equal access to justice for all is a fundamental principle of the rule of law.” — United Nations, Sustainable Development Goal 16. Across the world, the United Nations continues to remind governments that justice systems must be accessible, transparent, and accountable to all citizens. This principle is captured in Sustainable Development Goal 16, which calls on countries to promote peace, justice, and strong institutions. The goal emphasizes the need to ensure equal access to justice for all people, regardless of their social status, economic circumstances, or physical ability.

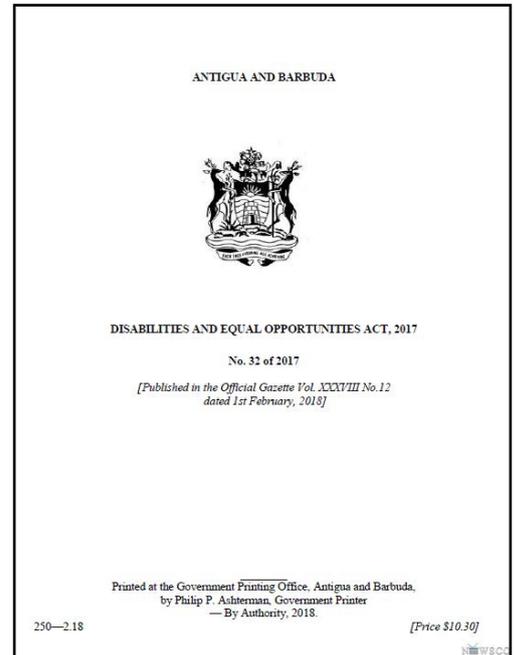
Yet global statistics suggest that this goal remains a challenge. According to the United Nations, over five billion people worldwide lack meaningful access to justice, whether because of legal barriers, institutional weaknesses, or physical obstacles that prevent them from fully participating in legal systems. For persons with disabilities, the barriers can be even more significant.

The World Health Organization estimates that more than 1.3 billion people globally live with some form of disability, representing roughly 16 percent of the world’s population. Many of them face obstacles not only in employment and education, but also in accessing public services and institutions — including the justice system. These

global conversations about accessibility and equality have taken on a very local dimension in Antigua and Barbuda over the past few days.

A video and written message that began circulating across several WhatsApp group chats and social media platforms has sparked public discussion and concern. The message comes from paraplegic citizen St. Clair Henry, who has spoken publicly about his experience seeking justice in a case involving a cheque allegedly taken by one of his caretakers. The matter first gained public attention in October 2025, when reports indicated that the caretaker had allegedly taken and cashed a \$1,500 cheque belonging to Mr. Henry. According to those reports, an audio recording existed in which the woman appeared to admit to writing the cheque and cashing it.

At the time, the case appeared straightforward enough. Evidence had reportedly been presented to investigators, and the matter had been brought before the legal system. But months later, the story has resurfaced in a new way — raising questions not only about the progress of the case itself, but also about the accessibility of the justice system. In the video now circulating publicly, Mr. Henry describes attending court only to discover that the courtroom where his matter was being heard was located upstairs in a building without accessible en-

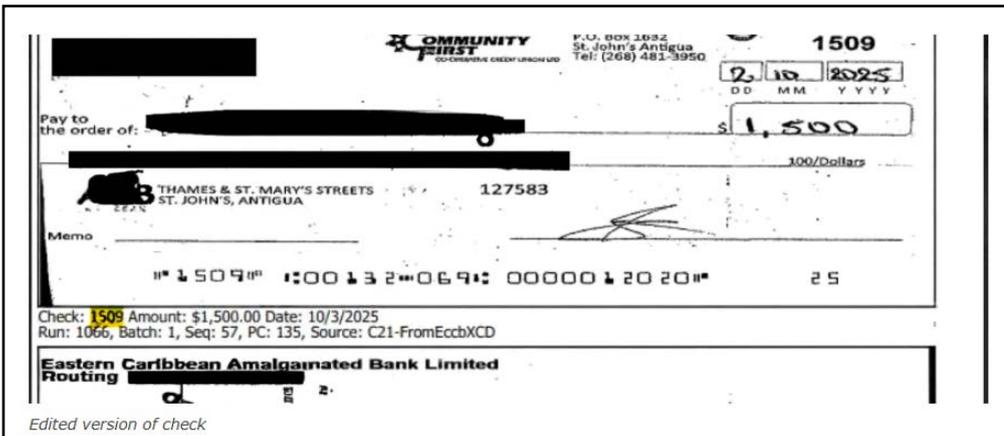


try for someone using a wheelchair.

Unable to physically enter the courtroom, he remained downstairs waiting for information about proceedings that directly involved him. For many citizens who have seen the video, the situation raises an uncomfortable question: How can justice truly be equal if the courtroom itself is not accessible to everyone?

Antigua and Barbuda has already acknowledged the importance of addressing these barriers through legislation. The Disabilities and Equal Opportunities Act, 2017 was enacted to ensure that persons with disabilities are protected from discrimination and can participate fully in society. The Act recognizes the importance of reasonable accommodation, meaning that institutions must take steps to ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from services or opportunities because of physical barriers.

Public institutions, including courts, are expected to provide access that allows individuals with disabilities to participate in civic life on equal terms.



Accessibility is therefore not merely a matter of convenience. It is a matter of rights and dignity. The issue is also addressed internationally through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which calls on governments to ensure that persons with disabilities have effective access to justice on an equal basis with others.

This includes ensuring that facilities, procedures, and communication methods are accessible. The United Nations has emphasized that accessibility is a prerequisite for equality, noting: "Accessibility enables persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life."

Without accessibility, the promise of justice becomes difficult to realize. The situation described by Mr. Henry has therefore resonated beyond the

details of the original allegation. It highlights a broader issue facing many societies — the need to ensure that systems designed to serve the public truly serve all members of the public.

For someone living with paraplegia, attending court can already require significant effort. Transportation must be arranged, assistance may be needed, and physical access to buildings becomes an important factor. When the very structure of a courthouse prevents someone from entering the room where their case is being heard, it raises serious questions about how inclusive the system truly is.

The conversation sparked by this case is therefore not simply about one individual situation. It is about whether Antigua and Barbuda's institutions are evolving in ways that reflect the principles already outlined in law. The Disabilities and Equal Opportunities

Act represents an important commitment to equality. But laws must ultimately be reflected in everyday practice — in the design of buildings, the organization of services, and the way institutions interact with citizens.

Accessible infrastructure, clear communication, and inclusive procedures are all part of ensuring that justice systems operate fairly. The Sustainable Development Goals remind us that strong institutions are built not only on legal frameworks but also on public trust. When citizens believe that systems are fair and accessible, confidence in those institutions grows. When barriers exist, however — especially barriers that prevent someone from even entering the courtroom — that confidence can quickly erode.

Justice must therefore be more than a legal principle. It must be visible, reachable, and inclusive. Because in the end, the promise of SDG 16 is simple but powerful: Justice should never be out of reach for anyone.

Joshuanette Francis

Founder and President, Good Humans 268 Inc.

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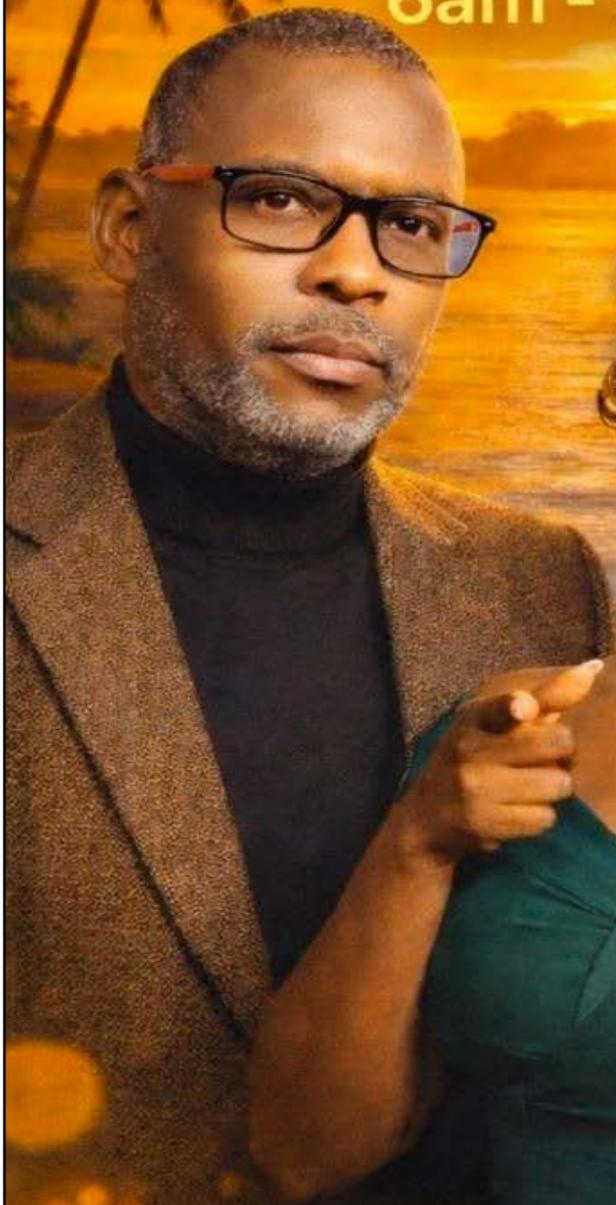


Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

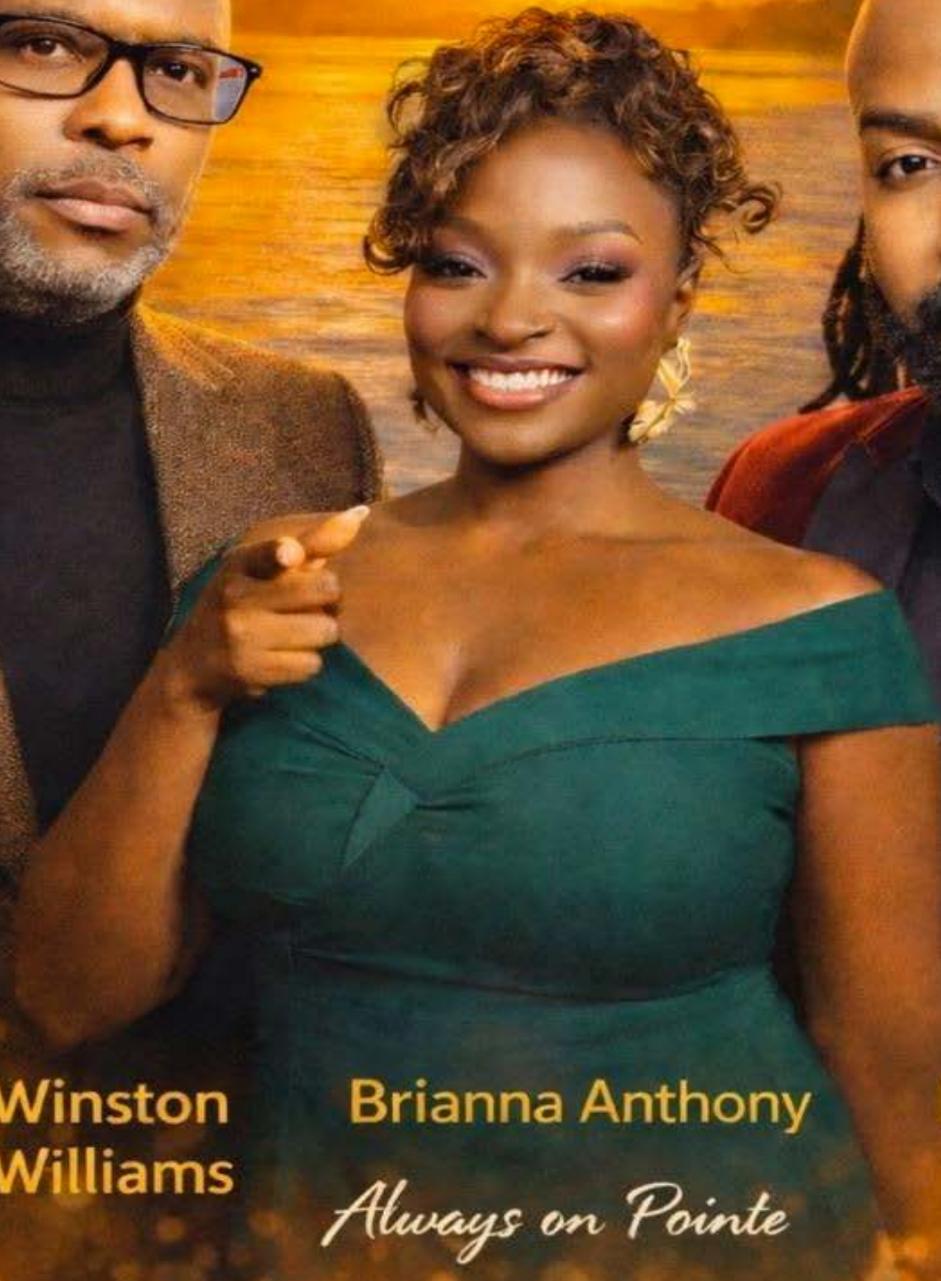
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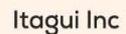
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National Festivals Office, 1st Floor, Cecil George-John Building, Corn Alley & Redcliffe Street
Ministry of Creative Industries, Old Parham Road
(Upstairs KFC/INET Building)

Hours:

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

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



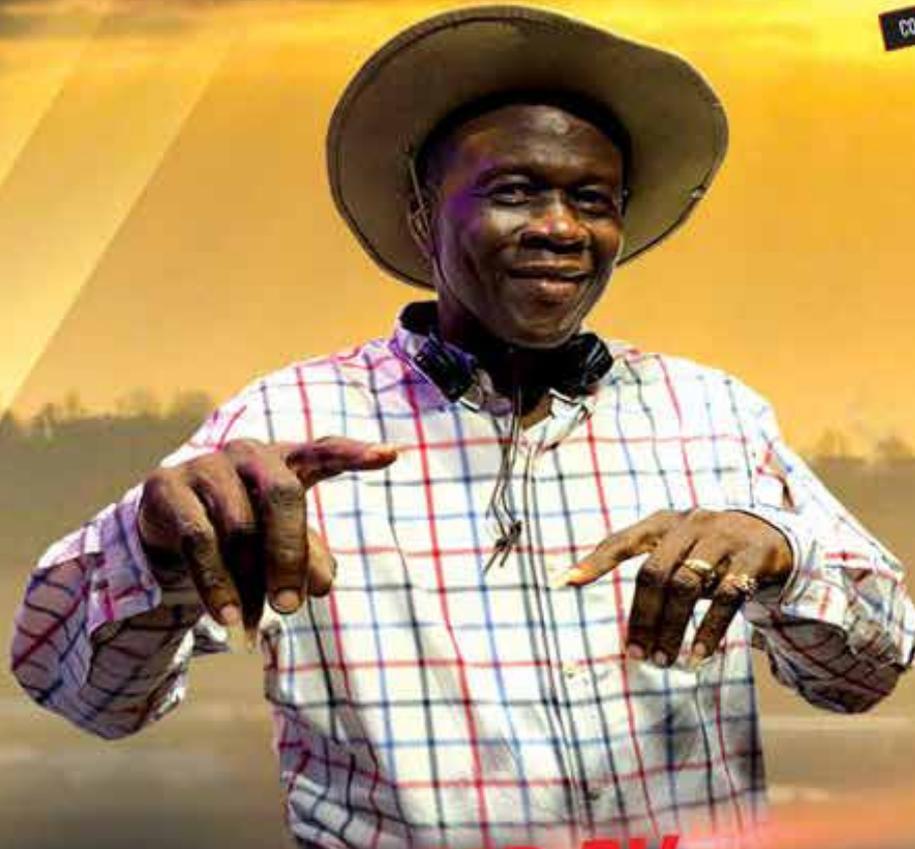
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Completed registration forms must be returned to:
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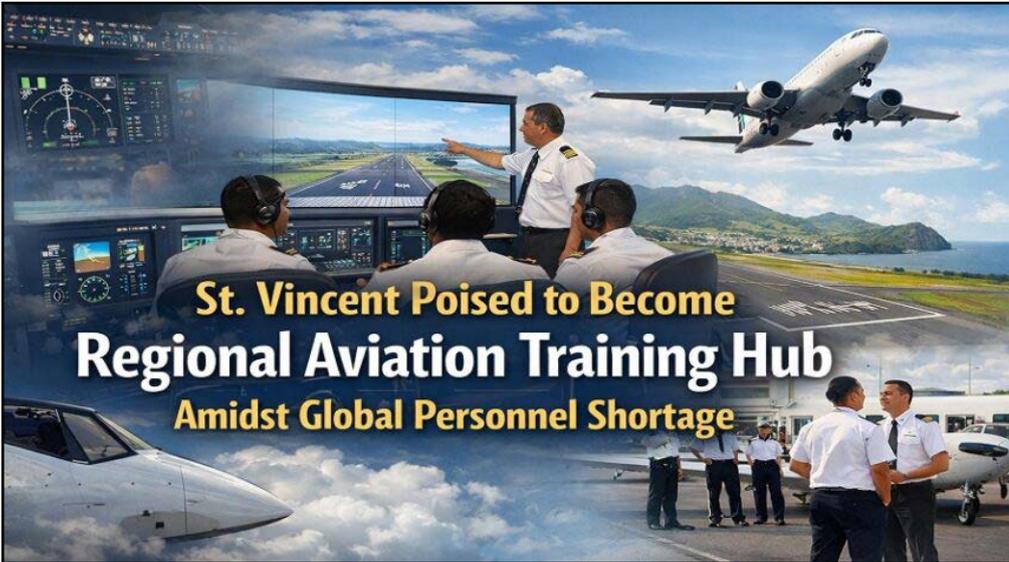
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SVG Poised to Become Regional Aviation Training Hub



With a significant focus on developing aviation training to address a recognized shortage of aviation personnel both regionally and globally, St Vincent could benefit from the sector, according to Minister Fitzgerald Bramble.

Bramble noted that a potential partner has expressed interest in building and operating an aviation training institute in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

This is seen as a way to train people for newly approved CARICOM skill categories, such as flight attendants, aviation security inspectors, and flight operations inspectors, allowing them to work freely across the region.

The government intends to “seriously be examining all opportunities” in the aviation sector to develop training programs that will create jobs and encourage further investment, Bramble said.

Bramble said the government is positioning the country to lead in aviation training by leveraging new regional free movement agreements and seeking investment from international partners and development banks interested in regional connec-

tivity.

Meanwhile, at a press conference on Tuesday, Prime Minister Godwin Friday said during meetings with the Afrexim Bank (an African development bank), the president showed “great interest” in investing in air connectivity and providing financing to improve air services within the Caribbean.

The bank has increased its Caribbean financing limit to \$5 billion USD for the next three years. (St Vincent Times)

NOTICE

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Dated the 29th day of January. 2026
Tel : 1268-728-6097
Lorenza Mateo Del ROSARIO

Dominica saw nearly 8% increase in US tourist arrivals in January, says travel site

In January 2026, the Caribbean region continues to enhance its appeal to American travelers, with Dominica experiencing a notable 7.5% rise in U.S. vacation arrivals.

It joins its neighbors “Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Turks and Caicos Islands, the Netherlands Antilles, and others”, in a recent upsurge of tourists, as reported by Travel and Tour World.

Specifically, the country welcomed 633 visitors from the United States during this period, reflecting its growing popularity among eco-conscious holidaymakers.

The publication said that Dominica’s emphasis on sustainable tourism and environmental preservation has positioned it as an attractive destination for those seeking nature-based experiences. Tourists can enjoy activities such as hiking, bird watching, and river tubing, which showcase the island’s natural environment.

It also attributed the increase in American visitors to improved air connectivity, with more flight options now available from major U.S. cities. According to the article, the enhanced airlift has significantly increased the island’s accessibility, making it easier for travelers to reach Dominica.

Furthermore, the Caribbean’s overall attractiveness has reportedly been bolstered by a combination of competitive pricing for vacation packages and the expansion of air travel options. These factors, coupled with a regional focus on sustainable tourism, have made Caribbean destinations more enticing for U.S. visitors.

“As awareness of Dominica’s eco-tourism offerings grows, the island is poised for continued success in attracting U.S. tourists”, projects TTW. (Dominica News Online)





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CARICOM secures \$5B boost, forges global partnerships



Prime Minister Godwin Friday says significant discussions were held at CARICOM meeting regarding international partnerships and development financing, focusing on diversifying funding sources and securing investment for critical infrastructure.

Friday said the bank announced an increase in its Caribbean financing limit from \$3 billion to \$5 billion US, intended for deployment over the next three years.

Financing will focus on “financing sovereignty,” including plans for a Caribbean EXIM bank and a regional payment system to reduce reliance on extra-regional hard currencies.

There is a specific interest in financing air connectivity and supporting physical infrastructure development across the region.

The bank expressed support for the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank’s (ECCB) initiative to double the size of

Eastern Caribbean economies within a decade.

Friday said CAF was noted for its fast approval and rollout rate, with a timeline of approximately four months from conception to disbursement.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is looking to CAF for assistance in financing a national bank to provide loans to small businesses.

Specific interest was shown in financing the upgrading of ports in the Grenadines, which have exceeded capacity or deteriorated.

Prime Minister Friday said a \$50 million initiative (including \$40 million in grant funding) was presented by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center (5C’s) to create climate-resilient water infrastructure.

This project includes installing solar-powered desalination plants in Bequia, Canouan, Mayreau, and Union

Island, as well as constructing six new storage tanks for the CWSA on the mainland.

United Arab Emirates (UAE): Cooperation is expected to be extensive, focusing on high-tech sectors like AI and e-governance, water security, and housing, with the possibility of opening a diplomatic embassy.

Saudi Arabia: CARICOM welcomed a Saudi commitment to development financing, with further participation confirmed for 2030 in Riyadh.

Venezuela: Prime Minister Friday said discussions involved the current situation in Venezuela and ongoing economic relations, including existing debts and potential cooperation in the fisheries sector. There was also mention of a potential revived PetroCaribe initiative.

Citizenship by Investment (CBI): This is viewed as a mechanism to finance capital projects without borrowing or taxing the population, though the government emphasized it is only one part of a broader economic plan.

Diaspora Investment: The government intends to create systematic mechanisms to mobilize the capital, talent, and investment of the Vincentian diaspora, treating them as a highly motivated group of potential investors.

Foreign Minister Bramble emphasized that participating in these international forums is essential to ensure small island states are “at the table” to influence the developmental agenda and secure these tangible commitments for their people. (St Vincent Times)



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Spain's Pedro Sánchez hits back at Trump threat to sever trade saying 'no to war'

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has delivered a strong rebuttal to US President Donald Trump's threat to end trade with Spain by restating his opposition to war and what he called the "breakdown of international law".

In a 10-minute televised address, Sánchez reflected on the wars in Ukraine and Gaza as well as the Iraq War more than 20 years ago and said the Spanish government's position could be summed up as "no to war".

Trump threatened to impose a full trade embargo on Spain in response to Madrid's refusal to allow the US to use the jointly-run bases at Morón and Rotafor for strikes on Iran.

"Spain has been terrible," Trump said during a meeting with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Tuesday.

"We're going to cut off all trade with Spain. We don't want anything to do with Spain," he added.

Merz said later he had told Trump very clearly that he could not conclude a separate trade agreement with Germany or all of Europe but not with Spain.

In response to the US economic threat, the Élysée Palace said French President Emmanuel Macron had conveyed his "solidarity" with Spain, during a phone conversation with Sánchez on Wednesday. European Council President António Costa also said he had spoken to the Spanish leader "to express the EU's full solidarity".

Trump accused Spain on Tuesday of being a "terrible partner" in Nato for failing to increase its defence budget in line with a target of 5% of economic output (GDP).

Earlier this year Sánchez drew



Trump's anger by speaking out against the US military incursion into Venezuela.

In his televised address from the prime minister's Madrid residence at La Moncloa on Wednesday, Sánchez said the government was studying economic measures to counter the impact of the conflict on Spaniards, although he avoided directly referring to Trump's trade threat.

"The question is not if we are on the side of the ayatollahs - nobody is. The question is whether we are in favour of peace and international legality."

"You cannot answer one illegality with another, because that is how the great catastrophes of humanity begin."

Spain's Socialist prime minister explained that the government's position was comparable to its stance on Ukraine and Gaza. Sánchez has been a vociferous critic of Israel's military response to the Hamas attacks in 2023.

Spain has been among Europe's most outspoken governments on Gaza, describing Israel's actions there as "genocide" and acknowledging a Palestinian state before many

other EU members did.

That position was in step with his coalition partners to his left and, broadly speaking, with Spanish attitudes to the Middle East.

Looking back to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, which he said had failed to achieve its goals and had made life worse for ordinary people, he warned that the attacks on Iran could have a similar economic impact for millions.

His reference to the Iraq invasion will connect with many Spanish voters. Spain's support at the time from the conservative People's Party (PP) government was deeply unpopular, and triggered mass anti-war protests.

Many believe it also lay the groundwork for the Socialist Party's surprise election victory in March 2004, days after Madrid was hit by deadly jihadist bombings.

Sánchez reminded Spaniards of the "Azores trio" of then-US President George W. Bush, the UK's Tony Blair and Spanish conservative leader José María Aznar - who had met on a Spanish base in the region days before the Iraq invasion.

He said they had handed Europeans

the “gift” of “a more insecure world and worse life”.

The Spanish leader’s stance contrasts strongly with that of Merz, who told German TV on Tuesday regime change in Iran would leave the world “a little better off”, although he also said this was “not without risk and we would also have to bear the consequences”.

Unlike Spain’s fellow Nato allies - the UK, France and Greece - it has not yet committed to any military involvement in response to the war.

The Spanish prime minister said he wanted to express the solidarity of the Spanish people with countries that had been “illegally attacked by the Iranian regime”.

Aside from the fierce criticism Sánchez is facing from the US, his coalition government has faced months of enormous political pressure, generating constant speculation that its collapse could be imminent.

It has been struggling to maintain its parliamentary majority, which includes an array of left-wing and regional nationalist parties.

Allegations of corruption against several of his allies and his inner circle have severely weakened his position.

In Spain’s deeply polarised politics, much of the support for Sánchez is driven as much by concerns about the country’s right and far right as it is by endorsement of his leadership and policies.

Standing up to the US president may have electoral benefits for the Socialist leader.

A recent poll by the CIS research institute found that 77% of Spaniards had a “bad” or “very bad” opinion of Trump, suggesting that even many right-wing voters might back Sánchez on this issue.

However, there is now uncertainty in Spain over whether Trump’s threats will translate into some form of eco-

conomic reprisals, and many Spaniards will be watching this drama nervously. (BBC)

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Elon Musk is set to take the stand in a trial over claims he deflated Twitter stock before purchase

Elon Musk is expected to take the stand in a shareholder trial on Wednesday in San Francisco, where he's accused of making false and misleading statements that drove down Twitter's stock price before he bought the social media platform for \$44 billion in 2022.

The lawsuit was filed in October 2022 in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California on behalf of Twitter shareholders who sold the stock between May 13 and Oct. 4, 2022, a few weeks before Musk's purchase of Twitter was finalized. It claims Musk violated federal securities laws by making false, public statements that "were carefully calculated to drive down the price of Twitter stock."

The billionaire Tesla CEO reached a deal to buy Twitter and take it private in April 2022. On May 13, however, he declared his plan "temporarily on hold" and said he needs to pinpoint the number of spam and fake accounts on the platform. Twitter's stock tumbled as a result. A few days later, he tweeted that the deal "cannot go forward" and claimed that almost 20% of Twitter accounts were "fake," according to the lawsuit.

Musk's May 13 tweet — "Twitter deal temporarily on hold pending details supporting calculation that spam/fake accounts do indeed represent less than 5% of users" — was "false because the buyout was not, in fact, 'temporarily on hold,'" the lawsuit says. That's because Twitter did not agree to put the deal on hold, and there was nothing in the merger agreement the two parties signed that allowed Musk to put it on hold, according to the lawsuit.

In the following weeks, Musk continued to try to delay or get out of the deal, which the lawsuit claims he did in the form of false, disparaging statements about Twitter's business that drove the San Francisco company's



stock down sharply.

In July 2022, Musk doubled down on the bots issue and said he would abandon his offer to buy Twitter after the company failed to provide enough information about the number of fake accounts. That's even though the lawsuit notes that Musk waived due diligence for his "take it or leave it" offer to buy Twitter. That means he waived his right to look at the company's non-public finances.

The stock closed at \$36.81 on July 8, when Musk tweeted he was abandoning the deal over the fake accounts issue. That's 32% below Musk's offer price of \$54.20 per share.

"To try to renegotiate the price or delay the merger, Musk made materially false and misleading statements and omissions, and engaged in a scheme to deceive the market, all in violation of the law," the lawsuit says.

The problem of bots and fake accounts on Twitter wasn't new. The company had paid \$809.5 million in 2021 to settle claims it was overstating its growth rate and monthly user figures. Twitter also disclosed its bot estimates to the

Securities and Exchange Commission for years, while also cautioning that its estimate might be too low.

Twitter sued Musk to force him to complete the deal, and Musk countersued. On Oct. 4, Musk offered to go through with his original proposal to buy Twitter for \$44 billion, which Twitter accepted. The deal closed later that month. In the ensuing months, Musk slashed the company's workforce, gutted its trust and safety team and rolled back content moderation policies. In July 2023, he renamed Twitter as X.

This isn't the first time that Musk has been dragged into court to defend himself against allegations of duping investors with his social media posts. Three years ago, Musk spent about eight hours testifying in a San Francisco federal trial about his plans to buy Tesla — the electric automaker that he still runs as publicly traded company — for \$420 per share in a proposed 2018 deal that never materialized. A nine-member jury absolved Musk of wrongdoing in that case. (AP)

Head of IICA visits Brazil to engage officials on advancing agricultural sector



The head of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Muhammad Ibrahim, is embarking on a four-day official visit to Brazil this week.

IICA stated in a release that during his stay, he will engage with Brazilian ministers and senior government officials to enhance the efforts of the agency dedicated to agricultural and rural development in Brazil.

A distinguished Guyanese agronomist, Ibrahim, took on the role of Director General of IICA in January. His itinerary includes participating in forums in the Brazilian capital alongside ministers from other American nations, and hearing firsthand accounts from local farmers, cooperatives, and private sector representatives about their current circumstances and needs.

While in Brazil—where Minister Carlos Fávaro presides as Chair

of IICA's governing body, the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA)—Ibrahim will also join the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS). This ministerial platform is responsible for regional consultation and coordination among the agriculture ministers of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay. With IICA providing the technical and administrative support, CAS has reached consensus on key issues over the past two decades.

According to IICA, Ibrahim intends to update CAS ministers on the development of IICA's Medium-Term Plan (MTP), which serves as the organization's strategic framework for 2026-2030. This plan has been developed through extensive stakeholder engagement and consultations with Member States to ensure that the technical assistance aligns with national priorities.

Additionally, Ibrahim will hold bilateral discussions with Uruguay's Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, Alfredo Fratti, and Paraguay's Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Carlos Giménez.

His agenda in Brasilia also includes participation in the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, where IICA will facilitate a panel on regional challenges in agri-food systems.

Further meetings are scheduled with Caribbean and Central American ministers, Brazil's Deputy Foreign Minister Maria Laura da Rocha, and Carlos Antonio Vieira Fernandes, President of the state-owned Caixa Econômica Federal bank.

Reportedly, a significant part of his visit will be a dialogue with Silvia Massruhá, President of EMBRAPA—Brazil's leading agricultural research organization—focused on establishing an innovation hub for the Caribbean and Central America. EMBRAPA is recognized worldwide for its leadership in science and technology applied to agriculture.

Ibrahim will also meet with Brazil's Minister of Social Development, Wellington Dias, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Planning.

The itinerary includes discussions with Senator Tereza Cristina, a former Minister of Agriculture, as well as meetings with leaders from the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), the Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil (CNA), the Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives (OCB), and representatives from Corteva Agriscience and Toyota. (Dominica News Online)

Carney says he supports Iran strikes 'with regret'

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has called for parties involved in the war in Iran to de-escalate hostilities quickly - and said while he supports the strikes, it is a position he takes "with regret".

Carney, speaking to reporters in Sydney, his second stop on an Indo-Pacific tour, said of Iran that Canada "has long supported the imperative of neutralising this grave global threat".

He added: "We do, however, take this position with regret, because the current conflict is another example of the failure of the international order."

The US and Israel began striking Iran on Saturday. Iran responded by firing missiles and drones at Israel and Gulf states allied to the US.

While speaking with reporters in Australia, Carney was critical of the US and Israel for acting "without engaging the United Nations or consulting with allies, including Canada".

The Canadian leader said Iran having a nuclear bomb would be a "massive threat" and described Iran's regime as "the biggest exporter of terror in the world," which had "murdered scores of Canadians".

"Nobody has a civil nuclear programme that's buried a mile beneath the desert," Carney said. "That is a threat."

In Sydney, Carney also faced questions about his conversations with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier this week.



He described those discussions as "frank".

Prior to the trip, a Canadian official suggested India is no longer linked to violent crimes or threats on Canadian soil.

"I really don't think we'd be taking this trip if we thought these kind of activities were continuing," the official said during a briefing.

Some Canadian Sikhs reject the government assessment, saying they still face threats from India, which Delhi denies.

"To engage, you have to be able to talk to countries, countries where there have been issues," Carney prime minister said.

"And to raise issues, including at the highest levels, to ensure that the co-operation is there, whether it's extortion or some other form of cross-border criminal activity or security risks."

Carney added that high-ranking Canadian officials have been in contact with top Indian defence

and national security officials "from the moment that we re-established a dialogue at the leader level with India".

Under Carney, the two governments are trying to repair ties that were strained when his predecessor, Justin Trudeau, publicly accused Delhi of a link to the 2023 assassination of Sikh separatist and Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar in the province of British Columbia (BC).

India vociferously rejected the allegation by Trudeau.

Trade and diplomatic relations almost came to a standstill as both sides expelled each other's diplomats and cancelled visa services. Canada hosts a huge expatriate Indian community.

The case of four men charged over Nijjar's killing is still before the courts in British Columbia.

This week, Canada and India also announced a "landmark" nuclear energy deal, as well as other deals on critical minerals, space, defence and education. (BBC)

Sports News



Roman Hill Legacy wins ABNA President's Cup

The Roman Hill Legacy has been crowned as the first-ever Antigua and Barbuda Netball Association's (ABNA) Cool and Smooth AutoCraze President's Cup Champions.

Roman Hill Legacy played unbeaten to claim top honours in the female and mixed divisions round-robin competitions, which concluded at the YMCA Sports Complex on Tuesday.

The Roman Hill Legacy overcame the Gray's Green Flyballers 63-31 in their final outing in the female division, in which players were able to score money shots to the value of five points.

Everdine Parker-Barnarde achieved 25 points from her 20 tries, Jamila Fitz scored 22 points from her 17 attempts, and Rayana Regis claimed 16 points from her 19 shots for the Roman Hill Legacy.

Krizia Duncan sank 19 of her 28 tries, and Kizzy Hughes converted 12 of her 17 shots for Gray's Green Flyballers, who finished in third place.

In their previous encounter,



The Roman Hill Legacy netball team celebrates after winning the first ever Antigua and Barbuda Netball Association's Cool and Smooth AutoCraze President's Cup at the YMCA Sports Complex on Tuesday, March 3, 2026. (Photo courtesy of the ABNA)

Roman Hill Legacy notched up a 54-14 victory against the Stingray City Eastsiders.

Jamila Fitz scored 25 points, Everdine Parker-Barnarde sank 18 of her 26 tries, and Rayana Regis converted 11 of her 15 shots for the Roman Hill Legacy.

Christina Lloyd sank seven of her 20 attempts, Charmaine Wetherill scored five points, and Shakora Prince converted two of her nine attempts for the Stingray

City Eastsiders.

SW Electronics Black Lightning Snipers claimed second place after pulling off a 32-23 victory against the Gray's Green Flyballers in their final encounter.

Joy Shaw sank 21 of her 30 tries, Zhanira Pereira converted eight of her 12 attempts, and Khaiva Knowles scored three of her seven attempts for the Black Lightning Snipers.

Kizzy Hughes converted 14 of her 23 shots, and Krizia Duncan sank nine of her 15 attempts for Gray's Green Flyballers. Stingray City Eastsiders finished second in the mixed division.

Rayana Regis of Roman Hill Legacy finished as the top shooter, scoring 63 from 78 attempts, while Shermaine Reifer claimed the award as the best defender of the tournament.

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ABFA names squad for 2nd CONCACAF Women's Championship match



Players of the Antigua and Barbuda senior women's national football team.

The Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) has announced the national senior team (Benna Girls) squad for their second match in the 2026 CONCACAF Women's Championship, which will also serve as the Confederation's qualifier for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup in Brazil.

The 20-member Antigua and Barbuda national senior team will continue their campaign in the qualifying round of the 2026 CONCACAF Women's Championship at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium on Thursday when they will face Guyana at home in their second qualifier in Group B at 6 pm.

The senior Benna Girls squad includes goalkeepers Anik Jarvis and Serenity Colbourne, along with forwards Gabrielle De Souza, Kai Jacobs, and Keitonya Skepple.

Also included are midfielders Nafisa Quashie, Zolique Samuel, Jada Benjamin, Nicelle Drew, Zoya Simon, Virginia Simon, and Ajahna Martin, along with winger Kevoncia James.

Completing the squad are defenders Brianna Roberts, Denovia Jarvis, Jessica Powell, Abisha Henry, Karmellia Hughes, Carlene Thomas, and Deborah Weston.

The Antigua and Barbuda women's team is competing in five-team Group B alongside Jamaica, Guyana, Nicaragua, and Dominica.

Antigua and Barbuda are among 29 CONCACAF member associations—excluding the region's two highest-ranked nations (USA and Canada)—that are competing in six groups in the preliminary stage of the competition, which is being played during the FIFA Women's International Match Windows in November 2025 and February and April 2026.

The Antiguanians will travel to Kingston to face Jamaica's Reggae Girls in their third match on April 10 and will tackle Dominica in their final outing on April 14.

The group winners will qualify for

the CONCACAF Women's Championship, which will be played in November 2026, and serve as the Confederation's qualifier for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup in Brazil and the 2028 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles, California.

Antigua and Barbuda senior women's national team squad: Anik Jarvis, Serenity Colbourne, Karmellia Hughes, Denovia Jarvis, Zolique Samuel, Breana Roberts, Jada Benjamin, Abisha Henry, Carlene Thomas, Kevoncia James, Nicelle Drew, Virginia Simon, Zoya Simon, Kai Jacobs, Gabrielle De Souza, Nafisa Quashie, Keitonya Skepple, Ajahna Martin, and Deborah Weston.

Support staff: Head Coach Astel Joseph, Assistant Coach Karen Warner, Equipment Manager Lakeisha Samuel, Trainer McLean Lawrence, Physiotherapist Jennifer Daniel, Team Manager Esther Anthony, and Safety Officer Tanya Ambrose.

Perera's poise powers Sri Lanka to series sweep over West Indies

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada – An unbeaten half-century from opener Hasini Perera guided Sri Lanka Women to a comfortable nine-wicket victory over the West Indies in the third and final T20 International here at the National Stadium on Tuesday.

The win sealed a dominant 2-0 series sweep for the visitors, who once again proved proficient with the ball and then resolute with the bat.

Chasing a modest target of 120 for victory, Sri Lanka reached 121 for one with 14 balls to spare, largely thanks to a composed and unbeaten knock of 52 from their wicket-keeper batter Perera. Her innings, which anchored the chase, earned her the Player-of-the-Match award.

The Sri Lankan reply got off to a flying start as captain Chamari Athapaththu with a blistering 34 from 25 balls, laid into the West Indies attack, racing to 49 for the first wicket with Perera in just 6.4 overs.

Athapaththu smashed five fours before she was caught by a brilliant diving catch by Chinelle Henry at deep square leg off the bowling of Afy

Fletcher.

Perera and the incoming Imesha Dulani quickly extinguished any hopes of a West Indies fightback. The duo combined for an unbroken 72-run stand, expertly navigating the required run rate without taking any further risks.

Dulani provided the perfect foil, finishing with a brisk 34 not out from just 25 deliveries with five fours.

Earlier, the West Indies Women struggled once again to build momentum on a pitch that offered some turn. Sent in to bat by Athapaththu, the home side laboured to a below-par 119-5 from their 20 overs.

With as many as four changes to their side, the West Indies were looking for some much-needed impetus with the bat, especially with the inclusion of the hard-hitting debutant, Eboni Brathwaite.

The innings never really got going as Hayley Matthews was the first to go, caught and bowled off spinner Sugandika Kumari for eight.

Shawnisha Hector, batting at number three, lasted as many balls as she was

castled by Inoka Ranaweera for five before Kumari also accounted for the debutant Brathwaite for eight, leaving the hosts reeling at 28-3 in the fifth over.

Veteran Stafanie Taylor, with a brisk 24 and the explosive Deandra Dottin, with 28, attempted to rebuild the innings, adding 48 for the fourth wicket.

However, just as they were looking to accelerate, Dottin was adjudged LBW to Ranaweera, and Taylor was caught off Kavisha Dilhari, leaving the score at 78-5 with three overs to go.

A late unbeaten cameo of 32 from 15 balls from Chinelle Henry, featuring two towering sixes, gave the total some respectability, but it was never likely to trouble a confident Sri Lankan top order.

Ranaweera was the pick of the Sri Lankan bowlers with economical figures of two for 16 from her four overs.

Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu was adjudged Player-of-the-Series for her all-round contributions, leading her side to a comprehensive series victory on Caribbean soil.



The victorious Sri Lanka T20 team at the National Stadium in Grenada.

Sports

THURSDAY 05TH MARCH 2026



Gomes praises Antiguan for reaching CONCACAF U-20 finals

Technical Director of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) Sowerby Gomes has bestowed high praises on the national team for qualifying to this summer's finals of the CONCACAF Under-20 Men's Championship.

The under-20 boys became the first Antiguan national team to ever qualify for the finals of a CONCACAF youth tournament, accomplishing the historic achievement by winning Group C of the 2026 CONCACAF Under-20 Men's Qualifiers in Costa Rica on Tuesday.

The Antiguan won Group C by snatching a 1-0 victory against favourites, the Dominican Republic, in their final match and top-of-the-table clash at the Costa Rica Football Federation Field in San Rafael de Alajuela, Costa Rica.

The sole goal of the game came in the 89th minute via a well-placed header from substitute **Brandon Satchell**. The win positioned Antigua and Barbuda as the winner of the five-team Group C to advance to the 2026 CONCACAF Under-20 Championship, which will take place from July 25 to August 9.

Gomes claimed the success of the national under-20 team is testimony to the investment made by the ABFA in the players and coaching



The Antigua and Barbuda team celebrate after winning Group C of the 2026 CONCACAF Under-20 Men's Qualifiers in Costa Rica on Tuesday, March 3, 2026. (Photo courtesy of the ABFA)

education over the past five years.

"This tournament was a battle of football institutions, where over the last 5 years, each of these players would have represented the Antigua and Barbuda national football team at CFU U-14, CONCACAF U-15, and U-17.

"We would have been carefully mapping their development, tracking their growth, and, moreover, investing heavily in their development. Academically, each of these boys is on sound academic pursuits," Gomes stated.

"However, at the helm, we have some of the best football minds around these boys, from head coach Neil Schyan Jeffers, assistant coaches Janeil Simon

and Rackley Thomas, team trainer and physio Evans Jawaki Jones, and team manager Roderick Williams.

With a cast like that, 100 percent Antiguan home-grown and God at the helm, the result is success. I am extremely proud of the team in the way they went about executing their task, game by game, moment by moment; they have made us all proud, a true testament of our coach education development partway.

"I am happy because each of the coaches within the national setup worked extremely hard at their game, and it shows in the players' development. When I said this tournament was a battle of institutions, I was intentional and deliberate with my words; this shows

clearly what we are doing, it shows where we are at, and it also gives a reflection of where we need to be. We are not done yet; the journey continues."

Antigua and Barbuda played unbeaten, winning all four matches without conceding a goal to finish at the top of Group C with 12 points, while the Dominican Republic came in second with nine points after suffering their only loss of the tournament to the Antiguan.

Head coach Schyan Jeffers said the accomplishment is also the realization of a dream for him and the players.

"It was a fantastic moment. This is a moment that I dreamt of all the time, and it came to reality for the boys. The boys did a good job; they put in a good shift. They were very receptive, and when the whistle blew and we won the game one-nil, my mind went straight back to Antigua because we are representing the flock all the time," Jeffers stated.

"This team is special because the players are very receptive and they know what they want. They have been dreaming all along; they went for their dream and they finally got their dream. We are off to the next round."