

The New National Minimum Wage Goes Into Effect

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2026 ABLP/AT&LU Labour Queen contestants in a group photo during a recent rehearsal

The New National Minimum Wage Goes Into Effect



LABOUR DEPARTMENT
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Code Cap. 27, as amended, requires that where the established national basic minimum wage is applicable, the rate is to be posted on a Notice Board in the workplace.

The statement said failure to pay the National Basic Minimum Wage as

ordered by the Minister of Labour is an offence punishable by a fine upon summary conviction.

It is also advising employers or anyone with queries to visit its offices on Long and Thames Street in St. John's.

The Labour Department has announced that the new National Minimum Wage of \$11.50c per hour is now the law of the land as the Statutory Instrument effecting the change went into effect from April 1, 2026.

In a statement, the department reported that the change was made in accordance with Section 21 subsection (10) of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code Cap. 27, as amended, and as such the Attorney General has issued a new Minimum Basic Wage Order, Statutory Instrument No.30 of 2026 with effect from April 1, 2026.

“The Minister responsible for Labour has ordered a Minimum Basic Wage of eleven dollars and fifty cents (\$11.50c) per hour for employment in Antigua and Barbuda, effective April 1, 2026,” the ministry revealed.

It said employers are reminded that Section C22 subsection (5) of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour

ABLP DELIVERS



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- Reduces terminal processing time
- To be expanded to seaport arrivals



National CHOGM 26 Taskforce Convenes Joint Meeting With The Commonwealth Secretariat

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda's National Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) Taskforce on Tuesday held a productive joint meeting with representatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat to provide a comprehensive update on preparations for the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2026.

The meeting was chaired by High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom and CHOGM Focal Point, Karen-Mae Hill, on behalf of the Chairman of the CHOGM Taskforce, E.P. Chet Greene. The session was attended by senior officials, including Director General, Ann Marie Layne and Permanent Secretary within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sharon Stevens, reflecting the high-level coordination and whole-of-government approach to CHOGM preparations.

The meeting focused primarily on planning for the forthcoming Advance Visits scheduled for 28th - 29th April and 5th - 6th May 2026 in St. John's. These visits will bring delegations from across the Commonwealth to Antigua and Barbuda to assess logistics and operational readiness in advance of the Heads of Government Meeting in November 2026.

During the session, the National CHOGM Taskforce provided detailed briefings on the proposed agenda and structure of the Advance Visits, including site inspections of key venues and coordination mechanisms for visiting delegations. Updates were also shared on accommodation arrangements,



with emphasis on block bookings,

delegate experience, and coordination protocols, as well as ongoing efforts in communications and media planning to ensure effective dissemination of information and global visibility for CHOGM 2026.

Representatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat welcomed the progress made to date and reaffirmed their continued support for Antigua and Barbuda in delivering a successful and impactful meeting.

Antigua and Barbuda will host CHOGM 2026 from 1st - 4th November 2026 under the theme, "Accelerating Partnerships and Investment for a Prosperous Commonwealth".




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Local News



ABDF Conducts Training Exercise As Part Of Its CHOGM26 Preparations

The Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force is conducting a training exercise during this week dubbed 'Exercise Daybreak'.

In a media release, the ABDF said the exercise forms part of its ongoing preparations for the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). It will include the participation of regional partners from St. Kitts and Nevis and Barbados as well as the Canadian Armed Forces and the Regional Security System (RSS) in addition to various local government agencies in Antigua and Barbuda.

According to the release, during the exercise military activities will take place across multiple locations throughout Antigua and Barbuda. Members of the public may observe an increased military presence, including soldiers operating in simulated re-



al-world scenarios.

The ABDF assures the public that this is a planned training exercise and that there is no cause for alarm.

Additionally, the ABDF is appealing to the public for its cooperation in this matter.

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Antigua and Barbuda's young leaders take centre stage at major global gathering of youth at the United Nations



With its largest ever delegation of young leaders in New York, Antigua and Barbuda is playing another active role in the 2026 Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum at the United Nations.

The April 14-16 event takes place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York under the theme “Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for a sustainable future for all”.

The delegation, led by the Director of Youth Affairs, Dr. Jrucilla Samuel, comprises four National Youth Ambassadors: Christal Percival, Amelia Williams, Kristine Louisa, and Shacia Albertine, as well as two members of the National Youth Volunteer Corps, Sara Bacchus, General Secretary, and Esquire Henry, a former CARICOM Youth Ambassador.

The youth forum got underway on Tuesday with an impactful presentation by the Director of Youth Affairs who underscored the significance of workforce rejuvenation.

In her presentation, Dr. Samuel asserted that “workforce rejuvenation is not

simply the next cycle of recruitment. It is a deliberate strategy to revitalize institutions through cognitive diversity. The aim is not to replace experience, but to create synergy. By uniting the insight of veteran staff with the creativity and digital fluency of youth, we strengthen our capacity to confront the world’s most pressing challenges.”

Dr Samuel also argued that while investing in a rejuvenated workforce is a great initiative, young people should not be catapulted into leadership overnight. “Sustainable multilateralism depends on sustainable leadership,” Dr. Samuel added. Therefore, it is important that youth receive all-round support, but she insisted that there is an urgent need to equip young leaders with “quality education, meaningful work experience, and mentorship grounded in core values such as accountability, resilience, and integrity.”

The delegation also paid a courtesy call on Antigua and Barbuda’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Aubrey Webson. As he discussed the structure and the work of the United Nations, he impressed on the young leaders to remain persistently active as advocates of Small

Island Developing States (SIDS). He commended the youth and director for the work they have been doing in the fields of environmental sustainability, education, health, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.

Ambassador Webson also shared his experiences of resilience and the important role of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) in building and linking resilient communities, as well as strengthening data collection.

The Forum will place special emphasis on five of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, to include Goal 6, which is Clean Water and Sanitation, Goal 7 having to do with Affordable and clean Energy, Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure, Goal 11 - Sustainable cities and communities, and Goal 17, Partnerships for the goals.

Serving as a global platform, the ECOSOC Youth Forum brings together young people, Member States, the UN system, and other partners to exchange ideas, showcase innovative solutions, and strengthen youth engagement in accelerating progress on the SDGs.

National Secondary Schools' Theatre Festival Opens with Dazzling Performances



The ninth edition of the National Secondary Schools' Theatre Festival officially opened on Monday evening with a vibrant showcase of talent, as students took to the stage in solo, duet, and improvisation dance categories.

The week-long festival, running from April 13–18, 2026, brings together young performers from across the country at the Multipurpose Cultural and Exhibition Centre. The event highlights the creativity and passion of secondary school students engaged in drama and dance.

Delivering remarks at the opening ceremony, Director of Culture Khan Cordice underscored the importance of the festival in advancing the Department of Culture's mandate, which falls under the Ministry of Creative Industries.

He explained that the department continues to focus on three core pillars—preservation, education, and development—and described the festival as a key initiative supporting those goals.

“It preserves storytelling traditions, it educates and develops young minds

through discipline, creativity, and collaborations. Most importantly, it provides a platform to showcase the immense talent that exists within our schools and communities,” Cordice said.

The Director of Culture also made a strong appeal for continued investment in the cultural sector, emphasising that sustained support is necessary to nurture talent and strengthen national identity.

“We need sustained investment—not just in events, but in people, in infra-



structure, and in long-term cultural development,” he stated. “Because when we invest in culture, we are not simply funding performances, we are shaping identities, strengthening communities, and building a more confident, creative, and capable nation.”

Cordice expressed gratitude to the festival’s organizing committee and commended adjudicators, principals, teachers, parents, and students for their contributions to the event’s success.

Ten schools participated in the opening night’s dance categories, perform-

ing before a packed audience that included Governor General Sir Rodney Williams.

The festival continued last evening with group dance performances featuring nine schools, alongside drama improvisations from four institutions.

Midweek performances will see Ototos Comprehensive School and Jennings Secondary School presenting their drama pieces today, with shows scheduled for both a 9 a.m. matinee and a 7 p.m. evening performance.

On Thursday, All Saints Secondary School and Pares Secondary School will take the stage, followed by Irene B. Williams Secondary School and St. Mary’s Secondary School on Friday.

Tickets for the festival are available at Cool and Smooth, Roti King, the Ministry of Creative Industries on Old Parham Road, and at the venue.

The festival will culminate on Saturday with a dinner and awards ceremony, bringing the curtain down on a week celebrating youth talent and the performing arts.

Midweek Deals

TUESDAYS / WEDNESDAYS

-Burger
-Medium Drink
\$19.99

-Leg and Thigh
-Biscuit
-Medium Drink
\$17.99



ABLP Denounces Fake Letter, Accuses UPP of Misinformation Campaign

The Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP) has pointed a finger at the opposition United Progressive Party (UPP), accusing it of orchestrating a misinformation campaign involving a fraudulent document purportedly linked to a government senator.

The document captioned “Attendance at Labour Party Events”, and signed by Senator “Shanella Govia”, purportedly advises chairpersons and board members that they are expected to be in attendance at ABLP events, including at the launch that took place on April 7th, and that the notification was being issued following discussion with the leader of the party.

In a statement released Monday evening, the ABLP alleged that the document, circulated via WhatsApp and published on a Facebook page associated with “Real News,” falsely claims to originate from Senator Shenella Govia, Leader of Government Business in the Senate.

The party described the document as “a complete sham,” asserting that it contains multiple inconsistencies that expose it as fabricated. Among the issues highlighted was the date on the letter—April 6, 2026—which the ABLP noted falls after the dissolution of Parliament on April 1, rendering any such official correspondence invalid.

Further casting doubt on the document’s authenticity, the ABLP pointed to the misspelling of Senator Govia’s name, as well as what it described as improper formatting.

The statement outlined that official ABLP correspondence does not combine the national Coat of Arms with the party’s logo, calling the alleged document a clear breach of established protocol.

The party also criticised what it claimed were visual inaccuracies in


the Coat of Arms featured on the document, suggesting it appeared distorted and inconsistent with official imagery. Additionally, the ABLP noted that Senator Govia has neither used the letterhead in question nor been assigned the email address referenced in the document.

Describing the incident as a “direct assault on the intelligence” of the pub-

lic, the ABLP accused the UPP of resorting to deceptive tactics in the face of political challenges.

The governing party maintained that it remains focused on national development and urged citizens to be cautious of misinformation circulating online.


The UPP has not publicly responded to the allegations.



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Letter demanding State board members attend ALP events sparks legal controversy ... See more



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

OFFICE OF THE
LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS
IN THE SENATE

SENATOR SHANELLA GOVIA
Leader of Government Business in the Senate



6th April 2026

To: All Chairpersons and Board Members
All State Boards
Antigua and Barbuda


Dear Chairpersons and Board Members,

RE: ATTENDANCE AT LABOUR PARTY EVENTS

Please be advised that you are expected to attend all Labour Party events, including the launch on **7th April 2026**. This matter has been discussed with the Leader of the Party, and it is with his approval that you serve as Chairpersons and Board Directors.

Please be guided accordingly.

Yours faithfully,




Senator Shanella Govia
Leader of Government Business in the Senate

cc: The Honourable Gaston Browne
Leader of the Antigua Labour Party

Parliament Building, Queen Elizabeth Highway
 St. John's, Antigua
 Tel: (268) 562-6819 | Email: leader.govbusiness@ab.gov.ag

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💬 1
🔄 5





TACKLING THE COST OF LIVING, NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT IT

WHILE OTHERS **TALK**, **ABLP DELIVERS**

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- ✓ **LOWER COSTS**
- ✓ **REAL RELIEF FOR FAMILIES**

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Anique Goodwin: Championing People-First Leadership and Inclusive Workplace Excellence

Anique Goodwin, a certified Human Resources and Industrial Relations professional with over 30 years of experience, continues to shape workplace culture through her unwavering commitment to people development and organizational success at Curtain Bluff Resort.

Beginning her journey at just 17 years old at World Wide Tele Sports (WWTS), Anique quickly gained hands-on experience in recruitment and employee engagement. Over the years, Anique has developed a proven track record of balancing organizational objectives with employee needs—ensuring alignment that drives sustainable growth. Her expertise spans a wide range of HR disciplines, including talent acquisition, employee engagement, performance management, organizational development, coaching, team building, employee relations, and change management. She is also highly experienced in compen-

sation and benefits strategies, as well as workplace wellness, health, and safety initiatives.

Anique is especially passionate about developing both managers and employees, equipping them with the tools needed to adapt in ever-evolving business environments. She is deeply committed to identifying and nurturing future talent, creating pathways for growth, and empowering individuals to reach their full potential.

Her transition into the hospitality industry further reinforced her people-centered philosophy. At Curtain Bluff Resort, she has helped cultivate a culture rooted in respect, opportunity, and continuous development. The organization’s investment in its employees has resulted in strong staff loyalty and a collaborative environment where individuals support one another and lead by example.

Anique believes that effective leader-

ship is grounded in action. By demonstrating respect, offering opportunities, and recognizing contributions, she creates workplaces where employees feel valued and motivated. “It’s more than just skills—it’s about personality and potential,” she emphasizes. “When you invest in people, they invest in you.” She also underscores the importance of recognition, noting that acknowledging employees’ efforts is fundamental to building positive workplace cultures.

Through her decades of experience and dedication to people-first leadership, Anique Goodwin remains a driving force in building resilient, inclusive, and high-performing organizations.

Watch the stories unfold on ABHTA’s YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram platforms (@AntiguaHotels). Join us in celebrating the people who shape and strengthen Antigua and Barbuda’s hospitality industry.



UNVEILING
HOSPITALITY
PROFESSIONALS

Anique Goodwin

Human Resources Manager
Curtain Bluff Resort



CHIEF AWARDS
PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT
AND SUPPORT

Presented by **ABHTA**
ANTIGUA, BARBUDA HOTELS & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Time-Off For Voting



LABOUR DEPARTMENT
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

With general elections just fifteen days away, employers across Antigua and Barbuda are asked to note that they must provide their employees time to cast their votes on Election Day.

The Labour Commission issued a media release advising employers that they must provide registered voters ‘a period of four consecutive hours for voting’ without loss of pay in accordance with Section 34 of the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 2001.

The full text of the section reads; 1. “Every employer shall, on polling day, allow every voter a period of four consecutive hours for voting and no employer shall make



any deduction from the pay or other remuneration of any such voter or impose upon or exact from him/her any penalty by reason of his absence during such period.”

And (2) “Any employer who, directly or indirectly refuses or by intimidation, undue influence or in any way, interferes with the grant-

ing to any voter in his employ of such period of voting, as this section provided, shall be guilty of an offence, and on summary conviction liable to a fine not exceeding three thousand dollars, or to imprisonment not exceeding twelve months.”

ELECTION DAY
Thursday,
30 April

"In times like these, let us keep strong, steady leadership."

PM Browne, Minister Greene Attend Opening of New Sports Complex In Barbuda



The commissioning of the new multi-sports complex located at the Sir McChesney George Secondary School in Barbuda took place in Codrington on

Tuesday.

Among the guests attending the event were Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Minister of Barbuda Affairs, E.P.

Chet Greene.

Both government officials indicated that they wanted to present as a demonstration of their support for the



continued development of the people of Barbuda. They viewed the handing over of this critical sports complex to the students of the SMG Secondary

School and the wider Barbuda Community as providing facilities for the youth of the sister isle.

Funding for the project were provided by the Coco Point Fund and the Barbuda Ocean Club, the trading name of the PLH Project.

Curry House

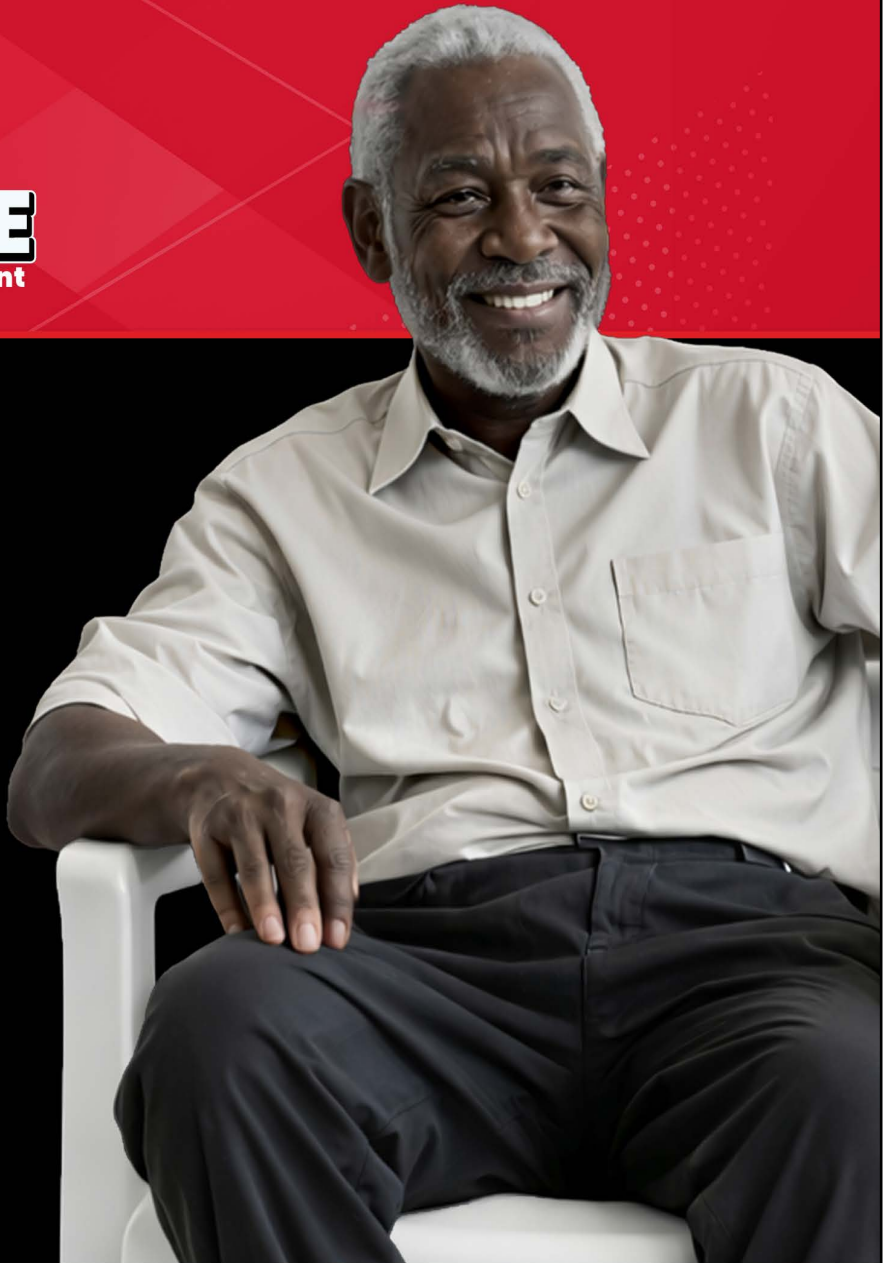
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ABLP DELIVERS

UWI FIVE ISLANDS CAMPUS



ABLP DELIVERS



Building Homes, Building Lives

Construct Antigua and Barbuda Initiative (CABI): First time home owners get duty free concessions up to the value of EC \$500,000. For existing homes that require renovations and expansions, home owners get duty free concessions up to the value of \$250,000.

Helping Those Who Need it Most

- Forgiveness of electricity and water debt owed to APUA by disconnected households
- National reconnection programme underway
- Entrepreneurial Development Fund: loans, training, mentorship and grants/loans.

A caring government ensures no family is left in the dark.



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE

April
13|14|15
16|17|18



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THEATRE FESTIVAL

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7 PM

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BLESS EYE

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



Echoes of the Past

RHYTHM • SOUL • SPIRIT



Jessica Serena Tracey proudly represents St. John's Rural North, carrying with her the vibrant spirit of McKinnons Village and the resilience that defines her journey.

A dynamic entrepreneur, dancer, and youth advocate, Jessica has used every chapter of her life to grow in purpose, leadership, and service. From excelling as a student leader to building businesses and mentoring through dance, she embodies determination, creativity, and faith.

Her passion for youth development, entrepreneurship, and community upliftment continues to inspire those around her. Grounded in service and guided by purpose, Jessica stands as a confident, compassionate, and empowered ambassador for the proud people of St. John's Rural North.



Jessica Tracey
ST. JOHN'S RURAL NORTH

Echoes of the Past

RHYTHM • SOUL • SPIRIT



Julissa Stoute proudly represents St. Paul as a vibrant 20-year-old university student whose poise, passion, and purpose set her apart.

She is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Business Management at The University of the West Indies, Five Islands Campus, specializing in Tourism and Hospitality Management. A past student of Old Road Primary School and Antigua Girls' High School, Julissa built a strong foundation in leadership, discipline, and creativity.

Her love for the performing arts earned her a Grade One in dramatic presentation. Ambitious and driven, she aspires to make a meaningful impact in tourism and hospitality while proudly showcasing Caribbean culture on the global stage.

Julissa Stoute
ST. PAUL



Echoes of the Past

RHYTHM ◦ SOUL ◦ SPIRIT



Aliyah Andrew, a proud resident of St. John's Rural East and first-year Law student at the University of London, is driven by a passion for justice and national development.

As a Junior Paralegal and active member of JCI Antigua, she is committed to advocacy, youth empowerment, and nation-building. Representing her constituency and the Honourable Maria Browne in the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Queen Pageant 2026, Aliyah returns to the stage with confidence and purpose.

Her platform addresses absentee fatherhood and its impact on child development, as she champions stronger families and brighter futures for every child.

✦ A voice for change. A vision for impact.

Aliyah Andrew
ST. JOHN'S RURAL EAST



Echoes of the Past

RHYTHM ◦ SOUL ◦ SPIRIT



Queenela Williams proudly represents St. Mary's South with creativity, confidence, and cultural pride.

A dynamic performer and dedicated member of the National Youth Theatre, she uses the stage to connect, inspire, and tell meaningful stories. Her artistic journey began at Antigua Girls' High School and has since earned her regional recognition, including awards for acting excellence and appearances at CARIFESTA. Beyond performance, Queenela works in customer service and is a local entrepreneur whose handcrafted earrings celebrate individuality and Caribbean identity.

Deeply committed to service, self-love, and personal growth, she continues to uplift her community while aspiring to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts and expand her creative impact.

Queenela Williams
ST. MARY'S SOUTH



Echoes of the Past

RHYTHM • SOUL • SPIRIT

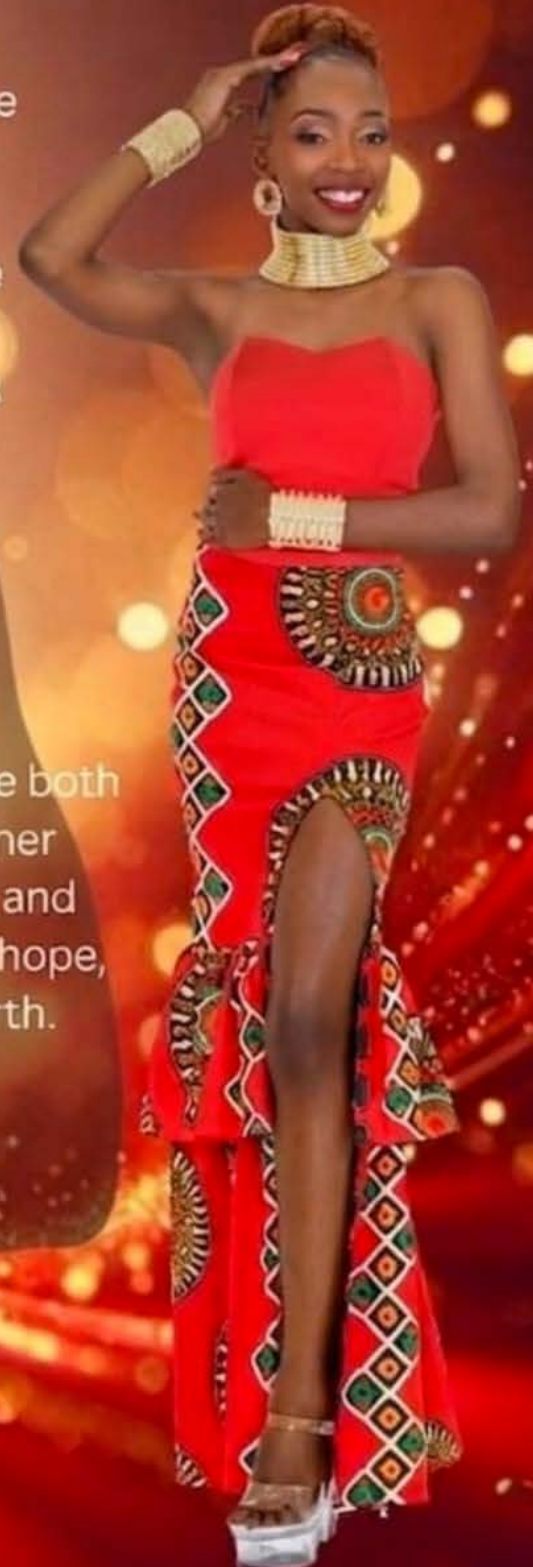


Iszarea Lloyd proudly represents St. Phillip's North as a young woman of purpose, resilience, and quiet strength.

Born on August 30, 2005, she is a proud graduate of Glanvilles Secondary School, where she emerged as Valedictorian, and is currently pursuing Social Sciences at The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus. Though naturally quiet and observant, Iszarea possesses a vibrant spirit and a heart deeply committed to service.

Passionate about cooking, singing, sports, photography, and reading, she aspires to become both an interior designer and photographer. Through her platform, she advocates for youth development and mental health awareness, determined to inspire hope, healing, and a stronger future for St. Phillip's North.

Iszarea Lloyd
ST. PHILLIPS NORTH



Hospital at centre of child HIV outbreak caught reusing syringes in undercover filming

Mohammed Amin was eight when he died shortly after testing positive for HIV.

His fevers were so bad that he insisted on sleeping in the rain, and he writhed in pain “like he’d been thrown in hot oil”, says his mother, Sughra. “He used to fight with me, but he also loved me,” 10-year-old Asma says as she kneels at her younger brother’s graveside.

Not long after her brother contracted the virus, Asma was also diagnosed with HIV. Her family believe both children contracted it from injections with contaminated needles during routine medical treatment at a government hospital in Taunsa, in the province of Punjab, Pakistan. They are two of the 331 children that BBC Eye has identified as testing positive for HIV in the city between November 2024 and October 2025.

After a doctor at a private clinic linked the outbreak to the hospital, called THQ Taunsa, in late 2024, local authorities promised a “massive crackdown” and suspended the hospital’s medical superintendent in March 2025 – but a BBC Eye investigation can now reveal that dangerous injection practices continued months later.

During 32 hours of undercover filming at THQ Taunsa in late 2025, we witnessed syringes being reused on multi-dose vials of medicine on 10 separate occasions, potentially contaminating the drugs inside.

In four of these cases we saw medicine from the same vial given to a different child. We do not know if any of the



children were HIV-positive but this practice creates a clear risk of viral transmission.

“Even if they have attached a new needle, the back part, which we call the syringe body, has the virus in it, so it will transfer even with a new needle,” said Dr Altaf Ahmed, a consultant microbiologist and one of Pakistan’s leading infectious disease experts, after watching our undercover footage.

Despite signs on the hospital walls showing safe injection practice we filmed staff – including a doctor – injecting patients without sterile gloves 66 times, and a different expert told us our footage highlighted broader weaknesses in infection control training in Pakistan.

We also watched a nurse rummage through a medical waste disposal box without sterile gloves. “She is violating every principle of injecting medicine,” said Ahmed.

But when we showed our footage to the hospital’s new medical superintendent, Dr Qasim Buzdar, he refused to acknowledge it was genuine. He claimed it could have been recorded before he took over or that “this footage

could also be staged”, and insisted his hospital was safe for children.

Dr Gul Qaisrani, a doctor at a local private clinic, was the first to spot the outbreak in late 2024 after noticing a rise in the number of children going through his clinic who tested positive for HIV.

Almost all of the 65 to 70 children he diagnosed had been treated at THQ Taunsa, he says.

He recalls one mother telling him that her daughter was injected with the same syringe as a cousin living with HIV, and that the syringe was then used on several other children. Qaisrani says a father told him he challenged syringe reuse at THQ Taunsa but was ignored by nurses.

BBC Eye has pieced together data from the Punjab provincial Aids screening programme, private clinics, and a data set leaked by police to identify 331 children who tested positive for HIV in the city of Taunsa between November 2024 and October 2025.

Out of a sample of 97 children with HIV whose families were also tested, only four of their mothers tested positive. This suggests

very few of these cases were caused by mother-to-child transmission. The mother of Mohammed Amin and Asma, Sughra, tested negative for HIV – her husband died two years ago in a road traffic accident.

The provincial Aids screening programme data lists “contaminated needle” as the mode for transmission in more than half of all these 331 cases, including Asma’s – for the others, the mode is not listed.

The Punjab government intervened in March 2025, when it said the number of cases was 106. THQ Taunsa Hospital’s medical superintendent Dr Tayyab Farooq Chandio was suspended, but BBC Eye can reveal that within three months he was working with children again as a senior medical officer at a rural health centre in Taunsa’s outskirts.

Chandio says that as soon as he found out about a HIV-positive case he took “whatever measures were required”.

He told BBC Eye in an interview that he took “immediate” action after being notified of an HIV-positive case at THQ Taunsa, but he said the hospital was not the cause of the outbreak.

Chandio was replaced by Buzdar, who told the BBC that HIV was his “main focus” when he took the job in March 2025 and that he had a “zero tolerance” policy for unsafe infection control.

“We conducted training programmes for the paramedics and staff nurses on how to prevent and defeat HIV. The most important part is our

section on infection prevention control. They have been properly trained in this," he said.

BBC Eye's evidence, however, proves that unsafe practices continued eight months later.

Our footage from November and December 2025, filmed over several weeks, captured syringes and vials frequently left open alongside discarded needles on countertops that should be kept sterile.

Most children we saw being treated at THQ Taunsa were given injections via a cannula – a tube inserted into a vein – which further increases the risk of infection. By entering directly into the bloodstream, contaminated medicine can bypass the body's natural defences.

We also filmed one nurse pull a used syringe from under a counter with liquid for the last patient still inside. Rather than discarding it she hands it to her colleague, apparently ready to be reused on another child.

When we showed Buzdar our undercover footage, he insisted it had been filmed before his tenure or that it had been staged.

When asked what he would say to local parents watching this footage, he said: "I can say to them with certainty, with confidence, that you should get your treatment done at THQ Taunsa."

In a statement, the local government said that "no validated epidemiological evidence" had "conclusively established THQ as a source" of the outbreak.

It added that a joint mission between the children's charity Unicef, the World Health Organization and the regional healthcare department had highlighted "the role of unregulated private practices"

and "the contribution of un-screened blood transfusions". But BBC Eye has been leaked the joint mission's April 2025 inspection report into the city's outbreak, which found many of the same issues as our investigation into THQ Taunsa.

"Conditions were especially concerning in the paediatric emergency room," the report says – this is one of the departments BBC Eye filmed in.

"Essential paediatric medications were missing, and unsafe injection practices were common. IV [intravenous] fluids were being reused, cannulas were unlabelled, and used IV sets were left hanging on stands. Hand hygiene was neglected – basins were blocked, and no sanitizers were available."

Dr Fatima Mir, professor of paediatric medicine at the Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi, says our footage highlights weaknesses in infection control training in Pakistan. "We must warn our injectors: 'You have become an active instrument for passing disease.'"

Our investigation suggests that unsafe practices are in part driven by systemic pressures including a reliance on, and cultural preference for, injections as treatment.

Pakistan has one of the highest rates of therapeutic injections in the world, many of them medically unnecessary. Members of the general public ask for them, including for their children, and doctors happily oblige, says Mir. "They should keep the threshold for injection practice very high. Only give injections for life-threatening illnesses. For mild to moderate illnesses, use oral medication."

A shortage of medicines and supplies also fuels unsafe

practices. The demand for injections can put a strain on resources, which are allocated in government hospitals through quota systems overseen by their superintendents. "They have a set number of supplies and are told they must make them last for the whole month," Mir says. "Are they seeing where corner-cutting is dangerous? And where the money should be spent?"

During our undercover filming we found that supplies were often missing on the wards, and that patients who could afford liquid paracetamol were told to bring their own. "They make us account for every little bit of medicine," one nurse said.

The practices documented in THQ Taunsa mirror those in previous outbreaks elsewhere in Pakistan.

In 2019, hundreds of children in the town of Ratodero, in Sindh province, tested positive for HIV, most of them with parents who tested negative. Local paediatrician Dr Imran Arbani told the BBC that he found repeated clinic visits and multiple injections in their medical histories, "so it must have been transmitted in one or other of these medical settings". By 2021 the number of HIV-positive local children had risen to 1,500 – and even now, new infections are still occurring.

While we were filming in Taunsa a cluster of cases was reported in Karachi. In the SITE Town area, children treated at a local government hospital, Kulsoom Bai Valika Hospital, were later testing positive for HIV.

Among them was two-year-old Mikasha.

A family member said hospital staff used the same syringe on multiple children: "They filled the same syringe

and gave it to one child, then filled it again and gave it to another," they told BBC Eye. The hospital's medical superintendent Dr Mumtaz Shaikh said in an interview that "qualified doctors will never reuse" syringes, "so we have no concept of such things happening in government hospitals".

The federal health minister, however, has confirmed publicly that the outbreak of 84 cases was triggered by the reuse of contaminated syringes at the hospital.

When we put the findings of our investigation to the national government, a spokesperson said that it had "acted promptly within its mandate to investigate concerns [and] implement infection prevention control measures", with guidelines sent to health facilities in March 2025.

Back in Taunsa, Asma's family say she is losing weight, and she now faces a lifetime of treatment for a virus she should never have been exposed to.

A young girl in a blue dress smiles, her eyes looking down towards her hands. She has a dark scarf with a patterned border over her head. The stigma associated with HIV means that neighbours often stop their children from playing with her, leaving her isolated as well as sick, her family say. She asks her mother: "What is wrong with me?"

Standing at her brother's grave, Asma says she misses him. "He's with God now." She tells BBC Eye she works hard at school.

"When I grow up," she says, "I want to become a doctor." (BBC)

Retrial over death of Argentina legend Maradona to begin

A retrial into the death of the football great Diego Maradona, who died aged 60 after suffering heart failure, starts on Tuesday.

The first trial in May 2025 collapsed after one of the three judges on the case allegedly allowed unauthorised filming in court for a documentary.

Maradona's medical team are accused of failing to administer proper medical care, and seven people will be tried for homicide with possible intent. They deny the allegations. If convicted, they face between eight and 25 years in prison.

The football legend had been recovering at his home in Tigre, in Buenos Aires province, after successful surgery on a brain blood clot earlier that month.

Investigators classified the case as culpable homicide, a crime similar to involuntary manslaughter, because they said the accused were aware of the seriousness of Maradona's health condition but did not take the necessary measures to save him.

The heart failure caused him to suffer acute pulmonary oedema, when fluid builds up in the lungs, the preliminary autopsy confirmed.

A panel of medical experts, asked by prosecutors to investigate Maradona's medical team, said the treatment he received at his home was "deficient and reckless".

It concluded that the footballer "would have had a better chance of



survival" with adequate treatment in an appropriate medical facility.

The seven people on trial include his main medical adviser, Leopoldo Luque, and his psychiatrist Agustina Cosachov.

His former nurse, Dahiana Gisela Madrid, will stand in a separate trial.

Around 100 people are set to testify in front of a new set of judges at a court in San Isidro, including Maradona's daughters. The trial is expected to last until July.

When the footballer died on 25 November 2020, then President of Argentina Alberto Fernandez declared three days of national mourning.

"Thank you for having existed, Diego. We're going to miss you all our lives," he said.

Maradona started his career with Argentinos Juniors. He went on to rep-

resent Argentina in four World Cups, scoring 34 goals, including the infamous "Hand of God" goal against England in 1986.

During the second half of his career, he struggled with cocaine addiction. He was banned for 15 months after testing positive for the drug in 1991.

He retired from professional football in 1997, on his 37th birthday, during his second stint at Argentine giants Boca Juniors.

Maradona was appointed head coach of the national team in 2008 and left after the 2010 World Cup, where his side were beaten by Germany in the quarter-finals.

He subsequently managed teams in the United Arab Emirates and Mexico and was in charge of Argentinian club Gimnasia y Esgrima at the time of his death. (BBC)



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Spain approves plan to give around 500,000 undocumented migrants legal status



Spain's government has approved plans to give legal status to 500,000 undocumented migrants, allowing them to be integrated formally into the workforce.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez described his government's decision as both "an act of justice" and a necessity for Spain.

In a letter to Spaniards posted on social media, Sánchez, a socialist, said the mass legalisation sought "to acknowledge the reality of nearly half a million people who already form part of our everyday lives".

Spain's conservative opposition People's Party (PP) has pledged to attempt to block the legalisation, which it said

rewards illegal migrants and would encourage more to come.

The government's plan will offer a one-year, renewable residence permit to undocumented migrants. In order to be eligible, applicants must prove that they have already spent five months living in Spain and have a clean criminal record. They have between 16 April and the end of June to apply.

Sánchez said migrants helped "build the rich, open and diverse Spain that we are and to which we aspire".

The prime minister said these migrants are needed to sustain the economy and public services in a country whose population is ageing. He also said it was the right course of action

for a nation which in the past had seen many of its own nationals emigrate in search of better opportunities.

The Funcas think-tank estimates that there are around 840,000 undocumented migrants in Spain, the vast majority of whom are Latin American.

"This is going to benefit a lot of people, give them access to work and to a better quality of life," said Ricardo, a Bolivian graphic designer who has been unable to maintain stable employment and plans to apply for the scheme. "And it means more money for the Spanish state and more workers will be legally available for employers."

The opposition has said that the government's estimates are wrong and that about one million migrants could apply for the scheme, with PP describing the plan as an "outrage".

The Catholic Church, by contrast, has supported the government's legislation.

The scheme comes as many of Spain's European neighbours tighten controls on immigration.

Both Socialist and PP governments have implemented migrant amnesties in the past. The most recent one was in 2005, when 577,000 people received residency under a Socialist administration. (BBC)



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Global economy at risk of recession if Iran war persists, warns IMF

The global economy is at risk of recession if the US-Israel war with Iran continues and high energy prices persist, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned.

In its World Economic Outlook report, the IMF said in a worst case scenario - where oil, gas and food prices spike and remain high this year and next - global growth could fall below 2% in 2026.

“This would mean a close call for a global recession which has happened only four times since 1980,” it said, the most recent being during the Covid pandemic.

Energy prices have soared since the war began more than six weeks ago after the key Strait of Hormuz shipping route effectively closed and peace talks between the US and Iran failed.

The IMF said: “Once again, the global economy is threatened with being thrown off course - this time by the outbreak of war in the Middle East at the end of February 2026.”

It said the most severe conditions that could lead to a worldwide slowdown would include oil prices reaching an average \$110 per barrel this year and hitting \$125 in 2027.



Based on these assumptions, the IMF said inflation could reach as much as 6% next year. This could force central banks to increase interest rates to slow the pace of price rises.

Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, chief economist at the IMF, told the BBC: “Global recession is sort of a concept that is a bit fuzzy when we’re looking at global numbers.

“And so, yes, 2% is a situation that will feel for most people around the world as if it’s a recession time. Unemployment will be high. For some countries, food prices, food insecurity

might rise.”

Oil has risen close to \$120 during the Iran conflict but has since fallen back and on Tuesday, a barrel of crude cost \$98.85.

Moreover, the IMF pointed out that the risk of recession would only increase if severe conditions continued over two years.

It said that if the conflict is resolved in the next few weeks and if energy production and exports from the Middle East begin to normalise by the middle of this year, global growth would ease



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to 3.1% for 2026.

That is below an earlier forecast of 3.3%. It also left its prediction for global growth next year unchanged at 3.2%.

Of the world's advanced economies, the IMF has forecast that the UK will be the hardest hit by the energy shock from the Iran war.

It cut its estimate for UK growth this year to 0.8%, from a previous prediction of 1.3%. However, it expects the UK to then recover with economic expansion of 1.3%.

Oil exporting nations in the Gulf are likely to see a sharp slowdown in economic growth or even a contraction this year, according to IMF forecasts.

It estimates that Iran's economy will shrink by 6.1% this year. However, it forecasts a rebound of 3.2% in 2027 - providing the war ends in the next few weeks.

Some countries such as Qatar, a major supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG), have been targeted with missiles and drones by Iran.

Qatar's Ras Laffan, the world's largest LNG refinery, has been struck and is not expected to be fully operational for some time.

The IMF forecasts that Qatar's economy will contract by 8.6% in 2026, before bouncing back with 8.6% growth next year.

It also predicts that Iran's neighbour, Iraq, will take an economic hit this year from the war, with a slowdown of 6.8%. But it is expected to recover to 11.3% growth in 2027.

A country's economic resilience will depend on a number of factors, the IMF said, including the damage to energy infrastructure, dependence on the Strait of Hormuz and availability of alternative export routes.

Saudi Arabia, for example, has its East-West pipeline which runs from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea and can pump up to 7 million barrels of oil per day.

Saudi's growth will slow in 2026 but the economy is still expected to expand by 3.1%, and is projected to grow by 4.5% next year.

The IMF said most Middle East oil exporters are forecast for an upturn next year "based on the assumption that energy production and transportation are normalized over the next few months".

But it cautioned that this assumption "may need to be revised if the duration of the conflict extends and the degree of damage suffered gets reassessed".

One country that has benefited from the surge in oil prices is Russia, according to IMF forecasts.


The Russian economy is expected to grow by 1.1% this year and next, ahead of previous predictions of 0.8% and 1% respectively.

Russia had been hit by a series of sanctions after it launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than four years ago.

In March, US President Donald Trump removed restrictions on exports of Russian oil as global prices soared.

He also temporarily lifted sanctions on 140 million barrels of Iranian oil for 30 days.

Trump has since announced a US blockade of Iranian ports to stop exports. (BBC)




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Greenbay Hoppers go second in First Division League



Players of the Greenbay Hoppers FC

The Greenbay Hoppers have moved from fourth to second place on goal difference in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League.

The Greenbay Hoppers claimed their 14th win in 20 matches by pulling off a 3-1 victory against Parham FC at Parham in their latest outing.

The Hoppers took a two-nil lead at halftime via an own goal by Quanell Williams in the 14th minute and a conversion by Chad Williams in the 26th minute.

Dale Gardner converted a penalty kick in the 52nd minute to reduce the deficit for Parham FC, but Tyler Anthony restored Hoppers' two-goal advantage by scoring his team's third goal in the 55th minute to wrap up their victory.

The result allows the Greenbay Hoppers to advance to 44 points, the same as leaders Freemans Village Scorpions, who boast a superior goal differ-

ence and have played 21 matches.

It allows Parham to remain in sixth place with 36 points after suffering their sixth defeat in 22 matches.

SAP FC moved from fifth to fourth place on goal difference by notching up their 11th win in 22 matches with a 4-1 victory against Golden Grove FC at St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

Goals by Emerson Henry in the fourth minute, Devonta Kirk Geran in the ninth minute, and Tyrique Tonge in the 42nd minute gave SAP FC a three-nil lead at halftime.

Alex Browne scored a consolation goal for Golden Grove FC by converting a penalty kick in the 62nd minute. Quinton Roy sealed the win for SAP FC by scoring his team's fourth and final goal with a strike in the 66th minute.

The result allows Golden Grove FC to remain in ninth place on goal difference with 27 points after losing for the 11th time in 22 matches.

It also allows SAP FC to advance to 42 points, the same as third-placed Five Islands FC and fifth-placed Swetes Vipers, who have played 22 matches.

Five Islands, who have completed 21 matches, are awaiting the result of their 22nd match against Willikies FC, which ended prematurely after a brawl between players of both teams in Willikies on Tuesday, April 7.

Bendals FC leapfrogged Bolans FC into 11th place by recording their fifth win in 22 matches with a 2-0 victory over their opponents at Golden Grove.

Following a goalless first half, Bendals FC secured victory by scoring twice in the second half via conversions from Alex Colbourne in the 61st minute and Glenroy Barthley in the 80th minute.

The result allows Bendals FC to advance to 18 points, while Bolans FC slipped from 11th to 12th place with 17 points after suffering their 10th defeat in 21 matches.

Wins for Daggers and Phoenix in Division 2 basketball



The Old Road Daggers and Michael Joseph Phoenix recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Monday evening.

The Daggers notched up their ninth win in 12 matches by snatching a hard-fought 91-62 victory against the Navigators 2 in the second game of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Wester Batista Perez shot a game-high 36 points and claimed five rebounds; Rafiki Harris produced 14 points, six assists, and five rebounds; Kedar Clare provided 13 points, 11 rebounds, and five steals; and Kwame Huntley scored 13 points and claimed eight rebounds for the Daggers.

Raheem Sawyer produced 24 points, six rebounds, and five assists; Henry Dorsette converted 16 points and claimed nine rebounds; and Molefi Joseph sank 10 points and snatched five rebounds for Navigators 2, who suffered their ninth loss in 11

games.

The Phoenix claimed their eighth win in 12 games by soaring to a 69-59 victory over Da Project 2 in Monday's opening encounter.

Adrian Carnegie shot a game-high 27 points and provided seven assists; Shalom Bloodman sank 15 points and grabbed 20 rebounds; and Shamar Joseph

converted 12 points and claimed five steals for the Phoenix.

Donte Trimmingham sank 14 points and grabbed 12 rebounds; Nathan Matthew converted 14 points and snatched 11 rebounds; Kevin Pimentel had eight points and five rebounds; and Erije Joseph scored eight points for Da Project 2, who slumped to their ninth defeat in 13 games.

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Da Squad continue to dominate ABAVA Women's D-1 League



The Da Squad women's volleyball team

Defending champions Cool and Smooth/Joma Da Squad have continued their title defense in dominant fashion in the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Women's Division 1 League.

Da Squad, who are the reigning four-peat champions, claimed their third win in as many games with a 3-1 victory against the Jets at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Da Squad showed their championship quality by prevailing 25-20, 25-21, 15-15, and 25-17 against the Jets, who lost for the first time after winning their previous two matches.

After losing their opening two games, Vernon G. Edwards Limited High Flyerz hit back to claim their first win with a 3-0 victory over the University of the West Indies (UWI) in the Men's

Division 1 League.

The High Flyerz prevailed 25-15, 25-14, and 25-20 over the UWI men, who lost for the second time in three games.

Gwava and N18 Construction Invaders recorded their first win in two games with a 2-0 victory against Schools in the Men's Division 2 League.

The Invaders prevailed 25-11 and 27-15 against Schools, who were making their debut in the competition.

Gwava and N18 Construction Invaders also returned to winning form in the Men's Division 1 League.

After suffering a 3-1 loss to Theatric Lighting and JOMA Stoneville, the Invaders rebounded to claim their second win in three games with a 3-0 victory over Chargers Velocity.

The Invaders took an hour and 18 minutes to pull off their 25-21, 25-23,

and 25-22 victory over Chargers Velocity, who suffered their third loss in as many games.

After losing their previous two games, Hidow Caribbean Starz 1 rebounded to claim their first win in their Women's Division 1 League with a 3-0 victory over the University of the West Indies (UWI).

Starz 1 needed an hour and 12 minutes to secure their 25-18, 25-21, and 25-15 victory over UWI Women, who tumbled to their third loss in as many games.

Dynasty recorded their first win in two games in the Women's Division 2 League with a 2-1 victory against Schools, who were making their debut in the competition.

It took an hour and 20 minutes for Dynasty to prevail in a 29-27, 24-26, and 15-10 victory against Schools.

Lions stay unbeaten in Super40 Championship

Caribbean Motor Works (CMW) New Winthorpes Lions have continued their successful start in defense of their title in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Super40 Championship.

The Lions recorded their third win in as many matches with a crushing 261-run victory against Tertiary Institutions and Schools at New Winthorpes.

Demari Benta and opener Tyrone Williams Jr. both struck half centuries to power the Lions to 333 for nine off their allotted 40 overs after being sent in to bat.

Benta hammered 86 off 61 balls, including seven fours and three sixes, while Williams Jr. slammed 85 off 61 balls, which included four sixes and nine fours. Ishmael Peters chipped in with 32 off 30 balls. Captain Kaivalya Mishra bagged four for 46.

In reply, Tertiary Institution and Schools were bundled out for 72 in 14 overs. Peters snapped up four for 25, and Ian Eusebe picked up three for 31.

Empire Nation recorded their second win in three matches by snatching a 28-run victory over the Pigotts Crushers at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

Empire Nation made 182 all out in 25.2 overs after winning the toss and opting to bat. George Elvin hit 45, and Tanez Francis made 39. Ronniel Jeffrey bagged five for 19.



CMW New Winthorpes Lions batsman Tyrone Williams Jr.

The Pigotts Crushers were dismissed for 154 in 29.3 overs. Xaveek Toppin struck 33 off 16 balls, while leg-spinner Micah McKenzie snapped up six for 29.

The PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks claimed their second win in three matches with a seven-wicket victory over WES Rising Sun Spartans at Ball Beef in Liberta.

The Rising Sun Spartans made 211 for six off their allotted 40 overs. Opener Royal Richards smashed 87 off 84 balls, including 12 fours and three sixes. Captain Kerry Mentore struck 41 off 35 balls, and opener Brandon Jno

Baptiste cracked 34.

The Blackhawks achieved victory by scoring 214 for three in 30.5 overs. Michael Greaves hit 90 off 86 balls, and captain Elroy Francis Jr. struck an unbeaten 45. There was also a contribution of 34 extras, including 28 wides.

The All Saints Pythons and the Bolans Blasters recorded their first win in three matches. The Pythons beat the Jennings Tigers by 23 runs at Jennings.

The Pythons made 174 all out in 36.2 overs. Michael Haynes Dover hit 44, and Isaiah Harris struck 30. Hughan Tonge grabbed four wickets for nine runs.

In reply, the Jennings Tigers were dismissed for 151 in 33 overs. Shane Burton struck 29, while Justin Robinson claimed three for 17.

The Bolans Blasters pulled off a 41-run win against the Bethesda Golden Eagles at Pigotts. The Bolans Blasters were all out for 259 in 38.3 overs.

Orlando Peters smashed 86 off 79 balls, Nazair Williams hit 33, and captain Taiem Tonge scored 31. Shacyoy Floyd took four for 37, and Keno Goodwin captured three for 51.

In reply, the Bethesda Golden Eagles were restricted to 218 for eight off their allotted 40 overs. Kevin Pitman struck 51, and captain Anthony Martin hit 48. Dwaine Fordyce captured four for 32.

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2025 CPL generates US\$19.5 million to Antiguan economy



Fans in attendance at a CPL game in Antigua in 2025. (CPL)

The Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) generated a total event impact of US\$19.5 million for Antigua and Barbuda during the 2025 tournament, according to an independent Economic Impact Assessment conducted by GSIQ.

Five CPL matches played at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium from August 16 to 24 in 2025 delivered a direct economic impact of US\$10.7 million, alongside US\$8.8 million in international media value promoting Antigua and Barbuda across global broadcast, digital and social platforms.

A total of 23,553 fans attended CPL matches in Antigua and Barbuda, including 1,733 international visitors. Visiting supporters stayed an average of 4.5 nights and spent an average

of US\$3,100 per trip, contributing US\$4.1 million in attendee spending that supported accommodation providers, restaurants, transport operators and local businesses across the country.

CPL's direct investment into Antigua and Barbuda delivered significant benefits to the local economy. In 2025, the tournament spent US\$3.7 million locally, creating 169 new jobs, investing US\$2.8 million with local suppliers, and spending US\$321,000 on salaries.

The tournament also supported community initiatives including development cricket programmes and CSR activities, including donations of school supplies for children attending match days at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium.

Over the past two seasons, the CPL and the Antigua & Barbuda Falcons have invested US\$7.1 million into Antigua and Barbuda, demonstrating the growing economic partnership between the tournament and the country.

In addition to the economic contribution, Antigua and Barbuda benefited from extensive global exposure through the tournament. The event generated US\$8.8 million in international media value, with US\$8.4 mil-

lion coming from broadcast coverage alone, highlighting the global reach of CPL and its ability to showcase Antigua and Barbuda to international audiences.

Pete Russell, CEO of the Caribbean Premier League, said, "Antigua and Barbuda continues to play an important role in the CPL calendar. Delivering an event impact of US\$19.5 million highlights the positive impact the tournament brings to the country, supporting tourism, creating jobs and generating global exposure.

"The Sir Vivian Richards Stadium provides a fantastic stage for CPL cricket and we are proud to continue growing our partnership with Antigua & Barbuda."