

Front Page Commentary

Why Strength, Stability and ABLP's Renaissance Are the Only Choice

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Governor General Sir Rodney Williams pose with members of the OAS Observer Mission to Antigua and Barbuda

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The Final Verdict: Why Strength, Stability and the ABLP's Renaissance Are the Only Choice



By Hon. E. P. Chet Greene

Antigua and Barbuda goes to the polls today (Thursday April 30, 2026). After weeks of campaigning, speeches and promises, the noise fades away and what remains is the quiet of the voting booth; a space where each of us must render a final verdict on who will steer our twin-island nation for the next five years.

In that booth, there is only one question that matters: Who is fit to lead?

When you compare the two men seeking your mandate, the answer is not merely clear, it is glaring. This election is a referendum on leadership and the choice is between a proven Captain at the helm during a tempest and a rookie first mate who cannot control his own crew.

Let us speak plainly and honestly about Gaston Browne. Love him or respect his tenacity, you cannot deny the facts. Prime Minister Browne is strong, focused, steady and supremely knowledgeable. He has stood behind the podium on the world stage, negotiating climate finance for a Small Island Developing State that the world often ignores. He has navigated the crushing economic fallout of COVID-19, the volcanic ash crisis and global inflation

with a steady hand. He knows the levers of power; he understands the corridors of finance; he does not blink in

a crisis.

Now, look across the aisle at Jamale Pringle. To call him an alternative is to misuse the word. Mr. Pringle is presiding over the weakest political opposition in this country's history. This is not an opinion; it is an observable fact. His party is not a government-in-waiting; it is a caucus in chaos. While the ABLP has put forward a solid, enviable lineup of youthful energy fused with experienced governance; a balanced ticket built for tomorrow, the opposition is paralyzed.

The UPP is plagued by infighting so severe it makes parliamentary sessions look like a tea party. They are devoid of any coherent policies required to advance our national agenda. Where is their economic plan? Where is their



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Front Page Commentary

housing strategy? They have none, because they are too busy fighting each other to write one.

It is an open secret, agreed upon across the political divide, that Mr. Pringle is simply not fit for the job. He is weak. He is out of touch. When Antigua and Barbuda needed an opposition to hold the government accountable, he was missing. When the nation required a constructive critique of the budget, he offered silence. The job of Prime Minister is not a training ground; it is a war room. You do not send a child to do a sentry's duty.

Since leadership sets the agenda, let us compare the blueprints.

The ABLP has released the Renaissance Agenda. This is not a list of promises; it is a strategic roadmap. Renaissance seeks to advance what we started: the completion of major hotel projects to supercharge tourism, the digital transformation of our public service and the expansion of

the Citizenship by Investment Programme with integrity and transparency. It addresses the rising cost of living through targeted subsidies and wage negotiations, not platitudes. It is a vision crafted by knowledgeable minds for a modern Antigua and Barbuda.

What is the opposition offering? Confusion. Their "manifesto" is a collection of AI bullet point renderings, lacking financial modeling or timelines. They critique the ABLP's projects but offer no viable path to replace them. They speak of change but when you ask "to what?", they point to their internal chaos.

You cannot advance the national agenda if you cannot agree on a meeting time. You cannot lower the price of bread if you do not understand macroeconomics. You cannot keep us safe if you cannot keep your own party united.

Fellow citizens, a general election is not a protest vote. It is a binding con-

tract for the future of our children. Throwing your support behind a fractured opposition led by a man universally viewed as unfit for the role is a gamble Antigua and Barbuda cannot afford.

We are not a country that can afford "on-the-job training" for a Prime Minister. We need the steady hand of Gaston Browne, a leader who is focused and knowledgeable to finish the infrastructure boom, to stabilize the economy and to lead the Renaissance.

Today, the gavel falls. The evidence is in. The ABLP has the track record, the team and the plan. The opposition has infighting, emptiness and a leader out of his depth.

Vote for strength. Vote for stability. Vote for the ABLP to ensure the continued growth and prosperity of our beloved 268.

Vote for a Renaissance, not a Recession.

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ABEC engages Election Observers ahead of General Elections 2026



The Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) convened a high-level meeting with local, regional, and international observers as part of its final preparatory activities ahead of the General Elections scheduled for **Thursday, April 30, 2026**.

The engagement, which took place at the John E St. Luce Financial Centre, served as an important platform to brief observers on electoral procedures, operational readiness, and the Commission's commitment to delivering a transparent, credible, and inclusive electoral process.

In his welcome remarks, Chairman of the Commission, **Ambassador Arthur G. B. Thomas**, extended a warm greeting to all observers and underscored the critical role they play in strengthening public confidence in the democratic process.

"Your presence here reflects a shared commitment to upholding the principles of democracy, transparency, and accountability," Ambassador Thomas stated. "The Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission has worked diligently to ensure that every eligible voter is afforded the opportunity to participate freely and fairly in these elections. We welcome your oversight and value your contribution to reinforcing the integrity of our electoral system."



Ambassador Thomas further emphasized ABEC's adherence to established electoral laws, regional best practices, and international standards, noting that the Commission remains steadfast in its duty to conduct elections that reflect the will of the people.

Providing an overview of the extensive work undertaken in the lead-up to Election Day, Supervisor of Elections, **Ian S. Hughes**, outlined the Commission's comprehensive preparations. These include the finalization of the voters' list, training of election officials, distribution of sensitive and

non-sensitive materials, and the implementation of robust logistical and security arrangements across all polling districts.

Hughes also highlighted the Commission's ongoing voter education initiatives aimed at ensuring that electors are well-informed about voting procedures, polling locations, and their rights and responsibilities on Election Day.

"We have placed significant emphasis on readiness, accuracy, and efficiency," Hughes explained. "Our teams have been working assiduously to en-

sure that all systems are in place for a smooth electoral process. We remain confident in our preparations and committed to facilitating an orderly and credible election.”

Observers were also briefed on polling day protocols, counting procedures, and the transmission of results, and were provided the opportunity to engage directly with ABEC officials to seek clarification and share perspectives.

The Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission reiterates its commitment to transparency and encourages all stakeholders, including voters, political parties, and observers, to work collaboratively to ensure a peaceful and orderly electoral process.

The observers got the opportunity to field questions to the ABEC’s Chairman and Supervisor of Elections in efforts to further expand their understanding about the process.

Meanwhile, Governor General Sir Rodney Williams received members of the Organization of American States (OAS) Electoral Observation Mission during a courtesy meeting at Government House on Wednesday.

The purpose of the meeting was to consider the perspectives and views of key political actors relevant to the electoral process, as part of the Mission’s mandate to support transparency, inclusiveness, and confidence in democratic systems.



The OAS delegation comprised:

- Ms. Maricarmen Plata**, Chief of Mission
- Ms. Melene Glynn**, Deputy Chief of Mission
- Mr. Diego Paez**, Press Officer
- Ms. Clarissa Ribeiro**, Specialists

Coordinator

The engagement forms part of the Mission’s broader consultations with national stakeholders to assess the electoral environment and contribute to strengthening democratic governance.

Foreign Affairs Minister Encourages Full Participation in CHOGM 2026



Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs
E.P. Chet Greene

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs E.P. Chet Greene has appealed for full participation from member states of the Commonwealth of Nations at CHOGM 2026 later this year.

He made the appeal on Tuesday evening during a welcome reception at the Copper and Lumber Store Hotel for a group of diplomatic representatives on an advance visit, which ended on Wednesday.

Minister Greene encouraged the delegates representing several governments to impress upon their leaders the importance of full participation in the 1st - 4th November, 2026 meetings, and to make meaningful contributions to critical discussions, which will be held at a time of global uncertainty.

He underscored the importance of the theme for the November meeting, "Accelerating Partnerships and Investment for a Prosperous Commonwealth," and said the gather-

ing will provide a platform for the grouping, which represents one third of the world's population to send a clear message that its people matter.

The visiting delegation was assured that Antigua and Barbuda continues to make preparations for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, 2026, and will draw on its successes from the 4th International Conference on Small

Island Developing States, which was held in Saint John's in May, 2024, and the 55th Regular Session of the OAS General Assembly held in June, 2025.

Foreign Minister Greene thanked the delegation for the engagements that were held over the last two days, and the feedback it provided to the organising committee in Antigua and Barbuda, as CHOGM 2026 draws closer.

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- Entrepreneurial Development Fund: loans, training, mentorship and grants/loans.

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Commonwealth Official Pleased With First Advance Visit Outcome



Coordinator for CHOGM 2026, Jennifer Namgyal (left) and Antigua and Barbuda High Commissioner to the UK, Karen-Mae Hill speaking with local reporters on Wednesday

Antigua and Barbuda is getting high marks for its overall state of preparedness for hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) from November 1 – 4, this year.

That assessment comes from the Coordinator of CHOGM 2026, Jennifer Namgyal, who is based at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, and who spent the last two days in Antigua and Barbuda as part of the Advance Visit delegation that came for an update on the preparation for the major event.

In a news conference with the local media, Coordinator Namgyal said the reception and hospitality extended to the delegation by the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda have been ‘excellent’.

“We have heard very positive feedback from the delegation members who are in Antigua at this time. It is a very important milestone on *‘The Road to CHOGM’* and it allows our member countries to be re-assured of

the plans; to understand what the host government is putting in place and to see some of the arrangements that are being made so it has been a very positive visit,” she told the media representatives.

Antigua and Barbuda’s High Commissioner to the UK and CHOGM Focal Point, Karen-Mae Hill, who was also part of the panel, gave an overview of what the delegation looked for during the April 28 and 29 visit.

“The members are looking at several things. We know that we are going to have meetings that will involve heads of government and meetings that will involve foreign ministers; meetings that involve civil society, youth, women, and the business sector. So they want to see that we have venues that can meet the requirements that will satisfy heads, foreign ministers and even persons with disabilities. Therefore, that is one of the things that they were looking at; the quality of the facilities we will offer,” HC Hill explained.

Other areas of concern for the visit-

ing delegations were the hotels where delegations will stay to ensure that they meet the standards expected of presidents and prime ministers. “They want to assess what we have and as you know in Antigua and Barbuda we have some fantastic hotel offerings; there is an assessment across the range of hotels that are available here in the country,” she stated.

Issues of security, the media arrangements, transportation especially of a certain type, a road-plan to move delegations quickly to and from the various venues in a safe and secure manner were also factors considered by the team members. “Those are some of the questions that the delegation members wanted answer and we were happy to be able to answer them competently and clearly,” HC Hill indicated.

A second Advance Visit with different members will be in Antigua and Barbuda from May 5 to 6, while a virtual visit is slated for May 7.

Samoa Is Happy To Pass The CHOGM-Host Baton To Antigua and Barbuda



Samoan High Commissioner to the Commonwealth Francella Strickland

The last country to host the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), Samoa in the Pacific, is happy to pass the baton of hosting this signature event to Antigua and Barbuda.

Those were the sentiments expressed on Wednesday by Samoa's High Commissioner to the Commonwealth, Francella Strickland, who visited St. John's as part of the Advance Visit of officials who journeyed to the twin-island state to get a first-hand update on the state of preparedness for CHOGM 2026 in

November in Antigua and Barbuda.

HC Strickland said as a small island developing state itself, it feels a sense of pride in passing the baton of host-country to another small island developing state.

"We are pleased and very proud to pass to baton to Antigua and Barbuda. I think that having hosted CHOGM it was quite an experience and an opportunity for Samoa to play a leadership role in the Commonwealth so we are very pleased to see a small island de-

veloping state about to take up this leadership role. I am quite pleased to be here in St John's, its lovely and I feel at home," HC Strickland stated during an engagement with the local media.

She revealed that Samoa also hosted the Third Small Island Developing States (SIDS) conference back in 2014 and the experiences from that engagement helped Samoa in its hosting of CHOGM ten years later. She feels that having hosted SIDS just two years ago, those experiences will redound to Antigua and Barbuda's benefit.

"From what I am seeing here on this trip, it is clear that Antigua and Barbuda is using its experiences from SIDS4 in its own preparations for CHOGM. Much of Antigua and Barbuda's preparation started when a delegation from St. John's came to Samoa for an assessment and I think that this type of collaboration is what is needed as you go forward," She explained.

HC Strickland also made the point that Antigua and Barbuda does not stand alone in this undertaking; other countries in the Commonwealth stand ready to assist as 'we all want to see Antigua and Barbuda succeed'.

ELECTION DAY
Thursday,
30 April

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Coteen Francis Charged With Multiple Firearm-Related Offences

The police have arrested and charged Coteen Francis in connection with multiple firearm-related offences.

The 32-year-old resident of Grays Farm has been charged with Shooting with Intent to Murder, Discharging a Firearm in a Public Place, Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, and Unlawful Possession of Ammunition.

The charges stem from an incident that occurred along Queen Elizabeth



Highway shortly after 1: a.m. on Sunday, April 26.

The accused is expected to appear before the court at the next available sitting.

The police continue to appeal to members of the public who may have information relevant to this matter to contact the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) at 462-3913 or call Crimestoppers at 800-TIPS (8477).

All information will be treated with the strictest confidence.



POINTE ON DE STREETZ
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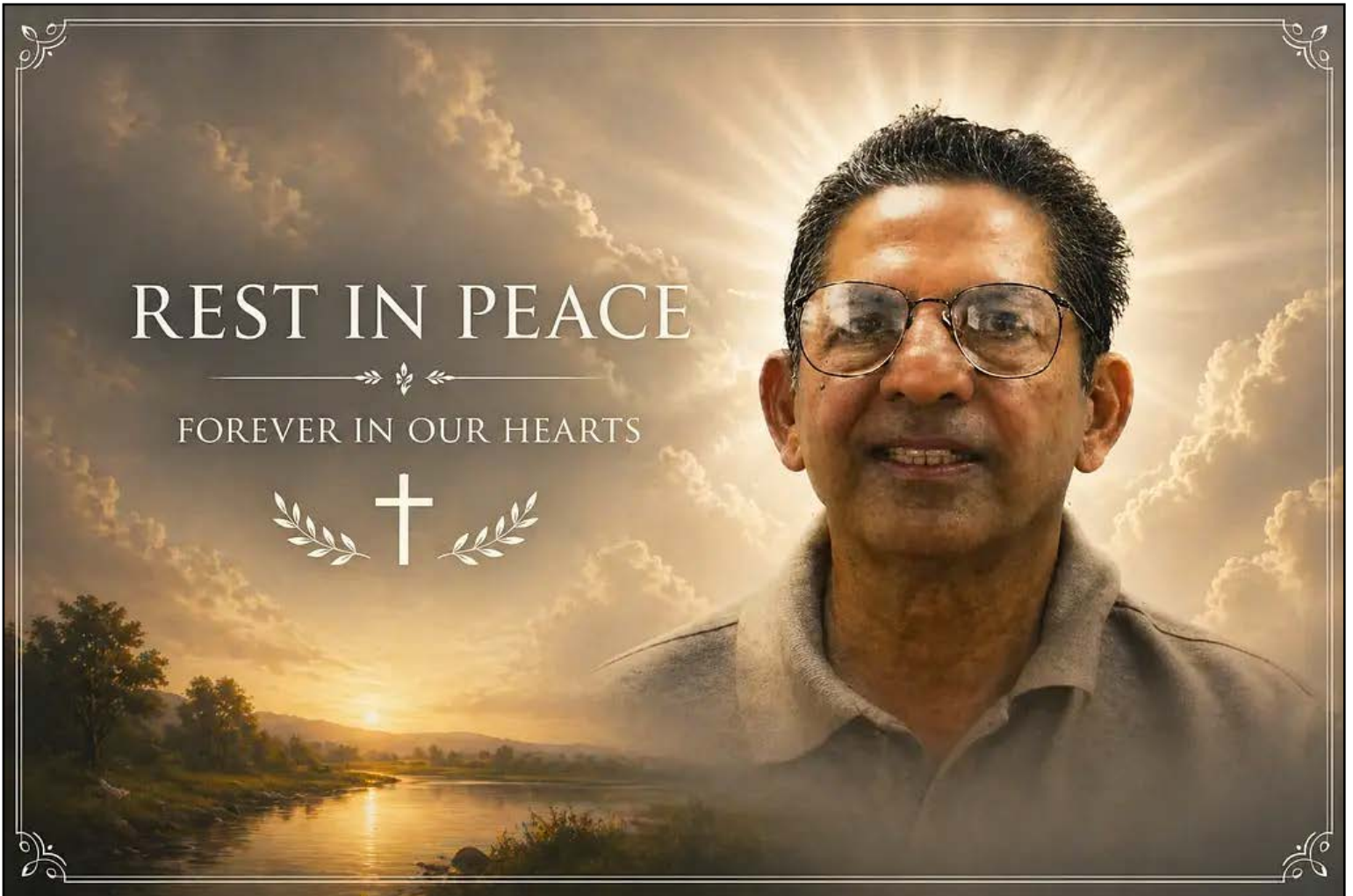
PBN
 POINTE BROADCASTING NETWORK

TUE - FRI
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Medical Community Mourns The Passing of Dr Bekal



The Medical Association of Antigua and Barbuda (MAAB), the entire medical fraternity, and the wider Antigua and Barbuda society join hands in extending deepest sympathies to the family, friends, and colleagues of Dr. Ramamurthi Bekal, retired General Surgeon, who passed away peacefully at his home on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, at the age of 94.

Dr. Bekal was a pillar of the surgical community, serving at the Hol-

berton Hospital for over 35 years. Throughout his distinguished career, he was more than a clinician; he was a cornerstone of medical institutional knowledge and a dedicated mentor who shaped the careers of generations of physicians in Antigua and Barbuda. He will be remembered most for his quiet demeanor, compassion, and patient advocacy. His excellent bedside manners served as a masterclass in the art of healing, proving that technical mastery is most effective when paired

with a gentle spirit.

His legacy lives on in the lives he saved and the medical professionals he inspired to practice with the same integrity and grace he displayed every day.

The MAAB offers its thoughts and prayers to the Bekal family during this difficult time.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

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Antigua and Barbuda's Renaissance: A Visionary Blueprint



Antigua and Barbuda stands at a defining moment—one characterized by steady progress, institutional maturity, and a clear commitment to improving the quality of life of its people. At the heart of this national evolution lies a simple but powerful principle: peace is the essential foundation upon which sustainable development is built. Supported by internationally recognized standards relating to human development, governance, stability, and transparency, the country's trajectory reflects a deliberate effort to translate policy into meaningful outcomes that benefit its citizens.

Within this framework, the SIDS Antigua Agenda for SIDS (2024–2034) functions not merely as a global declaration, but as a practical management tool—guiding national priorities and aligning them with international benchmarks. This effort is further strengthened through active engagement with CARICOM and the OECS, both of which provide critical regional platforms for policy coordination, economic integration, and shared standards of governance. Together, these frameworks create a cohesive and layered approach to development—one anchored in cooperation, resilience, and stability.

Antigua and Barbuda's progress is

most clearly reflected in its human development trajectory, which continues to place the country within the upper range of developing nations and among the stronger performers within the SIDS community. Improvements in education, income opportunities, and general well-being point to a society that is steadily advancing, supported by policies that emphasize inclusion and opportunity. These gains are not accidental; they are made possible by a stable social environment in which citizens can participate meaningfully in national life.

In governance, the country's standing within the higher tier globally for rule of law and institutional effectiveness reinforces the importance of sound public administration and accountability. Strong performance in areas such as public order, security, and fundamental rights reflects a society where stability is maintained not only through enforcement, but through trust in institutions. These are precisely the conditions that underpin peace, and by extension, sustained development.

The country's growing international engagement—reflected in its strong global mobility and diplomatic reach—further demonstrates the confidence placed in its governance systems. At the same time, there remains a clear and measured recognition that areas such as digital governance and health system resilience must continue to evolve. This willingness to acknowledge both progress and opportunity enhances credibility and signals a mature and forward-looking policy environment.

Against this backdrop, a number of strategic national initiatives have contributed meaningfully to the country's advancement. In the area of human development and social stability, the introduction of a national minimum wage framework has strengthened income security and supported broader social equity. The continued expan-

sion of the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus reflects a sustained investment in human capital, ensuring that education remains a central pillar of national development. Complementing this is the establishment of a national School of Agriculture at Glanvilles, integrated with ABCAS, which delivers practical training while preparing for degree-level programmes—an initiative that supports food security, entrepreneurship, and economic resilience.

These measures collectively reinforce the core dimensions of human development while fostering social cohesion—an outcome that is only possible within a peaceful and stable society.

Economic and infrastructural development has also played a central role in this Renaissance. The modernization of the V.C. Bird International Airport, alongside improvements in port facilities and the development of the Burton-Nibbs International Airport in Barbuda, has enhanced connectivity and expanded economic opportunity. These investments, coupled with continued growth in tourism and private sector activity, have strengthened resilience and positioned the country within a competitive and steadily advancing range among small island economies.

Closely linked to this progress is the expansion of housing and broader infrastructural development, which has had a tangible impact on everyday life. Increased access to housing, combined with improvements in roads, utilities, and community facilities, has elevated living standards and strengthened social stability. These developments do more than improve the physical landscape; they contribute to dignity, security, and a sense of belonging—critical elements in sustaining peace and national cohesion.

Equally significant are the ongo-

ing efforts to strengthen governance, transparency, and institutional trust. Enhancements in regulatory frameworks, improvements in accountability, and the gradual modernization of public services have reinforced confidence in state institutions. These reforms align closely with internationally recognized governance standards and contribute to an environment in which fairness and openness are increasingly embedded in public life.

On the global stage, Antigua and Barbuda has demonstrated thoughtful and effective leadership. The successful hosting of the SIDS4 Conference and the articulation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda have positioned the country as a credible voice among Small Island Developing States. The establishment of the SIDS Centre of Excellence and continued advocacy for mechanisms such as the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index reflect a commitment to ensuring that development frameworks accurately capture the realities faced by vulnerable states. These efforts further reinforce resilience, particularly in the face of climate-related challenges.

Cultural identity and social cohesion remain integral to this development journey. The advancement of a National Creative Industries Policy signals a recognition of the economic and social value of culture, creativity, and heritage. By fostering innovation while preserving identity, this initiative strengthens the social fabric and

contributes to a more inclusive and balanced development model.

Importantly, the progress achieved reflects a collective national effort. While the policy direction and coordination of recent years have provided clarity and momentum, the outcomes are also the result of contributions from public institutions, private enterprise, civil society, and the wider population. Regional collaboration through CARICOM and the OECS continues to reinforce these gains, ensuring that Antigua and Barbuda benefits from shared knowledge, integrated markets, and collective resilience.

There is also a clear recognition that the work of national development is ongoing. Continued emphasis on digital transformation, health system strengthening, economic diversification, and institutional modernization will be essential in sustaining progress and adapting to future challenges. This balanced acknowledgment of both achievement and opportunity strengthens the credibility of the national narrative.

Beyond policy and performance indicators, the meaning of this Renaissance is deeply personal. Having grown up in the capital, St. John's, I recall a community shaped by strong relationships, shared experiences, and a quiet but enduring sense of order.

Cultural traditions—expressed through gatherings and familiar meals such as rice pudding and goat water—were not only expressions of identity,

but reflections of a society grounded in peace.

That same foundation continues today, enabling transformation while preserving the values that define the nation.

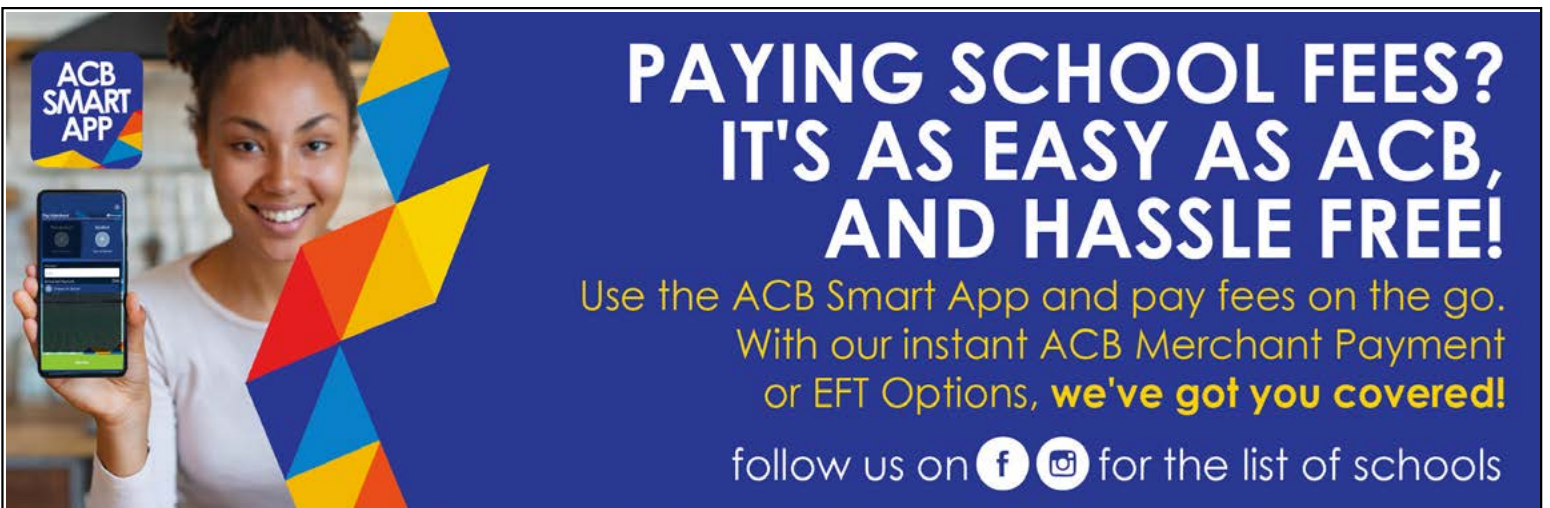
Antigua and Barbuda's Renaissance therefore represents more than progress; it reflects a deliberate and sustained effort to build a society in which peace underpins every aspect of national advancement. The policy direction of recent years has demonstrated a consistent commitment to stability, inclusion, and forward planning—providing a solid platform upon which the next phase of development can confidently proceed.

The task ahead is not simply to maintain momentum, but to deepen it—ensuring that improvements in human development, governance, and resilience translate into lasting prosperity for all citizens. In this regard, Antigua and Barbuda offers a compelling example of how a small state, guided by thoughtful leadership and anchored in peace, can steadily *shape its future and advance with confidence*.

About the writer

Dr. Clarence E Pilgrim is an Ambassador who is an advocate for transformational leadership, peaceful diplomacy, creativity and innovation.



The views expressed by the writer does not represent any institution or government.



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Commentary



The Quiet Decisions That Shape Our Lives ----For Better or for Worse



By Garfield Joseph, MBA

Where Most Financial Stories Begin

Most people remember the first job they ever had — the first real pay cheque and the pride that came with earning your own money. At that stage of life, very few of us were thinking about retirement, longterm wealth, or the future version of ourselves. We were focused on surviving, supporting family, and enjoying life as best we could. That is natural. It is also where many people go wrong.

When the Future Arrives Unannounced

Life moves forward one day at a time, but financial consequences do not appear all at once. They accumulate slowly, almost unnoticed — and then one day, they arrive in full view. The future does not announce itself. It simply arrives.

The Monthly Choices We Rarely Notice

Every single month, whether we realize it or not, we make decisions about money. When we spend everything we earn, we choose one path. When we save only what is left over, we choose another. And when we fail to invest, we make one of the most expensive decisions of all — not out of carelessness, but because we are busy, tired,

and focused on today.

Why Investing Feels Easy to Postpone

Many people assume investing is something only wealthy people do, or that it requires advanced financial knowledge, or that it is a concern best left for “later.” But later has a habit of arriving sooner than expected, often before we feel ready for it.

What Investing Actually Means

It is worth clearing up a major misunderstanding. Investing is not gambling. It is not daytrading. And it is not about getting rich overnight. At its simplest, investing means setting aside money today so it can grow steadily

and help support you tomorrow. Saving protects money. Investing allows it to grow. Over long periods of time, the difference is not income — it is decision-making over time.

A Tale of Two Financial Paths

This story plays out far too often. Two people earn roughly the same income. They work hard, pay their bills, and love their families. One begins investing modest amounts early in life and does so consistently. The other keeps postponing the decision, waiting for the “right time.” Thirty years later, one lives with choice — flexibility, stability, and peace of mind. The other lives with anxiety, uncertain how long in-

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- Home-porting operations allowing more efficient passenger handling
- Turning cruise growth into more local business participation




come will last or whether support will be needed.

Why Delay Comes at a High Price

People rarely delay investing because they do not care. More often, it is because the topic feels intimidating, money already feels tight, the future seems far away, or fear of making mistakes leads to paralysis. Yet the uncomfortable truth remains: money grows best when it is given time, and time lost cannot be replaced.

How Compounding Quietly Does the Heavy Lifting

One of the most powerful ideas in personal finance is compounding — money earning returns and then earning returns on those returns. It sounds technical, but it is quite simple. Time multiplies effort. Consistency beats intensity. Patience outperforms panic. Growth may feel slow in the early years, but compounding builds momentum quietly for those who stay the course.

Investing as an Act of Responsibility

At its core, investing is not about markets — it is about responsibility. Most of us spend our lives taking care of others: children, parents, employers, and communities. Investing is about taking care of the future version of yourself — the person who will one day need security, dignity, and peace of mind.

Getting Started Without Overcomplicating Things

Fortunately, investing does not require a high income or complex strategies. It requires a plan. Starting small — even EC\$50 or EC\$100 per month — matters. Investing consistently, thinking longterm, ignoring shortterm noise, and using pension plans, credit unions, banks, or professional advice all make a difference. As income improves, contributions can increase. The goal is not perfection. It is progress.

What Changes When Money Is Managed Intentionally

When people begin managing money differently, tangible changes occur. Stress begins to ease. Confidence

grows. Choices expand. Dependence decreases. The future feels less frightening. This is not about luxury. It is about resilience, independence, and peace of mind.

The LongTerm Truth


The most important financial decisions are rarely dramatic. They are quiet, repeated, and easy to ignore. Yet over time, they shape how we live, how we age, and how much control we have over our lives. Investing for the long haul is not about predicting markets. It is about believing that the future matters enough to prepare for it.

And that may be one of the wisest decisions any of us can ever make.


About the Author:

Garfield Joseph is the Executive Director of a public sector organization

in Antigua and Barbuda, where he serves as the senior operational leader responsible for translating policy, strategy, and national objectives into daytoday action. His work spans strategic execution, financial oversight, stakeholder engagement, and advising senior decisionmakers on economic and development matters. He has also taught as an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, delivering capstone courses in Business Strategy and Policy and Business, Government and Society. With experience across both the public and private sectors, he writes frequently on investment, entrepreneurship, and longterm decisionmaking, with a focus on helping ordinary people understand complex issues in practical, accessible terms.



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CPL FIXTURES 2026

HOME

AWAY

 **AUG 9 SUN**
7:00 PM ECT / 4:30 AM IST (-1)
ST. VINCENT

 **AUG 7 FRI**
7:00 PM ECT / 4:30 AM IST (-1)
ST. VINCENT

 **AUG 20 THU**
7:00 PM ECT / 4:30 AM IST (-1)
ANTIGUA

 **AUG 14 FRI**
7:00 PM ECT / 4:30 AM IST (-1)
ST. LUCIA

 **AUG 22 SAT**
7:00 PM ECT / 4:30 AM IST (-1)
ANTIGUA

 **AUG 30 SUN**
7:00 PM ECT / 4:30 AM IST (-1)
ST. KITTS

 **AUG 23 SUN**
7:00 PM ECT / 4:30 AM IST (-1)
ANTIGUA

 **SEP 2 WED**
7:00 PM ECT / 4:30 AM IST (-1)
TRINIDAD

 **AUG 25 TUE**
7:00 PM ECT / 4:30 AM IST (-1)
ANTIGUA

 **SEP 8 TUE**
7:00 PM ECT / 4:30 AM IST (-1)
GUYANA

BARBUDA Caribana 2026



MAY 2026

THURSDAY 21ST

- 2PM | OPENING PARADE
- 3PM | KIDS FEST
- 8PM | JUNIOR CALYPSO MONARCH

FRIDAY 22ND

- 11AM | WHEELS UNITED - PARK & LIME
- 8:30PM | CALYPSO / SOCA MONARCH

SATURDAY 23RD

- 10AM-5PM | SPRITZ & SUN - SEAFOOD FEST - AND-
JOHNNY DESOUZA FISHING TOURNAMENT
- 10PM-4AM | CARIBANA COLORS FETE

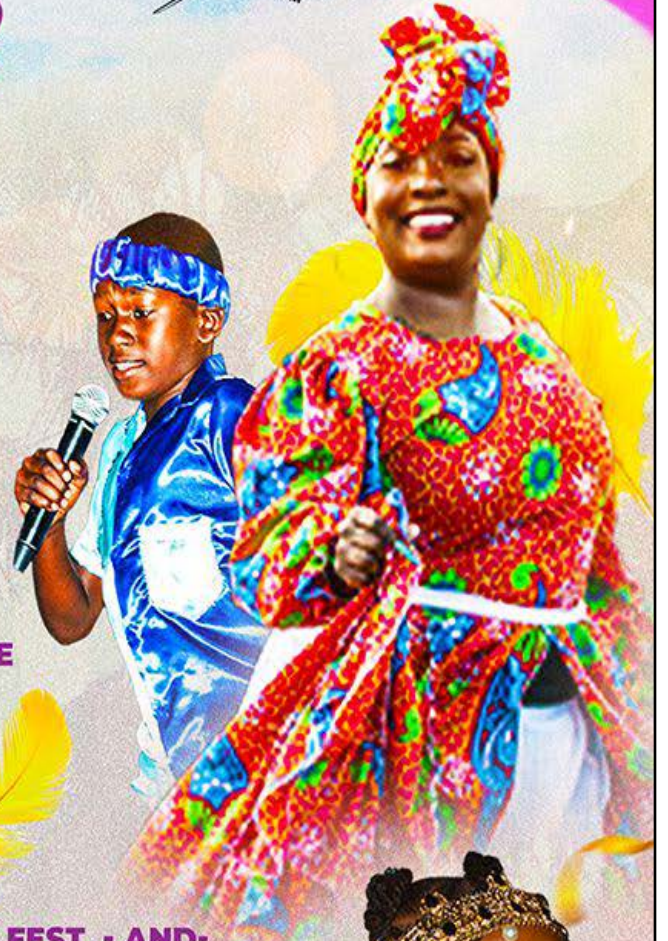
SUNDAY 24TH

- 1PM | CARIBANA CLASSIC
HORSE RACING

MONDAY 25TH

- 4AM-10AM | J'OUVERT
- 6PM-10PM | LAST LAP

EVENT SCHEDULE

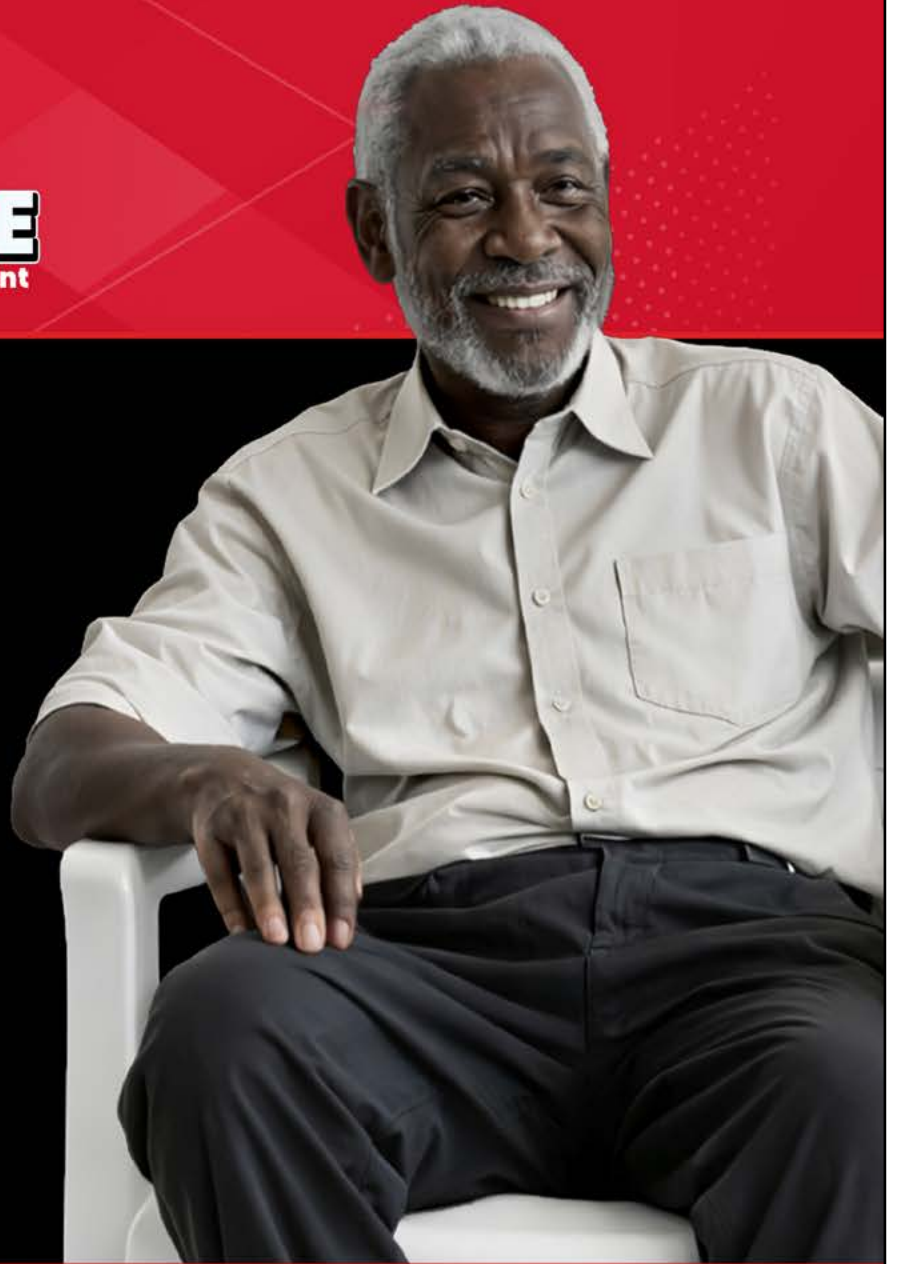


**A VOTE FOR
ANY UPP
CANDIDATE**

**IS A VOTE
TO MAKE
JAMALE PRINGLE
PRIME MINISTER**



RENAISSANCE
A New Era of Progress and Development



**“After a
lifetime
of work,
seniors
deserve
respect.**

That’s why we

INCREASED PENSIONS |

for our seniors.”





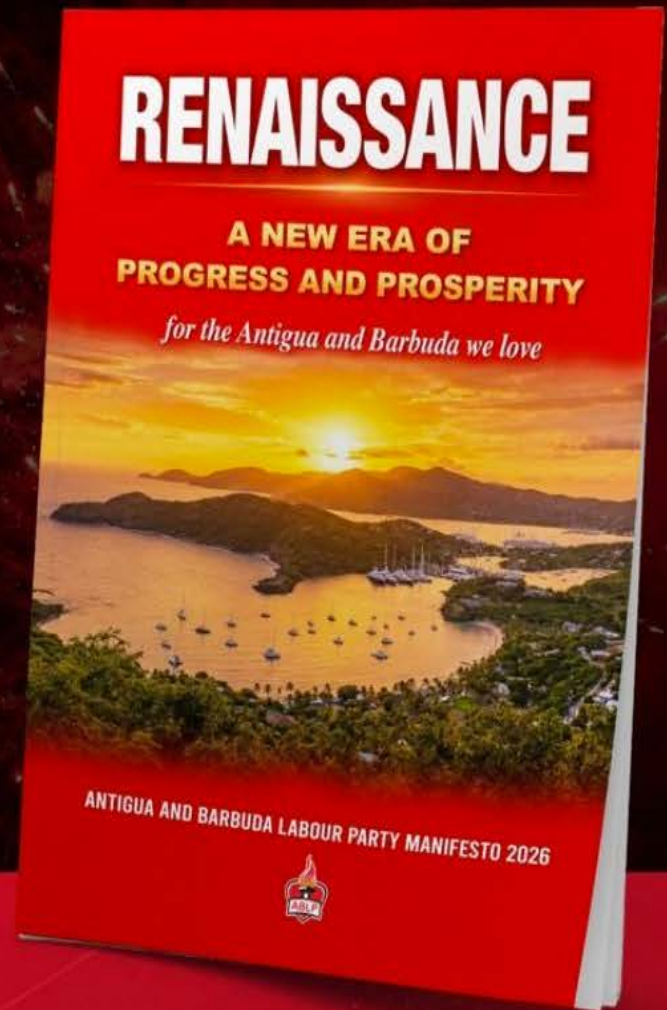
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THE ANTIGUA &
BARBUDA TRADES
AND LABOUR UNION
(AT&LU) PRESENTS

FRIDAY 1ST MAY 2026



THE ULTIMATE DJ COMPETITION DE-LABOUR MIX

8 PM - 12 AM



HOSTED BY: JESSE FYAH & DJ KAVITY

PARTICIPANTS (LEFT TO RIGHT)

DJ ACE (BARNES HILL & NEW WINTHROPES SECTION) | DJ SHADY (JENNINGS & EBENEZER SECTION)
DJ KYLE (CMC) | DJ TREBLEBEATZ (APUA) | DJ STRANGER (JENNINGS & EBENEZER SECTION)
DJ SPARK (CLARE HALL & CASSADA GARDENS SECTION) | DJ STUEY (LIBERTA SECTION)

PRIZES: 1ST \$1000.00
2ND \$750.00 - 3RD \$500.00



AT&LU HEADQUARTERS
46 NORTH STREET

BINGO WILL BE PLAYED
BETWEEN THE ROUNDS

COMING SOON



ANNOUNCING A NEW HOUSING RENEWAL LOAN PROGRAMME

**\$150 MILLION TO BE ALLOCATED
FOR PEOPLE WHO
DON'T QUALIFY FOR A BANK LOAN**

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UP TO 30 YEARS TO REPAY**





SENIORS ARE FOR LABOUR!





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BARBUDA
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2026



Classic HORSE RACING

SUN 24H MAY

1PM | CORONATION PARK

THE ANTIGUA &
BARBUDA TRADES
AND LABOUR UNION
(AT&LU) PRESENTS

FRIDAY 1ST MAY 2026



THE ULTIMATE DJ COMPETITION DE-LABOUR MIX

8 PM - 12 AM



REPRESENTING:
BARNES HILL AND
NEW WINTHROPES
SECTION



HOSTED BY: JESSE FYAH & DJ KAVITY

PARTICIPANTS

DJ ACE (BARNES HILL & NEW WINTHROPES SECTION) | DJ SHADY (JENNINGS & EBENEZER SECTION)
DJ KYLE (CMC) | DJ TREBLEBEATZ (APUA) | DJ STRANGER (JENNINGS & EBENEZER SECTION)
DJ SPARK (CLARE HALL & CASSADA GARDENS SECTION) | DJ STUEY (LIBERTA SECTION)

PRIZES: 1ST \$1000.00
2ND \$750.00 - 3RD \$500.00



AT&LU HEADQUARTERS
46 NORTH STREET

BINGO WILL BE PLAYED
BETWEEN THE ROUNDS



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*The rhythm never stopped.
The passion never faded.
And now... we're back.*

Join us for an unforgettable evening of **movement, music, and magic** as we return to the stage – stronger, sharper, and still dancing the line between grace and power.

 **Date: Saturday 16th May 2026**

 **Time: 7:00 PM**

 **Venue: St Anthony's Secondary School, Langfords**

 **Admission: \$50**

**Come celebrate the comeback.
Feel the energy. Witness the return.**

Secure your tickets now from any LDC Antigua member—
and let's dance the line together! ✨



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

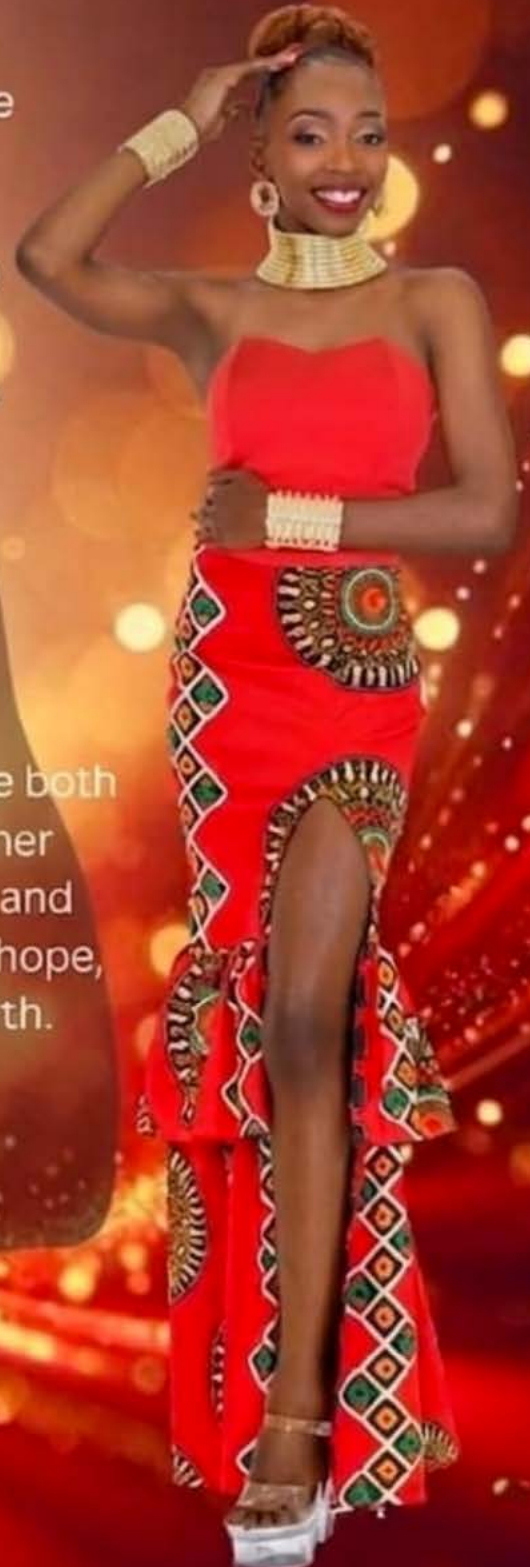


Iszarea Lloyd proudly represents St. Phillip's North as a young woman of purpose, resilience, and quiet strength.

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



Probe deepens into UHWI tax exemption abuse

Focused on revenue recovery, the Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA) has launched an audit of the last three years to assess breaches by the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) involving misuse of its tax-exempt status to import goods for private companies.

JCA Acting CEO Kirk Benjamin told Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Tuesday that if the probe uncovers fraudulent activities, the agency would extend its investigations to the last seven years.

Benjamin was appearing before the committee to respond to queries regarding the findings of a performance audit of the hospital done by the Auditor General's Department (AuGD). Tabled in January, the report revealed a litany of procurement breaches and violations of the Jamaica Customs Act.

It found that UHWI inappropriately utilised its tax-exempt status to import goods for four private companies, resulting in losses totalling \$23.1 million.

Benjamin told the committee that the audit is expected to begin next month and is set for completion by March 2027.

He also indicated that the outstanding reports for three of the private firms that benefitted from the UHWI's tax exempt status would be completed in another two weeks.

The Integrity Commission has joined the police and the JCA to examine the hospital's use of its tax-exempt status.

Acting UHWI CEO Eric Hosin told the committee at an earlier meeting that the anti-corruption body and the police had the files in relation to four companies – Supreme Laundry Services, Willman Sales, Scientific



ic Medical Services, and JACDEN Limited.

At Tuesday's PAC meeting, members wanted to know who signed the declarations for the hospital to apply its tax-exempt status to benefit private companies.

Benjamin told the committee that for Willman Sales and Scientific Medical Services the signature of the current CEO, Fitzgerald Mitchell, was affixed. Benjamin said in the case of JACDEN and Supreme Laundries, the signature of the former CEO, Kevin Allen, was on the documents.

However, he noted that while the former CEO Allen's signature was on the two documents for the period 2023-2024, the former CEO had left the UHWI in 2022.

While the JCA would normally receive a notification when heads of agencies had moved on, Benjamin said the agency was not notified that Allen was no longer with the UHWI.

In light of the foregoing, Benjamin argued that it was reasonable to as-

sume that there were pre-signed declarations in the name of the former CEO as he was no longer at the helm of the hospital.

Hosin said all the records indicate that the exemptions granted to private companies through the hospital were not presented to the board for approval.

Members of the PAC voted unanimously on Tuesday to invoke Parliament's legal powers to compel UHWI CEO Mitchell to attend its June 2 meeting after he signalled that he would not appear before the oversight committee. The PAC is taking steps to serve a warrant on Mitchell and warned of potential criminal sanctions if he refused to show up.

Allen, the former CEO who was also a no-show at the meeting, will also be ordered to attend the June 2 meeting.

The former UHWI Chairman Wayne Chai Chong advised the committee that he could not have attended Tuesday's meeting as he was travelling. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Dominica strengthens ties with France and Guadeloupe

High-level officials from Dominica, France, and Guadeloupe met in Guadeloupe recently to advance cooperation on key areas of mutual interest.

The discussions brought together Mr. Thierry Devimeux, Prefect of Guadeloupe, and Her Excellency Marie Noelle Duris, Ambassador of France to the Eastern Caribbean, alongside Dominican representatives.

The meeting focused on strengthening collaboration in judicial affairs, customs operations, fire and rescue services, maritime security, and immigration matters. Dominican officials emphasized the nation's commitment to building practical partnerships that deliver tangible benefits for citizens.

“Dominica values its relationship with France and with Guadeloupe as a neighboring territory, and remains committed to building practical partnerships that benefit our people,” Primev Mister Skerrit posted on his



Facebook page, underscoring the importance of regional cooperation in addressing shared challenges and opportunities. (Dominica News Online)



**NO TO LOVELL.
NO TO GISELLE.
NO TO PRINGLE.
NO. NO. NO.**

Cayman minister wants stronger backing for regional regulators

A Caymanian government official is urging Caribbean countries to provide stronger support to regulatory bodies, saying that underinvestment in these institutions could undermine the region's development ambitions.

Speaking at the 20th Organisation of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OCCUR) Conference in Trelawny, Rolston Anglin, the minister of finance and economic development, education and training in the Cayman Islands, said governments must deepen their engagement with regulators and recognise their critical economic role.

“There are governments across our region that have not yet fully grasped the economic leverage that a well-resourced, technically capable, and independent regulator provides,” Anglin said. “If we are to underinvest in our regulators, we are to underinvest in ourselves.”

He argued that regulation plays a central role in shaping economic outcomes even if it often goes unnoticed.

“Regulation is, in the truest sense, the infrastructure behind infrastructure,” he said. “Take away the regulator, and very quickly you feel it – in water bills that spiral without accountability, in service that plummets, and in electricity tariffs that bear no relationship to cost.”

Anglin noted that Caribbean regulators are operating in increasingly complex conditions, describing it as a “perfect storm of small economies, climate vulnerability, fiscal pressures and technology that moves faster than our legislation can chase”.



Against that backdrop, Anglin urged regulators not to retreat from their responsibilities.

“The temptation in a storm is to shorten the sail and narrow the mandate, but I suggest just the opposite,” he said. “The difference between challenge and opportunity often comes down to whether our institutions are positioned to navigate with purpose.”

Anglin also stressed that regulatory decisions have far-reaching implications for citizens, particularly in essential services.

“For small island states, water is not an abstraction. It is a daily negotiation with geography, climate, and scarcity,” he said. “These are not technical questions. They are questions about equity, dignity, and resilience.”

On the region's energy future, Anglin pointed to significant untapped potential but said progress depends on decisive regulatory action.

“The Caribbean sits on sunshine,

on wind, on geothermal and hybrid potential, natural resources that are sovereign, renewable, and largely untapped at scale,” he said. “What is required now is the regulatory architecture to unlock investment, protect consumers, ensure grid stability, and attract the partnerships that can move from ambition to reality.”

He also underscored the importance of collaboration across the region, including in times of crisis, referencing support following Hurricane Melissa.

“Where one of us is struck, all of us must answer as one,” he said, while urging conference participants to ensure that discussions translate into tangible outcomes.

“I hope you leave with frameworks you can take home, relationships you can call on, and at least one idea that you did not arrive with,” he said. “That is what 20 years of this work deserves – meaning and implementation.” (Jamaica Gleaner)

IShowSpeed visits Dominica and pledges live stream funds to islands flood recovery



Streaming sensation Darren Jason Watkins Jr known the world over as IShowSpeed (Speed for short) touched down in Dominica as part of his Caribbean Tour.

This most recent tour is the latest in a series of tours that saw him travel to Europe, China, India and various countries in Africa among others.

In Dominica he experienced the local cuisine, danced with the indigenous people of the Caribbean the Kalinagos, learned local expressions and Kweyol words and sang a remixed version of his own song performed by internationally known bouyon veterans Triple K Band.

The streamer had an even more comprehensive plans for Dominica but had to change plans due to the effects of flooding and inclement weather on the island over the previous weekend.

In response Speed went full throttle ahead despite the slight detour he used the opportunity to donate

all his earnings from the stream to Dominica's flood recovery with his sponsor Expedia pledging to match his donation.

In his just under 3 hour worldwind tour in Dominica he started with a ritual Kalinago cleansing bath and received a Kalinago name "Elay-ti" meaning strength. He went on to face-off with Dominican Olympic Gold medalist Thea Lafond in a bounding competition where giving it his all he suffered a minor fall and knee scrape. Though he was bested by Thea she still declared him a winner and awarded (temporarily) her Olympic gold medal as his participation prize.

From there he performed our local dances including Bélé which he took to as a natural, learned about what the 767 cultural reference (Dominica's area code) means which he initially confused with the viral Tik Tok trend "67".

He continued on his tour where he sampled and thoroughly enjoyed our titiwi accra, callalou soup,

"bounja" and bakes and cheese and our local Caco tea at a special version of the Wato food festival made just for him.

He wound up his tour with a demonstration of street jump and Dominica Carnival where he wore a Sensay costume and a live performance by Triple K band. He had high praise for bouyon which he declared as the "hardest" of the music he has experienced in the Caribbean (he has previously been to Trinidad, St. Lucia, Barbados and St. Vincent).

Speed was accompanied and guided by various local personalities and officials including Jodie Dublin Dangleben, Jael Joseph, Monelle Alexis and Shy Guy from Shy Guy Tours served as his personal tour guide.

Full list of countries on Speed's Caribbean tour:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Jamaica
- Puerto Rico
- Sint Maarten
- St. Kitts & Nevis
- St. Lucia
- St. Vincent & the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- US Virgin Islands (Dominica News Online)

NCAA agrees to lift restrictions on student-athletes earning prize money before enrolling in college



The NCAA has agreed to overhaul its restrictions on athletes accepting prize money before enrolling in college under the terms of a proposed settlement of a class action lawsuit brought by North Carolina women's tennis champion Reese Brantmeier.

The NCAA agreed to pay \$2.02 million in damages to Brantmeier and former Texas tennis player Maya Joint under terms of the settlement reached Tuesday.

According to documents filed in the US District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina and obtained by The Associated Press, the elimination of restrictions to prize money before initial full-time enrol-

ment applies to student-athletes in all sports, not just tennis.

The ruling was first reported by WRAL TV in Raleigh.

Brantmeier, a senior, won the NCAA singles championship for North Carolina on November 28, 2025.

She filed the complaint on March 18, 2024, asserting antitrust claims under the Sherman Act against the NCAA "on behalf of herself and other similarly situated student-athletes in numerous individual sports, including tennis."

Before the ruling, the NCAA restricted student-athletes from receiving cash awards from third parties when competing in non-NCAA

events such as the US Open tennis championship.

The ruling stated "the injunctive relief obtained will positively impact future generations of student-athletes."

In the settlement, the NCAA also agreed to pay more than \$2 million in attorneys fees and other administrative costs.

The ruling comes after the NCAA agreed to allow student-athletes to earn money off their name, image and likeness in 2021 and then allowed schools to share revenue directly with student-athletes in 2025. (AP)

Outrage after Indian man carries his sister's skeleton to a bank to prove her death

A man in eastern India has said he was forced to carry his sister's skeletal remains to a bank to prove her death after failing to withdraw her savings.

A video from Odisha state of Jitu Munda, 52, taking the remains to the bank went viral this week, sparking outrage. He said he acted in frustration after repeated attempts to access the money without being able to show official proof of death.

Police said he exhumed the woman's remains to bring them to the bank.

The bank denied asking for this, saying they only demanded legally required documents. It added that the incident appeared to stem from a lack of awareness of procedures, and that the money has since been handed over to the legal heirs.

The bank also disputed other parts of Munda's claims.

The incident, which took place in Keonjhar district on Monday, drew national attention, with many criticising local authorities and the bank for failing to help the man.

Odisha's Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari said the case was under investigation and that action would be taken against the branch manager over his alleged conduct. The Keonjhar district administration also expressed "deep concern", saying protecting people's rights and dignity was a priority.

Munda told BBC Hindi that the ordeal began after his 56-year-old sister, Kalara, died earlier this year. She had been working as a daily wage labourer and returned to her maternal home after the deaths of her husband and son, he said.

A few months before her death, she sold her livestock and deposited about 19,300 rupees (\$203; £150) in the bank.

Munda said he visited the branch several times after her death but was un-



able to access the money.

"When the bank manager refused to listen and kept asking for proof, I got frustrated," he said. "I brought the skeleton to show that she had died."

The viral video shows him carrying a bundle of skeletal remains wrapped in a sack to the bank and placing it outside the building's entrance. It's not clear who shot the video.

After it sparked outrage, many people pointed out the bureaucratic hurdles involved in accessing someone's funds after their death, particularly when they did not register a nominee who can claim it. Others highlighted the broader difficulties faced by rural families in navigating the banking system.

In India, if an account holder dies without naming a nominee, families must provide documents such as a death certificate and proof of legal heirship before funds can be released - a process that can take time, especially in remote villages where access to such paperwork is limited.

Following the backlash, Indian Overseas Bank, which operates the Odisha Grameen Bank where the incident took place, said reports that staff had asked for the physical presence of the

deceased were "incorrect".

It said Munda had been informed of the process but did not follow it. The bank also alleged he first arrived in an "inebriated state" and became disruptive, and later returned with the remains, describing the situation as "distressing".

Branch manager Sushant Kumar Sethi told BBC Hindi that Munda had initially said his sister was paralysed and unable to visit the bank, and that staff had offered to visit her at home. He said Munda later claimed she died.

Sethi also disputed other parts of Munda's account, saying he had not visited the branch in the past two months and that other legal heirs had come forward to claim the money, prompting officials to request the required documents.

Police and local officials later intervened, persuading Munda to return the remains to the burial ground and assuring him his request would be addressed. Officials have also offered him 30,000 rupees as assistance.

By Wednesday, officials had issued a death certificate and legal heir documents, and the bank said the money had been handed over to the woman's family members. (BBC)

Stranded whale ferried out of German waters in barge



More than five weeks after a humpback whale became stranded in shallow waters on the German coast, a barge has ferried the animal out of German waters, en route to the North Sea.

The final operation to save the whale is being closely followed across Germany, after the failure of earlier attempts to lure it away from the coast.

The whale was coaxed into the water-filled barge on Tuesday, in a mission funded by two German entrepreneurs.

Marine experts have largely distanced themselves from the operation. An expert International Whaling Commission panel said such plans were well meant, but the animal looked “severely compromised and unlikely to survive even if moved to deeper water”.

Despite the scepticism surrounding the whale’s fate, those involved in the operation were delighted with its success.

For many, Till Backhaus, the environment minister in the northern state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, has become the face of the rescue mission. Hailing the operation as a success, he said it was an “example for Germany of what can be done”.

“If everything goes well, it will be in

the North Sea in two days,” he told reporters, adding that the whale was doing very well and reportedly even sang during the night.

The two entrepreneurs who funded the rescue were delighted the whale had been saved from shallow waters near the island of Poel where it had spent the past 29 days.

“I can’t even say how happy I am,” said Karin Walter-Mommert, while Walter Gunz said he had never prayed so much in his life.

Once the transport ship Fortuna B towing the whale left German waters, it headed through the Baltic Sea into Danish waters with the aim of sailing north and eventually around the north Danish coast of Jutland, through the Skagerrak strait towards the North Sea.

There was a mood of euphoria among the rescue team that began on Tuesday when the whale swam into the specially adapted barge and it was still evident when they spoke to reporters on Wednesday.

Felix Bohnsack, the technical head of the mission, praised everyone involved, from Backhaus’s environment ministry to the German life guards’ association DLRG, although he warned they were not yet “out of the woods”.

Wildlife groups are far from optimistic about the whale’s future once it is eventually released into the North Sea.

Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC) was especially downbeat, warning that the whale had no long-term chance of survival. It is known to have suffered skin damage because of the lack of salinity in the waters along Germany’s Baltic Sea coast and WDC said its skin would need to fully recover and it would need to start finding food independently for any rescue to be considered a success.

Marine biologist Fabian Ritter was more positive, telling German press agency DPA that it clearly had a “will to live”, but he warned that this type of rescue mission was unprecedented: “We don’t know what effect this will have on the whale.”

The German Oceanographic Museum warned that the whale was at risk of drowning because it was so weak.

The whale’s troubles appear to have started when it became entangled in netting. Although it was first spotted early last month, it was on 23 March that it first became stranded on Timmendorfer Beach in Lübeck Bay.

It has been a cause celebre in Germany ever since. When a channel was eventually dug for the whale to swim free, it went further east along the coast to Wismar Bay and by the end of March he ended up in a shallow area off the island of Poel, where it remained until Tuesday’s rescue.

Some among the rescue team and German media have given the whale nicknames: either Timmy, after the beach where he first stopped on the German coast in late March, or Hope.

Reflecting on the past 24 hours, rescue director Felix Bohnsack said on Wednesday that “the moment Hope swam into the barge was inconceivable; we had tears in our eyes; these are images I will never forget”. (BBC)

Pentagon inks deal with Google for AI services



The Pentagon and Google have reached an agreement for the Defense Department to use the tech company's powerful Gemini AI systems on classified networks, according to a U.S. official familiar with the deal.

The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose details of the deal. The exact contents and details of the new contract remain unclear.

The deal follows similar agreements with other leading AI companies, including OpenAI and xAI. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has made adopting AI a top priority for the armed forces, vowing to transform the military into "an AI-first warfighting force."

A Google spokesperson did not answer specific questions about the deal, which was first reported by technology news outlet The Information.

"We are proud to be part of a broad consortium of leading AI labs and technology and cloud companies

providing AI services and infrastructure in support of national security," Google spokesperson Kate Dreyer said in an email to NBC News. "We remain committed to the private and public sector consensus that AI should not be used for domestic mass surveillance or autonomous weaponry without appropriate human oversight."

The Defense Department has embraced AI over the past decade, using automated systems for everything from analyzing drone footage in the fight against the Islamic State group to streamlining logistics and eliminating pay discrepancies for soldiers. It is currently using AI to analyze intelligence and provide targeting support in the war with Iran.

Michael Horowitz, a former senior defense official and current professor at the University of Pennsylvania, said the deal "to use Google's AI models for classified purposes illustrates the growing importance of AI for U.S. national security."

However, Horowitz noted that

Google's AI systems were already being used on unclassified systems, so "it's not surprising that they came to an agreement on classified uses."

Over the past few months, the Pentagon has sought to negotiate new contracts with America's four largest AI companies to include language allowing "any lawful use" of their AI systems. The Pentagon announced the initial, exploratory contracts with Google, OpenAI, Anthropic and xAI in July.

Those moves have sparked some controversy, most notably with Anthropic. The company, led by CEO Dario Amodei, sought stronger guarantees from the Pentagon that it would not use the company's AI models for domestic mass surveillance or direct control of lethal autonomous weapons.

It's not clear whether Google sought any such guarantees. The U.S. official who spoke with NBC News said the Google deal covered lawful use by the Defense Department.

While Google avoided a public spat with the Pentagon, it has faced some pushback from its own employees. On Monday, Bloomberg News reported that around 600 Google workers sent a letter to CEO Sundar Pichai urging him to refuse new AI partnerships with the Pentagon.

It's not Google's first time dealing with employee unrest over its work with the military. In 2018, thousands of Google employees protested the company's role in a secretive Pentagon program called Project Maven. Operated in partnership with data analytics compa-

ny Palantir, Maven remains one of the Defense Department's leading AI programs.

Google decided not to renew the Project Maven contract in the wake of the employee opposition. Pichai said at the time that the company would not pursue any AI application "for surveillance violating internationally accepted norms" or for weapons whose main goal "is to cause or directly facilitate injury to people."

The use of AI by the government in domestic surveillance and direct control of deadly automatic weapons have been areas of particular focus both within the AI industry and among civil society groups, though that has done little to slow the government's adoption or moves by tech giants to sign deals.

Those concerns became a public controversy earlier this year. In a late February blog post outlining these two red lines, Amodei, the Anthropic CEO, wrote that "in a narrow set of cases, we believe AI can undermine, rather than defend, democratic values. Some uses are also simply outside the bounds of what today's technology can safely and reliably do."

After setting an ultimatum for Anthropic to comply with the Pentagon's wishes enabling AI use for any lawful purpose — which could exceed Anthropic's accepted scope for use — Hegseth declared Anthropic a "supply-chain risk to national security," a designation usually reserved for foreign adversaries. The Defense Department has said it will look to scale back its use of Anthropic's models in the coming months.

President Donald Trump also announced in late February that he would ban all federal agencies from using Anthropic's products, calling

Anthropic a group of "Leftwing nut jobs."

Anthropic is suing the Defense Department and the relevant federal agencies to undo the fiats. The case is split between California, where a judge ordered a preliminary halt to the offloading of Anthropic systems, and Washington, D.C., where the court opted not to issue a similar injunction.

11.5

persons and nationals."

Brian McGrail, senior counsel at the Center for AI Safety, said in March that intelligence and national security agencies often take very liberal interpretations of contract provisions about surveillance. McGrail said that because these contracts remain private, it is often difficult to judge the robustness of the prohibitions of domestic surveillance (NBC)



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- Minimum wage increased to \$11.50/hour (28% rise), moving closer to a livable wage.
- Pensions improving, higher government pensions delivered, with further Social Security increases recommended.
- Waiver of customs duty on thousands of imported vehicles

*The ABLP Government doesn't just recognize the struggle. **We act on it.***





Republic Bank
CPL
CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE

2026 MATCH SCHEDULE

FRI 7 AUG	JKM	v	ABF	7:00 PM	ST VINCENT
SAT 8 AUG	SKNP	v	TKR	7:00 PM	ST VINCENT
SUN 9 AUG	ABF	v	SLK	7:00 PM	ST VINCENT
TUE 11 AUG	JKM	v	BR	7:00 PM	JAMAICA
WED 12 AUG	SLK	v	SKNP	7:00 PM	ST LUCIA
THU 13 AUG	JKM	v	GAW	7:00 PM	JAMAICA
FRI 14 AUG	SLK	v	ABF	7:00 PM	ST LUCIA
SAT 15 AUG	JKM	v	TKR	7:00 PM	JAMAICA
SUN 16 AUG	SLK	v	BR	7:00 PM	ST LUCIA
TUE 18 AUG	JKM	v	SKNP	7:00 PM	JAMAICA
WED 19 AUG	SLK	v	GAW	7:00 PM	ST LUCIA
THU 20 AUG	ABF	v	SKNP	7:00 PM	ANTIGUA
FRI 21 AUG	SLK	v	JKM	7:00 PM	ST LUCIA
SAT 22 AUG	ABF	v	TKR	7:00 PM	ANTIGUA
SUN 23 AUG	ABF	v	GAW	7:00 PM	ANTIGUA
TUE 25 AUG	ABF	v	BR	7:00 PM	ANTIGUA
WED 26 AUG	TKR	v	SLK	7:00 PM	TRINIDAD
THU 27 AUG	SKNP	v	JKM	7:00 PM	ST KITTS
FRI 28 AUG	TKR	v	BR	8:00 PM	TRINIDAD
SAT 29 AUG	TKR	v	GAW	7:00 PM	TRINIDAD
SUN 30 AUG	SKNP	v	ABF	7:00 PM	ST KITTS
MON 31 AUG	TKR	v	JKM	5:00 PM	TRINIDAD
TUE 1 SEP	SKNP	v	BR	7:00 PM	ST KITTS
WED 2 SEP	TKR	v	ABF	7:00 PM	TRINIDAD
THU 3 SEP	SKNP	v	SLK	7:00 PM	ST KITTS
FRI 4 SEP	GAW	v	JKM	7:00 PM	GUYANA
SAT 5 SEP	BR	v	TKR	8:00 PM	BARBADOS
SUN 6 SEP	GAW	v	SKNP	10:00 AM	GUYANA
SUN 6 SEP	BR	v	SLK	7:00 PM	BARBADOS
TUE 8 SEP	GAW	v	ABF	7:00 PM	GUYANA
WED 9 SEP	GAW	v	SLK	7:00 PM	GUYANA
THU 10 SEP	BR	v	SKNP	7:00 PM	BARBADOS
FRI 11 SEP	GAW	v	TKR	7:00 PM	GUYANA
SAT 12 SEP	BR	v	JKM	8:00 PM	BARBADOS
SUN 13 SEP	BR	v	GAW	7:00 PM	BARBADOS
WED 16 SEP	ELIMINATOR - 3 RD v 4 TH			7:00 PM	BARBADOS
THU 17 SEP	QUALIFIER - 1 ST v 2 ND			8:00 PM	BARBADOS
FRI 18 SEP	QUALIFIER 2 - WINNER ELIMINATOR v LOSER QUALIFIER 1			7:00 PM	BARBADOS
SUN 20 SEP	FINAL			7:00 PM	BARBADOS

**POP
QUIZ!**

**WHO IS REALLY IN
CHARGE OF THE UPP?**

A



LOVELL

B



GISELLE

C



PRINGLE

D



MALAKA

**UPP: WEAK LEADERS
FIGHTING FOR POWER**

FIFA increases financial distribution to World Cup participants by 15%



FIFA WORLD CUP
UNITED STATES - CANADA - MEXICO

VANCOUVER (Reuters) - FIFA will increase payments to teams taking part in the 2026 World Cup to almost US\$900 million, world soccer's governing body said on Tuesday, citing the commercial success of its expanded flagship men's tournament.

The FIFA Council, meeting in Vancouver ahead of the 76th FIFA Congress, approved a 15% increase in the resources to be distributed to all 48 participating member associations at next year's tournament in Canada, Mexico, and the United States of America (USA).

The total pot will rise to US\$871 million, FIFA said, with each participating team receiving increased preparation money of US\$2.5 million, up from US\$1.5 million.

Qualification money will also increase from US\$9 million to US\$10 million, while FIFA said additional team contributions would include subsidies for team delegation costs and increased team ticketing allocations totalling more than US\$16 million.

"FIFA is proud to be in its most solid financial position ever, en-

abling us to help all our Member Associations in an unprecedented way," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said.

"This is one more example of how FIFA's resources are reinvested back into the game."

The sheer scale of staging a tournament across North America, with long-haul travel, differing tax regimes and significant operational demands, had prompted unease among some participating nations.

UEFA had passed on concerns from several European associations

that teams could find it difficult to break even unless they progress deep into the competition.

The 2026 World Cup will be the first edition of the men's tournament to feature 48 teams, up from 32, and will be staged across the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The increased distribution comes as FIFA prepares for the biggest and most commercially lucrative World Cup in history, with more teams, more matches and expanded revenue opportunities across ticketing, sponsorship and broadcast rights.

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f y i d

Palestinian football body appeals to sports court over FIFA Israel ruling



Players of the Palestinian national football team

VANCOUVER (Reuters) - The Palestinian Football Association has appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport against FIFA's decision not to sanction Israel over clubs based in West Bank settlements, a senior PFA official said on Tuesday, as visa issues affecting several delegations added to tensions ahead of the FIFA Congress.

The PFA has long argued that clubs based in settlements in the West Bank – territory Palestinians seek as part of a future state – should not compete in leagues run by the Israel Football Association (IFA).

FIFA said last month it would take no action against the IFA or Israeli clubs, citing the unresolved legal status of the West Bank under public international law.

“Since we have exhausted every legal venue possible at FIFA, we’ll still go by the rules, go by the book, and we’ll appeal that decision because we think it’s very unjust,” PFA vice president Susan Shalabi said

after the Asian Football Confederation Congress in Vancouver, held two days before the FIFA Congress in the same city.

“The (FIFA) council decided after 15 years of deliberations on this issue not to decide. So the only course of action that we have is to go to CAS and to appeal that. We will go through the whole process until we are able to achieve justice.”

She later told Reuters that the appeal had been filed on April 20. CAS has not yet announced the appeal and was not immediately available for comment outside business hours on Tuesday. FIFA was also not immediately available for comment. Reuters has also contacted the IFA.

Shalabi said visa problems also prevented some of the PFA's representatives from entering Canada for the FIFA Congress.

She said she received an electronic travel authorisation immediately because she applied on a foreign passport, but other members of the dele-

gation, including the PFA president, general secretary and legal counsel Gonzalo Boye, initially did not receive visas.

She said the visas were issued only after pressure “on the political level, on the social level, on the media level,” as well as action from community members and activists, adding that the PFA president had not received a visa in time to travel with the rest of the delegation but was expected to arrive later.

She said Boye, however, had still not received a visa and would not attend. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada told Reuters it would look into the matter.

Shalabi said the visa problems were not limited to Palestine and that she understood Iran's football association, whose representatives were not present at the AFC Congress, had also faced issues.

“As you can see, it's a huge event that's going to happen. We have a World Cup, and it's good for Canada to have everyone from everywhere able to come and participate in this,” Shalabi said.

She added the situation for Palestinian football remained dire, particularly in Gaza, where she said every football structure was either unusable or destroyed.

“We lost so many hundreds of footballers; we lost most of them children,” she said. “So football now in Gaza, there is no football at all. It's very dangerous for our teams to compete,” she said, adding that professional leagues were suspended and that the PFA was trying to keep football alive through grassroots and youth competitions.

New Zealand's Patel, Sharp named in T20 World Cup squad

WELLINGTON (Reuters) - Off-spinning all-rounder Nensi Patel and batter Izzy Sharp are set to make their Women's Twenty20 World Cup debuts after being named in the New Zealand squad for the tournament in England in June, the country's cricket board announced on Wednesday.

Sophie Devine, Lea Tahuhu and Suzie Bates were also named in the defending champions' squad with the trio set to call time on their international careers after the tournament.

The 15-woman squad, led by Amelia Kerr, will defend the title they won in 2024.

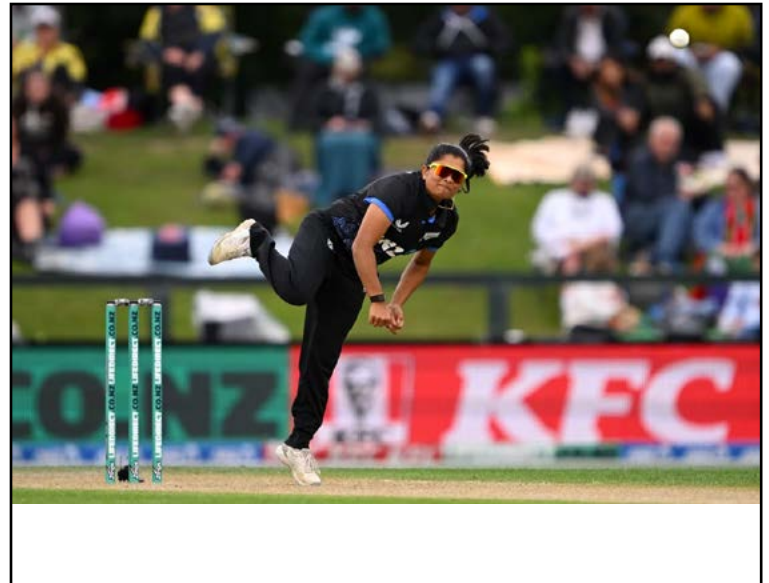
Before the tournament begins in England in June,

the team will play a three-match T20I series against the hosts in late May as part of their World Cup build-up.

"It's going to be an extra special time for Izzy and Nensi with it being their first World Cup," head coach Ben Sawyer said.

"To have our three most senior players all finishing their careers at the same tournament is a rare and special occasion. There'll be a time at the end of the tournament to further acknowledge and celebrate the trio."

New Zealand have been drawn in Group B alongside England, Ireland, Scotland, Sri Lanka and the West Indies, and will open their campaign



New Zealand all-rounder Nensi Patel

against the West Indies in the 12-team tournament on June 13. The tournament runs from June 12 to July 5.

Squad: Amelie Kerr (C), Suzie Bates, Sophie Devine, Flora Devon-

shire, Izzy Gaze, Maddy Green, Brooke Halliday, Bree Illing, Polly Inglis, Jess Kerr, Rosemary Mair, Nensi Patel, Georgia Plimmer, Izzy Sharp, and Lea Tahuhu.

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The Second Division playoffs will commence with the opening games in two of the best-of-three first-round series on Tuesday.

The fourth-seeded Michael Joseph Phoenix will face the fifth-seeded Fearless Crew at 6:45 pm, and top-seed Cedar Grove Gunners will take on eighth-seed Navigators 2 in the second game of a doubleheader at 8:30 pm.

Pares Secondary among winners in Under-15 schools' cricket contest

Pares Secondary School (PSS) was among the winners in the latest round of matches in the Ministry of Sports Inter-School Under-15 Competition.

Pares Secondary School snatched an eight-run victory over All Saints Secondary School at the Factory Grounds

in a keenly contested low-scoring affair.

Pares Secondary School made 62 for nine off 17 overs after losing the toss and being sent in to bat. Their total benefited from a contribution of 19 extras. Martin snapped up four wickets, and Nasri Brooks claimed two wickets.

In reply, All Saints Secondary tumbled to 55 all out. Brooks top-scored with 24. Freeland captured three wickets, while Jarvis, Tonge, and John each picked up two wickets for Pares Secondary School.

There was success as well for Sir Novelle Richards Academy, which recorded a nine-wicket victory against Jennings Secondary at Antigua Grammar School's playing field.

The Sir Novelle Richards Academy

made 95 for eight off 20 overs after winning the toss and electing to bat. Sherwin Martin hit 22 off 20 balls, Clayton Joseph struck 15 off 20 balls, and Rohan John scored 12 off 16 balls.

Estan Hill snapped up three wickets for five runs, Tyler Martin claimed three for 27, and Orane Morrison captured one for 12.

In reply, Jennings Secondary School was dismissed for 86 in 19.1 overs. Captain Jariek Francis hit 45 off 52 balls. Kevon Charles bagged two for 14, Sherwin Martin took two for 19, and Ayden Bazil had two for 23.

The Ottos Comprehensive School was awarded victory via default against Irene B. Williams Secondary, who was unable to field a team for their encounter at Swetes Village.

Gunners win ABBA's Division 2 League title



The Cedar Grove Gunners captured the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's Second Division League title at the JSC Sports Complex on Tuesday, April 28, 2026. (Photo courtesy the ABBA)

The Cedar Grove Gunners have captured the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League title.

The Gunners clinched the title by securing an 87-76 victory over the Old Road Daggers in the final round-robin league encounter at the JSC Sports Complex on Tuesday evening.

Tyras Grayman produced 20 points, 15 rebounds, and six steals, and Keady Martin sank 19 points and snatched six rebounds as the main performers for the Gunners.

In support, Olivee Morris converted 13 points and provided six assists; Kim Casey scored 10 points; and Iornie Joseph sank nine points and grabbed 14 rebounds for the Gunners.

Point guard Devea Aaron converted 17 points; Rafiki Harris provided 16 points, five rebounds, five assists, and five steals; Kedar Clarke produced 14 points, seven rebounds, and five assists; and Ryan Sheppard scored 10 points and claimed six rebounds for the Gunners.

The result allows the Cedar Grove Gunners to finish at the top of the standings in the nine-team round-robin league with a record of 15 wins and one defeat from their quota of 16 matches.

In achieving the feat, the Gunners have dethroned last year's winners, the Cuties Ovals Ojays 2, who secured the runners-up spot with a record of 14 wins and two losses from their quota of games.

By virtue of clinching the top two spots in the Second Division league, both the Gunners and Ovals Ojays 2 have earned automatic promotion to compete in ABBA's First Division next season.

The Old Road Daggers finished in third place with a record of 12 wins and four losses from their quota of matches.

Meanwhile, Ramco Pharmacy Fearless Crew finished in fifth place with a record of nine wins and seven losses by pulling off a 63-56 victory over the EZ Fit Flyers in their final outing in the opening game of Tuesday's double-header.

Emeka Emujuru-Oupe sank 25 points and snatched nine rebounds; Jesus Lopez produced 12 points, seven rebounds, seven steals, and six assists; and Romel Diggs scored eight points and grabbed 11 rebounds for the Fearless Crew.

Elijah Charles sank 12 points; David Mensah produced 10 points, seven rebounds, and five steals; Gabriel De-Suza converted 10 points and claimed six steals for EZ Fit Flyers 2.

The EZ Fit Flyers finished third from the bottom of the standings with a record of three wins and 13 losses from their quota of 16 games.

Square One Construction Cristos United was the only team that has been eliminated from contesting the Second Division playoff competition, which will commence at the JSC Sports Complex on Tuesday, May 5.

Cristos United finished winless and at the bottom of the Second Division league, losing all 16 games.

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