

CHOGM 2026 Task Force Names Social Media Correspondents

Story on page 2



- ▶ **Janet Simon**
- ▶ **Gabrielle Hamlet**
- ▶ **Joshua Edwards**
- ▶ **Lutrell John**

Left - Right



CHOGM 2026 Task Force Names Social Media Correspondents



CHOGM
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA 2026

MEET THE CHOGM 2026 CORRESPONDENTS

JANET SIMON

Janet Simon is a CARICOM Youth Ambassador, Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassador and trained Educator in Antigua and Barbuda. Her platform reflects Sustainable Development Goals encompassing Health, Education, Sanitation, Climate Action and Peace. She is committed to expanding opportunities for youth success in these areas.

Janet believes in service to others and the development of self. Her national 'School Tour,' delivers life skills education to thousands of students on island. She also launched a PeaceThrough Art series and conducts capacity-building trainings for youth organizations. A recent member of Healthy Caribbean Youth she advocates for comprehensive school nutrition and youth mental health policies for Caribbean Youth.

Her advocacy extends to the World Bank and the United Nations, where she highlights priorities of Caribbean youth globally.



CHOGM
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA 2026

MEET THE CHOGM 2026 CORRESPONDENTS

GABRIELLE HAMLET

Gabrielle Nia Hamlet is a marketing student and emerging communications voice with a passion for storytelling and youth engagement. She is particularly interested in using media and digital platforms to highlight opportunities, issues, and achievements across the Caribbean. Gabrielle gained national recognition during the 2024 Mr. and Miss Teenage Pageant, where she further developed her public speaking, advocacy, and representation skills. She is passionate about representing Antigua and Barbuda on local, regional, and international platforms while contributing to conversations that shape the region's future. As a CHOGM Correspondent, she hopes to amplify youth perspectives and share impactful stories from across the Commonwealth.

The CHOGM 2026 Task Force has announced the official selection of four dynamic young content creators who will serve as Social Media Correspondents for the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2026.

The selected correspondents are Janet Simon, Gabrielle Hamlet, Lutrell John, and Joshua Edwards.

These individuals were selected for their exceptional communication skills, strong on-camera presence,

ability to create engaging, informative and professional digital content. As Social Media Correspondents they will play a pivotal role in amplifying the voice and visibility of CHOGM 2026 by delivering timely updates, behind-the-scenes coverage and community-focused storytelling across official digital platforms.

The CHOGM 2026 Social Media Correspondents initiative seeks to engage audiences particularly youth through creative and relatable con-

tent, while maintaining the highest standards of accuracy, ethics and professionalism. The correspondents will report on key developments, highlight important themes and bring a fresh, authentic perspective to the CHOGM experience.

To qualify for this role, applicants were required to demonstrate a strong command of the English language, both written and oral, as well as a clear understanding of news-style storytelling. Candidates also needed to show



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MEET THE CHOGM 2026 CORRESPONDENTS

JOSHUA EDWARDS

Joshua Edwards is an emerging communicator from Antigua and Barbuda with a strong interest in international affairs, culture, and youth engagement. Currently studying at The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, he is passionate about understanding people, societies, and the forces that shape global conversations.

Edwards has experience in digital communication, content creation, and youth advocacy, using storytelling and media to connect communities and amplify meaningful perspectives. His work often explores the intersection of culture, identity, and social development, reflecting his commitment to thoughtful dialogue and global collaboration. Edwards hopes to contribute to international platforms that encourage understanding, cooperation, and the exchange of ideas across borders.




MEET THE CHOGM 2026 CORRESPONDENTS

LUTRELL JOHN

Lutrell John is a young Antiguan leader, student, and youth advocate from St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda. He is a graduate of Sir Novelle Richards Academy, where he served as Head Boy, and is currently pursuing a degree in Tourism Management at The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus. Lutrell gained national recognition as Mr. Teenage 2023, using his platform to promote youth empowerment, leadership, and community development. As a Youth Ambassador and honor roll student, he is passionate about creating opportunities for young people through initiatives such as leadership programs, skills workshops, and community engagement projects.

proficiency in content creation, including access to tools such as HD video recording devices, editing capabilities and an appreciation for production elements such as lighting, sound and framing.

Additionally, applicants were expected to be active members or alumni of youth-focused organizations and leadership platforms, including the Antigua and Barbuda National Youth Ambassador Programme, CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme, National Youth Parliament, or to have served in leadership roles such as Head Boy,

Head Girl or Prefect within secondary schools across Antigua and Barbuda.

The selected correspondents have also demonstrated a keen interest in areas such as climate change, gender, civil society, social issues, sports and youth development key thematic pillars that align with the broader CHOGM agenda.

A panel comprising members from the Commonwealth Secretariat and the CHOGM 2026 Task Force facilitated the adjudication process. Com-

mittee Co-Lead Sharifa George stated "We are proud to have put forward these young individuals to the panel for selection. They demonstrated intelligence, professionalism, and a passion for their areas of interest, and impressed the panel with their individual talents."

The CHOGM 2026 Task Force congratulates Janet Simon, Gabrielle Hamlet, Lutrell John, and Joshua Edwards on their selection and looks forward to their contributions in shaping a vibrant and engaging digital narrative for this landmark event.



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High Commissioner Renews Call for United Front in Making CHOGM a Success

Antiguans and Barbudans are being reminded of the collective effort that is required to ensure the success of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting scheduled for 1st-4th November, 2026 in Saint John's.

High Commissioner Karen-Mae Hill has described the upcoming summit as a "whole of government" and "whole of country" effort, while highlighting the critical role volunteers, citizens and residents will play in shaping the experience of thousands of visitors that are expected to arrive in Antigua and Barbuda.

The senior diplomat praised the professionalism and warmth shown by local volunteers during the SIDS 4 Conference hosted in Antigua and Barbuda, recalling her own experience interacting with volunteers at the American University of Antigua (AUA).

"They were so well scripted. They were so pleasant," she said. "That was an experience I heard a lot of people respond to and see."

She revealed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is continuing with its volunteer recruitment campaign ahead of CHOGM, with officials seeking approximately 400 volunteers. According to Hill, about half that target has already been reached.

Additionally, the ministry is recruiting Delegation Liaison Officers (DLOs) — individuals who will be assigned to assist visiting delegations throughout the summit. The government is aiming for 200 DLOs and has already begun training the first 120 recruits.

High Commissioner Hill is encouraging citizens interested in volunteering to seize the opportunity, describing it as a chance to gain valuable experience while interacting with high-level international visitors.

"You get a wonderful experience, a chance to work and interact directly with all the thousands of guests who will be on island," she said.

She underscored the enormous tourism and promotional value CHOGM is expected to bring to Antigua and Barbuda, likening the event to a global advertis-



High Commissioner Karen-Mae Hill

ing campaign that the country could not otherwise afford.

"This is advertising dollars that I think our tourism team... will be salivating

over," she stated. "We couldn't afford this kind of dollar value in terms of what is coming to our shores."

The Antiguan and Barbudan diplomat stressed the importance of making a strong first impression, noting that advanced teams from approximately 25 countries have already visited Antigua and Barbuda to assess preparations and report back to their respective governments.

Reflecting on accompanying visiting delegations around the island, Hill said the experience gave her a renewed appreciation for Antigua and Barbuda.

She is encouraging citizens from every sector of society — including taxi drivers, fisherfolk, farmers, and hospitality workers — to recognise the role they will play in the country's presentation to the world.


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New Health Minister Conducts Introductory Visit to Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre

Newly appointed Minister within the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Environment, and Civil Service Affairs, Michael Joseph, officially commenced his ministerial duties Thursday following his appointment on May 5, 2026, and attendance at his first Cabinet Meeting on May 6, 2026.

The Minister's day started with a strategic meeting alongside Permanent Secretary, Stacey Gregg-Paige, during which priority matters relating to the nation's healthcare system and public health services were discussed.

As part of his first official engagement, Minister Joseph visited the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre where he met with Medical Director, Dr. Shivon Belle-Jarvis, and members of the hospital's leadership team.

Discussions focused on the current needs of the institution, ongoing operational challenges, infrastructure development, administrative support systems, staffing needs, and strategies aimed at strengthening healthcare delivery across the facility.

The Minister also toured key areas of the hospital, with particular focus placed on the Emergency Room Department, including the triage area. During the tour, he received updates on patient flow processes, emergency response procedures, and the systems currently in place to support patient



care.

Minister Joseph also observed the software platform utilized by the institution to manage patient intake and monitoring. The system assists healthcare professionals in documenting patient arrivals, assessing medical needs, tracking treatment progress, facilitating ward placement, and coordinating discharge procedures.

Throughout the visit, the Minister engaged with healthcare workers and administrative personnel, commending

staff for their continued dedication and service to the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

Minister Joseph emphasized the importance of collaboration, innovation, and efficient healthcare systems in ensuring quality patient care and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to supporting the continued advancement of the nation's primary healthcare institution.



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The ministry of health is stepping up the campaign to get the nation's women take advantage of the free HPV screenings that are ongoing. In an effort to ensure maximum coverage, the ministry will conduct these screenings on select weekends during the month of May. The ministry said these screenings form part of the its ongoing commitment to promoting early detection, prevention, and overall wellness. Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus that can lead to serious

health complications if left undetected, making regular screening an important step in safeguarding one's health. Members of the public are encouraged to review the accompanying flyers for specific dates, locations, and eligibility details, and to take full advantage of this free service. Prioritizing screening today can make a significant difference in long-term health outcomes. The HPV screening is a critical tool in the ministry's campaign to reduce the incidence of cervical cancer in Antigua and Barbuda.



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BARBUDA Caribana 2026



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- 8:30PM | CALYPSO / SOCA MONARCH

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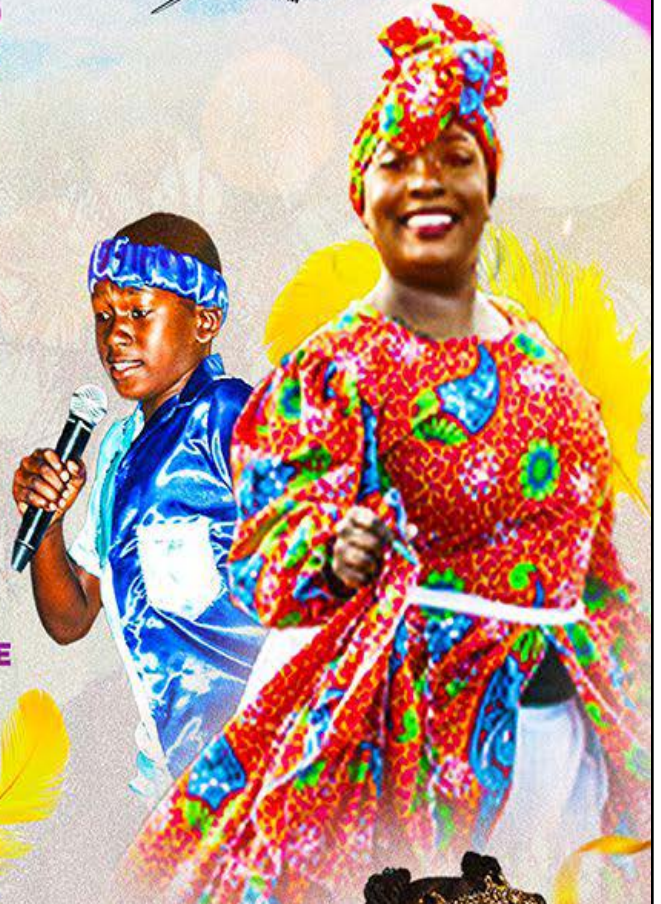
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MONDAY 25TH

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EVENT SCHEDULE



Former UPP MP Delivers Blunt Post-Election Assessment

Former United Progressive Party (UPP) candidate for St. Mary's South, Kelvin 'Shugy' Simon, says low voter turnout and a lack of confidence in the opposition party's leadership were major factors behind the UPP's defeat in last week's General Election.

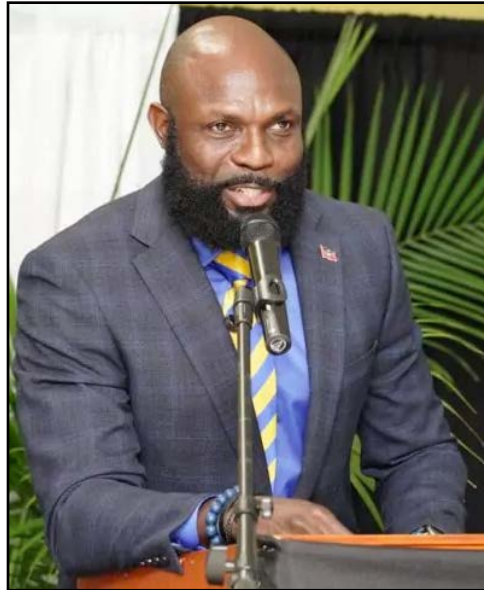
Speaking on a local radio programme on Wednesday evening, Simon, who lost the St. Mary's South seat to Dwayne George of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP), offered a candid assessment of the election results and called for "serious self-introspection" within the UPP.

"I lost this election because a lot of my people did not vote," Simon said, while arguing that elections are heavily influenced by momentum, public perception, and the prevailing political climate.

He contended that the contest was ultimately decided by the strength of each party's core support base, noting that many independent voters stayed away from the polls. According to Simon, the ABLP enjoys a larger base than the UPP, making independent voters crucial to the opposition's electoral success.

"The United Progressive Party depends on the independent voters to push them over the hill," he said. "We did not get the support of a lot of independent voters. Now, the question is going to be why?"

Simon pointed to the relatively low national voter turnout of approximately 62 percent, describing it as a significant issue that the party must examine. He suggested that a large portion of the 38 percent who did not vote were either independent voters or UPP supporters.



Kelvin 'Shugy' Simon

"To get to the bottom of it, we have to investigate those figures," he stated, adding that politics requires a factual and data-driven approach rather than excuses.

The former MP also revealed that concerns about the UPP's readiness for government and confidence in the party's leadership were repeatedly raised during the campaign.

"Well, I heard on the campaign trail a lot... they just didn't think that the United Progressive Party was ready," Simon noted. "They didn't believe in the leader of the party. And they decided that they were not going to come and vote."

He said the decline in support was evident across several constituencies, including that of Political Leader Jamale Pringle, who Simon recalled received significantly fewer votes than in the previous election.

The former Saint Mary's South MP used a striking analogy he claimed was commonly expressed by voters when comparing Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Jamale Pringle.

"You have a driver that's reckless and you have a driver that can't drive," Simon said, explaining that many voters viewed Browne as the "reckless driver" but still believed he would get them "home." In contrast, he said some voters viewed Pringle as incapable of leading effectively.

"This is what the electorate was faced with. And they made a choice," Simon added.

The former candidate also stressed the importance of polling and data analysis in modern political campaigns, revealing that internal polling had shown him trailing in St. Mary's South weeks before election day. He said the information highlighted weaknesses in key communities, including Bolans, allowing his team to narrow the gap before the final result.

"But this is the importance of numbers, of data," he said. "Anything outside of assessing and getting scientific data is fortune-telling."

Simon argued that warnings about the electorate's dissatisfaction with the party were ignored, contributing to what he described as the UPP being "steamrolled" at the polls.

Despite his defeat, Simon insisted he would remain active in advocating for residents of St. Mary's South.

"It's natural for me to advocate for my people," he said. "I will continue to fight for what's best for everybody."

He also expressed hope that the constituency would benefit from positive development under its new parliamentary representation, stressing that he wished no ill will toward anyone.

Family Appeals For Helping In Locating Missing Man

The family of a 64-year man who reportedly went missing some three weeks ago, is appealing for the public's health in locating him.

Reports are that former jockey – George Quallis, aka, Dumbai, was last seen in the vicinity of the abattoir near the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium. He is described as 5ft 4 inches, with a low-haircut with his hair slightly grey.

A relative of Quallis reported that he visited his family home on Sunday April 19 and was seen later that day near the abattoir.

According to the relative confusion over his whereabouts is what caused the delay in reporting the matter to the police.

A formal report has since been made to the police.



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Physical Description:

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Hair Color: low cut slightly grey

Complexion: Black

Additional Information:



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Prime Minister

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May 4, 2026



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (right) congratulates Prime Minister Rt. Hon Gaston Browne on his overwhelming election victory

Excellency,

On behalf of the Government and the people of India, I extend my warmest congratulations to you on the resounding victory of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP) in the General Elections under your leadership.

I also congratulate you on securing a fourth consecutive term in office. This decisive mandate is a clear reflection of the trust and confidence that the people of Antigua and Barbuda vest in your leadership and in your vision for the nation's continued growth and development.

I fondly recall our meeting in November 2024 on the sidelines of the 2nd India-CARICOM Summit in Guyana. I look forward to working closely with you to further strengthen our bilateral cooperation, particularly in areas such as trade and investment, capacity building, climate resilience, and people-to-people ties.

I appreciate your decision to host the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in November 2026 and wish to convey India's readiness to support Antigua and Barbuda in ensuring the successful organization of this important event.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration, along with my best wishes for your continued success and good health, and for the prosperity of the people of Antigua and Barbuda.



(Narendra Modi)

His Excellency Gaston Browne
Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda
St. John's

Commentary

The Caribbean's Limits in Absorbing Other States' Deportees



By Sir Ronald Sanders

Migration policy is a matter of sovereign control. Governments assert, rightly, their authority to regulate borders, determine who may enter, and enforce their laws. The United States has that right, as does every sovereign state. All Caribbean governments also

regulate entry to their countries. While they welcome visitors, they impose visa requirements on some nationalities and limit how long visitors may remain. That is normal state practice.

The difficulty begins when the assertion of sovereignty by one state imposes disproportionate obligations on others. That is the question now confronting the Caribbean and other resource-constrained developing states. They are being asked by the United States to receive persons who are not their nationals and whom the United States wishes to deport.

Such arrangements have been publicly acknowledged. Panama said in February 2025 that it had received 119 migrants of multiple nationalities from the United States as part of an agreement, with 360 expected on three flights. Costa Rica received its first such group in April 2026 under an agreement that allows up to 25 people per week. Paraguay announced in April that it would receive an initial group of 25 under a migration cooperation agreement. El Salvador has publicly agreed to receive certain de-

portees from the United States for a fee and to detain them in a specially designated prison facility. These arrangements differ in form, but together they show that the policy is already being put into operation.

Public reporting and independent policy trackers indicate that several Caribbean governments have been approached to accept persons whom the United States wishes to deport. At least three Caribbean states have already agreed in some form, often without the full terms being made public. The Migration Policy Institute has noted that many of these agreements have not been published and that, in numerous cases, it is still unclear what exact obligations receiving states are assuming.

A draft of an agreement to operate this arrangement is now circulating in the region. It illustrates the concern. It contemplates the transfer of a specified number of persons each month, gives only 72 hours' notice of such transfers, and says that background and criminal information will be supplied only "if available" or "to the extent known" to



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the United States. It also states that the operating procedures do not commit U.S. financial resources. The receiving country is expected to regularise, in some form, the status of these deportees from the United States.

If any sending state retains broad discretion over who is sent, how much information is shared, and provides no binding commitment to meet the costs of settlement, while the receiving state must absorb the consequences on arrival, then a small country is no longer simply cooperating. It is being asked to shoulder substantial elements of another state's migration policy with its own institutions, social services, public order systems, and political capital. For large countries, these may seem manageable matters of administration. For small island and coastal states, they are not. They can generate unemployment pressures, social strain, severe stress on public services, tensions between nationals and new arrivals, and, over time, changes in the demographic character of the country.

There is a further humanitarian dimension. Migrants sent to third countries have no family ties there, may not speak the language, and may arrive with uncertain legal status and no clear path forward. Reuters reported in March that the U.S. third-country policy permits removals where officials say they have diplomatic assurances or where migrants have received as little as six hours' notice. Litigation continues in the United States over whether that satisfies due process. Even if the courts eventually uphold parts of the policy, the humanitarian cost will still fall somewhere. Increasingly, that "somewhere" will be the countries that accept the deportees.

Resolving this issue should not be a matter of conflict with authorities in the U.S. Instead, it requires genuine understanding of the enormity of the problem that can be created for under-resourced countries. The United States is entitled to decide who may enter and remain in its territory. It is not unreasonable for Caribbean states to insist, with equal clarity, that they too are entitled to decide whether they can responsibly accept non-nationals

from elsewhere, if at all, on what legal basis, for how long, at whose cost, and with what safeguards. That is not hostility. It is prudence. It is also respect for law. It reflects basic, long-standing principles of how states deal with each other. The Caribbean remains ready to work with the United States on migration challenges, but cooperation must be designed in a way that both sides can sustain.

If the United States wishes Caribbean cooperation in this arrangement, it is only fair that the terms be agreed, the legal status of any person received be clear, the costs be fully covered, and vetting be thorough. The right of the receiving state to refuse, suspend, or terminate should be explicit and unconditional. Above all, this burden cannot simply be pushed onto states that lack the capacity to carry it safely or humanely, particularly as they are already burdened with maintaining their own people in difficult and wors-

ening economic circumstances.

The Caribbean has always shown goodwill. However, the region's absorption capacity is limited. So, too, is its resilience, which is already under severe stress from external shocks arising from extreme weather events, wars in the Middle East and Europe, rising prices, and limited access to financial markets.

The Caribbean already accepts the return of its own nationals from the United States. That is one thing. The organised reception of deportees who are not its nationals is quite another, and it cannot become a standing expectation unless arrangements are devised that do not impose unbearable weight on small countries that are already overburdened.

(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the U.S. and the OAS. He is also Chancellor of the University of Guyana. The views expressed are entirely his own).

NOTICE



Antigua and Barbuda Diabetes Association

P.O. Box 3322, email: diabetesassociation268@gmail.com.

Tel: 268-764-5096

St. John's, Antigua

Notice is hereby given of the **Annual General Meeting** of the Antigua and Barbuda Diabetes Association to be held on **Wednesday, May 13th, 2026, 5:00 pm** at the **Auditorium of Sir Lester Bird Medical Center**.


AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Prayers
3. Welcome remarks
4. Apologies for absence
5. Adoption of Agenda
6. Minutes of AGM 2025
Correction
Adoption
Matters Arising
7. Reports
Treasurer's Report
• Audited Financial Statements
President's Report
8. Questions and answers
9. Any Other Business
10. Adjournment

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CARPHA says Hantavirus threat to Caribbean remains low amid cruise ship cases



The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) has advised its Member States and the wider public that the likelihood of hantavirus infection in the Caribbean remains low despite a recent cluster of cases linked to a cruise ship in the Central Atlantic Ocean.

As per a CARPHA media release, on May 2, 2026, the World Health Organization (WHO) received notification from the United Kingdom's International Health Regulations (2005) Focal Point regarding an outbreak of respiratory illness affecting both passengers and crew aboard a cruise vessel operating in the Central Atlantic. Laboratory testing confirmed hantavirus infection in one critically ill patient.

CARPHA said it became aware of the situation on May 3 through its Information Environment and Monitoring platform. By May 6, WHO had reported a total of eight cases connected to the incident, including three confirmed infections, five suspected cases, and three deaths.

Hantaviruses are carried by rodents and can spread to humans through contact with contaminated urine, saliva, or

droppings from infected animals.

CARPHA Executive Director Lisa Indar sought to reassure the region, stating, "At this time, the risk to the Caribbean region is considered low. In the Americas, hantaviruses are most commonly transmitted by wild field rodents rather than urban rat populations, where transmission is less likely".

It is reported that Dr. Indar further noted that while person-to-person spread of hantavirus can occur, such transmission is uncommon.

Given the Caribbean's status as the world's leading cruise tourism destination — accounting for roughly 44 percent of global cruise traffic and welcoming an estimated 16.3 million cruise passengers in 2025 — CARPHA is urging countries across the region to stay alert. The agency recommended that Member States assess and reinforce surveillance measures and public health systems at ports and other points of entry.

CARPHA also reaffirmed its commitment to supporting safe tourism operations through strengthened monitoring

systems across the region.

Dr. Indar explained that this effort includes, "CARPHA's Tourism and Health Information System (THiS) and the Caribbean Vessel Surveillance System (CVSS), which provide early warnings of public health threats associated with tourism accommodations and maritime travel".

She added, "These systems enable timely information sharing, strengthen decision-making, and support rapid, targeted responses by national health authorities".

According to CARPHA, the upgraded CVSS has already demonstrated strong results by identifying syndromic cases — suspected illnesses detected through symptoms — before ships reach Caribbean ports. More than 96 percent of cruise ship alerts have reportedly been communicated to Member States within 24 hours.

The regional health agency said it will continue monitoring developments closely alongside international and regional partners and will issue further updates if necessary. (Dominica News Online)

Another early morning fire affects several buildings in Roseau



An early morning fire has destroyed eight to nine buildings on Great Marlborough Street and Upper Lane in Roseau on Wednesday, May 6.

According to reports from Deputy Fire Chief Matthew Prosper, the office of attorney Joshua Francis, the French Connection Building, the Family Restaurant, and other buildings were affected.

He described the situation as a major loss for the community.

Meanwhile, in a statement via social media, Attorney Francis said, “This morning I was alarmed that HAJ LAW offices, my offices—two floors—were compromised by fire. The damage will be assessed later.”

Investigations into the fire are ongoing.

This follows a widely reported major fire on Monday, March 2, 2026, on King George IV Street in Roseau, which damaged several businesses and forced the closure of one of the country’s leading pharmacies.

Deputy Fire Chief Matthew Prosper confirmed that the blaze affected Jolly’s Pharmacy, its adjoining gym (Fitness University), a Chinese

store, and a bar. He praised the swift response of fire officers, noting that their efforts prevented the fire from spreading further.

“The fire officers did a very, very good job in confining the fire,” Prosper

told DBS Radio about the handling of the first incident.

At that time, he estimated that the financial toll on the city would be significant. (Dominica News Online)

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SVG govt committed to exploring geothermal energy

A high-level Eastern Caribbean delegation, including Minister of Health, Wellness, Environmental Health and Energy Hon. Daniel Cummings and Energy Unit Director Lance Peters, participated in an EU–Caribbean geothermal energy study visits in Portugal and Spain from April 14–22, 2026.

The mission, supported by the European Union under its Global Gateway programme and implemented by FIAP, brought together OECS member states and regional energy institutions to advance geothermal development,

energy security and climate resilience across the Caribbean.


Delegates engaged in technical exchanges and site visits in the Azores and Gran Canaria, examining successful geothermal operations and frameworks for financing, regulation and grid integration in small island systems. The programme included high-level meetings with Portuguese energy authorities and participation in the Global Sustainable Islands Summit and Geothermal Forum.

Key takeaways highlighted geother-

mal energy as a viable, reliable solution for reducing electricity costs and strengthening resilience, with early investment, risk mitigation and strong regulatory frameworks identified as critical to success.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines remains committed to advancing renewable energy development and exploring geothermal opportunities as part of its broader strategy to achieve energy security, affordability, and environmental sustainability. (St Vincent Times)







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Hantavirus outbreak on cruise ship not start of pandemic, UN health agency says



An outbreak of hantavirus on board a cruise ship is not the start of a pandemic, the UN health agency has said.

Maria van Kerkhove, an infectious disease epidemiologist at the World Health Organization (WHO), told a news briefing that it was not the same situation as six years ago with Covid-19, because hantavirus spreads through “close, intimate contact”.

Health authorities are racing to trace dozens of people who have recently disembarked from the Dutch vessel MV Hondius.

On Thursday, the WHO said that overall, five of eight suspected cases of hantavirus had been confirmed. Three people have died, including a 69-year-old Dutch woman, who had the virus.

Her Dutch husband and a German woman also died, and their cases are being investigated.

Hantavirus typically spreads from rodents - but in the latest outbreak the transmission between people was documented for the first time, the WHO said.

The luxury cruise, operated by Oceanwide Expeditions, began its journey on 1 April in Ushuaia, Argentina, and is due to arrive soon in Spain’s Canary Islands.

About 150 passengers and crew from 28 countries are reported to have initially been aboard the vessel, but dozens disembarked on the island of St Helena on 24 April.

At Thursday’s news briefing, WHO’s Maria van Kerkhove said “this is not Covid, this is not influenza, it spreads very, very differently”.

She said authorities had asked “everyone to wear a mask” on board the MV Hondius.

Those in contact with or caring for

suspected cases, she added, should “wear a higher level of personal protective equipment”.

At the same briefing, WHO Director General Tedros Ghebreyesus said his organisation “assesses the public health risk as low”.

He said the first two people with the confirmed virus had “travelled through Argentina, Chile and Uruguay on a bird-watching trip which included visits to sites where the species of rat known to carry the virus was present”.

Dr Tedros said the WHO was aware of reports of other people with symptoms who may have had contact with passengers, adding that officials were in touch with the relevant authorities.

Given the incubation period of this disease - which can be up to six weeks - it was possible more cases may be reported, he said.

International

AROUND THE WORLD



Earlier on Thursday, Oceanwide Expedition said 29 passengers, of at least 12 different nationalities, had left the MV Hondius in St Helena, the British Overseas Territory. The Dutch government put a number of those who had disembarked the ship at 40, including a Swiss national who has now a confirmed virus case.

Seven were British nationals.

“Two of these individuals are now self-isolating in the UK while the others have not yet returned,” an update from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said. Four remained in St Helena - and “tracing efforts are ongoing for the seventh individual, who we know has not yet returned to the UK”, the statement said.

On Thursday, Spain said discussions with the UK were “very advanced” for London to send a repatriation flight for British nationals to Tenerife after the vessel’s arrival to the Canary Islands.

Virginia Barcones, head of Spain’s civil protection and emergencies, said there were 19 passengers and four crew members currently on board the ship.

She said there were also four Americans on the MV Hondius, adding that “the United States has shown its willingness to send a plane that will collect its citizens directly”.

Oceanwide Expeditions said the first confirmed case of hantavirus was not reported until 4 May and that all guests who disembarked the ship had been contacted.

The operator said it remained in “close and continual discussion with relevant authorities regarding our exact point of arrival, quarantine and screening procedures for all guests”.

The Dutch government said the ship stopped in St Helena on its way to Cape Verde, an archipelago nation off the West African coast.

It said the Dutch woman who left the cruise on 24 April travelled to South Africa, where she died two days later.

Her husband died on board the ship

on 11 April, but is not a confirmed case of hantavirus.

The update said the woman had boarded a KLM flight heading from Johannesburg to the Netherlands, but became ill before its departure.

Authorities in the Netherlands are sending letters to passengers who were on the flight, asking them to remain “available for monitoring”.

The third fatality - a German woman - died on board the MV Hondius on 2 May, and is not a confirmed case either. Her body remains on the ship.

Three other people - British, Dutch and German nationals - were evacuated from the vessel on Wednesday.

Singapore’s Communicable Diseases Agency said it was isolating and testing two men - a 67-year-old Singa-

porean and a 65-year-old permanent resident - who disembarked the ship in St Helena.

It added that they had taken the same flight from St Helena to Johannesburg in South Africa as the 69-year-old woman who died. Their hantavirus test results are still pending.

Two US states - Georgia and Arizona - confirmed to the BBC that they were monitoring three passengers who returned to the US after disembarking. None were displaying symptoms. The US Department of State said it was in “direct contact” with affected passengers.

Argentina’s health ministry has said officials will test rodents in Ushuaia. (BBC)



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Dozens of passengers left hantavirus-stricken cruise ship after first fatality

More than two dozen passengers from at least 12 different countries left a cruise ship hit by a deadly hantavirus outbreak without contact tracing nearly two weeks after the first passenger died on board, the ship operator and Dutch officials said Thursday.

Health authorities on at least four continents are now tracking down and in some cases monitoring the cruise passengers who returned home on April 24, and trying to trace others who may have come into contact with them.

Experts say the risk to the wider public is considered low because hantavirus — usually spread by the inhalation of contaminated rodent droppings — isn't easily transmitted between people.

The Dutch health ministry said Thursday that a flight attendant on a plane briefly boarded by an infected cruise passenger in South Africa was showing symptoms of hantavirus and would be tested in an isolation ward at a hospital in Amsterdam. The cruise passenger, also a Dutch woman, was too ill to fly and was taken off the plane in Johannesburg, where she died.

If the woman tests positive, she could be the first known person not on the MV *Hondius* to become infected in the outbreak.

Three cruise ship passengers have died in the outbreak, and several others are sick.

Symptoms usually show between one and eight weeks after exposure.

Three people, including the ship's doctor, were evacuated Wednesday while the ship was near the West African island country of Cape Verde and taken to specialised hospitals in Europe for treatment.

The body of the Dutch man who was the first to die on board on April 11 was taken off the ship on the remote South Atlantic island of St Helena on



April 24, when his wife also disembarked. She then flew to South Africa a day later and died there.

Oceanwide Expeditions, the Netherlands-based cruise ship company, said Thursday that 29 passengers left the vessel at St Helena, while the Dutch Foreign Ministry put the number at about 40. The company had not previously said that dozens more people left the ship on April 24.

It wasn't until May 2 that health authorities first confirmed hantavirus in a passenger on the ship, the World Health Organization has previously said. That was in a British man evacuated from the ship to South Africa from Ascension Island three days after the St Helena stop. He was tested in South Africa and is in intensive care there.

The people who left the ship at St Helena to return to their home countries were of at least 12 different nationalities, Oceanwide Expeditions said. It said there were also two people whose nationalities were unknown.

It emerged Wednesday that a man tested positive for hantavirus in Swit-

zerland after he also disembarked at St Helena and flew home, though his precise movements aren't clear.

On Thursday, Singaporean health authorities said they were monitoring two men who got off the ship at St Helena and flew to South Africa and then home. The two men, who arrived in Singapore at different times, were being tested for hantavirus and were isolated at the country's National Center for Infectious Diseases, officials said.

One had a runny nose and the other had no symptoms, Singapore's Communicable Diseases Agency said.

British health officials say two people who were passengers aboard the ship but flew home midway through the journey are self-isolating but do not have symptoms of illness. The UK Health Security Agency said "a small number" of contacts of the two are also self-isolating but are not showing any symptoms. Other contacts are being traced.

Authorities in St Helena, the remote, volcanic British territory in the South Atlantic where passengers got off, said

they were monitoring a small number of people who were considered “higher risk contacts.” Those higher risk contacts were being told to isolate for 45 days, the St Helena government said.

Meanwhile, the vessel is now sailing to Spain’s Canary Islands, a voyage that is expected to take three or four days, with more than 140 passengers and crew members still on board.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Thursday that he had “been in touch with the ship’s captain regularly, including this morning.”

“He told me morale has improved significantly since the ship started moving again,” Tedros said.

Authorities in South Africa are also

trying to trace contacts of any passengers who previously got off the ship. They have focused mainly on an April 25 flight from St Helena to Johannesburg, the day after passengers disembarked there.

The Dutch woman from the cruise ship who later died in South Africa briefly boarded that flight, officials have said. It’s not known how many other cruise passengers also were among the 88 people on it, but flights from St Helena go to South Africa and are rare, normally once a week.

The body of the third fatality, a German woman, is also still on board the ship after she died on May 2.

Tests have confirmed that at least five people who were on the ship were infected with a hantavirus found in South

America, called the Andes virus. It can cause a severe and often fatal lung disease called hantavirus pulmonary syndrome.

Argentina’s health ministry said there were 28 deaths from hantavirus last year, up from an average mortality rate of 15 in the five years before that. Nearly a third of cases last year were fatal, it said.

The Andes strain is the only hantavirus known to spread from human to human.

The ship departed from Argentina and investigations into the source of the outbreak are focusing on that country. The Dutch couple, the first passengers to fall sick, traveled there and elsewhere in South America before boarding the ship, according to WHO. (AP)

Man arrested on suspicion of weapon possession after report former Prince Andrew was threatened

A man has been arrested on suspicion of possessing an offensive weapon after reports that the former Prince Andrew was threatened by a masked man while walking dogs near his home.

Norfolk Constabulary said that the arrest came Wednesday evening after a man was reported “behaving in an intimidating manner” near the home of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor in eastern England.

“Officers attended, and the man was arrested on suspicion of a public order offense and possession of an offensive weapon,” the force said.

The suspect is being held for questioning at a nearby police station. The term offensive weapons covers knives, truncheons and other items used to cause injury. Police didn’t specify what type of weapon was involved.

The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported that a man wearing a ski mask ran toward the former royal while shouting abuse. It said the incident occurred near the Sandringham Estate while the former prince was out walking his dogs, and that Andrew and his protection officer got in their car and sped away. Mountbatten-Windsor, the younger



brother of King Charles III, moved to the king’s private Sandringham Estate, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) north of London, after he was evicted from his longtime home near Windsor Castle and stripped of his royal title following revelations about his friendship with Jeffrey Epstein.

Andrew now lives at Marsh Farm, a property on the Sandringham estate, after leaving Royal Lodge last year.

One of Epstein’s accusers. Virginia Roberts Giuffre, alleged that she was

forced to have sex with the then-prince three times starting when she was 17. He denied it, but eventually settled the case for an undisclosed sum and acknowledged Giuffre’s suffering as a victim of sex trafficking. Giuffre died by suicide in April 2025, aged 41.

In February, he became the first senior British royal in almost 400 years to be arrested when he was held for hours by British police on suspicion of misconduct in public office in a case related to his links to Epstein. No charges have been brought against Mountbatten-Windsor, who has previously denied wrongdoing connected to Epstein.

Police previously said they were “assessing” reports that Mountbatten-Windsor sent trade information to Epstein, a wealthy investor and convicted sex offender, in 2010, when the former prince was the United Kingdom’s special envoy for international trade.

Correspondence between the two men was released by the U.S. Justice Department along with millions of pages of documents from the American investigation into Epstein. (AP)

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Sports News



Ottos make winning start in ABBA's Division 1 Playoffs



Players of the Daryll Matthew Ottos huddle during a Division 1 game at the JSC Sports Complex. (Photo courtesy of the ABBA)

Fourth-seed Daryll Matthew Ottos got off to a winning start in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) First Division Playoffs on Wednesday evening.

Ottos took a one-nil lead over the fifth-seeded Cuties Ovals Ojays in their best-of-three first-round series by securing a commanding 108-81 victory in their opening game at the JSC Sports Complex.

Nick Strawter produced 26 points, seven rebounds, and five assists; Christian Walker provided 21 points, 13 rebounds, and eight assists; and Warren Bogle contributed 17 points, five rebounds, and five steals as the main performers for Ottos.

In support, Pindo Drammeh sank 16 points and snatched nine rebounds; Ziven Clarke came off the bench to contribute 12 points, six assists, and five rebounds; and Danny Perez also scored 12 points for Ottos.

Jabiri Smith sank 20 points and claimed five rebounds; Jalen Owens scored 14

points and snatched five rebounds; and Rolontae Knowles converted 13 points as the main performers for the Ovals Ojays.

In support, Jeremiah Maldonado produced 10 points, six rebounds, and five steals; Kareem Edwards scored nine points and claimed eight rebounds; and Sam Taylor chipped in with nine points, seven rebounds, and five assists for the Ovals Ojays.

Both teams will clash again in Game Two on Sunday at 8:30 pm.

Meanwhile, reigning threepeat champions and top seed EZ Fit Flyers have advanced to the semi-finals of the Division 1 playoffs.

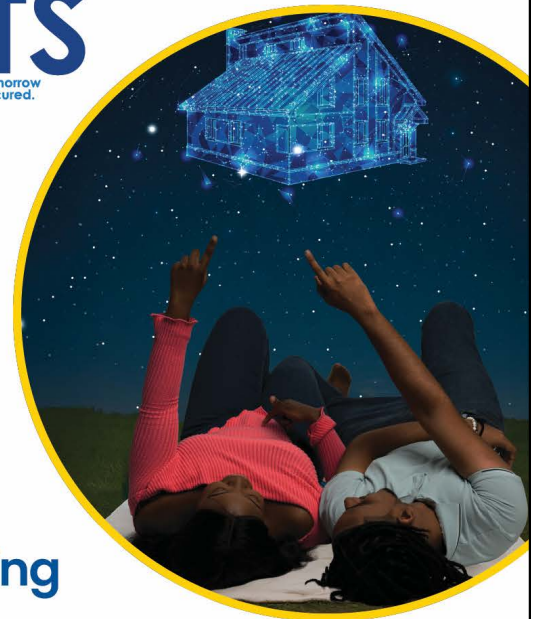
The Flyers, who won the league title for the third consecutive year last month, gained a bye into the playoffs semi-finals after the eighth-seeded Navigators forfeited their best-of-three first-round series 2-0.

The Navigators finished in the cellar of the eight-team round-robin Division 1 League, losing all 14 games.



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

AGS crush IBWS in Under-15 schools' cricket contest

The Antigua Grammar School (AGS) romped to an emphatic 274-run victory over Irene B. Williams Secondary (IBWS) in the latest round of matches in the Ministry of Sports Inter-School Under-15 Competition.

Three batsmen struck half-centuries to propel the Antigua Grammar School to an impressive 325 for four off 20 overs after batting first in the encounter at the Swetes playing field on Wednesday.

Opener Isaiah Harris hit a top-score of 87 off 33 balls, including nine fours and six sixes. He shared a 93-run opening stand with Tiaidre Charles, who struck 37 off 19 balls.

Harris also featured in a 127-run second-wicket partnership with Dante Adam, who slammed 84 off 48 balls,

with 12 fours and three sixes.

Adams also added 96 runs for the third wicket with Irvine Smith, who cracked an unbeaten 56 off 23 balls, including five sixes and five fours. Kamor Jacob picked up two wickets for five runs.

In reply, Irene B. Williams Secondary was bundled out for 51 in 14.2 overs. Seth Paul snapped up four wickets for three runs, Irvine Smith took three for 13, and Marc Crawford claimed two wickets for two runs.

The Ottos Comprehensive School secured a seven-wicket victory over the Sir Novelle Richards Academy at Antigua Grammar School.

Sir Novelle Richards Academy was restricted to 70 for six off 20 overs, with Rohan John getting 20. Ian Jere-

miah took two for 15.

Ottos Comprehensive School achieved victory by scoring 72 for two in 15.3 overs. Ondre Peters hit an unbeaten 25, and captain Akez France scored 23.

There was success as well for All Saints Secondary School, which recorded a seven-wicket victory over Jennings Secondary School at the Factory Grounds.

Jennings Secondary School made 104 for six. Orane Morrison struck 20. Nasa Blooties captured two wickets for nine runs, and Dequan Cochrane claimed two for 22.

All Saints Secondary School achieved victory by scoring 105 for three. Kyle Charles picked up two wickets for nine runs.






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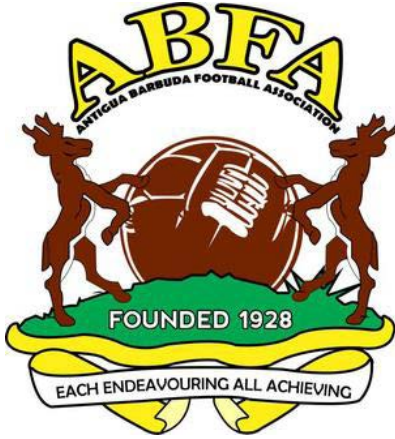
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Sports News

Wins for Parham, Willikies, and Blue Jays in First Division League



Parham, Willikies, and Cedar Grove Blue Jays all recorded wins in their latest matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League on Wednesday.

Parham FC consolidated their position in seventh place by securing their 11th win in 25 matches with a 5-0 drubbing of Bendals FC at the Parham playing field.

Jahvante Harriette had a double-conversion, while the other goals were scored by Andy Daniel, Dale Gardner, and Jeremiah Harriette.

The result allows Parham FC to advance to 40 points with one game remaining.

It means Bendals FC will be relegated to compete in the Second Division next season after finishing their cam-

paign in 11th place in the 14-team standings with 21 points after losing for the 17th time during their quota of 26 matches.

Willikies FC also consolidated their position in eighth place by claiming their 11th win in 25 matches with a 6-0 drubbing of Bolans FC at Willikies.

Novelle Francis had a double conversion, with strikes in the 77th and 79th minutes. The other goals were scored by Dejzmatch Christian, Zahdeir Forde, Scian Hastings, and Wayne Williams.

The result allows Willikies FC to advance to 37 points with one game remaining.

Bolans FC has been relegated to compete in the Second Division next season after finishing their campaign second from the bottom of the standings with 17 points, having lost for the 15th time during their quota of 26 matches.

Cedar Grove Blue Jays, who will also be relegated to compete in the Second Division next season, wrapped up their First Division campaign on a winning note.

Javin Maynard and Kishorn Hamilton each scored twice as the Blue Jays recorded their fifth win during their quota of 26 matches by pulling off a 6-2 victory against English Harbour FC at Cedar Grove.

Maynard scored in the ninth and 37th minutes, while Hamilton had conversions in the 18th and 73rd minutes. The other goals for the Blue Jays were scored by Rajiel Parchment in the second minute and Raekwan Stevenson in the 12th minute.

Clarence Marsh scored in the 48th minute and Taj Simon had a 60th-minute conversion for English Harbour FC.

The result allows the Cedar Grove Blue Jays to finish their campaign third from the bottom of the standings with 18 points. English Harbour, who have one game left, remain in 10th place and the playoff position with 27 points after crashing to their 14th defeat in 25 matches.

The other relegated team, FC Master Ballers, ended their season by defaulting to Golden Grove FC in their final outing at Golden Grove.

FC Master Ballers finished in the cellar with nine points after losing for the 22nd time during their quota of 26 matches.

Golden Grove FC, who were awarded a 3-0 victory via default over FC Master Ballers, finished their campaign in ninth place with 34 points after securing their 10th win during their quota of 26 matches.



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Spurs take out frustration on Timberwolves to even semifinal series

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Whether it's chess, a drawing contest or table tennis, San Antonio Spurs All-Star Victor Wembanyama hates to lose. A loss in Game 1 of the Western Conference semifinals to the Minnesota Timberwolves only magnified that loathing.

Wembanyama responded by setting a suffocating tone as San Antonio handed Minnesota its largest postseason loss in franchise history, beating the Timberwolves 133-95 on Wednesday night to even their series at one game apiece.

Despite posting 11 points, 15 rebounds and setting an NBA postseason record with 12 blocks, Wembanyama shouldered much of the blame for the Spurs' 104-102 loss to the Timberwolves on Monday in Game 1.

The 7-foot-4 All-Star knew he needed to do more, especially offensively. Was there some anger and frustration and a desire to get back on the court for Game 2? Absolutely.

"There always is," Wembanyama said. "In the playoffs, magnify that."

What resulted was what Minnesota coach Chris Finch said was a punking before a raucous sellout crowd. The Timberwolves were held to 35 points in the first half while shooting 7 for 24 from the field and 2 for 15 on 3-pointers.

Minnesota closed the game shooting 40% from the field, 30%



San Antonio Spurs forward Victor Wembanyama, right, and forward Keldon Johnson, second from right, reacts to a play with teammates during the second half in Game 2 of a second-round NBA playoffs basketball series against the Minnesota Timberwolves in San Antonio, Wednesday, May 6, 2026. (AP)

on 3-pointers while committing 22 turnovers.

San Antonio had a 58-36 scoring advantage in the paint, a 55-43 rebounding advantage and had nine blocked shots compared to two for Minnesota.

"We got beat in every way possible, it's as simple as that," Timberwolves forward Julius Randle said.

Game 3 is Friday in Minneapolis followed by Game 4 on Sunday at the Target Center.

The Spurs and Timberwolves went deep into their benches Wednesday with 10 minutes remaining in the game, with only the margin of defeat undecided.

San Antonio's 38-point victory toppled Minnesota's previous largest postseason defeat of 30

points to the Los Angeles Lakers on April 29, 2003.

After blowing a nine-point lead in the fourth quarter Monday, Wembanyama and De'Aaron Fox both took accountability for the two-point loss.

Wembanyama and Fox combined for only 21 points in Game 1. The All-Star duo was a combined 0 for 12 on 3-pointers with Wembanyama missing eight.

"They acknowledged it, them being the leaders on our team," Spurs guard Stephon Castle said.

"Coming out of Game 1, I mean, it's going to happen. You're going to have bad shooting nights, but I mean, we have nothing but confidence in those two. So, I expect them to play well the rest of the series like they did tonight."

Storming Lions end Pytonz perfect run in national volleyball league



Da Storming Lions men's volleyball team

The Cool and Smooth/JOMA Caribbean Da Storming Lions have ended the unbeaten run of defending champions and current leaders Zamine Shipping and ABI Insurance Pytonz in the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association (ABAVA) Men's Division 1 Championship.

Da Storming Lions consolidated their second-place position in the men's top league by claiming their fifth win in six games with a 3-2 victory over the Pytonz in their latest outing at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex on Wednesday evening.

It took Da Storming Lions two hours and 17 minutes to prevail 25-22, 21-25, 29-27, 23-25, and 15-13 against the Invaders, who suffered their first

defeat after winning all five previous encounters.

Meanwhile, the University of the West Indies (UWI) recorded back-to-back wins in the Women's Division 1 League.

The University of the West Indies notched up their second win in six matches by pulling off a 3-1 victory over the TOA Media and MKUU Tours Chargers Eagles 1 in their latest outing.

The UWI women needed an hour and 44 minutes to prevail 25-13, 25-20, 18-25, and 27-25 over the Chargers Eagles 1, who remain in fourth place in the seven-team standings after suffering their fourth defeat in six match-

es.

Their latest victory allows the UWI women to move out of the cellar, leap-frogging the Royal Cruisers to second from the bottom of the standings.

The Chargers Momentum also maintained their unbeaten run to stay at the top of the five-team Men's Division 2 League by recording their fourth win in as many games with a 2-0 victory against Schools.

The Chargers Momentum proved their superiority by taking just 43 minutes to secure their 25-19, 25-16 victory over Schools, who dropped into the cellar of the five-team development league after suffering their third loss in as many games.