

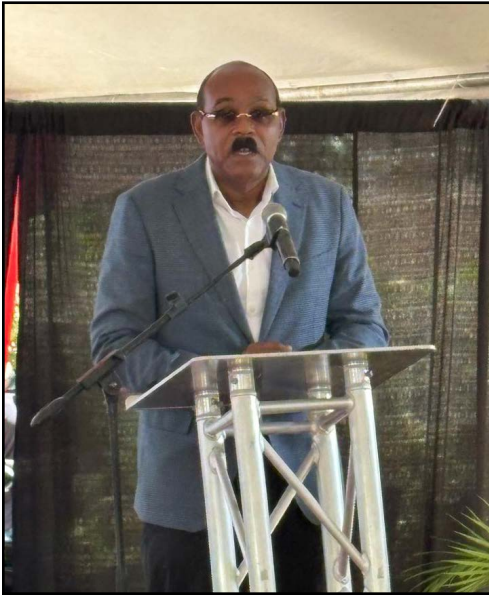
Government Wants To Attract More High End Hotels

Story on page 2



Developer Sophie Zhong (second from left) Prime Minister Gaston Browne (on her left) Governor General Sir Rodney Williams (centre) Tourism Minister Charles Fernandez (yellow suit) and two associates of Ms Zhong participated in the sod-turning ceremony at Long Bay on Thursday

Government Wants To Attract More High End Hotels



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Prime Minister Gaston Browne says his government prefers more high-end luxury hotel developments as they are more beneficial to all; the developers, the government and the hotel workers.

That is a model of hotel development that the government is now seeking to attract as part of its overall strategy of expanding the tourism industry and in the process increase government's intake from the hotels' increased business.

PM Browne was speaking on Thursday at Long Bay where he participated in the turning of the sod to make the start of development on a US\$200 million hotel resort, Long Bay Zen Resort.

According to the prime minister the new resort is being developed along the lines of Hermitage Hotel where guests pay as much as US\$3,000.00 per night. Noting that Long Bay Zen will have better amenities, he said he is of the view that the hotel ought to be able to charge more for its nightly rates.

"This is where we want them to go; offer service at a premium while at the same time take care of the staff. We want to pursue our development in an integrated way and we want to ensure






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that these luxury properties can operate profitably while at the same time ensure the staff are well paid,” he suggested.

PM Browne reemphasized his government’s philosophy that workers in the hotel sector must receive salaries/wages that are higher than the country’s lifestyle minimum wage that will be introduced.

“We want to make sure that when you work in the sector you can at least afford the basic mortgage. I believe that those who work in this hotel property that they will be properly remunerated so that they can afford a small mortgage to take care of themselves and their families,” he indicated.

PM Browne gave the project his government’s ‘full endorsement’ noting that the principal investor, Sophie Zhong, is not ‘a fly-by-night’ investor.

He revealed that despite certain setbacks due to their investments in a financial institution that is experiencing some challenges, the Zen investors have brought new monies into the country to invest in the current project at Long Bay.

“That’s what you call real commitment!” he declared.

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Groundbreaking For Long Bay Zen Resort Signals New Phase For Antigua and Barbuda Tourism

Antigua and Barbuda took another significant step toward the advancement of its Vision 2030 tourism and national development agenda with the official groundbreaking ceremony for the new Long Bay Zen Resort on Antigua's eastern coastline.

The luxury development, valued at approximately US\$200 million, is expected to redefine wellness and experiential tourism within the destination while contributing to sustainable economic growth, employment creation, and tourism diversification.

Delivering remarks at the ceremony, Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation and Investment, the Hon. Charles Fernandez, described the project as a transformative investment aligned with Antigua and Barbuda's evolving tourism vision.

"This project represents a new direction for tourism in Antigua and Barbuda," Minister Fernandez stated. "Long Bay Zen Resort embodies the evolving demands of the modern traveler — one who seeks more than just accommodation, but experience, wellness, authenticity, tranquility and connection."

The Minister noted that the development arrives at a pivotal time for Antigua and Barbuda's tourism sector, as the country continues expanding its international airlift capacity and tourism infrastructure.

"As our airport expansion continues and as we aggressively pursue increased airlift and new international routes into Antigua and Barbuda, the demand for quality room stock continues to grow," Fernandez explained. "Developments such as this position us strongly for the future."

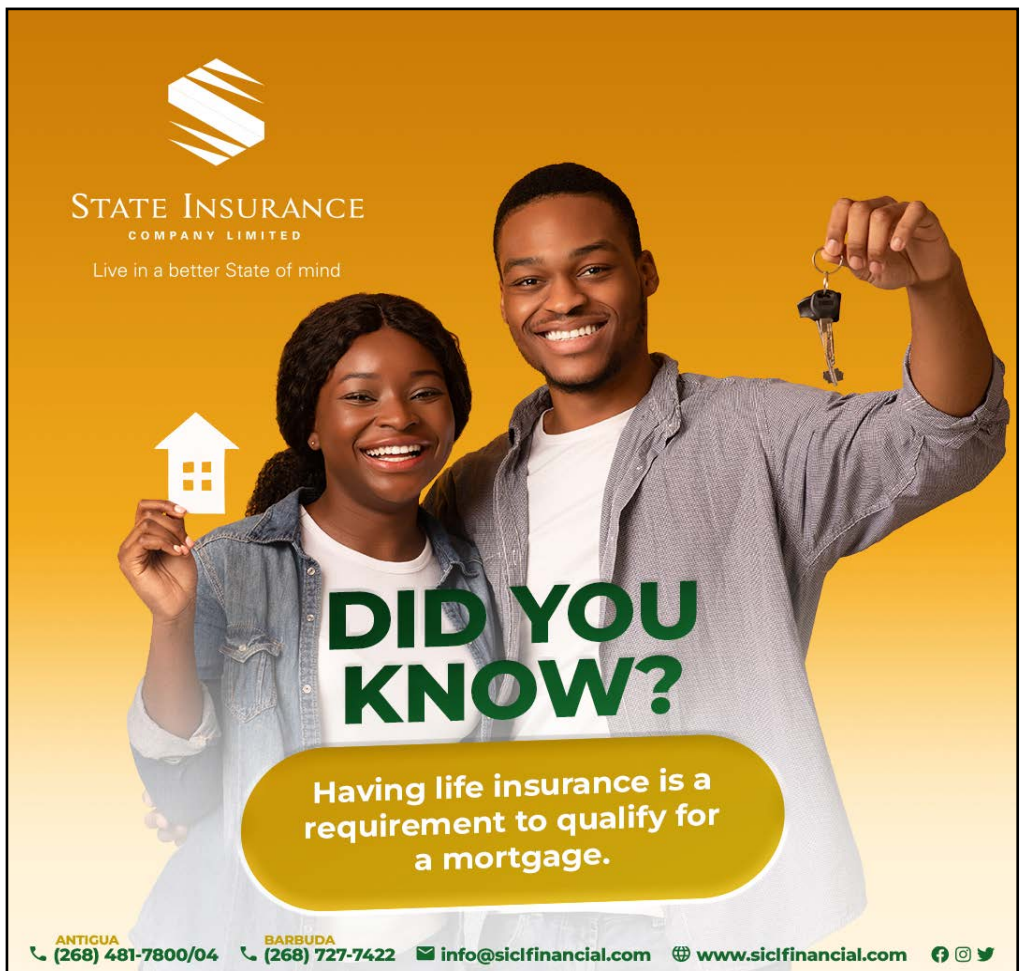
Minister Fernandez further emphasized that the resort aligns directly with the Government's broader Tourism Vision 2030 strategy.

"This project forms part of our broader Tourism Vision 2030, a vision focused on sustainability, innovation,



Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation and Investment, the Hon. Charles Fernandez,

luxury development, community involvement and long-term economic resilience," he said.



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New Resort To Utilise AI In Its Operations



Now that the ground has been broken for the new Long Bay Zen Resort, its developer Sophie Zhong described the project as a direct response to the Government's vision for a smarter and more sustainable Antigua and Barbuda.

“Antigua and Barbuda is already a champion of sustainable tourism. Prime Minister Browne has taken that further. He has set a bold vision for a Smart Island future — where renewable energy, artificial intelligence, and climate resilience shape how this nation welcomes the world. Long Bay Zen Resort is our answer to that call,” Zhong stated.

The development will feature 113 luxury accommodations designed around the concept of “quiet luxury,” emphasizing understated elegance, wellness, and deep integration with the surrounding natural environment.

“With rising visitor numbers and record air connectivity, demand for the very best Antigua has to offer has never been stronger. We are responding with 113 luxury keys, built in the spirit of quiet luxury — understated, refined, and deeply connected to this landscape,” Zhong said.

Among the resort's signature features

will be an on-the-water chapel intended to further strengthen Antigua and Barbuda's position within the destination wedding market. “I believe it will further cement Antigua's reputation as the Caribbean's premier destination wedding location,” she added.

Long Bay Zen Resort will also incorporate extensive sustainability and smart technology features, including renewable energy integration, low-carbon operational systems, intelligent guest services, and automated transportation solutions.

“At the heart of this resort is our commitment to sustainability. We rely heavily on green energy, with low-carbon operations designed to leave the lightest possible footprint on this protected coastline,” Zhong explained.

Construction activity is expected to move forward rapidly, with demolition works already underway and major construction scheduled to begin in the fourth quarter of this year.



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Marshall and Massiah Named to Diplomatic Service

Former Government Minister Samantha Marshall and former MP, Senator and Minister under the Baldwin Spencer administration Joanne Massiah have been appointed Ambassadors-at-Large as part of efforts to strengthen and modernise the diplomatic service.

The appointments were announced as Cabinet continues a wider review and restructuring of the country's diplomatic corps following the 30th April General Elections.

Cabinet congratulated both women on their appointments and expressed confidence that their extensive backgrounds in governance, law, public service and national development will help advance the interests of Antigua and Barbuda on the regional and international stage.

Officials noted that the appointments reflect the Government's ongoing commitment to attracting experienced and qualified individuals to undertake specialized diplomatic and developmental assignments on behalf of the country.

According to Cabinet, Ambassadors-at-Large Marshall and Massiah, head of the Democratic National Alliance (DNA), will each be assigned specific portfolios and responsibilities from time to time in keeping with national priorities and strategic areas identified by the Government.

Cabinet further explained that the appointments form part of a broader effort to ensure Antigua and Barbuda's diplomatic service is equipped to effectively support the country's foreign policy objectives and international development agenda.

Cabinet emphasised that strengthening the diplomatic service remains an important component of the Government's broader strategy to expand Antigua and Barbuda's global presence and deepen bilateral and multilateral relationships with international partners.

Meantime, it was revealed during Thursday's post-Cabinet press briefing that former Senator Clement Antonio is likely to commence duties as Antigua



Samantha Marshall

and Barbuda's Resident Ambassador to the People's Republic of China by mid-June. Director General of Communications Maurice Merchant detailed that the process was paused ahead of the last month's General Elections.

Further, Merchant explained that it is a meticulous process, with several mov-



Joanne Massiah

ing parts that include the Office of the Governor General, the Palace, the High Commission in London, along with the Government of the People's Republic of China.

However, he is confident that Clement Antonio will travel to Beijing next month to commence diplomatic duties.



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Cabinet Fast-Tracks New Centre for Autism and Neurodivergent Disorders



Director of Communications in the Office of the Prime Minister, Maurice Merchant

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has approved plans for the establishment of a specialised Cognitive Behavioral Centre aimed at improving care, treatment and support services for persons living with autism spectrum disorder and other neurodivergent conditions.

The proposal, presented to Cabinet by Minister for Health and Wellness, Michael Joseph on Wednesday, forms part of the Government's broader effort to strengthen access to special-

ised healthcare services and provide greater support to vulnerable families across the country.

During his presentation, Minister Joseph outlined the current challenges facing families affected by autism and related conditions, noting that many continue to struggle with limited access to therapy, developmental support and trained professionals.

Cabinet was informed that parents and caregivers often endure significant emotional, financial and social hardships while attempting to care for children and adults with neurodevelopmental disorders.

According to Director General of Communications Maurice Merchant, Cabinet has requested that the Minister return with additional proposals outlining possible forms of assistance for affected families, including the level of financial support that may be provided.

He told reporters that the Health Minister highlighted cases in which parents were forced to leave their jobs due to the lack of adequate care services available locally, adding this reality is

one of the major reasons the Government is accelerating work on the new facility.

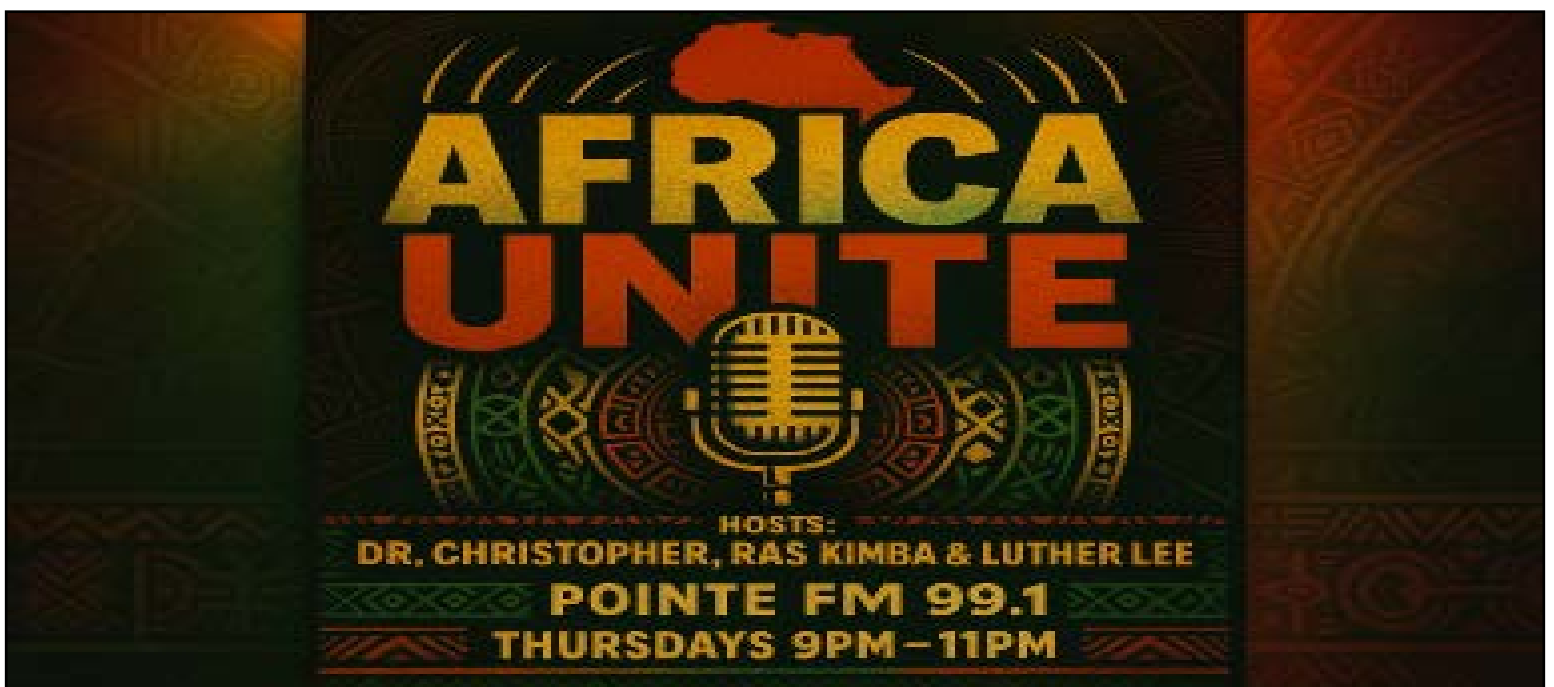
Cabinet approved plans for the Cognitive Behavioral Centre to provide early detection, assessment and treatment services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and other neurodivergent conditions.

The centre will also offer counselling, educational guidance and support services for parents and caregivers.

As part of the initiative, the Ministry has already begun recruiting qualified specialists to staff the facility, including an occupational therapist, speech pathologist and neurological psychologist.

Merchant revealed that the Minister's passion for the issue grew during the general election campaign after meeting families caring for children with severe developmental challenges.

He disclosed that in some cases children were being kept largely hidden from public life because of their conditions and because the necessary services to help them integrate into society were unavailable.



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Minister Michael Joseph calls for greater climate ambition for SIDS

Small island developing states (SIDS) are rallying ahead of the pivotal United Nations Bonn Climate Change Conference, with key country leaders and negotiators participating in the “New Tools to Save 1.5°C” forum hosted this week by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

The featured speaker was Antigua and Barbuda’s Minister of Health and the Environment Michael Joseph who delivered a clear call: wealthier and high-emitting countries must increase ambition on emissions reductions and expand accessible climate finance. He noted this is imperative for SIDS to survive, rebuild, and thrive despite disproportionate exposure and repeated climate shocks.

Speaking to the international audience, Minister Joseph noted that the continuous toll of responding to climate change impacts has a profound impact on the sustainable development of the most vulnerable countries and called for a revamp of the global financial architecture. Antigua and Barbuda is classified as “high income” yet remains highly vulnerable and often ineligible for official development assistance, leading to a vicious debt and recovery cycle.

“We contribute the least to emis-



Minister for Health and Wellness, Michael Joseph

sions, but our exposure is one of the highest,” Minister Joseph noted. “A hurricane throws our economies back for decades. Our countries deserve the right to same level of sustainability as everyone else.”

Antigua and Barbuda serves as a model for Caribbean SIDS, having recently increased accreditation and becoming eligible for up to \$250 million

in grants and loans via the Green Climate Fund. However, Minister Joseph noted the significant constraint of lack of capacity on the ground, leading to an implementation bottleneck.

“Antigua and Barbuda has proven that SIDS can access certain climate finance, but actually receiving and rolling out the funds remains a challenge due to our capacity limitations,” Minister Joseph stated.

“It’s a lot easier for larger countries. For SIDS, we need long term investment in capacity building. We must also look at the unique circumstances of each country and tailor solutions to our specific needs as smaller or larger islands. We all need to build resilience, and the only way we can do this is through financial mechanisms which evolve to effectively support the most vulnerable.

“The widening gap between NDC commitments and real-world action on issues such as climate finance, capacity building, and technology must be directly addressed,” said Ambassador Ilana Seid, Chair of AOSIS. “At Bonn, AOSIS is determined to ensure that the special circumstances of SIDS and the implementation barriers specific to us, are clearly recognised.”



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Government Strengthens Healthcare Partnership with Mercy Ships Australia and Margo Hartley Foundation



The Government of Antigua and Barbuda continues to strengthen international partnerships aimed at advancing healthcare resilience and sustainable development through ongoing collaboration with Mercy Ships Australia and the Margo Hartley Foundation.

As part of these efforts, Prime Minister Gaston Browne, Minister of Health, Michael Joseph, and Minister of Tourism Charles Fernandez recently met with Mr. Alan Burrell, Founder of the Burrell Family Office

and Managing Director of Mercy Ships Australia, and Mrs. Margo Hartley OAM, Founder of the Margo Hartley Foundation.

During the discussions, Prime Minister Browne expressed appreciation for the longstanding friendship and support extended to Antigua and Barbuda by Mercy Ships Australia and its partners.

The engagement builds on a relationship established during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which Mercy Ships Australia and its

partners assisted Antigua and Barbuda through donations of personal protective equipment and medical supplies that helped strengthen the country's healthcare preparedness and resilience.

Support was also extended during Antigua and Barbuda's hosting of the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) in 2024.

This growing partnership, cultivated through the efforts of Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations,

Ambassador Aubrey Webson, is expected to continue through collaboration with the SIDS Centre of Excellence headquartered in Antigua and Barbuda.

Discussions focused on the Government's vision for building a more resilient Antigua and Barbuda, with particular emphasis on strengthening the healthcare system, advancing mental health initiatives, and identifying practical opportunities for future collaboration and support.

Antigua and Barbuda To Maximise Training Opportunities In India

Antigua and Barbuda plans to take advantage of the many opportunities that are being offered by the government India to train members of the military and law enforcement agencies in the country.

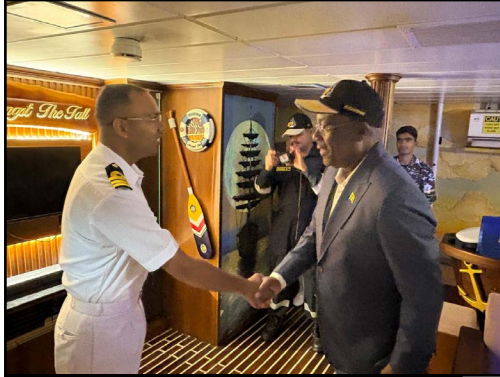
The commitment came from Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene during an official tour of the visiting Indian training vessel, INS Sudarshini, which is paying a five-day visit to Antigua and Barbuda as it makes its way to participate in major celebrations taking place in the United States over the summer.

Minister Greene said the government is keen on upskilling its people throughout the government service but especially for those in the military and law enforcement.

Recognising the India has in the past offered many scholarships for local students to undertake courses in the world's most populous country, the foreign minister said he intends to pursue with rigor as many training opportunities that he can from the government and people of India.

Training, he added, is a critical leg in the government's overall development strategy for Antigua and Barbuda.

Honorary Consul General for India in St. John's, Vijay Tewani, who was also present during the tour, outlined the several training opportunities that Antigua and Barbuda personnel have pursued or which are available for others to participate.



PM Browne, MP Freeland Offer Congratulations To Keondre Herbert

A young Antigua and Barbuda national has excelled remarkably in his studies in the United States and his achievements have not gone unnoticed by Prime Minister Gaston Browne nor Minister of State, Michael Freeland, the parliamentary representative.

“Our people possess limitless potential. This is why we work so relentlessly to expand access to education - both academic and vocational, and to increase support for entrepreneurship. Congratulations to Keondre Herbert, son of Keith Herbert and Julia Herbert from Pigotts Village,” PM Browne said in a social media post on Thursday.

According to the prime minister Keondre has been elected to the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) at Columbia University, where he completed studies in neuroengineering.

He will shortly be commencing his

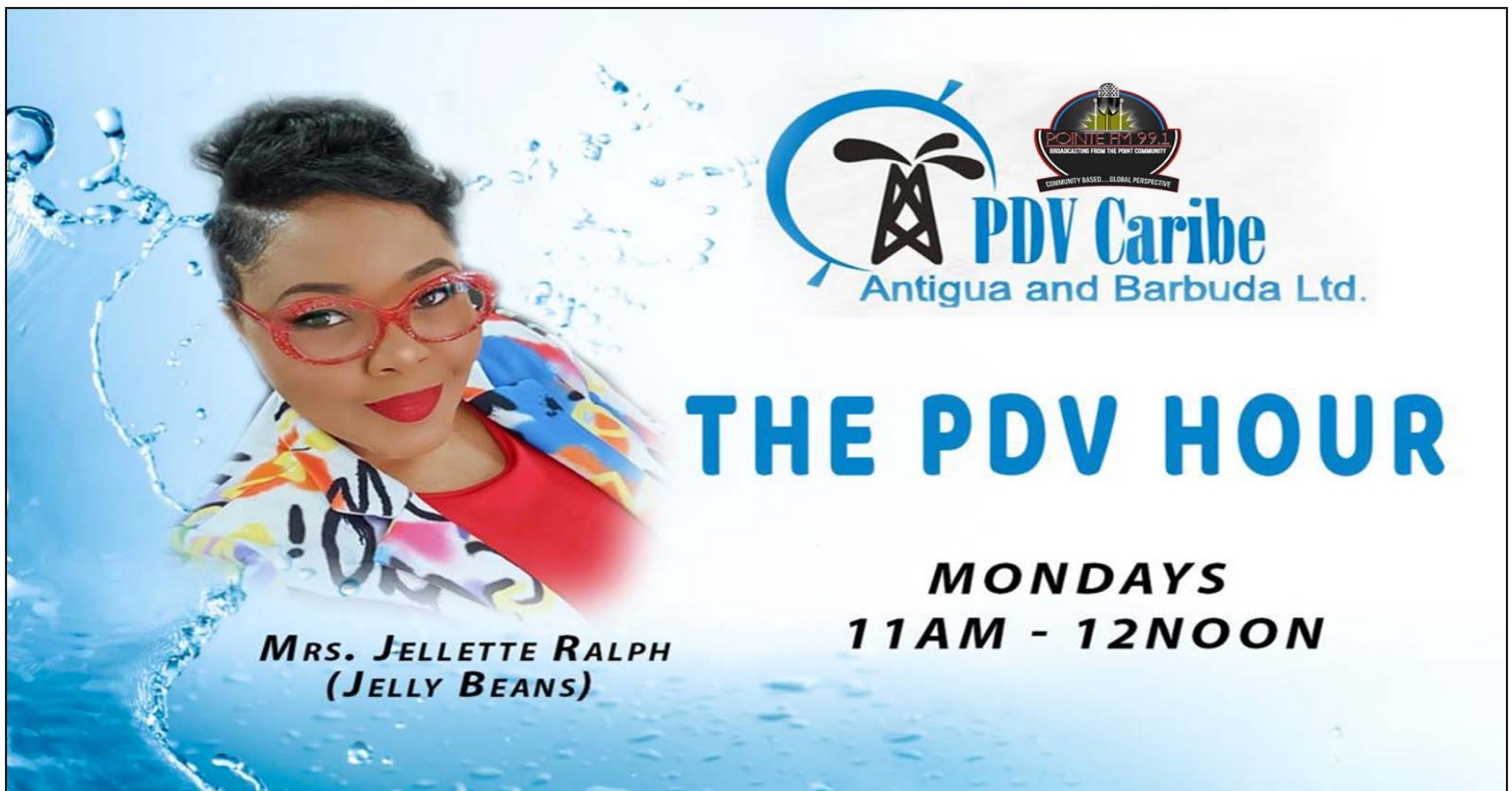


Keondre Herbert

PhD studies in Biomedical Engineering at Johns Hopkins University, a continuation of his neuroengineering focus. The GRFP will support his doctoral research at Johns Hopkins as he continues his mission to improve the understanding of how neuromodula-

tion therapies act on the brain, with the ultimate goal of making them more effective and accessible for patients.

MP Freeland also took to social media to congratulate Herbert on his remarkable achievements.



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Cabinet Says Sir Aziz Hadeed's Death Is A 'Profound Loss To The Nation'

The Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda extends its deepest condolences to Lady Mahasen Hadeed, brother Radwan and Joseph, Sister Lialia and nephews Francis and Andrew, the Hadeed family, relatives, friends, and the many individuals across Antigua and Barbuda and the wider Caribbean who mourn the sudden passing of Sir Aziz Hadeed, KCMG, CBE, former Senator, former Cabinet Minister, distinguished businessman, philanthropist, and national development advocate.

The passing of Sir Aziz represents a profound loss to the nation. He was a towering figure in the business community whose life was defined not only by extraordinary entrepreneurial success, but by an unwavering commitment to service, philanthropy, and national advancement.

Sir Aziz devoted decades of his life to the development of Antigua and Barbuda through both public service and private enterprise. As a former Senator and Cabinet Minister, he brought wisdom, integrity, vision, and practical business acumen to the service of the country. His contributions to national policy and development transcended political administrations and reflected a deep and abiding love for Antigua and Barbuda.

As Chairman of the Hadeed Group of Companies, Sir Aziz helped to build one of the most successful and respected business enterprises in the Americas, extending

into Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana and the United States. Yet despite his accomplishments in commerce and industry, he remained grounded, approachable, and deeply connected to the people of this nation.



Cabinet recognizes that Sir Aziz's greatest legacy may well be found in his extraordinary philanthropic work and his steadfast belief in empowering others through education and opportunity. His transformative leadership as Chairman of the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus Council helped guide the institution through its formative years and contributed significantly to its expansion and success. Through personal scholarships and financial contributions, he opened doors for countless students who otherwise may not have had access to tertiary education.

His generosity extended far beyond education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Sir Aziz provided substantial support to vulnerable families through food assistance programmes and utility support initiatives, helping thousands of households during one of the nation's most difficult periods. He also made significant contributions to healthcare, youth development, sports, culture, and the arts, often doing so quietly and without seeking recognition.

Cabinet further recalls with pride the recent conferral of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George upon Sir Aziz by Prince William at Windsor Castle in recognition of his outstanding contributions to national development, education, philanthropy, and community service. The honour reflected the high esteem in which he was held both nationally and internationally.

In recognition of his exceptional service and enduring contribution to Antigua and Barbuda, Cabinet has agreed to accord Sir Aziz Hadeed an Official Funeral.

The Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda join together in paying tribute to a remarkable patriot whose life embodied generosity, humility, enterprise, and service to humanity.

May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may his family find comfort and strength in the immense legacy he leaves behind.

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Tribute to George E. Williams, a true Caribbean son



By Sir Ronald Sanders

George E. Williams, who died in England on 23 May 2026, was a true Caribbean son: a distinguished Dominican public servant, regional integration pioneer, diplomat, economist, and international civil servant whose life's work advanced the interests of Dominica, the Eastern Caribbean, and the wider developing world. His passing marked the loss of a man whose intelligence, discipline, and quiet resolve strengthened every institution he served and strengthened the Caribbean's voice in the international community.

For Dominica, George gave many decades of faithful service. He came from humble beginnings and never forgot them. On one visit to him, after he had returned home to Dominica, he took me to the hills and rugged trails he had walked as a boy to get to school. He spoke of it without complaint and without self-pity; it was simply a decent man recalling the hardship that had shaped him and strengthened his resolve to overcome.


Before entering the higher ranks of diplomacy, he built a solid professional foundation in the public service, working in the Ministries of Agriculture and Finance, where he gained the administrative and economic skills that later made him such an effective voice in regional and international negotiations. Those early years were not simply a waystation in a career; they reflected a lifelong commitment to the hard, practical work of national development and careful stewardship of public affairs.

That commitment came fully into view when he was appointed High Commissioner for Dominica in London, a post he held from 1990 to 2001. His tenure coincided with one of the most difficult periods in Dominica's economic history, when the future of banana exports and the livelihoods built upon them were threatened by the international disputes known as the

Banana Wars. In that struggle, George was a tireless and persuasive advocate for preserving preferential access for Caribbean banana exports to Europe, defending not just a crop but the economic survival of small and fragile societies.



His work in London went far beyond trade. He helped to build Dominica's High Commission into a confident and effective mission, strengthened consular support for the Dominican community in the United Kingdom, and represented his country in important multilateral settings, including as Permanent Representative to the International Maritime Organization. After retiring from diplomatic service, he returned to serve Dominica on the Integrity Commission, bringing to the defence of transparency and accountability the same seriousness and integrity that had marked his entire public life.

But to speak only of his service to Dominica is to tell only part of his story. George Williams also belongs firmly in the history of Eastern Caribbean integration. The countries that now form the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States should remember him as one of the early pioneers and stalwarts of sub-regional cooperation. He played a leading part in the establishment of the East Caribbean Common Market and was its first Execu-



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tive Secretary, involved in the detailed technical work, the inter-governmental consultations, and the negotiations that laid the foundations for the sub-regional institutions that followed.

During his tenure at the Eastern Caribbean Common Market, George enjoyed the full confidence and respect of the political leaders of the time. They recognised in him a steady hand, a clear mind, and a regional public servant they could trust with the most difficult questions of economic policy and integration.

It was in Antigua, where the East Caribbean Common Market was based, that I first had the privilege of meeting and working with George. There, we set our shoulders together to promote the economic interests of the Eastern Caribbean countries in CARICOM, the World Bank, and other multilateral institutions. Out of that common work grew a friendship that endured until his death. Those who knew him in that period saw for themselves the qualities that made him such an effective servant of the region: an orderly mind, deep knowledge, patience in negotiation, and an unwavering commitment to the interests of small states.

George joined the economics staff of the Commonwealth Secretariat early in his career, and in 1979 moved to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. At UNCTAD he served first in West Africa and then in Geneva as a senior trade analyst and Inter-regional Adviser, helping developing countries to expand their trade and negotiate with larger and richer partners.

It was a particular joy, many years later, for me to welcome George to London when he was appointed High Commissioner for Dominica while I was serving as High Commissioner for Antigua and Barbuda. That period renewed our collaboration on behalf of Caribbean interests. We worked together not only to defend the region's trade preferences, including for bananas, but also to help put in place a structured framework for regular con-

sultation between the United Kingdom and Caribbean governments, a process that has since become an annual fixture. In all of this, George brought the same qualities he had always shown: diligence, clear thinking, sound judgment, and steady commitment.

In his later years, after suffering a stroke, George lost the ease of clear speech and the ability to write as he once had. His mind, however, remained sharp, and his memory was as strong as ever. Even in illness, he bore himself with quiet dignity. My own departure from London reduced the opportunities for the regular visits I would have wished to make in those years, and I regret that deeply.

For those of us who knew him, George was not only an able economist and diplomat; he was a kind, modest, and decent man whose friendship was a privilege.

George E. Williams deserves to be remembered with gratitude and respect. He gave the best of his life to public service and did so without flourish, but with distinction. His legacy endures in the institutions he helped to build, in the regional cooperation he helped to shape, in the standards of public integrity he upheld, and in the example that he leaves of a Caribbean man who served his country and his region with loyalty, intelligence, and grace.




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JUNE 8-12
TIME: 4PM-8PM

EUSTACE HILL CAMPUS
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From Antigua and Barbuda to Washington, D.C.: Joshuanette Francis Makes Her Mark at YLAI 2026



For six weeks, Antigua and Barbuda had a voice inside one of the hemisphere's most prestigious leadership and entrepreneurship programs.

That voice belonged to Joshuanette Francis, Founder and President of Good Humans 268 Inc., who represented the nation during the 2026 Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLAI) Fellowship in Washington, D.C.

Now, after returning home with a trophy and a Top 10 finish in the YLAI 2026 Solution Pitch Competition, Francis says the experience has strengthened her determination to continue fighting for disability inclusion, climate action, and waste-management reform throughout Antigua and Barbuda.

Out of 231 submissions from across Latin America and the Caribbean, Francis advanced to the final live pitching stage at the YLAI Closing Forum, placing Antigua and Barbuda among the region's top emerging social enterprises and innovators.

The competition featured entrepre-

neurs from countries including Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Paraguay, Ecuador, Uruguay, Suriname, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

For Francis, however, the journey to that stage was built on years of struggle, advocacy, and perseverance.

As she stood before the audience in Washington, D.C., she opened her pitch with words that immediately



captured attention.

“Fired and fighting for the last five years. I was fired because of a disability. The cartilage in my knees are failing me and the doctors predict that by 40, I might not be able to walk.”

The statement was honest, emotional, and powerful.

Rather than allowing those challenges to define her limits, Francis used them as fuel to create change through Good Humans 268 Inc., a nonprofit organization that focuses on disability awareness, climate action, recycling, accessibility, and community outreach.

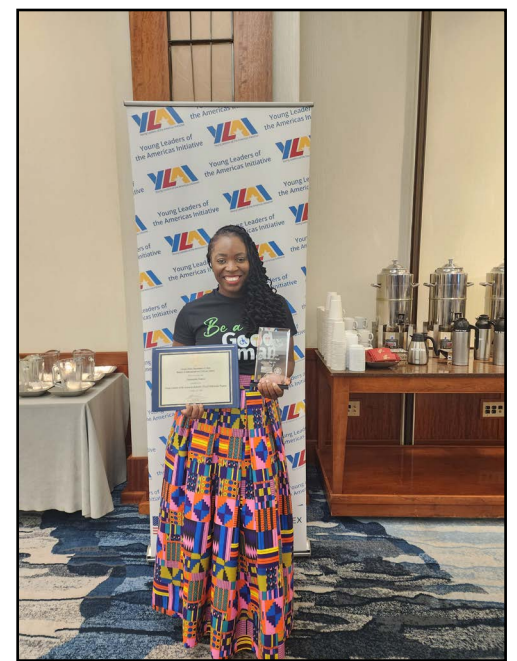
“My name is Joshuanette Francis and I am the founding president for the non-profit Good Humans 268 Inc.

We are creating golden opportunities for individuals with disabilities while tackling waste,” she told the audience.

That mission has become one of the organization's defining messages.

Over the last three years, Good Humans 268 Inc. has rapidly expanded its impact throughout Antigua and Barbuda. Through the Student Community Service Recycling Project, the organization has engaged approximately 17,000 students across nearly 80 school compounds while promoting recycling, environmental awareness, and volunteerism.

The organization has distributed more than 1,200 recycling bins and has diverted millions of recyclable items



away from the landfill.

Francis highlighted those accomplishments during her YLAI pitch.

“Through our Student Community Service Project, we've diverted nearly 3 million items from the landfill and secured over \$200,000 in grant funding,” she said.

Beyond recycling collections, Good

Feature

Humans 268 Inc. has also used creativity and public engagement to transform perceptions surrounding waste.

One of the organization's most recognized projects involved creating a massive Antigua and Barbuda flag from approximately 28,000 recycled bottle caps. The initiative has since evolved into an even larger vision tied to CHOGM 2026, where the organization plans to create all 56 Commonwealth country flags using recycled bottle caps.

For Francis, projects like these are about more than art or environmental awareness.

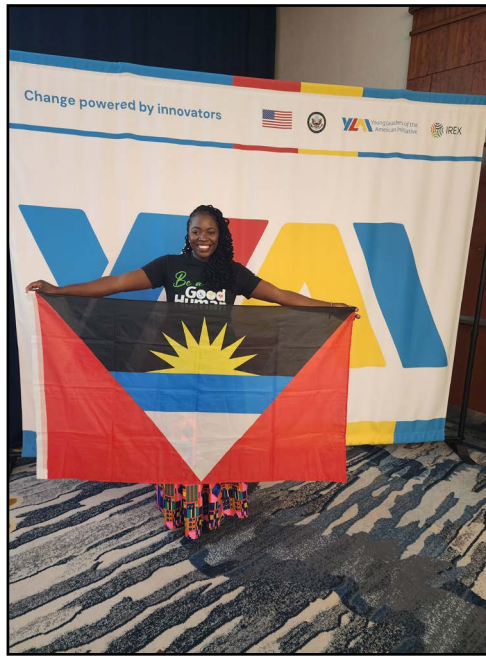
"Conversations surrounding legislation change and Guinness World Record projects are transforming how a generation sees waste," she explained during her presentation.

The YLAI fellowship itself became a major learning experience for Francis. During her six weeks in Washington, D.C., she was placed with American University's Center for Leadership and Community Engagement (CLCE), where she explored volunteer systems, nonprofit operations, community partnerships, and youth-engagement models.

She says the exposure gave her new ideas that can strengthen the work already happening within Antigua and Barbuda.

At the same time, the fellowship allowed her to advocate internationally for individuals with disabilities and for stronger environmental systems within small-island developing states.

"Waste systems are broken and they do not include individuals with disabilities," Francis stated.



That sentence reflects one of the organization's core concerns — ensuring that individuals with disabilities are not excluded from opportunities connected to sustainability, employment, leadership, and national development.

Through Project Red, Good Humans 268 Inc. has already started improving accessibility within schools by constructing ramps and supporting accessible infrastructure upgrades.

Francis believes the future of Antigua and Barbuda's development must include both environmental sustainability and disability inclusion working together.

Her long-term vision includes expanding waste-management services to households, businesses, and events while creating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities connected to recycling and sustainability.

"We have the network — 17,000 students and 5,000 individuals across 80 compounds and another 30,000 indi-

rectly through our waste-management systems. We are ready to scale," she said.

Francis also emphasized the economic opportunities connected to stronger waste-management systems.

"We're seeking investment to expand our waste-management services to households, businesses, and events. We are going to unlock \$53 million annually in revenue."

As her presentation came to a close, Francis delivered a statement that summarized both her mission and the spirit of Good Humans 268 Inc.

"It is bigger than waste. The world must know. We are Good Humans."

On Wednesday, as she returned home from Washington, D.C., Francis carried more than a trophy.

She returns with new partnerships, new ideas, global exposure, and renewed determination to continue advocating for change throughout Antigua and Barbuda.

From classrooms and recycling programs to international stages and policy conversations, Good Humans 268 Inc. continues proving that small islands can create global impact when passion, innovation, and purpose come together.

And for Joshuanette Francis, the mission is only getting started.

Joshuanette Francis

Founder and President, Good Humans 268 Inc.

Mobile: +1 (268) 789 GOOD (4663)

Website: <https://goodhumans268.org/>

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HER EXCELLENCY LADY WILLIAMS CSt.J, FMC, DCL, PhD (Hons), Dip.M, MCIM, MSc, BA

It is with profound sadness and a deep sense of personal loss that Her Excellency Lady Williams and I learned of the passing of our dear brother and treasured friend, Sir Aziz Fares Hadeed KCMG, CBE.

Today, Antigua and Barbuda has lost a remarkable son of the soil, a distinguished businessman, visionary leader, philanthropist, and nation builder whose impact touched every sector of our society. Yet for us, this loss is also deeply personal. The relationship between the Hadeed and Williams families spans many decades, reaching back to the time of our late parents, and grounded in enduring friendship, mutual respect, loyalty, and love.

Sir Aziz was like a brother to me and a

dear and cherished friend to both Lady Williams and my siblings. Through the years, we shared not only public life and national service, but also the warmth of genuine friendship, family fellowship, and countless treasured memories.

Sir Aziz was far more than a successful entrepreneur. He was a man of



immense generosity, wisdom, quiet strength, and unwavering commitment to Antigua and Barbuda. He believed deeply in investing in his homeland, in creating opportunities for others, and in building institutions that would contribute to long-term sustainable growth and national development. His legacy is firmly rooted in the economic, ed-

ucational, and social advancement of our nation.

Only recently, I had the distinct honour of paying tribute to Sir Aziz at the celebration of his Knighthood, where I reflected on his extraordinary life of service, leadership, and friendship.

His passing leaves a profound void, within his beloved family, among his many friends and colleagues, throughout the business and education sectors, and across the communities of Antigua and Barbuda that benefited from his vision, compassion, and generosity. Yet even in grief, we give thanks for a life so meaningfully lived and for a legacy that will endure for generations to come.

Sir Aziz understood that true success carries responsibility. He demonstrated throughout his life that prosperity is most powerful when it uplifts others along the way. He built not only businesses, but hope, confidence, and opportunity for countless people.

On behalf of Her Excellency Lady Williams and myself, we extend our sincerest condolences to his dear wife, Lady Hadeed, the entire Hadeed family, relatives, friends, colleagues, and all who mourn his passing during this difficult time.

May they find comfort in the tremendous legacy he leaves behind, in the respect and admiration of a grateful nation, and in the many lives he touched with kindness, dignity, and purpose.

May the soul of Sir Aziz Fares Hadeed, KCMG, CBE, rest in eternal peace, and may light perpetually shine upon him.

In Loving Memory of

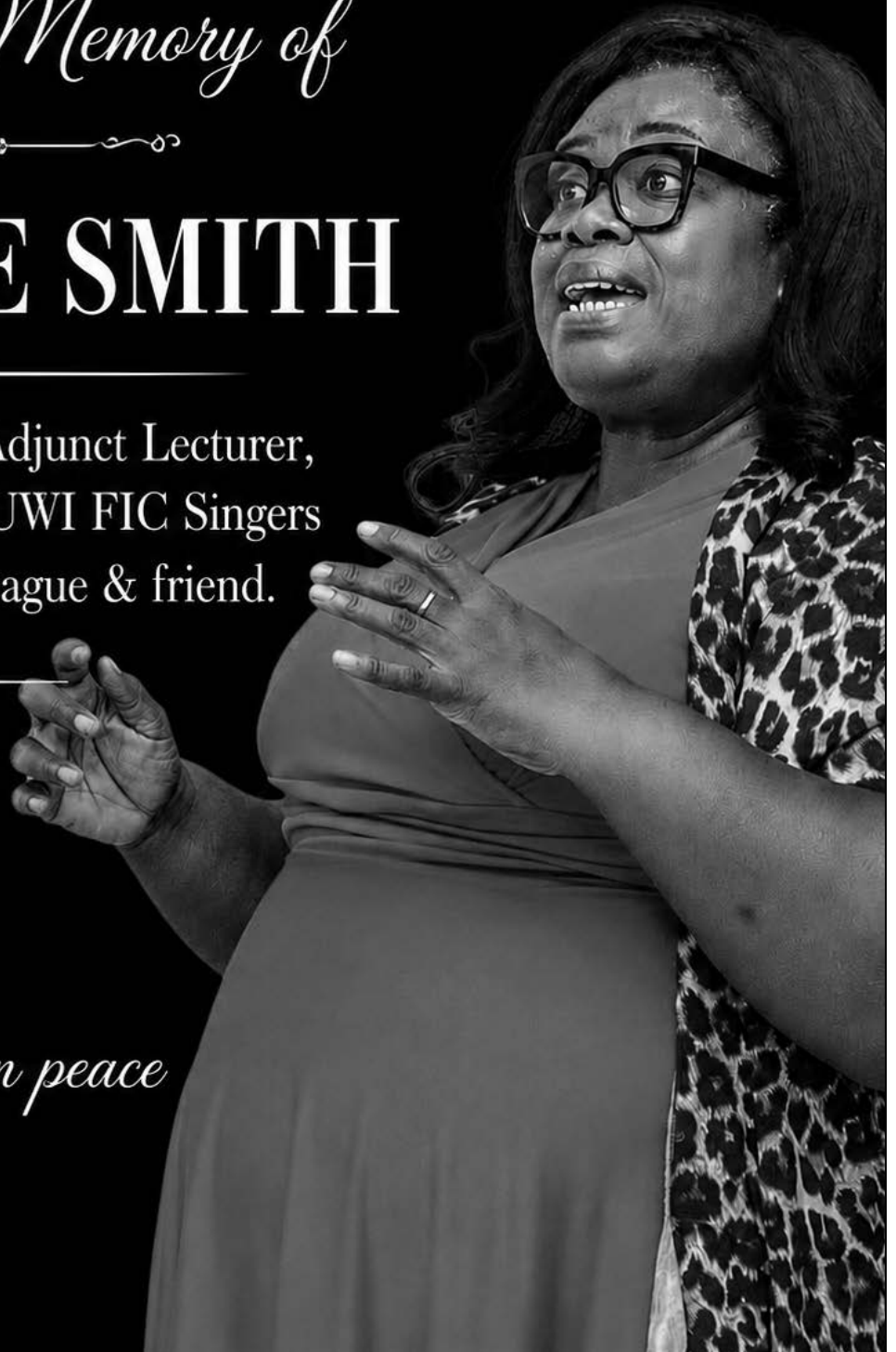


DR. RENEE SMITH

Our campus counselor, Adjunct Lecturer,
Musical Director of The UWI FIC Singers
sister, aunt, cousin, colleague & friend.



May her soul rest in peace





THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES FIVE ISLANDS CAMPUS

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For Immediate Release

Statement on the Passing of Dr. Renee Smith



The UWI Five Islands Campus, Antigua and Barbuda, Thursday, May 28, 2026 — The following statement is issued by Professor C. Jusin Robinson, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal of The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, on the passing of Dr. Renee Smith, Campus Counsellor and Musical Director of The UWI FIC Singers

It is with profound sadness, and with hearts steadied only by faith, that The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus shares news of the sudden passing of our beloved colleague, Dr. Renee Smith, who served as Campus Counsellor and Musical Director of The UWI FIC Singers. News of her passing broke in the early hours of Thursday morning. She was 48.

Forty-eight years. Far too few and yet a life is not measured by its length, but by its love and by the voices it lifts up along the way. Dr. Smith was, quite simply, a builder of harmony, in voices and in lives. For many years she directed Antigua and Barbuda's National Youth Choir, pouring herself into young singers and sending them into the world with confidence and craft. When she joined Five Islands, she did what she had always done, she gathered scattered voices and made them one, founding The UWI FIC Singers and carrying our students to stages local, regional, and international. A holder of a PhD from Walden University, she gave her deepest learning away freely, lesson by lesson, life by life.

But her truest legacy is written in people. As Campus Counsellor, she carried the quiet burdens of countless students and colleagues with grace, patience, and confidentiality. To the student sitting across from her on the hardest day of the year, Dr. Smith was a refuge. To the nervous singer who did not yet know what they were capable of, she was the one who said, try again. Ask the young people she mentored, and they will not speak first of the concerts, they will speak of how she saw them, how she believed in them before they believed in themselves.

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). We do not understand why she was taken so suddenly, but our faith does not require us to understand only to trust. Scripture tells us, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23) and if those words were ever earned, Renee Smith earned them. We give thanks for a life poured out in service to others, and we entrust her now to the God who first gave her to us, and who gave her that gift of music we were so blessed to share.

On behalf of the entire Five Islands Campus family, I extend our deepest condolences to her family, her loved ones, and all across Antigua and Barbuda's cultural and educational communities who mourn her today. To her family, especially, thank you for sharing her with our campus and with our country. We will carry her memory in everything we teach, in every student we encourage, and in every song we sing.

Rest now, dear friend. The morning has come, and you are home. May light perpetual shine upon her.

Feature



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Interested companies should include the following in their quotation submission:

- Company name
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- Equipment specifications
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For detailed technical specifications, please email us to request the complete RFQ documentation. All quotations must be submitted electronically to info.nfo@ab.gov.ag by the deadline of **Friday, June 12, 2026**.

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All interested persons should submit copies of statutory documents

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Interested persons are invited to submit resumes to kfchr268@gmail.com.

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Cuba raises concerns over U.S. actions during UN Security Council debate



Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Cuba's Foreign Minister, delivered an address at the United Nations Security Council to call for stronger support for multilateralism, international law, and the UN's role in maintaining global peace and security.

During an open debate on May 26, focused on preserving the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, Rodríguez Parrilla thanked China for leading the initiative and connected the protection of the international order to the need for addressing ongoing conflicts and threats affecting world stability.

The written statement, forwarded by the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba, quoted the minister strongly criticizing United States policy

toward Cuba, arguing that current measures against the island violate international law and undermine regional peace and stability.

He condemned the indictment involving Raúl Castro, describing the move as politically motivated. He warned that such actions could potentially be used to justify military aggression against Cuba.

Rodríguez Parrilla further argued that tightened sanctions and restrictions on fuel supplies have created severe humanitarian difficulties for the Cuban population.

According to the minister, the strengthening of the embargo and what he described as an "energy blockade" continue to place significant pressure on daily life in the country.

The Cuban diplomat reiterated that Cuba does not represent a threat to the United States and said Havana remains willing to engage in dialogue on matters of mutual concern, provided discussions are based on sovereignty, equality, and non-interference in domestic affairs.

He also appealed to the in-

ternational community, including countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Global South, the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly, urging them to act to prevent what he described as the risk of a humanitarian disaster or military aggression involving Cuba. (Dominica News Online)

NOTICE

The Management of LICS Limited would like to inform their Valued Customers and the General Public that both All Saints Road and Ottos New Town branches will be closed on Friday, 29th May 2026, for their annual stocktaking.

Both stores will reopen for business on Saturday, 30th May 2026 at 8:00 am.

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Gov't pockets 70% of \$1 billion allocated to poor under Solidarity Programme



A revelation by Dione Jennings, permanent secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, that about 77 per cent, or \$770 million, of the \$1 billion set aside for the Government's Solidarity Programme has been "returned for debt reduction" triggered grave concern among some members of a parliamentary committee on Wednesday.

The Solidarity Programme, which was announced in June 2025 targeted at vulnerable segments of the population, was intended to provide a one-time grant of \$20,000 to 50,000 individuals as part of the country's social protection efforts.

Under the programme, grants are provided to applicants who meet the criteria, such as the elderly, the disabled and vulnerable persons who are not in school or employed and are not benefiting from other social programmes.

Jennings, who was appearing before Parliament's Public Administration and Appropriations Committee (PAAC), said of the 18,000 applicants to the Solidarity Programme, 11,521 had been approved for payment, totalling \$230.42 million. This means that 63 per cent of the applicants were selected for disbursement.

Quizzed as to the plans for spending the balance of the money, Jennings replied: "We are at the end of the financial year, so the money unspent would have been returned for debt reduction."

She told members of the PAAC that there were applicants who were not eligible to receive a benefit as they did not meet the criteria.

"We are also looking at the persons who had submitted their applications and met the criteria after the end of the financial year," she added.

But PAAC member Dr Alfred Dawes was not satisfied with the explanation given by the permanent secretary as to why about 77 per cent of the money was not allocated to vulnerable Jamaicans.

According to Dawes, the country "is still reeling from revelations that the \$1.44 billion of donor aid was barely spent, and now we are being informed that there is \$770 million unspent [which was] earmarked for the most vulnerable in our society".

A real-time audit by the auditor general had revealed that the Government spent only \$26 million or 1.8 per cent, of the \$1.44 billion in cash donations for those displaced by Hurricane Me-

lissa. The report also found that funds from Hurricane Beryl which impacted Jamaica in 2024 were still unspent up to April this year.

Dawes argued that the conceptualisation of the Solidarity Programme was wrong from the outset "if people are suffering and we are sitting on \$770 million that went back into Consolidated Fund for debt payment".

However, Jennings pointed out that the Solidarity Programme was a one-off initiative that was "interrupted by the general election and by Hurricane Melissa". She said the ministry had made every effort to accommodate persons who applied for the benefit under the programme.

Committee Chairman Peter Bunting said a number of students from his constituency, who are attending tertiary institutions, had applied for the benefit but were told they did not qualify.

"I couldn't understand the logic of that. Why, by virtue of you attending a tertiary institution, were you disqualified from the assistance? Maybe the criteria could have been loosened somewhat to allow the full use of the \$1 billion," he said.

Given that the Government only used 23 per cent of the funds, Bunting said a decision should have been taken to widen the pool of beneficiaries.

However, Jennings stressed that the Solidarity Programme had a specific criterion in terms of the target group that the Government was trying to reach.

"The aim was to address persons who did not have any support at all," she added.

She said the Government had other suites of programmes to assist students at the tertiary level.

But Bunting argued that the suites of programmes for tertiary-level students are woefully inadequate and the quantum of assistance was very small relative to the cost of tertiary education. (Jamaica Gleaner)

J'can medical students in Cuba there by their own volition, says foreign ministry

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs says Jamaican medical students who continue to study in Cuba do so at their “own volition”, even as it continues to monitor the situation in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean country.

“The Government continues to make provisions for students who wish to return home and has ensured that pathways for the continuation of their studies in Jamaica are available,” the ministry said in a statement to *The Gleaner* on Wednesday.

“Students have been fully informed of these options. Those who remain in Cuba do so by their own volition, and the Government continues to respect that decision while remaining available to assist any national who chooses to return,” the ministry added.

Further, it said the Government remains prepared to assist with one-way airlift from Cuba to Jamaica, subject to the availability of flights.

The statement follows a *Gleaner* report on Wednesday, in which the Jamaican students called for the intervention of the Government after accusing the Cuban authorities of not meeting reported assurances they gave that their programmes would have continued uninterrupted.

A bruising infrastructure collapse and escalating geopolitical tensions in Cuba have left the medical students in an academic limbo, with some lamenting the mental strain it has caused.

Driven by an aggressive US fuel blockade, nationwide



shortages have reduced university and clinical hospital training to just one to three days a week, forcing students to pay full tuition for virtually “non-existent” practical education.

Added to that, hyperinflation has caused transportation costs to spike by over 250 per cent, *The Gleaner* was told, while daily electricity has plummeted to under six hours, triggering severe Internet blackouts that prevent them from utilising online medical resources for self-study.

The students accused the Jamaican Government and embassy of “passively accepting” the Cuban authorities’ assurances of normality despite the hardship they face.

However, the ministry said it will continue to closely monitor the situation, including the impact of prolonged power cuts and reduced access to public transportation.

It said through the Jamaican Embassy in Havana, it remains in communication with Jamaican students and other Jamaicans to ensure

their welfare and well-being.

“The Government has also maintained dialogue with the Government of Cuba, through both the Jamaican Embassy in Havana and the Cuban Embassy in Kingston and continues to engage CARICOM partners to share information and regional perspectives as developments unfold,” the ministry said.

Additionally, it said the Government has also taken “concrete” steps to support students who may wish to return home.

Among these measures, and at its request, it said the Ministry of Health and Wellness engaged The University of the West Indies, Mona, and the Caribbean School of Medical Sciences, Jamaica, regarding their capacity to accommodate returning students within their respective areas of specialisation.

The ministry said both institutions have indicated a willingness to consider applications from students who may decide to return home.

At the same time, it noted that admission decisions rest

solely with the universities, which operate under their own accreditation frameworks and independent matriculation standards.

The foreign ministry said it continues to engage these institutions, as well as the Ministry of Education, Youth, Skills and Information, on the matter of admission.

“However, we must recognise that any accommodation would be subject to an assessment of academic transcripts and the ability of students to meet applicable fees – a standard that applies universally. The Government is mindful of the particular circumstances facing students on government scholarships and remains engaged on the matter.

“The academic welfare of students, including matters relating to clinical instruction and examination arrangements, is governed by the terms of each student’s enrolment with their respective institution. We therefore continue to encourage students to engage directly with their institutions on these matters and to advise us of any difficulties they may be experiencing, particularly in accessing their academic records, based on which we can bring to the attention of authorities in the hope that they might assist where possible,” said the ministry.

It said the Jamaican Embassy in Havana remains the immediate point of contact in an emergency, and that urgent matters may also be directed to consular@mfaft.gov.jm. (Jamaica *Gleaner*)

CARICOM foreign council condemns US measures against Cuba



The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) has issued a strong statement criticizing ongoing economic and financial measures imposed on Cuba, warning that the situation is worsening conditions for the Cuban population and affecting Caribbean nationals residing there.

In the statement, the regional body said it was expressing “profound concern regarding the ongoing and intensifying economic, commercial, and financial measures imposed upon the Republic of Cuba.”

The council added that the growing difficulties faced by Cubans are also impacting CARICOM citizens studying and living in the country, whose welfare remains important to the regional community.

According to COFCOR, the current situation is being compounded by the long-standing trade and economic embargo against Cuba, which has remained in place for more than six decades and continues to negatively affect the lives and livelihoods of the Cuban people.

Defending Cuba’s right to secure energy supplies, the council stated that it “unequivocally affirms Cuba’s sovereign right to import and receive fuel,” while condemning actions that interfere with fuel shipments to the island. COFCOR warned that disruptions to energy access have contributed to what it described as a serious humanitarian crisis.

The foreign affairs body further reiterated its commitment to maintaining the Caribbean as a peaceful region and voiced concern over recent comments suggesting possible military action against Cuba.

COFCOR said it “reaffirms the need for the preservation of the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace” and expressed alarm at “recent statements that suggest the possibility of military aggression against the Republic of Cuba.”

This follows the US indictment of former Cuban President Raúl Castro and the reported gathering of US military forces in the region, according to Al Jazeera.

Leveraging claims that the Caribbean country poses a threat because of

its link to its adversaries, Russia and China, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio claimed that, though his government’s “preference” is diplomacy, the likelihood is “not high.”

Meanwhile, the CARICOM council warned that any military action would create unnecessary human suffering, impose severe economic costs, and destabilize security throughout the wider Caribbean.

Referencing international law and repeated resolutions passed at the United Nations, COFCOR maintained that “Cuba poses no threat to any nation” and described the country as “a peaceful and cooperative member of the international community.”

The council also argued that the continued use of unilateral measures against Cuba amounts to “an unjustifiable violation of human rights, the principles of free trade, and the fundamental norms governing relations among sovereign states.”

However, the statement noted that Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago reserved their positions on the declaration. (Dominica News Online)

Sixteen pupils killed in Kenya school fire



Sixteen students have been killed in a fire at a boarding school in Gilgil, about 120km (77 miles) north-west of the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, the authorities have confirmed.

Dozens of other students were injured and taken to hospital - 71 were later discharged and seven admitted for further treatment, Education Minister Julius Ogamba said while visiting the scene of the blaze. He said the cause of the fire had not yet been established and investigations were ongoing.

The fire at the Utumishi Girls Academy started in the early hours of Thursday as the students were asleep.

Anxious parents and relatives have been gathering at the scene waiting for news of their loved ones.

The education minister said the fire broke out on the first floor of one of the dormitories, which was “completely destroyed” in the blaze.

“The response teams managed to put

out the fire by about 03:00, but by then the damage had already been done,” he said.

He added that the school would begin releasing students to their parents and guardians throughout the day as authorities continue investigations.

Interior Minister Kipchumba Murkomen, who was also among the officials gathered at the school, sent his condolences to the bereaved families.

“It’s a very anxious moment and even as we account for the 16 so far identified as having passed on, I want to ask the people of Kenya that together we stand with the families... in prayer, in support.

“I ask everyone to be patient and avoid speculation,” he said.

Earlier speaking to parents and crowds outside the school, police commander Masoud Mwinyi said: “It is a sad and distressing situation.”

Fires are not uncommon in Kenyan

boarding schools, with several deadly incidents reported in recent years. Many have been the result of arson, with disgruntled pupils - angry about the discipline and living conditions - accused of being responsible, while others were caused by accident.

Overcrowding in dormitories and the failure to follow safety guidelines, such as keeping exits clear and windows unlocked, have frequently been blamed for the high number of casualties.

According to the police, the fire in Gilgil broke out around 01:00 local time (22:00 GMT Wednesday) and engulfed a dormitory block housing about 220 students.

More than 800 children were in the school at the time of the tragedy.

Earlier in the morning, Mwinyi said that some students who had fled into nearby areas during the chaos were still being traced.

“As we speak, our officers are combing the area because some students fled in shock and fear during the night,” he said.

Leah Serem, whose daughter is a final-year student at the school, said the news of the fire came as a shock. She said she travelled alongside other parents to the school from the Rift Valley town of Nakuru, about 40km away.

“We were anxious because we didn’t know whether our children were alive,” she said, adding that there was a lot of sadness when they arrived at the compound.

Serem met her daughter several hours later.

“I was very happy, and thanked God,” she told reporters. She said that her daughter did not know how the fire started, and had told her that students were waking each other up when the dormitory caught fire.

“We are praying for parents who have not yet met their children... we ask Kenyans to pray for us and remain calm as the cause of the fire is investigated,” Serem said.

“We’ve been here since 06:00. They’re not telling us where our daughter is,” one parent told the BBC in tears.

She said her 17-year-old daughter was in her final year at the school.

“We have searched all hospitals around here. The teachers aren’t telling us anything,” the mother said. “No-one came to their rescue.”

Wambui Nderitu, whose cousin is a student at the school, said family members coming to the scene were met with confusion and fear.

“When we arrived at the school we were told to queue. Most of us were so worried because we had heard some students had died and others were injured and in hospital.”

She said some students were injured after jumping from the upper floor of the dormitory while trying to escape.

“Some of those at the top floor had to

jump out, that’s why they are injured.”

Nderitu said her cousin survived the fire but suffered a broken leg. “I found her... she is fine... but she has a broken leg,” she explained.

Kenya has had a long history of school fires, with the deadliest being in 2001 when 67 students died in Machakos county, south-east of the capital, after some students set fire to a dormitory.

In 2024, at least 21 people died in a dormitory fire in central Kenya.

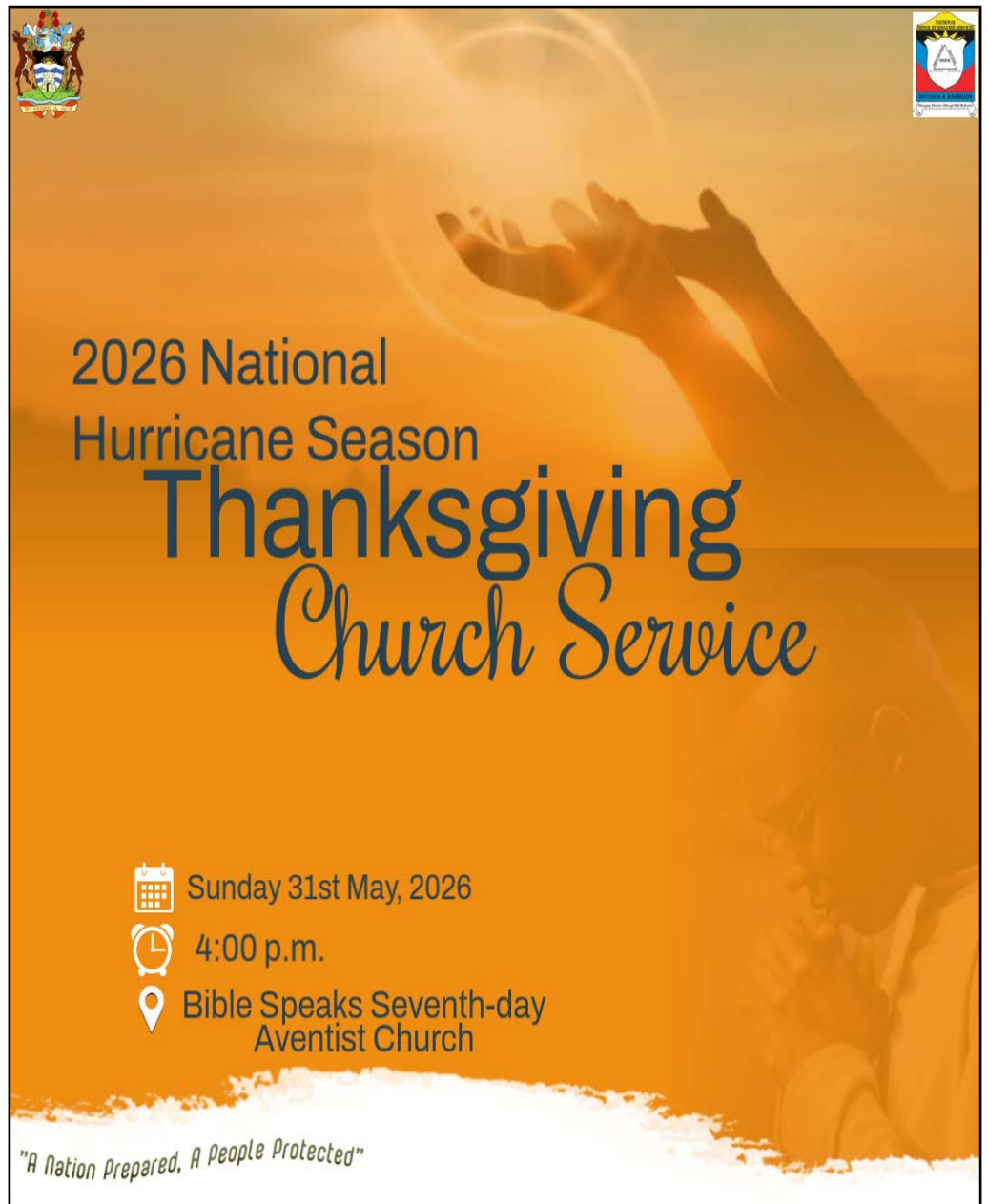
The ministry of education’s assessment of schools compliance to safety standards later that year found that most “had dormitories with grills on the windows, single exits and doors

that opened inwards hence compromising safety of the occupants”.


Congestion was also found to be common in the schools. Following the review, the ministry said it had closed “348 schools with immediate effect”.


In November 2021, the ministry of education issued a response to a parliamentary committee which had requested more information on school arson and revealed that there were 126 such cases between January and November 2020.


The Reuters news agency quotes research from 2018 saying that 60 cases of arson were recorded in that year. (BBC)



2026 National
Hurricane Season
Thanksgiving
Church Service

 Sunday 31st May, 2026

 4:00 p.m.

 Bible Speaks Seventh-day
Aventist Church

"A Nation Prepared, A People Protected"

EU fines Temu €200m for allowing sale of illegal products

The European Union has imposed a €200m (\$232m; £173m) fine on Chinese-owned online retailer Temu for having illegal products such as dangerous baby toys and faulty chargers for sale on its platform.

The European Commission said the company had “failed to diligently identify, analyse and assess the systemic risks” of the products and the harm they could cause to consumers.

Temu has been under investigation since October 2024 over whether it has been meeting its obligations as a designated Very Large Online Platform under EU law.

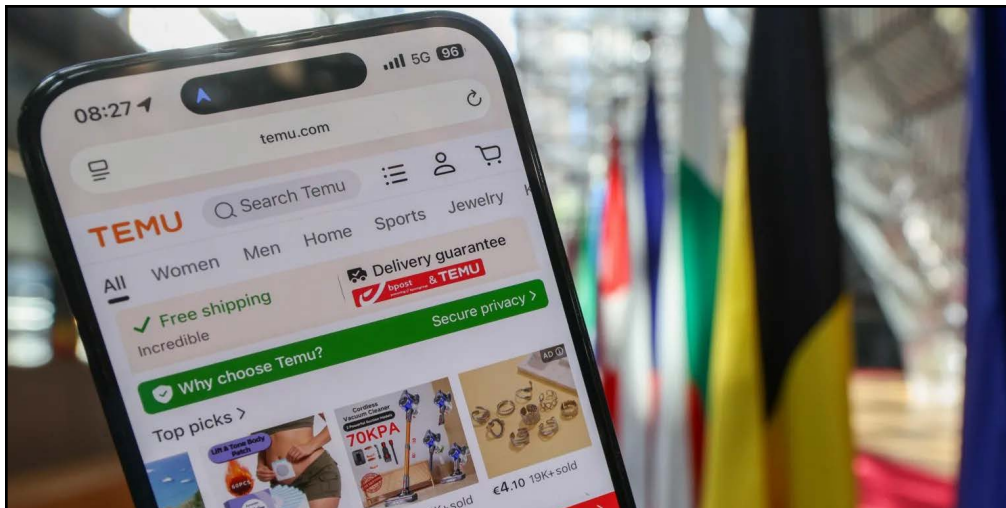
The online retailer said it disagreed with the decision and deemed the fine disproportionate and was now considering available options.

The investigation involved a mystery shopping exercise carried out by an independent testing organisation, which found that a high percentage of chargers purchased through Temu failed basic electrical safety tests. It also found that a high proportion of baby toys posed safety risks, containing chemicals above legal limits or featuring small detachable parts that presented suffocation hazards, Euronews reported.

As well as paying the fine, Temu has to present an action plan to address the failures by 28 August. The Commission then has two months to decide whether the company has done enough to comply.

EU tech commissioner Henna Virkunen told reporters that the decision was intended to send a “very strong message” to Temu.

A Temu spokesperson said in a statement that the retailer respected the need for clear, consistent rules, but that the decision related to 2024 and did not reflect the current state of its systems.



“We disagree with the European Commission’s decision and consider the fine to be disproportionate,” they said.

“We are reviewing the decision carefully and considering all available op-

tions.”

The fine is only the second imposed under the EU’s Digital Services Act for content, the first being a €120m penalty against Elon Musk’s X social media network last December. (BBC)



CHOGM
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA 2026

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Immigration invites Antiguans and Barbudans to volunteer for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2026, taking place 1–4 November 2026.

WHY VOLUNTEER

- Provide national service
- Sharpen your skills
- Learn about different cultures
- Build professional networks
- Enhance your CV
- Boost confidence
- Forge lasting friendships

WHO CAN VOLUNTEER

Open to All Antiguans and Barbudans Over the Age of 18.



Be part of history. Volunteer today!



SCAN ME!

FOR INQUIRIES
Contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Immigration at **462-1052**

J'can medical students in Cuba there by their own volition, says foreign ministry

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs says Jamaican medical students who continue to study in Cuba do so at their “own volition”, even as it continues to monitor the situation in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean country.

“The Government continues to make provisions for students who wish to return home and has ensured that pathways for the continuation of their studies in Jamaica are available,” the ministry said in a statement to *The Gleaner* on Wednesday.

“Students have been fully informed of these options. Those who remain in Cuba do so by their own volition, and the Government continues to respect that decision while remaining available to assist any national who chooses to return,” the ministry added.

Further, it said the Government remains prepared to assist with one-way airlift from Cuba to Jamaica, subject to the availability of flights.

The statement follows a *Gleaner* report on Wednesday, in which the Jamaican students called for the intervention of the Government after accusing the Cuban authorities of not meeting reported assurances they gave that their programmes would have continued uninterrupted.

A bruising infrastructure collapse and escalating geopolitical tensions in Cuba have left the medical students in an academic limbo, with some lamenting the mental strain it has caused.



Driven by an aggressive US fuel blockade, nationwide shortages have reduced university and clinical hospital training to just one to three days a week, forcing students to pay full tuition for virtually “non-existent” practical education.

Added to that, hyperinflation has caused transportation costs to spike by over 250 per cent, *The Gleaner* was told, while daily electricity has plummeted to under six hours, triggering severe Internet blackouts that prevent them from utilising online medical resources for self-study.

The students accused the Jamaican Government and embassy of “passively accepting” the Cuban authorities’ assurances of normality despite the hardship they face.

However, the ministry said it will continue to closely monitor the situation, including the impact of prolonged power cuts and reduced access to public transportation.

It said through the Jamaican Embassy in Havana, it remains in communication with Jamaican students and other Jamaicans to ensure

their welfare and well-being.

“The Government has also maintained dialogue with the Government of Cuba, through both the Jamaican Embassy in Havana and the Cuban Embassy in Kingston and continues to engage CARICOM partners to share information and regional perspectives as developments unfold,” the ministry said.

Additionally, it said the Government has also taken “concrete” steps to support students who may wish to return home.

Among these measures, and at its request, it said the Ministry of Health and Wellness engaged The University of the West Indies, Mona, and the Caribbean School of Medical Sciences, Jamaica, regarding their capacity to accommodate returning students within their respective areas of specialisation.

The ministry said both institutions have indicated a willingness to consider applications from students who may decide to return home.

At the same time, it noted that admission decisions rest solely with the universities,

which operate under their own accreditation frameworks and independent matriculation standards.

The foreign ministry said it continues to engage these institutions, as well as the Ministry of Education, Youth, Skills and Information, on the matter of admission.

“However, we must recognise that any accommodation would be subject to an assessment of academic transcripts and the ability of students to meet applicable fees – a standard that applies universally. The Government is mindful of the particular circumstances facing students on government scholarships and remains engaged on the matter.

“The academic welfare of students, including matters relating to clinical instruction and examination arrangements, is governed by the terms of each student’s enrolment with their respective institution. We therefore continue to encourage students to engage directly with their institutions on these matters and to advise us of any difficulties they may be experiencing, particularly in accessing their academic records, based on which we can bring to the attention of authorities in the hope that they might assist where possible,” said the ministry.

It said the Jamaican Embassy in Havana remains the immediate point of contact in an emergency, and that urgent matters may also be directed to consular@mfaft.gov.jm. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Hector named in Windies squad for 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup

Antiguan and Leeward Islands All-rounder Shawnisha Hector has been selected in the West Indies 15-member squad to compete at the 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup in England and Wales from June 5 to July 5.

Hector and fellow Leeward Islands teammates, Nevisian pacer Jahzara Claxton, and St. Lucian all-rounder Qiana Joseph, were all selected in the squad, which was announced by Cricket West Indies (CWI) on Thursday.

The squad was selected following extensive evaluation by the selection panel and team management unit, with careful consideration given to the tactical and technical requirements for impactful and consistent performances in English conditions.

Building on months of preparation and analysis, significant emphasis was placed on assembling a group capable of maintaining aggressive scoring rates throughout the innings, adapting to both seam and spin bowling, and executing consistently under pressure in varying conditions across England and Wales.

Head Coach Shane Deitz said the squad reflects a deliberate strategy designed specifically for the demands of international cricket in England.

“We know that in these conditions, strong powerplay batting and sustained scoring through the middle overs will be critical to winning games. Our analysis showed that when we score positively in the powerplay, particularly getting beyond that 45-run mark, we give ourselves a much stronger opportunity to control matches. Alternatively with the ball, we need to restrict boundaries in the power play and throughout the innings.”

“We've therefore selected a group with flexibility at the top of the order, players who can handle both pace



Shawnisha Hector

and spin effectively, and importantly, batters capable of maintaining intent regardless of wickets lost, along with ensuring depth in the batting so we can continue attacking deep into the innings.

“We also wanted bowlers who can attack when necessary but also quickly shift into defensive modes and execute under pressure at every stage of the innings.”

Director of Cricket Miles Bascombe expressed that the team's preparation programme was intentionally designed to acclimatize the squad to the unique demands of English conditions

while building the consistency and momentum required heading into the ICC Women's T20 World Cup.

“We have been very deliberate in how we structured the team's preparation for this tournament. The camp in Wales was designed to immerse the players in conditions similar to what they will experience throughout the World Cup, allowing them to fine-tune both their technical execution and tactical awareness in that environment. Equally important was creating opportunities for the group to build cohesion, confidence and consistency together over an extended period,” said Bascombe.

“The tri-nation series in Ireland is another critical component of that process, as it gives the squad valuable competitive match exposure against quality international opposition immediately before the tournament. Every aspect of the preparation has been intentional in ensuring the players arrive at the World Cup fully adapted to the conditions, clear in their roles and building positive momentum as a team,” he added.

The West Indies Women battle Ireland and Pakistan in the Evara Women's International tri-series from May 28 to June 3 in Ireland, before returning to England for the World Cup where they will play two warm-up matches against India on June 8 and Australia on June 10 before their first group stage encounter against New Zealand on June 13.

West Indies Women's Squad for Tri-Nation Series & ICC World Cup Squad: Hayley Matthews (captain), Chinelle Henry (vice-captain), Aaliyah Alleyne, Shemaine Campbelle, Jahzara Claxton, Deandra Dottin, Afy Fletcher, Jannillea Glasgow, Shawnisha Hector, Zaida James, Qiana Joseph, Mandy Mangru, Ashmini Munisar, Karishma Ramharack, and Stafanie Taylor.

Matthews powers Windies to victory over Ireland in first tri-series T20



Hayley Matthews

A brilliant unbeaten half-century from captain Hayley Matthews guided the West Indies women to a crushing eight-wicket victory over Ireland in the opening match of the Tri-Series in Ireland on Thursday.

After restricting Ireland to 103, the West Indies raced to victory at 104 for two in just 11.3 overs.

Ireland Women endured a difficult start after being sent in to bat, losing wickets at regular intervals. At 36 for three in the powerplay, they were immediately placed under pressure and struggled to build substantial partnerships.

Losing three wickets inside the opening six overs disrupted any chance of building momentum, and although the middle order fought hard, the innings lacked acceleration and meaningful partnerships.

The innings progressed steadily but lacked momentum, with Ireland eventually bowled out for 103 in 17 overs.

Crossing 100 in the final stages gave them something to bowl at, but it was never likely to be enough against a strong West Indies lineup.

The West Indies were sharp in the field and effective with the ball, consistently applying pressure and forcing mistakes.

Orla Pendergast hit a top score of 25, Leah Paul struck 21, opener Amy Hunter got 11, and Alice Tector scored 10 to be the only batters to reach double figures.

Left-arm spinner Qiana Joseph snapped up three wickets for eight runs, fast bowler Jahzara Caxton picked up two wickets for nine runs, and Zaida James captured two for 10.

Restricting Ireland to 103 meant the chase required composure rather than risk, and Hayley Matthews delivered exactly that. The Windies began positively in reply, though Ireland managed two early breakthroughs.

However, Hayley Matthews soon took

complete control with an unbeaten 82, smashing boundaries all around the ground and bringing up her half-century in 34 balls.

Together with Stafanie Taylor, who scored 10 not out, Matthews stitched together a rapid unbroken 63-run partnership that ended any hopes of an Ireland fightback. Matthews finished on 82 not out from 44 deliveries.

Matthews mixed controlled aggression with smart shot selection, punishing loose deliveries and taking charge of the innings. Even after West Indies lost two wickets, her calm presence alongside Stafanie Taylor ensured there were no alarms during the pursuit.

Fast bowler Ava Canning picked up two wickets for 16 runs. The West Indies and Pakistan will clash in the second match of the tri-series at the same venue on Friday (today).

Sinner's exit rocks French Open but Sabalenka and Gauff surge ahead

PARIS (Reuters) - Jannik Sinner's stunning Roland Garros exit shattered what had shaped up as one of the most predictable French Opens since Rafa Nadal's era, throwing the men's draw wide open on Thursday to leave it as finely balanced as the women's field.

Sinner's 3-6, 2-6, 7-5, 6-1, 6-1 second-round defeat by Juan Manuel Cerundolo was not just a collapse in a single match but the unravelling of a campaign that had seemed almost inevitable after he claimed titles in Monte Carlo, Madrid, and Rome.

The world number one arrived in Paris as the firm favourite, a tag long associated with retired 14-times champion Nadal, with defending champion Carlos Alcaraz pulling out injured and three-times winner Novak Djokovic searching for his best form.

All of that went to dust in a collapse to Cerundolo on Court Philippe Chatrier, after Sinner held a two-sets lead and was up 5-1 in the third set, when the toll of a long claycourt season finally caught up with the Italian.

"I struggled, started to feel very dizzy," said Sinner, who will have to try next year to win a maiden French Open title and complete the career Grand Slam.

Cerundolo said he had needed to stay mentally strong while Sinner dealt with a range of problems, including what he believed was a bout of cramp, while his elder brother Francisco was rejuvenated by news of the win and beat Hugo Gaston 2-6, 6-4, 6-2, 6-1.

"I'm super happy with the match," the younger Cerundolo said after his monumental upset.

While Sinner's loss left him contemplating a long period of rest ahead of his Wimbledon title defence, which



Jannik Sinner of Italy reacts during the second round men's singles tennis match against Juan Manuel Cerundolo of Argentina at the French Open tennis tournament in Paris, Thursday, May 28, 2026. (AP)

begins on June 29 with Alcaraz ruled out, Djokovic will feel new energy in his bid for a record 25th Grand Slam title.

Second seed Alexander Zverev will be another player eyeing his big chance to win an elusive maiden major title after three trips to the finals, as will other hopefuls such as twice finalist Casper Ruud, Ben Shelton and Rafael Nadal.

Aryna Sabalenka made sure there were no more major surprises on a warm afternoon when the world number one downed French hope Elsa Jacquemot 7-5, 6-2, while defending champion Coco Gauff eased past Egypt's Mayar Sherif 6-3, 6-2.

Along with four-times champion Swiatek, Sabalenka and Gauff are the main contenders to capture the Suzanne Lenglen Cup after contesting the Paris final 12 months ago.

Former world number one Naomi Osaka is another player eager to be in

the mix during the business end of the Grand Slam, and the Japanese player brought style and steel to defeat Donna Vekic 7-6(1), 6-4 and reach the third round.

Amanda Anisimova, a Paris semi-finalist as a teenager in 2019, went through after her opponent Julia Grabher retired with illness after being blanked in the opening set.

There was joy for French fans when teenager Moise Kouame defeated Paraguayan Adolfo Daniel Vallejo 6-3, 7-5, 3-6, 2-6, 7-6(10-8) in a gripping contest lasting nearly five hours and he credited Alcaraz for inspiring him.

The 17-year-old Kouame, ranked 318th in the world and playing in his first Grand Slam courtesy of a wildcard, became the fifth-youngest man to make it to the third round at Roland Garros since the professional era began in 1968.

New York and New Jersey probe FIFA's World Cup ticket practices

NEW YORK (AP) — FIFA is under fresh scrutiny for sky-high World Cup ticket prices and sales tactics that fans say left them with worse deals than they wanted.

The attorneys general in New York and New Jersey, which are hosting eight World Cup matches including the final, announced Tuesday that they are investigating whether FIFA's ticketing practices violated consumer protection laws.

They have sent subpoenas to soccer's global governing body demanding information on a range of ticketing issues, including FIFA's use of "variable pricing" models that sent ticket prices soaring for most matches and redrawn stadium maps that fans say relocated their seats far from the pitch.

The attorneys general, working with the New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection, said

they are focused primarily on ticketing practices for matches at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

"New Yorkers have been waiting years for the World Cup to come to their backyard, and they deserve a fair shot at affordable tickets," New York Attorney General Letitia James said.

"No one should be manipulated into paying sky-high prices for seats, and fans should be able to trust that the tickets they purchase will be the ones they receive."

New Jersey Attorney General Jennifer Davenport accused FIFA of turning the act of buying a World Cup ticket "into a gauntlet of confusion, fake scarcity, and impossibly high prices." It's an honor for New Jersey to host the World Cup, she said, "but the event is not an invitation to exploit our residents and visitors."

FIFA declined to comment. The World Cup kicks off June 11 with matches in Mexico City and Guadalajara, Mexico. The first match at the roughly 82,000-seat MetLife Stadium, temporarily renamed New York New Jersey Stadium for the event, pits Brazil and Morocco on June 13.

Some seats for the July 19 final are going for nearly US\$33,000. Last week, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani announced that 1,000 tickets -- about 150 tickets for each MetLife Stadium game, excluding the final -- will be made available to city residents via a lottery system at a cost of US\$50 each.

FIFA previously made some US\$60 tickets available for every match, distributing them through the national federations of the teams playing in the games.



Fans celebrate during the announcement of the United States men's national soccer team roster in New York, Tuesday, May 26, 2026, ahead of the FIFA World Cup soccer tournament. (AP)

Green City and E. Harbour secure wins in ABFA Playoffs Series

The Green City FC and English Harbour FC have won their opening encounters during the second round of matches in the two Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) three-team round-robin playoff series.

The Green City FC kicked off their campaign in the Premier/First Division Playoff Series with a 3-0 victory against SAP FC in the second game of a double-header at the ABFA Technical Center on Wednesday.

All the goals came in the first half. Elijah Whyte opened the scoring with a 17th-minute conversion, Carllon Warner scored in the 34th minute to double their lead, and Kieron Richards sealed the win by converting a penalty kick in the 41st minute.

SAP FC finished the match with 10 men with the expulsion of Peter Byers, who received a red card in the 90th minute.

It means that SAP FC ended their campaign in the playoffs winless, losing both matches, and will remain in the First Division after failing in their bid to return to the Premier Division by winning the three-team round-robin series that also involve the Swetes Vipers FC.

It was the second loss in as many games for SAP FC,



Players of the Green City FC starting XI

who suffered a 3-2 loss to fellow First Division team Swetes Vipers in the opening match of the playoff series on Saturday, May 23.

The result allows Green City FC to maintain their chances of remaining in the Premier Division after entering the playoffs by finishing in eighth place in this season's top domestic league, which was won by the Jennings Grenades.

Green City FC and the Swetes Vipers FC will clash in the final match of the playoff series at the ABFA Technical Center on Sunday at 7 pm.

The winner of the final match in the Premier-First Division playoffs will earn the right to compete in the Premier Division next season.

English Harbour FC launched their campaign in the First/Second Division playoff series by staging a late fightback to come from behind and snatched a 4-3

victory over Kelton Dalso Real Blizzard in the opening game of Wednesday's double-header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Clarence Marsh converted a penalty kick in the 85th minute to snatch victory after teammate Delroy Simpson scored an equalizer in the 74th minute for English Harbour FC to level the scores at 3-3.

Real Blizzard led for most of the game after taking the lead via a 12th-minute conversion from Jahrius Benjamin. Najae Morton scored his first of two goals in the 26th minute to equalize for English Harbour FC.

But Lincoln Zerwanzah Celestine scored in the 44th minute to restore his team's advantage and gave Real Blizzard a 2-1 lead at half-time. Taharie James scored in the 62nd minute to give Real Blizzard a 3-1 lead.

Najae Morton scored his second goal of the match in the 69th minute to engineer

English Harbour's comeback, which was completed by the conversions of Simpson and Marsh.

It means that Real Blizzard ended their campaign in the playoffs winless, losing both matches, and will remain in the Second Division after failing in their bid to attain promotion the First Division by winning the three-team round-robin series that also involve the Police FC.

It was the second loss in as many games for Real Blizzard, who suffered a 2-1 loss to fellow Second Division team Police FC in the opening match of the playoff series on Saturday, May 23.

The result allows English Harbour FC to maintain their chances of remaining in the First Division after entering the playoffs by finishing in 10th place in this season's domestic league, which was won by the Greenbay Hoppers.

English Harbour FC and Police FC will clash in the final match of the playoff series at the ABFA Technical Center on Sunday at 5 pm.

The winner of the final match in the First-Second Division playoffs will earn the right to compete in the First Division next season.