

# Remembering Cheryl Mary-Clare Hurst

Story on page 2



*The funeral procession making its way to the St. John's Public Cemetary for burial*

# Remembering Cheryl Mary-Clare Hurst



The nation of Antigua and Barbuda paused on Tuesday to pay homage to the life and times of Cheryl Mary-Clare Hurst, the former Leader of Government business in the Senate and Junior Minister in the Ministry of Tourism, who was accorded an official funeral held the St. John's Pentecostal House of Restoration on the Lauchland Benjamin Drive.

Prior to the funeral service, the body of the woman who served as the first general secretary of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, was available for viewing at the party's headquarters, the People's

Place on Nugent Avenue.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne, a close and trusted friend, was among those who filed pass the open casket to view the body dressed in the red beret and military style jacket, that she would wear on special party occasions. The prime minister would recall that she was one of those individuals with whom he would discuss ideas and to have these ideas refined before taking them public.

She was there when he first decided to contest the 1999 general elections and had been at his side as a friend and adviser until her death on

May 5. This was also the day when the new Cabinet for Antigua and Barbuda was sworn in following the April 30 general elections. In fact, news of her death was shared during the ceremony that was being held at the AUA Conference Room.

Senator Mary Clare Hurst, Tanty to many, also served as Chairman of the Antigua Port Authority as well as serving in several capacity for a number of other organisations including sporting bodies.

But it was Mary Clare the person who will be reminded in the years to come. She was an adopted

# Local News



mother of several persons from the Point/Villa Community, several of whom she helped to educate and even when they reached adulthood, was still a presence in their lives offering advice and guidance as were necessary.

Her devotion to the ABLP was unwavering. She provided the structure for the party's election cam-

paigns over the last fifteen years and whilst doing this, was able to train a cadre of young people who have now stepped into the breach when she was forced to step aside due to illness and now since her death.

Newly elected general secretary and Leader of Government Business in the Senate, Sen. Shenella

Govia called her a mentor and a role model and someone who provided an example of how she ought to perform in her role.

Following a funeral service filled with remembrance and thanksgiving for her life, Cheryl Mary-Clare Hurst was laid to rest at The St. John's Public Cemetery on Frias Hill Road.

## Eulogy of Mary Clare Hurst

By Dr. Oswald Thomas

Good afternoon.

There are people who hold offices. There are people who hold titles. And then there are the rare few who hold lives together. Mary Clare Hurst was one of those rare few.

I met Mary Clare when we were teenagers in the Labour Party Youth Movement. What began as friendship became something far deeper. We became brother and sister. Not by blood, but by choice. And sometimes the strongest families are built that way.

In November 1990, we traveled to New York together to take our college placement examinations. We entered that city carrying dreams larger than our suitcases. During our years at university, we lived together, worked together, struggled together, and encouraged each other through every challenge. Those years forged a bond that neither time nor distance could weaken.

While attending college, we both worked at Antigua and Barbuda's Mission to the United Nations. There we met our dear friend, Ms. Florentine Roberts, and an enduring friendship was born. During that period, we came to a troubling realization. Many members of the Antiguan and Barbudans diaspora knew very little about the significant development taking place back home. Most people would have lamented the problem. Mary Clare believed in creating solutions.

Together, we launched Waddle (Antigua) and Wa"omoni (Barbuda) News, a newsletter distributed every three months to more than five thousand Antiguan and Barbudans abroad. Long before social media connected communities across continents, Mary Clare was building bridges of information, identity, and belonging. She understood that people cannot support what they do not know, and she was determined to keep our people connected to home.

That commitment to service and purpose

revealed itself again while we were still studying in New York. Mary Clare received a call from the party asking her to return home and contest the St. John's City West seat following the retirement of her former boss and parliamentary representative, the late Henderson Simon. For many,



such an invitation would have been irresistible. For Mary Clare, the answer was simple. She declined.

Later, Henderson Simon called again and asked her opinion of a young man named Gaston Browne as his successor. Without hesitation, she expressed her confidence in him and pledged her full support. The rest, as they say, is history. What history should also remember is that Mary Clare willingly stepped away from what could have been a groundbreaking personal achievement. She could have become the first woman elected to Parliament in Antigua and Barbuda. Yet she never measured success by the offices she could occupy. She measured success by the impact she could make.

Mary Clare understood a principle that leadership scholars now champion around the world. The highest form of leadership

is not personal advancement. It is creating opportunities for others to flourish. She practiced that philosophy naturally and consistently, long before it became a popular leadership theory.

Her years of service reflected that belief. She became the longest-serving General Secretary of the Youth Movement and represented Party Chairman Sis. Lester on the Board of the Eastern Caribbean Institute for Democracy in Dominica. Wherever she served, she brought commitment, competence, and a remarkable understanding of people.

One memory from Dominica captures that gift perfectly. During a Caribbean Youth Conference, our delegation was determined to secure the election of the late Abuddha Barnes to the executive. As the votes were being counted, it became clear that we were trailing by a single vote. One delegate remained unconvinced and appeared unwilling to change his position.

As we assessed the situation, I noticed that the undecided delegate seemed particularly interested in one member of our delegation. I drew the matter to Mary Clare's attention and suggested that perhaps a strategic lunch invitation might help. With complete confidence, she simply said, "Leave it to me."

When the delegates returned from lunch and entered the conference room, voting had already concluded. Abuddha Barnes had been elected. It was another example of what made Mary Clare so effective. She understood that leadership is not merely about speaking. It is about listening. It is not about authority. It is about influence. And influence begins with understanding people.

Yet, as impressive as her public accomplishments were, they pale beside the quality of friend and sister she was.

One of the greatest blessings of her life was the extraordinary bond she shared with her sister, affectionately known as Jellybean. Growing up, they were very different. MC

was the adventurous and rebellious one, while Jellybean was the quiet and reserved sister who often found herself rescuing Mary Clare from whatever trouble she had managed to create. Yet despite their differences, they remained inseparable. As children they shared dreams, as adults they shared burdens, and as sisters they shared a love that never wavered until the very end.

When MC's health began to decline, Jellybean devoted herself completely to her care. She accompanied her to appointments, traveled with her for treatments, sat beside her during difficult moments, and remained a constant source of strength. Of course, anyone who knew these two knew that there was always room for laughter. Jellybean constantly reminded MC to eat properly and take care of herself, to which Mary Clare would respond with a serious face, "Jellybean, oh gosh jack Miss B ya name. Me tired tell you, who fi hang nah go drown." Even in her most difficult moments, she found a way to make people smile. That was her gift.

It would also be impossible to speak of MC's life without recognizing the extraordinary devotion she received from her beloved niece Lala. Long before her passing, MC shared with Lala that she intended to fight until the very end. She would do everything possible to manage her illness and continue living life fully—and that she did.

Lala became her caregiver, her advocate, her private nurse, her companion, and an unshakable source of strength. Whenever doctors asked questions regarding her care, MC would simply point to Lala and say, "She know everything... me na know anything." The doctors would laugh, and MC would laugh the loudest.

Lala would wake up early to prepare both herself and MC for their appointments, yet somehow MC always needed "just thirty more minutes." Like her six-year-old nephew Takaree, she had a childlike way of resisting time itself, often behaving like a child avoiding school, always finding a reason for a little more sleep.

Takaree, too, shared a very special bond with his beloved Tanty, as she affec-

tionately referred to him as her landlord. Whenever visitors arrived, he made sure everyone knew it was his house. Eventually, MC accepted her role as tenant and faithfully paid rent to her landlord every month—sometimes with a dollar, sometimes with candy, and sometimes with a meal. Together they created memories that will forever bring smiles to those who witnessed them.

Eight years ago, my son, who was also her godson, became gravely ill and later passed away. During one of the most painful periods of my life, Mary Clare never left my side. She walked with me through every



stage of that journey. She offered strength when I had none. She offered comfort when words were insufficient.

When my son died, Mary Clare left a sitting of the Senate, where she was serving as Leader of Government Business, and traveled to New York to attend his funeral. She came not because protocol required it, but because love compelled it.

Today, as I stand here reflecting on her life, I cannot help but notice a profound coincidence. My son transitioned on May 22. Mary Clare transitioned on May 5. In the mysterious providence of God, they now share the same month of departure.

As I reflect on all that Mary Clare accomplished, I realize that her greatest contribution was not a title she held, an election she influenced, or an institution she served.

Her greatest contribution was people.

People she encouraged. People she believed in. People she mentored. People she lifted.

People she loved.

As we witness more women assuming positions of leadership throughout our nation, we can see reflections of the foundation she helped build. Especially in Senator Govia whom she told me that she has trained well to take over from her as the GS of the party and thought that she would still be around to guide her as she grows into the GS position.

The true measure of a life is not how many doors open for us. The true measure of a life is how many doors remain open because we passed through them.

Today, throughout Antigua and Barbuda and beyond, there are countless doors that remain open because Mary Clare Hurst walked through them first. She opened opportunities. She created pathways. She built relationships. She expanded possibilities.

For her family, she was a source of unwavering love. For her friends, she was a steadfast companion. For her party, she was a trusted strategist. For her country, she was a devoted servant.

Some people leave memories. Some people leave accomplishments. Mary Clare left momentum.

That is why her story does not end today. It continues in every life she touched, every person she inspired, every opportunity she helped create, and every act of service that carries forward the values she embodied.

Rest well, my sister.

You did not simply live. You multiplied yourself in others.

And as long as we continue to serve, to build, to encourage, and to love as you did, your influence will continue to shape lives long after this day has passed.

Thank you, Mary Clare.

For the friendship. For the loyalty. For the example.

And for teaching us that the most powerful people are not those who seek the spotlight, but those who help others shine.

May your soul rest in eternal peace.



## *Tribute*

1<sup>st</sup> June, 2026



On behalf of the Executive Committee, Staff and Members of the Antigua & Barbuda Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU), I express our deepest condolences to the family and friends of the late Cde. Cheryl Mary-Clare Hurst. Comrade Hurst was a great daughter of soil that represented the Movement of Labour wholistically and had the embedded passion and dedication to protect worker's rights throughout the length and breadth of our twin island Nation of Antigua and Barbuda. The AT&LU was a part of her, and she always included the principles and values of the Union in her daily duties of being General Secretary of the ABLP, Minister of State, Senator and even as a Choir Member of ABLP.

I pray that the divinity the Holy Ghost transcend our dear comrade to the great beyond. Moreover, the prophetic belief of the scripture taken from John 16:22 states: "So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy." The AT&LU is forever indebted and appreciates and value the legacy of Cde. Hurst because of her dedication, support and loyalty to the Trade Labour Movement and the Working Class. May the Almighty Father continue to comfort the Hurst family in this time bereavement and may the soul of the late Cheryl Mary-Clare Hurst rest in perpetual peace.

Yours in Comradeship,

Bernard de Nully  
 President

## Talks Stalled with Washington on Third Country Nationals



Discussions between the governments of Antigua and Barbuda and the United States of America on third country nationals remain inconclusive with Prime Minister Gaston Browne maintaining that his administration cannot act recklessly in such circumstances.

Antigua and Barbuda is among several Caribbean states that has agreed, through bilateral arrangements, to accept deportees from the US. But the number being proposed by Washington for transfer to Saint John's has sparked concern among officials.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne, in an update on Saturday, said Antigua and Barbuda had agreed to accept 10 third country nationals annually under strict conditions. Those are that there will be background checks for criminal activity, and that those who will be sent here will all possess travel documents.

“What happens sometimes is some of these immigrants who they detain, as soon as they get to the United

States, they tear up their travel documents, and we can't have them here as stateless individuals,” the Prime Minister noted.

What appears to be a major sticking point in the discussions is the significant increase in the number that was initially agreed. Prime Minister Browne revealed that at one stage of the discussions, the US wanted Antigua and Barbuda to accept a total 120 deportees, with no guarantees, a risk he is unwilling to take.

“We're not promoting any hostility with the United States. We continue to maintain good relations with the U.S. But they have to understand that we have to defend our national interests. We're a small, powerless, and very vulnerable country.

He said it is necessary that Antigua and Barbuda due to its vulnerability, shield itself from allowing criminals to enter the country, adding that as leader, he cannot be reckless in his decisions.

The discussions have reportedly

stalled, but Prime Minister Browne has instructed senior diplomat Sir Ronald Sanders to make contact with the State Department for an update.

He reiterated Antigua and Barbuda's position, which is to assist where necessary, but not at any cost.

“We want to be a cooperative state, but we cannot participate or agree to anything that is to our detriment. I cannot justify as Prime Minister of this country to be part of any decision making or to agree, or to be compliant with anything that is not in the best interest of this country.

“I hope that the United States understands that because they themselves have issues that are not in their interests, that are inimical to their interests. They stand against those issues, and similarly, even though we are small and powerless, where we see potential risk, we cannot be complicit in any decision that will be detrimental to our country and its people,” Prime Minister Gaston Browne argued.

## Antigua and Barbuda Hosts Successful Focus Group Discussion On Regional Sweet Potato Initiative



Local sweet potato farmers, officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and representative of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) have concluded the first round of discussions on the project aimed at reviving the sweet potato industry across the Caribbean.

The participants met Tuesday at the Environment Division's Conference Centre for the first round of Focus Group Discussions on the project that is being implemented in Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia and Jamaica.

IICA Country Manager of Antigua and Barbuda, Craig Thomas, explained that funding is provided through the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, facilitated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with co-financing from the European Union.

"The four-year initiative continues to foster regional collaboration and knowledge sharing, building a strong community of practice to support



sustainable sweet potato production across the Caribbean.

"The project is being implemented by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)," he stated.

According to Thomas the FGDs generated qualitative information from

the participants that will support the strengthening of sweet potato seed systems, varietal selection, climate resilience strategies, and sector development planning in Antigua and Barbuda and will contribute across the region.

Dr. Myers Morgan, the consultant working on the project, was able to gather practical insights and experiences from stakeholders involved in the sweet potato sector.

The discussions will help the project to:

- \* Understand current sweet potato production systems and challenges
- \* Identify preferred sweet potato varieties and traits
- \* Assess seed sourcing and clean planting material systems
- \* Explore production costs and climate-related challenges
- \* Understand gender and youth participation in the sector
- \* Inform future project interventions and country-level planning

## Festivals Commission Board Swearing Takes Place On Friday



Government House has announced that the Swearing-In Ceremony of the newly appointed members of the Board of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission will take place on Friday.

In a statement issued overnight, Government House said during the ceremony, His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda, will administer the Oath of Office and Oath of Secrecy to the members of the Board, formally empowering them to undertake their

responsibilities in support of the continued development and promotion of Antigua and Barbuda’s festivals and cultural celebrations as assigned.

The ceremony takes place Friday at Government House in the presence of family and friends of the board members as well as representatives of the media.

Ambassador Elizabeth ‘Lisa’ Mahkoul will continue to serve as chair of the Board of the Festivals Commission with Attorney Ryan Johnson as the deputy chair. Larissa Barnes will serve

as secretary.

*The other members of the board are;*

- ☐ Terrence Dyett
- ☐ Annette Aflak
- ☐ Okera Lee
- ☐ Calbert Francis
- ☐ Devon Perry
- ☐ Dwayne Mussington
- ☐ Anika Davise
- ☐ Khan Cordice
- ☐ Yvonne Benjamin



## Antigua and Barbuda Brings the Caribbean's Greatest Summer Festival to Miami at Food, Wine & Fete 2026

Antigua and Barbuda brought the vibrant spirit and energy of the Caribbean's Greatest Summer Festival to Miami during the fourth annual Food, Wine & Fete (FWF 2026), held in May at the Historic Virginia Key Beach Park in Miami. The premier Caribbean all-inclusive beachside Soca fete welcomed more than 1,500 guests, including members of the Caribbean diaspora, tastemakers, media, food lovers, and culture enthusiasts for an unforgettable celebration of Caribbean cuisine, music, and culture.

Presented by the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority and the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission, the destination's immersive activation transported guests straight to the heart of Antigua Carnival 2026, taking place July 25 – August 4 under this year's exciting theme, "Feel the Rhythm." Guests were welcomed by a vibrant Antigua and Barbuda-branded experience featuring signature English Harbour Rum cocktails, custom-branded festival cups, dazzling Carnival costumes, and interactive photo opportunities that brought the energy and culture of the twin-island destination to life.

Antigua Carnival also dominated one of the event's most photographed moments through the destination's sponsorship of the festival's signature Carnival Wings step-and-repeat activation. Inspired by the beauty, artistry, and dramatic feathers synonymous with Caribbean Carnival culture, the vibrant installation became a must-visit photo destination throughout the evening, with guests eagerly lining up to capture moments alongside Antigua and Barbuda's dazzling Carnival ambassadors.

At the center of the activation was Antigua and Barbuda's fully branded destination bar experience, featuring English Harbour Rum, Antigua's internationally acclaimed premium rum. Wrapped in colorful destination imag-



**Carnival dancers at Food, Wine & Fete, representing the Antigua & Barbuda Festivals Commission showcased designs by Sechuns-The Band, while bringing the vibrant energy of Antigua Carnival 2026, "Feel the Rhythm," to Food, Wine & Fete 2026 in Miami. The activation highlighted the spirit of the Caribbean's Greatest Summer Festival. Photo Credit: Ricardo Reyes x FWF**



**Carnival dancers brought the spirit of Antigua Carnival 2026, "Feel the Rhythm," to life at Food, Wine & Fete 2026, posing alongside bartenders at Antigua & Barbuda's beautifully branded bar as guests enjoyed English Harbour Rum cocktails inspired by the twin-island destination. Photo Credit: Ricardo Reyes x FWF**

ery inspired by Antigua Carnival and the twin-island paradise, the visually striking bar invited guests to sip signature cocktails while immersing themselves in the energy, culture, and spirit

of Antigua and Barbuda. Bartenders, and Carnival dancers further brought the experience to life, creating one of the festival's most engaging and photographed activations.

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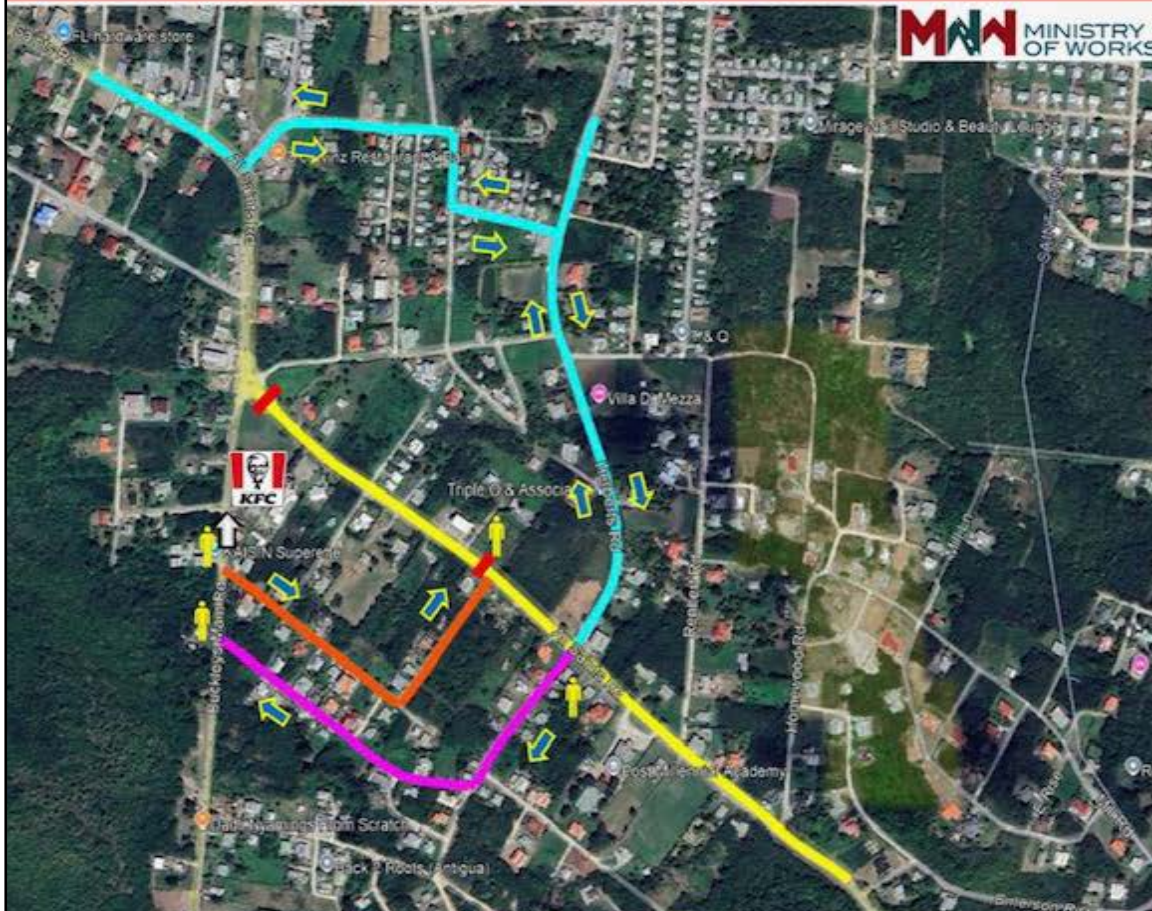
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## Motorcycle Officer Remains Hospitalised With Fractured Ankle



A police motorcycle officer remains hospitalized at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre following a traffic accident that occurred on Sir Sydney Walling Highway on Monday afternoon.

The injured officer has been identified as 23-year-old Te'field Charles, who was on duty at the time of the incident.

The allegations are that around 4:29 p.m. on June 1, a white Honda CR-V motor jeep, driven by a 52-year-old woman of Clarkes Hill, was travelling from north to south on an unnamed by-road near TURF.

It is further alleged that upon reaching the junction with Sir Sydney Walling Highway, the driver proceeded through the intersection and as a result, the vehicle collided with the police motorcycle, which was travelling westward along Sir Sydney Walling Highway.

Emergency Medical Services personnel responded to the scene and the injured officer was transported to the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre. He sustained a fractured right ankle and bruises to his body. His condition is said to be stable.

The motorcycle sustained extensive damage, while the Honda CR-V received minor damage.



Motorists are reminded to exercise due care and attention while using the nation's roads. Drivers are urged to obey traffic signs and signals, approach intersections with caution, and

ensure it is safe to proceed before entering major roadways. Responsible driving remains essential to preventing collisions and protecting all road users.



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SATURDAY  
**JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup>** | JACK IDLE | 7:30 PM | \$20



## CHTA Calls For A New, Broader Framework To Measure The True Value Of Caribbean Tourism

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) invites governments, development banks, tourism authorities, regional institutions and private sector leaders to adopt a new, broader framework for evaluating tourism's contribution to the Caribbean. The proposed approach looks past visitor spending alone to measure three things that shape the region's future: the economic value retained within Caribbean economies, the investment tourism makes in Caribbean people, and the industry's impact on the natural environment.

CHTA's proposal grew out of the 2026 Caribbean Travel Forum in Antigua, where public and private sector leaders agreed that the region needs better measures of tourism's long-term value. As a starting point, CHTA recommends the Domestic Capture Rate, the share of tourism spending that stays and circulates within the host economy. The figure shows how much of every visitor dollar works for the region's businesses and the people they employ.

"For decades the Caribbean has talked about tourism leakage," said Nicola Madden-Greig, immediate past president of CHTA and chair of the Association's Linkages Task Force. "That conversation taught us a great deal, and now we need a way to measure the progress we make. Domestic Capture Rate gives us a practical tool to track the value we keep and grow at home."

### A Broader Definition of Value

Economic retention tells only part of the story. CHTA wants the region to also weigh two measures long missing from the conversation.

Human capital is one of them. Tourism is the Caribbean's largest employer, yet the region rarely tracks how well the industry develops its people. Measuring investment in training, fair wages, career pathways and local leadership would tie tourism growth



to stronger livelihoods for Caribbean nationals, a priority now central to the new CTO Tourism Supply-Side Ministerial Committee.

Environmental stewardship is the other. The beaches, reefs and natural beauty that draw guests are the foundation of Caribbean tourism, yet the industry does almost nothing to measure its own footprint. CHTA wants that to change. Consistent measurement of energy use, water, waste and the condition of natural assets would help destinations protect the resources visitors come to enjoy.

"We want a fuller measure of what tourism delivers," said CHTA CEO Vanessa Ledesma. "It includes the careers we create for Caribbean nationals and the care we take of the environment our guests come to enjoy. Measuring those things will make the whole industry stronger."

### Building on a Growing Linkages Agenda

This work builds on CHTA's Linkages Task Force, which connects tourism with agriculture, manufacturing, creative industries, professional services and small businesses across the region.

Over the past two years CHTA has hosted three Tourism Linkages Trade Shows alongside Caribbean Travel Marketplace and CHIEF, giving Caribbean small and medium sized businesses direct access to tourism buyers and procurement teams. The Association is now launching a regional Tourism Linkages Demand Study to map procurement needs, open new doors for Caribbean businesses within tourism value chains and tackle the obstacles that hold them back.

### Why Better Measurement Matters

Caribbean leaders have discussed tourism leakage for more than half a century, held back by the absence of consistent, comparable measures of tourism's net contribution. Tourism Satellite Accounts remain incomplete or unpublished in many destinations. Incentives often encourage growth without tracking local participation. Data on workforce and environmental performance is scarcer still. A practical set of measures anchored by Domestic Capture Rate would close these gaps for policymakers, investors and industry leaders.



### An Action Agenda

To move the discussion forward, CHTA proposes four steps:

Develop a standardized methodology that measures value across three dimensions: economic retention through Domestic Capture Rate, investment in Caribbean people and the industry's environmental footprint, drawing on data destinations can use today.

Strengthen Caribbean supplier capac-

ity and SME participation in tourism supply chains, with expanded access to training, certification, financing, market intelligence and procurement opportunities. Greater local capture calls for investment in the businesses able to deliver it.

Establish shared standards for workforce development and environmental measurement, giving destinations a consistent way to track the careers

tourism builds and the resources it relies on.

Open a regional dialogue on tourism policies and investment incentives that rewards local sourcing, broader local participation and responsible use of natural resources.

“The next chapter of Caribbean tourism is about the value we create for Caribbean people, the businesses they run and the places they call home,” said CHTA President Sanovnik Destang. “Good measurement shows us where the opportunities are. Real progress comes from stronger local supply chains, a skilled Caribbean workforce and a well-protected environment.”

CHTA plans to engage governments, the Caribbean Tourism Organization, CARICOM, the Caribbean Development Bank, academic institutions and private sector partners to refine the concept and build a practical framework for regional use.

For more information on the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, visit [www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com](http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com).



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# Regional News

## SHOW OF FORCE

A former senior CARICOM official sees the docking of one of the world's largest warships, the USS Nimitz, in Jamaican waters on Monday as a tactic by the Donald Trump Administration to "intimidate" Cubans.

The Government on Monday welcomed the arrival of the aircraft carrier to Kingston, calling it a symbol of the long-standing bilateral relationship between Jamaica and the United States. The warship is expected to remain in the island until June 5.

But former assistant secretary general to CARICOM, Ambassador Byron Blake, scoffed at the idea of the warship in Jamaican waters carrying out "pedestrian" missions.

"Now, in the best of times, I might have said that was strange, but we're not living in the best of times. We are in a time where the US has announced publicly its intention to bring Cuba under US hegemony to regime change, to take over the country. The timetabling of that which has also been announced is that that would follow the Iran expedition," said Blake.

The US has intensified its economic and political squeeze on Cuba, maintaining tight trade sanctions and travel bans in a rigid push for democratic reform.

Washington's ongoing designation of Havana as a state sponsor of terrorism continues to cripple the island's economy as American officials demand immediate human-rights improve-



ments and systemic political changes.

Blake said it is "very strange" that the warship would come to Jamaica without an official statement from the Government.

"We have seen a listing of activities, which I would call pedestrian activities. Painting schools? Which high-level soldier does that? I think that it is really part of the intimidation and possible attack strategy on Cuba, and it should be seen and called in those terms. I cannot see any other term by which to describe it.

"What this means is that the Jamaican Government, and, by implications, we the Jamaican people are complicit in whatever will follow from here on with respect to Cuba and the US," said Blake.

At the weekend, the Associated Press reported that the top US commander in Latin America met with Cuban military leaders Friday in a "brief exchange on operational security matters" near the US Navy base in Guantanamo Bay, the latest official to visit the island

nation as President Trump ramps up pressure on its leaders.

Trump has issued a stark warning that Cuba "is next" on his administration's radar, following a dramatic January raid by US military forces that captured Venezuela's leader, Nicolás Maduro.

"Against that background, it seems to me that this ship in Jamaica waters is at best to intimidate the Cuban people. Note, I said 'Cuban people'. I didn't say the Cuban Government because the real intimidation of the generalised pressure is on the Cuban people.

"So it is either to intimidate them or, more probable, it is part of what would be the attack armoury on Cuba if the Cubans don't say, 'OK, we're dead take us'," said Blake.

Information Minister Dr Dana Morris Dixon said the five-day visit would see the USS Nimitz hosting and participating in a series of community initiatives.

Morris Dixon said the visit would offer a unique educational platform for young

Jamaicans as well as hands-on community support.

Yesterday, Investment Minister Aubyn Hill brushed aside concern about the ship's arrival in Jamaica amid rising tensions between Cuba and the US.

"The Nimitz is here on a goodwill tour. It's part of their 250-year anniversary as a country," he told The Gleaner. "The United States was one of the first countries – if not the first country – that recognised us when we became independent. We have a long partnership with them, and this is a goodwill tour. [I'm] very happy to see them."

In a media advisory, the US Embassy in Kingston said during the visit, the USS Nimitz will host subject matter expert exchanges and distinguished visitors, including government officials, members of the Jamaica Defence Force, and students from local universities.

It said crew members would participate in school-beautification projects and sports activities with local youth while also experiencing Jamaica's culture and hospitality.

The ship's visit, which falls under Southern Seas 2026, marks the 11th iteration of this maritime cooperation deployment since 2007, the embassy said, reflecting the US's continued commitment to working alongside regional partners like Jamaica to advance shared security objectives. (Jamaica Gleaner)

## Jamaica receives US\$2.5m in new disaster aid

Jamaica's recovery from Hurricane Melissa received a boost last Wednesday, when the United States Department of State announced an additional US\$2.5 million (\$394 million) in humanitarian assistance at the American Chamber of Commerce of Jamaica (AmCham Jamaica) Business Express and Civic Leadership and Corporate Social Responsibility Awards and 40th Anniversary Gala, held at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel.

The announcement, made during the presentation of the Eagle of the Americas Award to the Bureau for Disaster and Humanitarian Response (DHR) of the US Department of State, underscored the continuing humanitarian partnership between Jamaica and the United States following the Category 5 hurricane that struck the island in October 2025.

The additional funding builds on more than US\$22 million in emergency assistance already mobilised by the United States government after one of the most destructive storms to hit Jamaica in recent history. Deputy Assistant Secretary Taylor Garrett accepted the award on behalf of DHR, reflecting on the importance of sustained partnership and resilience in the recovery effort.

AmCham Jamaica president Ann-Dawn Young Sang said the occasion highlighted the role of international cooperation in times of crisis.

"The response to Hurricane Melissa demonstrated the extraordinary impact of partnership, compassion and coordinated leadership," she said. "As AmCham Jamaica marks 40 years of strengthening ties between Jamaica and the United States, it is fitting that we recognise a humanitarian effort that brought hope and relief to so many Jamaicans during one of the country's most difficult



periods."

She added, "AmCham Jamaica will continue advocating for sustainable growth, expanded investment, innovation, and stronger collaboration between the public and private sectors. We will continue supporting emerging opportunities in renewable energy, including solar and wind, while encouraging investments that strengthen both our economy and our resilience, as this is what meaningful partnership looks like."

The gala brought together senior government officials, diplomats, private-sector leaders and members of the philanthropic community to recognise leadership, civic engagement and corporate responsibility.

Among the top honours was a lifetime achievement award for Karl Hendrickson, recognising his contributions to business, tourism, philanthropy and national development. The award was accepted on his behalf by his son, Kevin Hendrickson, granddaughter Amanda Hendrickson, and great-grandson Dylan Marzouca.

The 2026 President's Award went to Audrey Tugwell-Henry, president and chief executive officer of Scotiabank Jamaica, for her civic leadership and impact on the financial sector. Her daughter, Peter-Kay Henry, accepted on her behalf.

The Civic Leadership and Corporate Social Responsibility awards highlighted organisations and individuals strengthening communities across the island. Special Good Samaritan awards recognised post-hurricane relief efforts by the Shaggy Make a Difference Foundation and the Sean Paul Foundation in western Jamaica.

In the corporate social responsibility categories, Danielle Rae Neil of The Happi Hub won for small organisations, while the GraceKennedy Group took top honours among large organisations. The Civic Leadership Award for Excellence (large companies) went to the Digi-cel Foundation, while Christopher Chinapoo received the award in the individuals and small organisations category. (Jamaica Gleaner)

## ‘Vincy Carnival Preparations in Full Swing’



St. Vincent and the Grenadines is officially in Carnival mode. With the official start of Vincy Mas just weeks away, the Carnival Development Corporation (CDC) is working around the clock, alongside private promoters and rural carnival organizers, to ensure a vibrant and successful season.

To accommodate artists, the CDC recently extended the registration deadline for the Soca monarch competition to Friday. In addition to administrative preparations, the CDC is actively building the festive atmosphere across the island. Following a successful event in Georgetown, the “Roman Rhythm” initiative is heading to Barrouallie this Friday. Organizers designed these community events to boost ticket sales, engage local communities without competing with rural carnivals, and provide artists with a platform to release new music.

A major focal point for this year’s festivities is the preservation and revival of traditional cultural components. The highly anticipated Cultural

Parade is set to return this year, with organizers working on the back end to make it a major hit once again.

Notably, the CDC is seeing a massive surge of local interest in the traditional “Monkey Band”. Rodney Small, a CDC board member, clarified that the Monkey Band is a distinctly local masquerade where participants cover themselves in charcoal, separating it from the oil-covered “Jab Jab” tradition seen elsewhere. Small emphasized that preserving these unique cultural identities is crucial, particularly because it drives the diaspora to return home for the festivities.

CDC board member Zion, who jokingly refers to himself as the “original bad man,” highlighted the broader national importance of the festival. He stated that serving on the CDC board is a privilege and a profound responsibility to drive the development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, particularly within the tourism sector. He noted that while the board may feature different viewpoints and occasional friction, they ultimately oper-

ate as a unified team to execute their mandate.

While excitement for Carnival remains high, organizers are not turning a blind eye to the challenges facing certain traditional events, such as the Queen Show, which has seen a decline in public turnout and gate receipts.

Small acknowledged that the entertainment indus-

try is constantly evolving, requiring organizers to “go back to the drawing board”. To combat “fete fatigue” where patrons grow tired of repetitive event formats like brunches the CDC is encouraging stakeholders to repackage their events and enhance the overall immersive experience for attendees.

“Why we move through the evolution and the innovation of things, the art form has to move, but don’t lose the core,” Small explained, comparing the necessary evolution of carnival events to the changing packaging of a cereal box over a decade.

Despite the financial pressures of hosting large-scale events, Small noted that corporate sponsors remain supportive. Sponsors understand that their financial backing goes beyond simple gate receipts; it is an investment in brand visibility and, more importantly, the preservation of live performance platforms for local artists. (St Vincent Times)

## Ukraine rescuers pull dead from rubble after Russian strikes kill 21 people



A Russian missile and drone attack killed at least 21 people across Ukraine overnight, including two children, marking one of Moscow's largest assaults in recent months.

An eight-year-old boy and three women pulled from the rubble of an apartment block were among 15 people killed in Dnipro, regional officials said. In the capital Kyiv, six people were killed.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said civilian infrastructure and energy facilities had been targeted across the country, with more than 100 people injured.

Russia's defence ministry said the strikes had been a response to previous Ukrainian attacks, saying in a statement that the "strike objectives" had all been achieved.

The Kremlin said on Tuesday it was carrying out the "systematic strikes" it had pledged after accusing Kyiv of a deadly attack on a student dormitory in an occupied part of eastern Ukraine in late May.

Kyiv said it had hit a Russian military

unit.

"This practice will continue," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Tuesday, claiming the strikes were targeting Ukrainian military infrastructure.

Zelensky had warned a "massive strike" was possible in his nightly video address on Monday, and urged residents to pay special attention to air raid alerts.

On Tuesday morning, he said Russia had launched 656 strike drones and 73 missiles of various types - ballistic, cruise, and anti-ship - in the overnight attack.

"We urgently need help from the United States in supplying missiles for Patriot systems", the Ukrainian president said, referring to interception hardware used to intercept Russian missiles.

Patriot missiles have been in short supply, exacerbated by the US and Israeli war against Iran.

Since returning to power last year, US President Donald Trump has also stopped direct supplies to Ukraine, so

Kyiv's European allies have been buying them from the US before sending them to Ukraine.

"The main strike was on Kyiv, where dozens of residential buildings and other purely civilian infrastructure were damaged again," Zelensky said.

Rescuers searching through the rubble of an apartment building in the central city of Dnipro where 15 people were killed recovered the bodies of an eight-year-old boy and three women, regional head Oleksandr Hanzha said, adding that another child had been killed in the blast.

The attack "essentially demolished" part of the building, Zelensky wrote on X.

More than 90 people were injured across both cities, while Kharkiv in the north-east - which also saw its energy facilities and civilian infrastructure hit - reported 10 injured, including a child.

An industrial facility was also attacked further south in Zaporizhzhia as regions across the country were targeted, the

# International

AROUND THE WORLD



president said.

Large plumes of smoke could be seen rising from the centre of the capital early on Tuesday, where the head of its military administration warned ballistic missiles had been fired and the city's Mayor Vitaliy Klitschko urged residents to stay in shelters.

The buzz of drones could be heard between more than a dozen loud explosions as strikes made impact through the early morning.

The attack caused fires near a petrol station, a construction site, and several apartment blocks, as well as two houses, Klitschko said. Blackouts were also been reported across the city.

One Kyiv resident sheltering in the city's metro said she dreamed the war would soon end, but that she had "lost all hope".

"I'm always going to the metro... it's really scary to stay at home," the 32-year-old told the Reuters news agency.

Leonid Zmiievskiy, 71, said Ukrainians were surviving on their own: "Although aid is coming from the West, I don't think they're helping much. If international pressure were stronger, I think it would all be over sooner."

Kyiv-born Ukrainian tennis player Marta Kostyuk was emotional after winning her quarterfinal match at the French Open in Paris.

"We had another difficult night in Ukraine, especially in Kyiv where so many people died, so I want to give this match to Ukrainian people, their resilience. Glory to Ukraine!" she said.

Meanwhile, one person was killed in Russia's western Kursk region after a Ukrainian drone strike on Monday evening, according to regional governor Alexander Khinshtein.

A fire was also reported at an oil refinery in the south-western city of Krasnodar after it was hit by a drone, authorities there said.

Ukraine's military confirmed it had struck both areas and several others overnight.

Since a brief ceasefire expired in early May, Russia has launched several waves of missile and drone attacks on Kyiv, among them strikes on a block of flats that killed 24 people, including

three children.

Days later, Ukraine responded with an attack on the Moscow region which Russian officials said had killed three people - which Zelensky said was "entirely justified".

Ukraine said Russia's threats were

"nothing short of shameless blackmail" and urged allies to increase pressure on Moscow.

Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. (BBC)

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**CHOIRS**  
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**Venue: Swetes Wesleyan**

9 Choirs from across the district and beyond will sing to the glory and honour of Almighty God. Admission is free but please bring a special offering and a special friend.

## Two people shot dead amid Kenya protests against US Ebola quarantine centre plan



Two people have been shot dead in the central Kenyan town of Nanyuki amid protests against US plans to establish an Ebola isolation centre at a military base nearby, the BBC has learnt.

One of the victims was shot in an area close to the Laikipia Airbase where a demonstration was taking place. He died after being brought to the town's hospital by friends.

The other victim was already dead when he was taken to the hospital by soldiers.

The circumstances of their deaths are not clear, and officials have not commented on the matter. A police spokesman told the Reuters news agency he was not aware of any deaths.

On Monday, hundreds of demonstrators marched through the town's streets, blocking roads and burning tyres, with police firing tear gas to disperse them.

Community leader Patrick Wahome told the BBC that one of those who died was shot when he "was heading home after closing his business".

The BBC has been unable to confirm the circumstances in which the second

man died. Both bodies, which are in the hospital morgue, appear to have gunshot wounds - one in the chest and the other on the shoulder.

The town was calm on Tuesday morning and there was a heavy security presence on the streets.

The US plan to establish an Ebola treatment facility in Kenya has sparked public concern about cross-border infection risks.

The 50-bed isolation centre is to be staffed by US medics and is intended to treat US citizens affected by the current outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Kenya has not recorded any Ebola cases so far.

Last Friday, the High Court said the opening of the centre should be halted after a rights group opened a case alleging the facility posed "grave and imminent risks" to public health.

Speaking for the first time about the issue on Monday evening, President William Ruto defended the plan saying that Kenya had "deployed every arsenal" to protect the country.

He told journalists that the US gov-

ernment had requested Kenyan support in dealing with the virus, which he had promptly accepted, describing it as a "mutual agreement".

"When President [Donald] Trump asked Kenya to support them by having a centre in Laikipia Airbase I gave the ok because it was an agreement with friends who have walked with Kenya for 30, 40 years," he said.

He called on Kenyans not to politicise a matter "so serious" as Ebola, asking politicians to avoid "reckless" talk about it.

"We are a responsible government. We know what we are doing," he added.

The High Court on Tuesday extended the suspension, ordering the government to disclose the details of the proposed Ebola facility.

Military aircraft have been seen flying in and out of the airbase in what experts say is ongoing preparation despite the court order.

Kenya's doctors' union and government watchdogs have opposed the plan saying it risks exposing local populations. (BBC)

## Murder victim told police 'I can't breathe' while handcuffed



Student Henry Nowak repeatedly told police officers “I can’t breathe” as he lay dying in handcuffs after being stabbed, bodycam footage shows.

The 18-year-old Southampton student was handcuffed after killer Vickrum Digwa, 23, lied to police at the scene of the 2025 stabbing, claiming he had been the victim of a racist attack.

Footage released by the force, with permission from Nowak’s family, shows him pleading “I’ve been stabbed” and an officer replying “I don’t think you have mate”.

Nowak suffered stab wounds to his legs and a fatal wound to his heart from a 21cm (8in) blade that Digwa said he carried as part of his Sikh faith. He was jailed for life with a minimum 21-year term.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) said an investigation into the police force’s actions was ongoing.

Speaking in the House of Commons

earlier, Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood revealed a police officer unrelated to the case had been misidentified and forced to relocate in order to protect him and his family.

The attorney general’s office is also considering the jail sentence given to Digwa after receiving “multiple requests” to review it under the unduly lenient sentence (ULS) scheme.

Nowak’s family, from Chafford Hundred, Essex, called his treatment by police “inhumane and degrading” and the force has apologised.

His father, Mark, said: “Henry told officers that he could not breathe nine times. He told them that he had been stabbed four times. Henry was pulled across the gravel, his hands forced behind his back and he was placed in handcuffs.”

He said the contrast between how his son and Digwa had been treated was “unbearable”.

“Henry should not have died on the

streets of Southampton in police custody,” he added.

In the footage, a police officer arriving at the scene can be heard asking: “What’s your name, mate?”

Nowak, who is lying on his back on the ground, faintly replies: “Henry.”

As the video continues, Digwa steps into the frame. He claims Nowak had taken his turban off and grabbed him by the hair.

The officer asks Digwa if he is injured, to which Digwa replies: “Yeah, yeah, I’ve got a swollen eye here, a little bruise here.”

Officers then turn to Nowak, who can be heard repeating “I’ve been stabbed” and then “I can’t breathe” while he is made to sit up to be handcuffed.

Speaking outside court, Henry Nowak’s father Mark said his son “did not die with dignity”

As the footage continues, the officer can be heard asking where Henry has

been stabbed. He then adds: “Don’t think you have, mate.”

While being handcuffed, Nowak says “I can’t breathe” another three times.

The officer can be heard saying: “He says he’s been stabbed, so let’s just check him.” He appears to briefly lift Nowak’s shirt around the belt area before he is left to lie on his side.

A female officer can then be heard asking: “Where do you think he’s been stabbed? In the face?”

A male voice replies: “He hasn’t been stabbed.”

Nowak, who seems unresponsive, is then told he is being arrested for assault.

Hampshire police’s Deputy Chief Constable Robert France said that within three minutes of interacting with Nowak, the officers were starting to perform CPR.

“This is a complete tragedy and I am sorry that they couldn’t save Henry that night and I’m sorry that Henry was handcuffed and arrested as he lost consciousness,” he said.

“The pathologist who spoke in court was clear there was nothing officers could have done that day to save Henry.

“His wound was deep and internal, the bleeding extensive but internal.”

Addressing the Commons, Mahmood said the stabbing was an “evil act” and she wanted to “pay tribute to the powerful words of the Nowak family”.

She said the bodycam footage was a “disturbing and tragic thing to see”.

“The IOPC will be equipped and encouraged to act to find the truth and to ensure, if necessary, that there are consequences,” she said.

But she said there was a “dangerous undercurrent” in how some had reacted to “this awful crime”.

Sir Keir Starmer commented on the case in a post on X, where he said: “This an awful, shocking case.

“We must end the cycle of tragedy by

tackling the horror of knife crime.”

Reform UK leader Nigel Farage said on social media that people should respond with “pure cold rage” to the treatment of Nowak.

In a statement, he said that “Henry’s family have responded to this in just the most extraordinarily dignified way” and claimed Britain has a “two tier culture where the rights and privileges of white people matter less than those of ethnic minorities”.

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch accused Farage of deepening divisions as she argued police should treat everyone equally regardless of race.

Liberal Democrat leader Ed Davey said it was “an evil murder made so much worse by the police response”.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police and Crime Commissioner Donna Jones described Nowak’s death as a “national tragedy”.

The Conservative politician said she was meeting with his family and had written to the prime minister calling for an “urgent review on the carrying of bladed articles for religious and ceremonial purposes”.

A spokesman for the attorney general said: “We have received multiple requests for Vickrum Digwa’s sentence to be considered under the unduly lenient sentence scheme.

“The law officers have 28 days from sentencing to carefully consider the case and make a decision.”

Under current legislation, practising Sikh’s have a legal defence for wearing a small, curved blade, known as a kirpan, close to their body for religious purposes.

While Digwa had been wearing a traditional kirpan under his clothing, the weapon he used on Nowak was much bigger and he had worn it in a sheath on top of his clothes.

When he asked his mother Kiran Kaur to take it away from the murder scene, he described it as a ‘shastar’, which is the Punjabi word for weapon.

Kaur is due to be sentenced for assisting an offender later this month.

The Sikh community has strongly condemned the killing and told the BBC worries about Digwa’s behaviour in the past had prompted them to bar him from one of their places of worship in Southampton. It added this happened long before he murdered Nowak.

The Sikh Federation said the blade used by Digwa was not a kirpan, while the Sikh Press Association added plans were in process to ensure every initiated Sikh in the UK was addressed directly regarding kirpan rules and responsibility.

In a statement, Digwa’s family said they were “deeply sorry for the pain and suffering the Nowak family has had to endure”.

It continues: “We would give anything to turn back time so the path of both Henry and Vickrum never crossed that night. We cannot change what has happened, we just hope that no further pain is caused in its name.”

The family added it “apologises to the Sikh community for our son’s actions which have unfairly brought the community into disrepute” and asked that the “tragedy is not used to inflame division or hostility”.

The officers who were called to the murder scene are still being treated as witnesses by the IOPC.

IOPC director Derrick Campbell said: “We acknowledge that this case has raised questions about the actions of the attending officers and we are aware that a few minutes of police body-worn footage has been issued by the force following the conclusion of criminal proceedings.

“As part of our ongoing investigation we are reviewing a large amount of police body-worn footage, which we need to consider in context with other evidence we have obtained, including reviewing material presented during the murder trial, as we establish the full circumstances.” (BBC)



ANTIGUA  
AND BARBUDA  
*The beach is just the beginning...*



# ANTIGUA Carnival 2026

JUL 25<sup>TH</sup> - AUG 4<sup>TH</sup>

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## Antigua and Barbuda Commonwealth Games Association to compete in Glasgow 2026

The Antigua and Barbuda Commonwealth Games Association (ABNOC/CGA) confirms its participation in the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, from 23 July to 2 August 2026.

The Glasgow Games have been scaled down to 10 sports as a cost-saving and financially sustainable measure after the Australian state of Victoria withdrew its hosting bid in 2023. That decision left the Scottish organisers with less time and a tighter budget; the reduced programme enables the event to proceed under the revised constraints.

A 13-member squad is expected to represent Antigua and Barbuda at Glasgow 2026 across Athletics, Boxing, Track Cycling and Swimming. The final team will be named once the Games move from entry by number to entry by name.

“We are at the stage of entry by number, which identifies the sporting disciplines we are expecting to participate in. The team will be confirmed when



**Cliff Williams, Secretary General, CGA**

we reach the protocol of entry by name,” said Cliff Williams, Secretary General, CGA.

Karen Joseph, 3rd Vice President of the ABNOC/CGA and a former national Netball star, has been appointed Chef de Mission. Joseph will lead the delegation and oversee registration and final preparations to ensure seamless participation. The ABNOC/CGA

says her leadership and experience make her a strong mentor for the next generation of athletes.

“We encourage the National Federations to put their best foot forward by submitting the best athletes with focused preparation. We are no longer taking athletes to events to participate but rather to compete, to be competitive,” said Hon. E. P. Chet Greene, President of the ABNOC/CGA.

The 12th Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting (12CSMM) will convene on 22 July 2026 in Glasgow, organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership with Commonwealth Sport and the Scottish Government. The ABNOC/CGA is hoping for attendance by our new Sports Minister. In the meantime, the ABNOC/CGA will monitor for any operational guidance issued by organisers in the days leading up to the Games.

The ABNOC/CGA will announce the final team and provide further updates as entries are confirmed.

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## Antigua Cup promises excitement and talent exposure



*Cutting Edge, the 2025 girls division champions of the Antigua Cup International Youth Tournament.*

The Young Warriors Football Club has announced the third staging of the Antigua Cup International Youth Tournament will be staged at the Buckley's Primary School Playing Field in Buckley's Village from July 5 to 12.

Dubbed summer's most exciting soccer event, the Antigua Cup continues to attract local and overseas teams.

With 33 days to go before kick-off, several clubs and teams have already confirmed their participation in the five age categories, which are under-9, under-11, under-13, under-15, and under-17 divisions.

The organizers say that a proactive effort has been made to attract teams for the girls' division, which will feature competitions in the under-11, under-15, and under-19 age categories.

Interested teams still have until the middle of this month to confirm their participation in both the boys' and girls' divisions, with registration set to close on June 15.

"We are looking forward to another week-long of exciting football and exposure of talent," a release from Young Warriors, organizers of the tournament, said.

The champions, runners-up, and third-placed teams in each age group of both the boys' and girls' divisions will receive trophies.

Individual awards will also be presented to the top goalkeeper, defender, midfielder, and goal scorer in every age category.

With the FIFA World Cup about to kick-off soon, excitement abounds among the young footballers in Antigua and the region ahead of this year's Antigua Cup International Youth Tournament.

## Strictly Business fail to reach final of ABSCA men's 30-over contest



*The Dredgers softball cricket team*

Last year's losing finalists, Rackaman Construction Strictly Business, have missed out on reaching the final of the 2026 Antigua and Barbuda Softball Cricket Association (ABSCA) Men's 30-Over contest.

Strictly Business team played unbeaten to end the round-robin preliminary stage at the top of the standings with a perfect four wins in as many games to earn the number one seeding into the semi-finals.

But Strictly Business crashed out in the knocking stage, losing their first match of this year's competition, in a one-wicket defeat to the fourth-seeded Dredgers in the semi-finals at Rising Sun.

The Strictly Business was dismissed for 112 in 16.3 overs. Jevon Howel hit 42, while Ashfield Weatherhead and Raymond Leadette each made 12.

Kurt Douglas snapped up four for 22, Mervin Higgins took three for 26, and J'Quan Athanaze picked up two for

14.

Player of the match D'hari Francis smashed an unbeaten half-century to lead the Dredgers to victory at 116 for nine in 19.3 overs.

Francis slammed 74 not out, which included five sixes and five fours, and Javon James chipped in with 11.

Kadem Josiah captured three for 30, Shaquan Reifer claimed three for 31, and Owen Graham picked up two for 23.

In the final, the Dredgers will face defending champions Marcko Inc. Buckley's 3Js, who pulled off a commanding 49-run victory over Goody's Advent 300 in the other semi-final at Dredgers.

Player of the match Demari Benta and Steve Martin both hit half-centuries to propel the Buckley's 3Js to 226 all out in 22.2 overs.

Demari Benta slammed 70, Steve Martin smashed 59, Richie Thomas

struck 24, and Nigel Fergus scored 19. Andra Samuel took four for 36, and Dorian Grant claimed three for 41.

In reply, 300 was dismissed for 167 in 26.2 overs. Brian Burton hit 44, which included five sixes. Kennedy Tonge struck 24, Zack Thomas made 20, and Andra Samuel scored 10.

Richie Thomas bagged four for 41, Rodney Williams picked up two for 21, Demari Benta captured two for 37, and Charanlall Ramjohn claimed one for 21.

The men's 30-over final between the Dredgers and the Buckley's 3Js will take place at Rising Sun on Sunday, June 7, at 10 am.

It will be followed by the final of the St. John's Cooperative Credit Union 15-over women's competition between Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors and defending champions Alzarri and Sharon Joseph North Sails Antigua Female Flyers at 2 pm

## Nixon backs Falcons to make CPL statement

Paul Nixon, head coach of the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons, is confident his charges are poised to make a strong statement in the 2026 Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL), insisting the squad possesses the talent, character, and culture needed to challenge the competition.

The regional cricket tournament is set to bowl off on August 7 and run until September 20 across six iconic Caribbean venues.

“We have a great squad, full of good people who are highly skilled,” said Nixon.

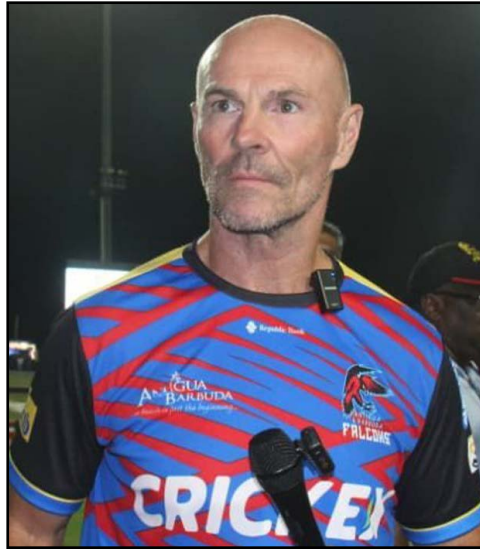
The former England wicketkeeper-batsman stated that creating the right atmosphere will be just as important as tactics and preparation, stressing the need to maximise individual performances while maintaining an enjoyable team culture.

“As coach, I will bring care, passion, winning experience and strategies to maximise each individual’s performances. Plus, a fun vibe is critical on our journey,” added Nixon.

Nixon played professionally for decades. He played for Leicestershire County Cricket Club in England from January 2003 to September 2011. Also playing in all forms of first-class cricket, winning Twenty20 tournaments in 2004, 2006 and 2011.

“Having been involved in an elite and high-pressure environment I am eager to be challenged and to challenge others in any organisation in which I operate. As a strong and motivational leader, I am passionate about coaching and developing players as individuals,” Nixon said.

“I have played and coached in cultures that expect and demand a high quality of work ethic and personal motivation. This is a work ethic that has been integral to my personal philosophy and that is the cornerstone of my coaching style, helping to generate the best from my players and management team,” added Nixon.



Paul Nixon

The Falcons will be hoping Nixon’s blend of experience, leadership and positive team culture can help turn potential into results as they prepare for what promises to be one of the most competitive CPL seasons in recent memory.

A total of 34 matches will be played in the CPL. As anticipation grows for the region’s premier T20 tournament, Nixon expects with greater balance across the competition, it should be a fiercely contested tournament.

Asked which teams he expects to pose the biggest threat this season, Nixon was reluctant to single out any particular franchise, instead pointing to the league’s increased competitiveness following changes to the player retention system.

“I really believe this year’s CPL is as open as it has ever been,” he said. “The draft having ‘Right to Match’ and ‘Heritage’ options has created more movement of players. This has levelled the playing field of the franchises with the deepest pockets,” said Nixon.

Nixon also revealed that several new players have joined ahead of the upcoming CPL season, with more signings still to be announced.

“We’ve added new local West Indies players to our team, and we will also

be making announcements on some additional overseas players soon. Our new recruits bring match-winning ability, experience and energy to the squad,” said Nixon.

Rather than singling out individuals, Nixon stressed the importance of creating an environment where every player can thrive.

“Before the CPL starts, I will sit down with each player and together we’ll go through their preferred role and what is required to help win the competition.

“We need every player to step up and win one or two games with outstanding performances. Taking pressure off players is key and allowing them to play as naturally as possible gives them the best chance to shine,” he explained.

Yet to win a title, the Falcons will be aiming to improve on their fourth-place finish in the 2025 season, when they ended the campaign with 11 points.

In the opening match, Falcons will play a returning Jamaica Kingsmen on August 7 at Arnos Vale Ground in Kingstown, St. Vincent, at 6 pm.

Nixon also welcomed the Jamaica franchise, formerly Tallawahs to the CPL, after a seven-year absence.

“It’s wonderful that Jamaica are back in the CPL. Everyone involved in the tournament wants to see a strong Jamaican team. It will be fantastic to return to a venue where we enjoyed so much success and to catch up with a few old friends.”

The Englishman previously enjoyed considerable success in Jamaica as head coach of the Jamaica Tallawahs, leading the franchise to CPL titles in 2013 and 2016, while also guiding the team to the playoffs in 2017.

“Hopefully, the amazing people of Jamaica will come out in their numbers, support the team and create the electric atmosphere that makes cricket there so special.”

## Ireland make history with first T20I win over West Indies



*Players of the Ireland women's team celebrate a dismissal.*

DUBLIN, Ireland -- In a rain-hit thriller at Castle Avenue on Monday, Ireland claimed a historic first-ever Women's T20I victory over the West Indies, winning via the DLS method after the heavens opened, with the hosts just one run ahead of the par score.

Chasing 142 for victory, Ireland were 99 for five after 14.1 overs when Louise Little struck a boundary at the start of the 15th over, a four that pushed Ireland one run ahead of the DLS target.

Moments later, the rain returned with a vengeance, and the players never made it back onto the field.

The win was powered by a magnificent captain's knock from Orla Prendergast, who remained unbeaten on 71 off just 46 deliveries. Her innings, which marked her 11th T20I half-century for Ireland, held the chase together after a rocky start.

Earlier, West Indies captain Hayley Matthews won the toss and chose to bat. The decision paid immediate divi-

dends in the field.

Ava Canning removed Matthews in the third over for one, and Leah Paul's stunning low diving catch at square cover sent Deandra Dottin packing for 12, leaving the Windies wobbling at 21 for two in the fourth over.

Wicketkeeper Christina Coulter-Reilly then produced a diving catch of her own to dismiss Qiana Joseph for 12, giving Canning her second wicket as the visitors slipped to 33 for three. When Jahzara Claxton was run out for 11 in the ninth over, the Windies were 49 for four.

Things didn't get any better for the regional side as Stafanie Taylor retired hurt after facing 18 balls and scored just nine runs.

Shemaine Campbelle, with a gritty 21, and Jannillea Glasgow, with a defiant top score of 36, steadied the ship with a 46-run partnership, but the West Indies could only manage 141 for eight from their 20 overs.

Ireland's reply began disastrously.

Openers Alana Dalzell and Arlene Kelly, promoted up the order, both fell in the first over to Shawnisha Hector, leaving the hosts at three for two.

Prendergast and Rebecca Stokell then rebuilt with a 57-run stand for the third wicket before Stokell departed for 12 in the ninth over, making it 60 for three.

Leah Paul, one, and Alice Tector, two, followed quickly as Ireland lost three wickets for just five runs, putting the chase in serious jeopardy.

But Prendergast held firm by hitting 11 fours and a six in her 46-ball knock, and Little's rain-soaked boundary sealed the historic result.

The victory lifts Ireland level with the West Indies at the top of the Tri-Nations standings, which also features Pakistan.

The West Indies will face Pakistan on Wednesday (today), while Ireland will conclude their campaign against Pakistan on Thursday. (CMC)

# Sports

WEDNESDAY 03<sup>RD</sup> JUNE 2026



## Winning starts for Da Squad and Pytonz in President's Cup defense



Both men's and women's defending champions have made a winning start in defense of their titles in the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association (ABAVA) President's Cup Championships on Monday evening.

Top-seed Cool & Smooth & JOMA Caribbean Da Squad launched their defense of the women's President's Cup title with a 3-0 victory over fourth-seed Chargers Eagles 1 in the first encounter of an opening-night double-header at the indoor volleyball stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

The opening match of the tournament saw Eagles and Da Squad battle through several competitive rallies, with both teams trading points early in each set.

While Eagles showed flashes of strong play, Da Squad's consistency and execution proved the difference as they gradually pulled away to secure a straight-set victory, winning 25-14,

25-18, and 25-19.

Top-seed Zamine Shipping Services and ABI Insurance Pytonz started their defense of the men's President's Cup title with a 3-1 victory over fourth-seed Vernon G. Edwards Logistics High Flyerz in Monday's second encounter.

The feature match of the evening lived up to expectations as reigning champions Pytonz stave off a strong challenge from a determined High Flyerz squad.

High Flyerz came out firing and immediately put the defending champions under pressure, claiming the opening set 25-22 and sending a clear message that they would not be intimidated.

Pytonz responded strongly in the second set, displaying the composure and experience that earned them the title to level the match with a 25-17 victory.

The final two sets were fiercely con-

tested, with High Flyerz battling for every point and threatening to regain control of the match. However, Pytonz found another gear in the crucial moments, edging both sets 25-22 and 25-21 to complete a hard-fought four-set victory.

Both Da Squad and the Pytonz advanced to their respective best-of-three finals, where they will clash with the other first-round match winners.

The other opening-round President's Cup matches were slated to take place during another double-header at the YMCA on Tuesday, June 2.

The second-seeded Jets were slated to meet third-seed Theatric Lighting and JOMA Stoneville in the women's President's Cup, while the second-seeded Cool & Smooth & JOMA Caribbean Da Storming Lions were scheduled to clash with third-seed Theatric Lighting and JOMA Stoneville in the men's President's Cup.