

# The National Performing Arts Centre Will Be Ready For CHOGM

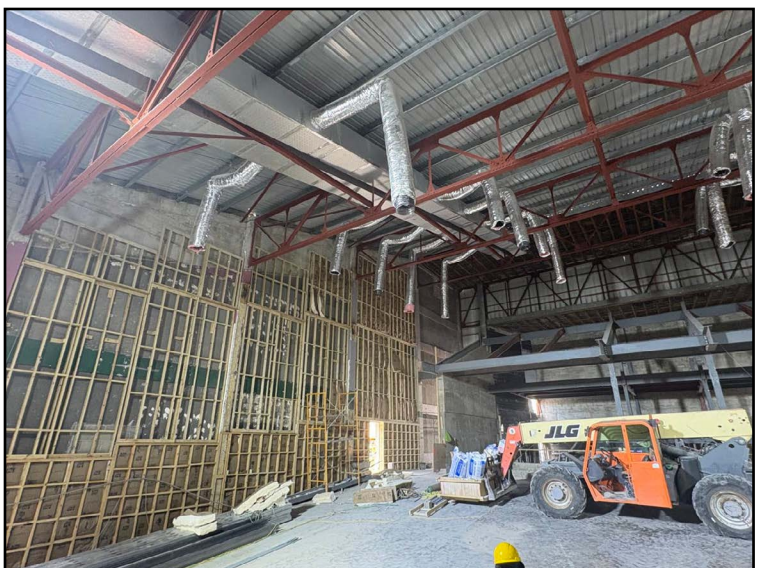
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Agriculture Minister Anthony Smith Jr. (Second from right) and the Antigua and Barbuda delegation at the Ocean Summit in Tokyo, Japan

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## The National Performing Arts Centre Will Be Ready For CHOGM



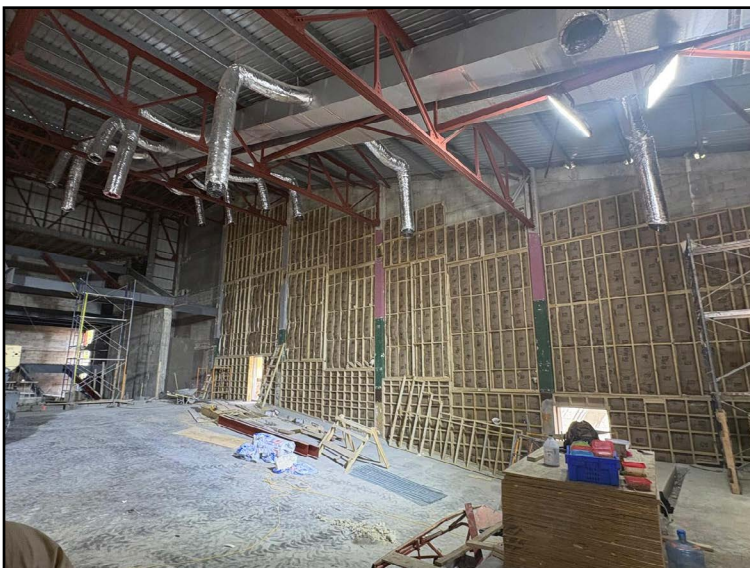
The Chairman of the National CHOGM Task Force, Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P Chet Greene and the Minister of Social Transformation and Chairman of the National House Company, Rawdon Turner say they are confident that the National Performing Arts Centre will be ready in time for the hosting of the CHOGM Opening Ceremony on November 3.

This after Minister Turner gave his Cabinet colleague a tour of the transformation work being done on the former Deluxe Cinema on

High Street which is being transformed into the National Performing Arts Centre. As head of the CHOGM Task Force, Minister Greene requested a tour of the construction site as he wanted to get a first-hand look at the progress of the work and to be reassured that the September timeline for completion was on target.

“I must say that I am pretty impressed and no amount of kudos is enough for Minister Turner and his team for the work that they have

done here. I am quite pleased with how they have flipped the internal arrangements and this is the first thing that caught my attention; the way they have maximized the internal space for greater seating capacity. This represents creative thinking; I am further impressed to learn that this is being led by local talent headed by Minister Turner and Project Coordinator, Cynthia Laviscount of National Housing and others. Yes, we have had some non-national support, but this project is being led by and driven by



and funded by local tax-payers,” Greene remarked.

The senior minister noted that the transformation of the former Deluxe Cinema into the National Performing Arts Centre represents a major policy decision by the Gaston Browne Administration to invest in the creative talents of the nation’s youth.

“I can imagine this facility, once built out, post-CHOGM and how it will fit into the expansion of the services and the offerings that we have in tourism where cruise ship tourists and others can come to this space and have or local talents performing, thus extending the value

of our tourism product,” he stated.

Minister Turner reported that the final bits of cement work are scheduled to be completed by the end of this month and after that will come the finishing; installing seats, the audio-visual system, carpeting and the sound-proofing of the building.

He said on completion the building will seat just under nine hundred persons with a balcony area with two layers of seats.

One of the interesting feature of the transformation is that the building now has two separate roofs.

“We have a layer of galvanise and then on top of that is insulation,

perline and then another layer of galvanise. What that does is that it provides very good insulation in terms of sound-proofing. Just imagine that you are in a theatre and it starts to rain, you don’t want the noise of the rain on the galvanise roof to be disturbing the performance taking place inside; we have to control the acoustics. Even the panels that will be used on the inside will also help to reduce external sound. There will also be special carpeting on the floor. This is going to be the most elaborate purpose built facility of its kind, certainly in the Eastern Caribbean,” Minister Turner declared.

## CDEMA Executive Director Pays Courtesy Call on Ministers Rawdon Turner and Kiz Johnson

Executive Director of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Elizabeth Riley, on Wednesday paid a courtesy call on Minister of Social and Urban Transformation and Local Government, Rawdon Turner, and Minister of State, Kiz Johnson as discussions continued to strengthen disaster management and regional cooperation.

The meeting focused on matters relating to CDEMA, the National Office of Disaster Services (NODS), and Antigua and Barbuda's role within the regional disaster management framework.

During the discussions, Riley highlighted the importance of strengthening Antigua and Barbuda's position as a sub-regional focal point within the Caribbean's Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) system. She also outlined several plans and initiatives pursued by CDEMA to improve regional preparedness, coordination, and resilience in the face of natural disasters and emergencies.

Riley encouraged both ministers to actively participate in regional and international initiatives aimed at strengthening the Caribbean's disaster management systems and improving collaboration among member states.

The CDEMA Executive Director also provided an overview of the agency's regional mechanisms, along with the various agreements and legislative frameworks that support the organization's operations throughout the Caribbean.

She was accompanied by her Executive Assistant during the courtesy visit.

The engagement forms part of a broader series of meetings and activities taking place this week involving CDEMA officials in Antigua and Barbuda. The delegation is expected to participate in meetings with NODS and receive updates on projects sup-



*Executive Director of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Elizabeth Riley*

ported by the agency locally.

Officials are also scheduled to conduct field visits across Antigua and Barbuda on Friday to assess ongoing initiatives and disaster preparedness efforts.

A key highlight of the visit will be the signing of the Country Work Programme for the next five years, aimed at strengthening disaster resilience, preparedness, and emergency response coordination within Antigua and Barbuda.

Sarah Stuart Permanent Secretary, Craig Cole Deputy Director of NODS, Naomi Williams-Carvalho Executive Assistant NODS were also present at the meeting.



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## Minister Kiz Johnson Calls for Greater Economic Empowerment of Caribbean Women at OAS Meeting

Minister of State within the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation, Kiz Johnson, has reaffirmed Antigua and Barbuda's commitment to advancing women's economic rights across the Caribbean during her participation in the Organisation of American States (OAS) Ministerial Luncheon in Washington, D.C.

Speaking during the high-level dialogue themed "Towards a CIM Agenda on Women's Economic Rights in the Caribbean," Johnson stressed that financial inclusion and economic empowerment remain essential pillars for the sustainable development of the region.

"Antigua and Barbuda believes that one of the essential keys to the sustainable development of the Caribbean is the financial inclusion and economic empowerment of women," Johnson told delegates. "We also hold the view that this is not the obligation of one state or a group of states, it is the collective responsibility of all states."

The Minister encouraged the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) to continue assisting member states in removing barriers that prevent women from accessing entrepreneurship opportunities, land ownership, higher education, and employment at all levels.

Johnson highlighted that while women in Antigua and Barbuda face relatively few barriers to entering the workforce, many remain concentrated in lower-paying and lower-ranking positions within the tourism and hospitality sectors, despite tourism being a major driver



of the national economy.

She said the government has therefore placed increased focus on entrepreneurship, leadership opportunities, digital inclusion, and access to financing for women.

The Minister pointed to initiatives led by the Antigua and Barbuda Investment Authority and the Prime Minister's Entrepreneurial Development Programme, which she said have helped many women access opportunities for small business development and self-employment.

Johnson also used the forum to address the growing importance of recognizing the "care economy," noting that many women continue to shoulder unpaid caregiving and domestic responsibilities while also participating in the workforce.

"Women who remain at home as full-time caregivers contribute enormously to national development, yet this work is rarely quantified or reflected within our eco-

nomic systems," she stated.

She further highlighted Antigua and Barbuda's Social Protection Act of 2020, which provides support measures including food assistance, school support, housing assistance, and other social programmes aimed at protecting vulnerable households.

Johnson called on regional governments and the Commission on Women to begin serious discussions on integrating unpaid care work into social protection systems and broader economic policy frameworks.

The Minister, who was also accompanied by President of the Senate Alinecia Williams-Grantha, has since returned to Antigua and Barbuda following the conclusion of the meetings in Washington, where regional leaders discussed strategies to create more inclusive, equitable, and gender-responsive economies throughout the Caribbean.

## Antigua and Barbuda Participates In Island States Ocean Summit In Tokyo

Antigua and Barbuda is participating in the Island States Ocean Summit 2026, taking place in Tokyo, Japan from 3–4 June under the theme, “Sustainable Ocean Action for Resilient Islands.”

The delegation is led by the Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and the Blue Economy, Anthony Smith Jr. It also includes Climate Ambassador Ruleta Camacho-Thomas, Ms., Senior Operations and Policy Manager within the Department of the Blue Economy, Marver Woodley, Deputy Chief Fisheries Officer, Dr. Tricia Lovell and Director of the Centre of Excellence for Oceanography and the Blue Economy at The University of the West Indies FIC, Dr. Branson Belle.

The Summit brings together representatives of island states, development partners, scientists and international organizations to advance climate-resilient and science-based ocean planning.

During the High-Level Segment, Minister Smith delivered Antigua and Barbuda’s national statement, emphasizing the importance of the ocean to the country’s food security, livelihoods, tourism and economic development. He highlighted the increasing pressures faced by Small Island Developing States, including sea-level rise, coastal erosion, coral reef degradation, marine pollution and stress on marine resources.

Minister Smith outlined Antigua and Barbuda’s efforts to strengthen ocean governance, including the development of a national Blue Economy Bill and ongoing work on Marine Spatial Planning. These initiatives are intended to support the sustainable management of fisheries, tourism, conservation, maritime transport and coastal development.

He also reaffirmed the country’s support for the global 30x30 target and



called for increased access to ocean science, research, data, technology

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and technical support for Small Island Developing States.

As a new member of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, Antigua and Barbuda welcomed the Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management Strategy as a useful framework for integrated ocean governance and regional cooperation.

Minister Smith also participated in a High-Level Special Event on “Sea Level Rise and International Law,” which focused on safeguarding the rights and interests of Small Island Developing States.

The Summit includes the launch of a Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management Support Platform to strengthen technical assistance, coordination and partnerships for island states. The Antigua and Barbuda delegation is also participating in bilateral meetings and technical discussions on ocean governance, sustainable fisheries, climate resilience and financing.



Antigua and Barbuda remains committed to working with regional and international partners to promote sustainable ocean management and a re-

silient blue economy for present and future generations.



# Local News



## Zachariah Represents Antigua and Barbuda at ICT Workshop in Belize

The Ministry of Information Communication Technologies (ICT's) was represented at a two-day workshop in Belize, hosted by UN ECLAC, focused on strengthening digital resilience throughout the Caribbean.

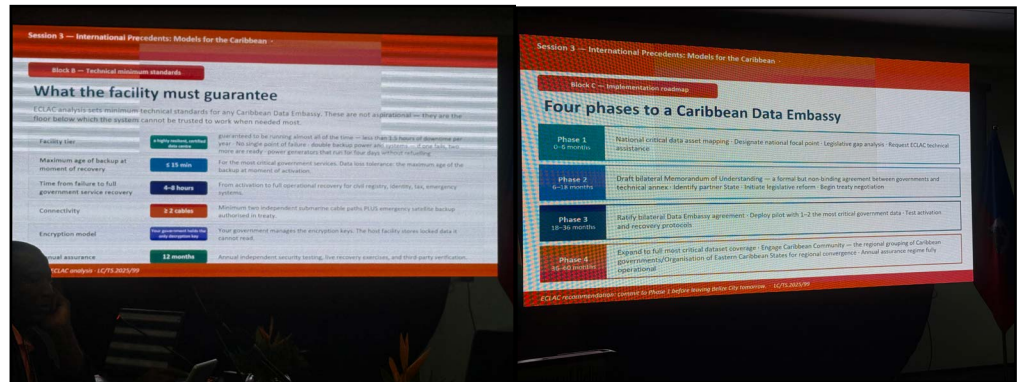
Manager – Business and Data Analytics Unit, Desiree Zachariah says, “Antigua and Barbuda recognizes the essential need for robust digital structures, and the June 2nd to 3rd workshop was an excellent opportunity for us to collaborate with stakeholders across the region to explore the implementation of data embassies.”

Data embassies serve as secure data storage facilities that enable countries to mitigate risks of data loss and service delivery disruptions during national crises. They support a robust legislative framework that encompasses hosting agreements, cybersecurity investments, and network connectivity solutions.

The workshop included discussions assessing the immediate, medium, and long-term benefits of data embassies and the potential for public-private partnerships to support this endeavor. It seeks to foster collaboration among



Ms. Desiree Zachariah (yellow jacket) - Manager Business and Data Analytics Unit



governments, businesses, and other key stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive approach to digital resilience.

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## PDV Caribe Supports Capacity-Building Efforts

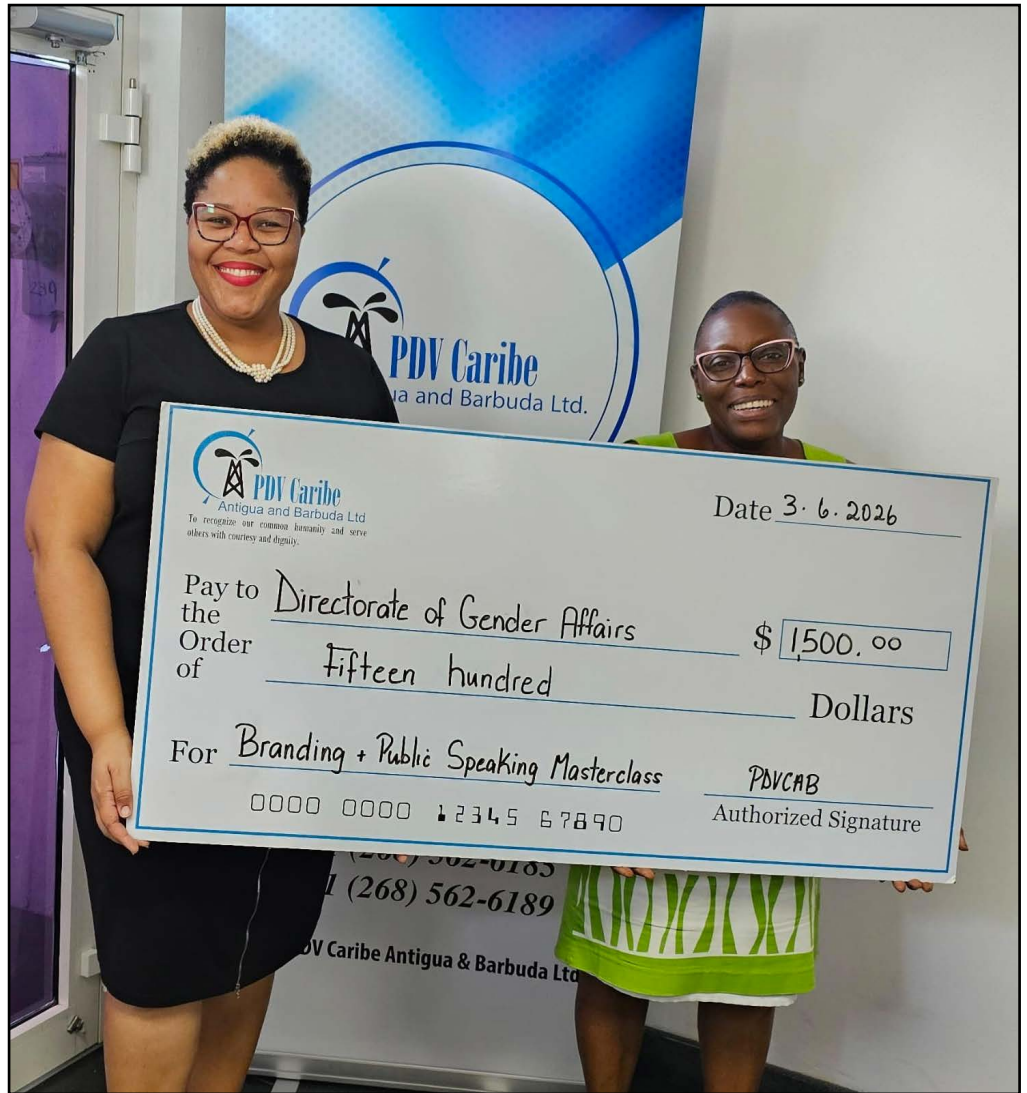
PDV Caribe is making a tangible contribution to capacity building among the young people of Antigua and Barbuda.

In this regard, PDV CAB Ltd. has decided that it will be a part-sponsor of the Directorate of Gender Affairs' Branding and Public Speaking Masterclass which it will host on June 13, 2026. This initiative is designed to equip young women with confidence, communication skills, and personal development tools needed to thrive in leadership and public life.

General Manager of PDV CAB Ltd. Jellette Ralph, expressed the readiness of her organisation to donate to such a worthy cause, as opportunities such as these align with PDV CAB's vision of providing access to educational programmes. She further stated that women are now being empowered to lead not only in corporate settings, but also in political and public life, and this workshop will strengthen communication skills.

The donation of EC\$1,500.00 will assist with key event expenses.

The handover was done at the PDV CAB's office on Wednesday 03 June, 2026.



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**MONDAYS**  
**11AM - 12NOON**

**MRS. JELLETTE RALPH**  
**(JELLY BEANS)**

# Tourism Minister Hails Ted Isaac's Lasting Legacy

Tourism Minister Charles Fernandez has paid tribute to the contributions of the late Theodore "Ted" Isaac, describing him as one of the most influential figures in the history of Antigua and Barbuda's hospitality industry.

In a statement issued on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism and the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, Fernandez hailed Isaac's decades of service to the tourism sector, noting that his contributions helped lay the foundation for the industry's continued success.

"Theodore 'Ted' Isaac was a towering figure in Antigua and Barbuda's tourism industry," the minister said. "He was a visionary leader, a mentor to generations of tourism professionals, and a proud son of the soil who dedicated his life to advancing our country's hospitality sector."

Fernandez said Isaac's impact extended far beyond the positions he held during a career that spanned more than four decades. According to the minister, the veteran tourism executive helped shape not only institutions and businesses, but also the lives and careers of countless individuals who entered the industry.

"His legacy is not measured only by the hotels he managed or the organizations he led, but by the countless lives he impacted, the careers he helped shape, and the standards of excellence he championed," Fernandez stated.

The minister's remarks came as members of the tourism fraternity, government officials, and members of the public reflected on Isaac's remarkable contribution to one of the country's most important economic sectors.

Isaac made history as the first Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority Board of Directors and the first indigenous Antiguan to serve as Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association. He also held senior leadership roles at



several of the country's most prominent resorts, including the Royal Antiguan Hotel, Jumby Bay Resort, and Jolly Beach Resort, where he became one of the longest-serving General Managers in the property's history.

Fernandez noted that Isaac's leadership and expertise extended well beyond hotel management. Throughout his career, he served on numerous tourism and national boards, including the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority, where he contributed to tourism policy, destination development, and industry standards.

The Tourism Minister also highlighted Isaac's commitment to people, describing him as a leader who understood that tourism's greatest asset was its workforce.

"Mr. Isaac understood that tourism was fundamentally about people. He invested in people, believed in people, and inspired people," Fernandez said.

Beyond tourism, the minister praised Isaac's dedication to preserving Antigua and Barbuda's cultural heritage. He pointed to Isaac's longstanding support for the arts and the steelpan movement, particularly his role in fostering support for the Gemonites "Moods of Pan."

Fernandez said Isaac recognised the

importance of culture in shaping the visitor experience and worked to ensure that the nation's artistic traditions remained an integral part of its tourism product.

The veteran tourism executive was awarded for his contributions, receiving the honour of Commander of the Most Illustrious Order of Merit, and the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Reflecting on Isaac's legacy, Fernandez said the nation is deeply grateful for his work within the hospitality industry.

"Our nation owes him a tremendous debt of gratitude. His contributions helped lay the foundation upon which our tourism industry continues to thrive today," he said. "We mourn his passing, but we acknowledge and celebrate a life of service, leadership, and remarkable achievement."

The Tourism Minister has extended condolences to Isaac's family, friends, former colleagues, and members of the wider tourism community, adding Isaac's legacy will continue to inspire future generations and serve as a reminder of the dedication and vision that helped transform the nation's tourism industry.

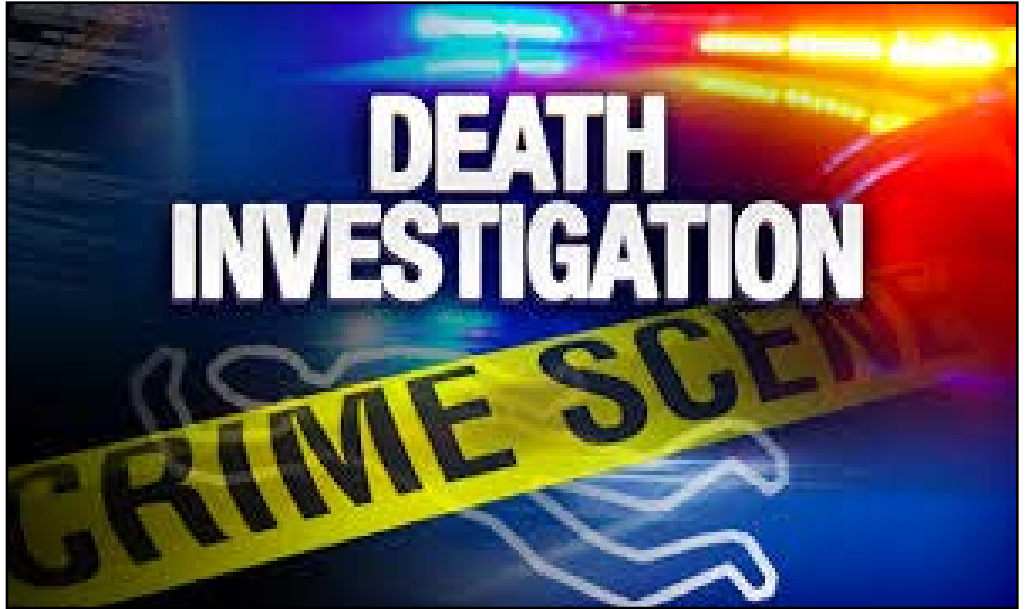
## Police Probe Sudden Death Of 75-Year-Old Man

Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding the sudden death of 75-year-old Carl Noel Lashley of No-Fixed-Address.

Lashley's lifeless body was discovered shortly after 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 3, in the vicinity of the Pillars of Saints New Testament Church of God on Lower All Saints Road. He was found lying on the sidewalk dressed in a black sweater, green shirt, long black pants, and a pair of black Crocs.

Police officers who responded to the scene conducted preliminary inquiries and observed no visible signs of injury or violence on his body.

A medical doctor later visited the scene and officially pronounced him dead at approximately 2:35 p.m.



Investigations into the circumstances surrounding the incident are ongoing.

The Police Administration extends

sincere condolences to the family, relatives, and friends of Mr. Lashley during this difficult time.

### DAILY PROGRAMMING

|                           |                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>EARLY VIBRATIONS</b>   | 6AM-10AM MON. - FRI.              |
| WITH GREMSTA              |                                   |
| <b>THE RUSH HOUR SHOW</b> | 5PM-7PM MON. - FRI.               |
| WITH ROGER LAKE           | 6AM-9AM SATURDAYS                 |
| <b>TOUCHLINE</b>          | 7PM-9PM MON. - THURS.             |
| WITH EPILUS               |                                   |
| <b>BAD COMPANY</b>        | 2PM-6PM THURS. 12PM-4PM SATURDAYS |
| LIVE FROM THE V.I.        | & 1PM-5PM ON SUNDAYS              |
| <b>REGGAE INSPIRATION</b> | 9PM-12AM MON. THURS. SUNDAY       |
| WITH SELECTOR KEEGAN      |                                   |
| <b>JAH WADADLI</b>        | 7PM-9PM FRIDAYS                   |
| WITH DJ JAH WADADLI       |                                   |

## George Lake Pays Moving Tribute to ‘Larger-Than-Life’ Father



The extraordinary life and legacy of renowned surgeon, mentor and national icon Sir Cuthwin Lake were celebrated Wednesday as family, friends, government officials and members of the public gathered at St. Peter’s Anglican Church to bid farewell to an extraordinary adopted son.

Delivering a deeply personal and often emotional eulogy at his Official Funeral, Sir Cuthwin’s son, Attorney George Lake, painted a vivid portrait of a man whose impact stretched far beyond the operating theatre, touching lives across Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Nevis and the wider Caribbean.

Born in North Side, Anguilla, on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 1930, Sir Cuthwin rose from humble beginnings to become one of the region’s most respected medical practitioners. His educational journey took him from St. Kitts Grammar School to Mount Allison University and Dalhousie Uni-

versity in Canada, where he earned his medical degree before further specialising in surgery in England.

His career would eventually bring him to Antigua and Barbuda at the invitation of the late National Hero Sir Vere Cornwall Bird, who recruited him to serve as Chief Surgeon.

“Dad, Doc, El Supremo, Brutus, Uncle Cutty, Slugs, the Russian — these were all his nicknames,” George Lake told mourners. “He was truly a man for every season.”

The eulogy highlighted Sir Cuthwin’s larger-than-life personality and varied interests. An accomplished athlete in his youth, he excelled in football, swimming, cycling and long-distance running. He captained university football teams in Canada and maintained a lifelong love of sport, music and horse racing.

Yet it was his dedication to medicine and public service that defined

his legacy.

George Lake recounted stories of his father traveling throughout the Leeward Islands, often at his own expense, to perform surgeries for patients with little access to health-care. In one remarkable example, he described how villagers in Anguilla would line airstrips with their vehicle headlights to guide Sir Cuthwin’s aircraft to safe landings before the island had electricity.

“He would later speak of performing surgery at the old hospital in Anguilla while nurses held kerosene lamps over his head so he could see well enough to save lives,” Lake said.

One of the most poignant moments of the tribute came when George Lake recalled suffering a devastating leg injury as a child after a horseback riding accident.

At the time, there were no orthopedic surgeons on the island, forcing



Sir Cuthwin to undertake the delicate operation himself.

Years later, George learned that behind his father's reputation for confidence and authority was a worried parent who privately feared he might not be able to save his son's leg.

"He told a friend he didn't know how he could cut off his son's leg," Lake recounted. "He opened up my leg like a fillet, took a magnifying glass and tweezers and stayed there until he was sure there was not a speck of dirt left in the wound."

The operation was successful, and George recovered fully.

The tribute also shed light on Sir Cuthwin's significant role in Antigua and Barbuda's political landscape. Described as one of Sir Vere Bird's closest advisors and a member of the famed "kitchen cabinet," Sir Cuthwin wielded considerable influence behind the scenes while maintaining his focus on healthcare development.

George Lake shared a little-known story involving former Nova Scotia Premier John Buchanan, Sir Cuthwin's former university roommate and lifelong friend. During the

1970s, Buchanan reportedly sought to recruit Sir Cuthwin to lead a major hospital project in Canada.

According to the eulogy, Sir Vere Bird became so concerned about losing the surgeon that he personally visited the Lake family home before dawn to appeal to Sir Cuthwin's wife to persuade him to remain in Antigua.

"Canada wants Dr. Lake. We know why," Bird reportedly told her. "We can never afford Dr. Lake. We can't pay Dr. Lake what he is worth, but Antigua needs Dr. Lake."

Sir Cuthwin stayed.

His son said that decision reflected a deep commitment to the people of Antigua and Barbuda and the wider Leeward Islands, whom he had come to regard as family.

Outside medicine and politics, mourners heard stories of a man known for his generosity and mischievous sense of humour. Patients who could not afford treatment were rarely charged and often paid with vegetables, livestock or whatever they could spare.

"He considered it service," George Lake said.

Friends and family also remembered his love of practical jokes, recounting one occasion when he secretly replaced a pot of boiled sweet potatoes with stones, delighting in the confusion that followed.

Even after his medical career in Antigua ended prematurely due to political disputes, Sir Cuthwin continued serving others. He later moved to Nevis, where he mentored his protégé, Dr. Dwayne "Baba" Thwaites, while continuing to provide medical care.

Throughout the nearly 20-minute tribute, George Lake repeatedly emphasised that behind the titles, honours and accomplishments was a man who never forgot his roots.

"At the end of the day," he said, "Sir Cuthwin Lake, with all the letters behind his name, does not begin to describe our husband, father, grandfather, uncle and friend."

Instead, he said, Sir Cuthwin remained throughout his 95 years "a little, brown-skinned island boy from North Side, Anguilla."

Dr. Sir Cuthwin Lake passed away at Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2026, at the age of 95 years.



ANTIGUA  
Carnival  
2026

*Skinner*  
FABULOUS



JULY 30<sup>TH</sup>

8:00PM @ CARNIVAL CITY

EARLY BIRD  
GENERAL

\$100

RHYTHM  
ROOM

\$350





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JULY 31<sup>ST</sup>

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2026

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# ANTIGUA Carnival 2026

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## JULY 30<sup>TH</sup>

8:00PM @ CARNIVAL CITY

EARLY BIRD  
GENERAL

**\$100**

RHYTHM  
ROOM

**\$350**





# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

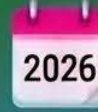


## CARNIVAL PARADE MARSHALS

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**2026 JUNE 15, 2026**



### WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU AS A PARADE MARSHAL

As a Parade Marshal, you play a vital role in ensuring the safety, order, and success of our parades as a representative of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission.

#### CORE OPERATIONAL DUTIES

- **Crowd Control** – Keep spectators behind designated boundaries, identify high-risk areas, and prevent overcrowding.
- **Parade Flow Management** – Ensure bands move at a consistent pace, maintain spacing, and prevent congestion.
- **Participant Support** – Provide directions, assist lost or distressed participants, and refer to medical or support services when needed.
- **Communication** – Maintain radio contact, report incidents clearly (what, where, who), avoid unnecessary chatter and follow instructions promptly.
- **Emergency Support** – Report emergencies immediately, assist within your level of training, create space for responders, and help keep everyone calm.



### WHAT YOU WILL RECEIVE

- ✓ **Mandatory training**
- ✓ **Official apparel and identification**
- ✓ **Meals and refreshments**
- ✓ **Operational experience in event management and public safety**



### OPERATIONAL CONDUCT

- Be visible, alert, and positioned strategically.
- Use clear, calm, and assertive communication.
- Act early to prevent issues rather than react.
- Stay within your assigned zone unless directed otherwise.



### CODE OF CONDUCT

- Treat everyone with respect and professionalism.
- Remain impartial, fair, and courteous at all times.
- No alcohol, drugs, or anything that may impair you while on duty.
- Do not engage in arguments or physical confrontation.
- Escalate issues to security, police, or your supervisor.
- Always wear your official ID and apparel.



### HEALTH & SAFETY

- Stay hydrated and wear appropriate clothing and footwear.
- Take scheduled breaks.
- Report any health concerns immediately.
- Follow all safety instructions and signage.



### BEFORE, DURING & AFTER THE EVENT

**Before:** Attend training, understand your duties and zone, collect all equipment and ID.

**During:** Perform your duties diligently, follow instructions, and stay focused.

**After:** Assist with crowd dispersal, report incidents/observations, and return all issued equipment.

## SIGN UP TODAY!

HELP MAKE THIS CARNIVAL SAFE, VIBRANT, AND UNFORGETTABLE!

THANK YOU FOR STEPPING FORWARD TO SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY!  
TOGETHER, WE MAKE CARNIVAL SAFE, VIBRANT & UNFORGETTABLE!





# CARNIVAL KAISO TENT

FRIDAY  
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SATURDAY  
**JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup>** | JACK IDLE | 7:30 PM | \$20

FRIDAY  
**JUNE 12<sup>TH</sup>** | JACK IDLE | 7:30 PM | \$20

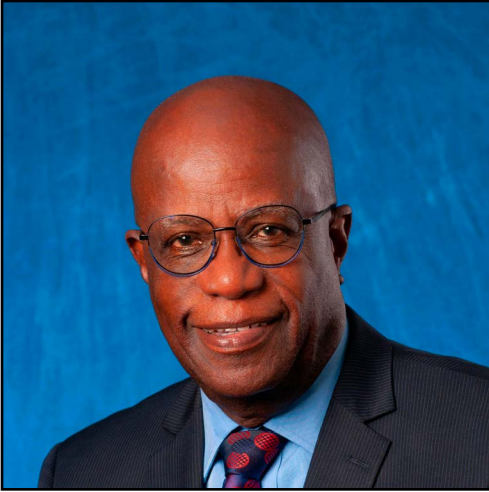
SATURDAY  
**JUNE 13<sup>TH</sup>** | JACK IDLE | 7:30 PM | \$20

FRIDAY  
**JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup>** | JACK IDLE | 7:30 PM | \$20

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



## Caribbean's Economic Report Card Under Spotlight as CDB Meets in The Bahamas



**By Julian Rogers**  
*Caribbean Bridges*

NASSAU, The Bahamas — As regional leaders, finance ministers, central bankers and development experts gather for the Caribbean Development Bank's Annual Meeting, discussions are expected to focus heavily on resilience, debt sustainability and innovative financing solutions for small island and coastal developing states.

Behind those discussions lies a reality often overlooked outside financial circles: the Caribbean's economic future is increasingly influenced by how international investors assess the region's creditworthiness.

Ahead of the meeting, Fitch Ratings economist Joshua Grundleger offered a rare insight into how one of the world's major credit rating agencies evaluates Caribbean economies and the factors shaping the region's standing in global financial markets.

His assessment suggests that, despite continuing vulnerabilities, the Caribbean's overall credit story has improved significantly since the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The past few years in the Caribbean have been pretty strong for many countries' credit profiles," Grund-

leger said during an interview with *Caribbean Bridges*. "Given that tourism is a big part of many countries' economies, we've seen tremendous growth coming from the lows of the COVID years."

According to Fitch, governments across the region have used the tourism recovery to strengthen public finances, reduce deficits and, in some cases, lower debt burdens.

Those improvements have translated into stronger sovereign credit profiles.

Among the standout performers is Jamaica, which Fitch currently rates at BB-minus with a stable outlook.

Grundleger described Jamaica's recovery as particularly noteworthy, pointing to more than a decade of fiscal reforms following the country's debt challenges in the early 2010s.

"Jamaica has come back from a tremendous path over the last 10 to 12 years," he said.

Barbados is following a similar trajectory after its 2018 debt restructuring. Fitch currently assigns Barbados a positive outlook, reflecting continued progress in fiscal management and debt reduction.

The assessment underscores a reality that Caribbean policymakers have increasingly embraced: fiscal discipline remains one of the most effective tools for improving economic resilience.

That resilience has become especially important in a region exposed to hurricanes, climate shocks, volatile energy prices and fluctuations in tourism demand.

Grundleger argues that credit ratings are not simply a measure of current economic performance but of a country's ability to withstand future

disruptions.

"You can't stop hurricanes from coming," he observed. "You have to put structures and institutions in place to manage these risks."

The concept of resilience is expected to feature prominently at this year's CDB gathering, where policymakers will explore mechanisms for financing climate adaptation and disaster recovery without creating unsustainable debt burdens.

For international investors, however, resilience is often measured through fiscal indicators.

Countries with lower debt, stronger fiscal balances, adequate reserves and credible institutions generally receive more favourable assessments because they are considered better equipped to absorb shocks.

The issue is particularly relevant for small Caribbean economies, where a single hurricane or global downturn can erase years of economic gains.

Grundleger pointed to Jamaica's response to Hurricane Beryl as an example of how preparation can make a difference.

Although the storm interrupted economic momentum, Fitch maintained confidence in the country's overall trajectory because years of reform had strengthened its financial position and disaster response framework.

The discussion also touched on Guyana's extraordinary economic transformation.

While Fitch does not maintain a public sovereign rating on Guyana, the country's rapid oil-driven expansion has attracted significant international attention.

At one stage, Guyana's economy was growing by approximately 40

per cent annually, one of the fastest rates ever recorded globally.

Yet Grundleger suggested that the ultimate measure of success will not be the pace of growth itself but how effectively the country uses its resource wealth to prepare for the future.

The experience of resource-rich nations around the world offers both success stories and cautionary tales.

“The question is how they prepare for the point when the oil is no longer there,” he said.

The broader message emerging ahead of the CDB meeting is that development and creditworthiness are increasingly interconnected.

While Caribbean leaders continue to advocate for fairer access to climate finance and concessional lending, international markets are also examining the quality of governance, fiscal management and institutional strength.

Credit ratings may appear to be little more than a collection of letters and symbols, ranging from the coveted AAA ratings of countries such as Germany and Singapore to lower speculative grades, but they carry significant consequences.

Higher ratings generally translate into lower borrowing costs, greater investor confidence and improved access to capital.

For developing countries seeking to finance infrastructure, education, healthcare and climate resilience, those advantages can be substantial.

As delegates meet in Nassau over the coming days, the debate will undoubtedly focus on innovative financing tools and development solutions.

Yet the conversation with Fitch suggests that the foundation of resilience remains surprisingly straightforward: prudent management,

strong institutions and the discipline to prepare for challenges before they arrive.

For a region that continues to confront economic and environmental uncertainty, that may prove to be the

most important lesson of all.

*Caribbean Bridges* by Julian Rogers  
[julian@caribbeanbridges.com](mailto:julian@caribbeanbridges.com)

Watch the full interview on [www.caribbeanbridges/substack.com](http://www.caribbeanbridges/substack.com)



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# Regional News



## Butch Stewart's family differences resolved



The family of late Jamaican business and tourism mogul Gordon 'Butch' Stewart have announced that they have resolved their differences and are looking forward to the continued development and success of his legacy.

The family made the announcement in a joint press release issued through the law firm Lennox Paton in The Bahamas.

The family of The Hon Gordon "Butch" Stewart

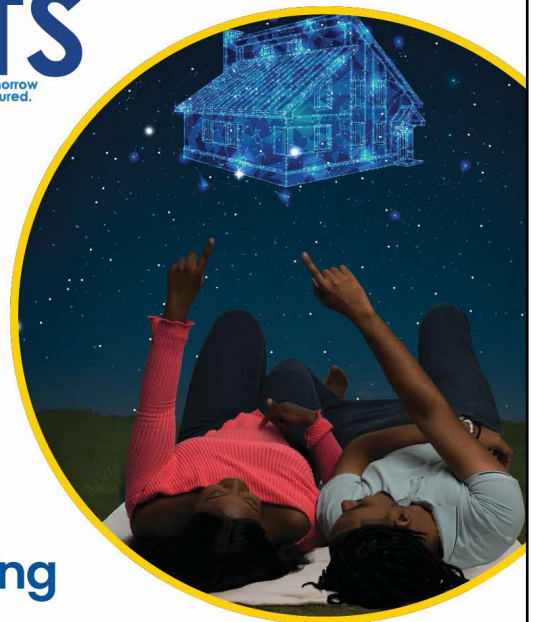
OJ, the founder of the Sandals & Beaches Group, are pleased to announce that they have resolved their differences that arose following Butch's death in January 2021.

The family look forward to moving on with their lives and are excited by the continued development and success of Butch's abiding legacy, the Sandals & Beaches Group. (Jamaica Observer)



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## Caribbean delegation visits Martinique and Guadeloupe to examine Sargassum management strategies

Following recent Sargassum Regional Strategies for Ecosystem-based Actions project (SARSEA) regional meetings in Dominica, a delegation representing nine Caribbean States and Territories of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is undertaking a study mission in Martinique and Guadeloupe from June 1 to 4, 2026, to explore approaches to managing sargassum seaweed and developing value-added applications for the material.

A SARSEA press release said that the initiative, supported by the European Union and the OECS, is part of a continuing regional collaboration effort designed to encourage knowledge-sharing and strengthen collective responses to the environmental, economic, and public health impacts associated with recurring sargassum invasions across the Caribbean.

Since 2011, large-scale sargassum influxes have posed significant challenges for Caribbean Small Island Developing States, affecting coastal ecosystems, marine biodiversity, public health, and economic stability. In response, Martinique and Guadeloupe have developed a range of strategies focused on monitoring, collection, risk management, and the transformation of sargassum into useful products.

Throughout the four-day mission, delegates will observe these measures firsthand, engage with local stakeholders, and discuss opportunities for greater regional cooperation. The visit aims to facilitate the exchange of best practices while promoting more coordinated responses to a challenge shared by Caribbean nations and territories.

The Martinique segment of the programme, taking place on June 1 and 2, includes a series of field visits and technical presentations.

On June 1 in Le François, participants are scheduled to visit offshore contain-



ment barriers and collection barges between 9:00 AM and noon. During the afternoon, they will tour two monitoring sites operated by Madinair from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM. A presentation on monitoring systems and early-warning tools will follow at Le François Town Hall from 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM.

Activities on June 2 in Le Vauclin will begin with visits to manual collection sites at Macabou and Pointe Faula, led by ACI representatives, from 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM. Delegates will then meet with representatives of GIP and ACI at Le Vauclin Town Hall between 10:30 a.m. and noon.

Later that day, the delegation will visit Holdex in Le François, a company involved in developing commercial and innovative uses for sargassum. The programme will also feature presentations on initiatives supporting the development of value-added products derived from sargassum, delivered by Dominique Bœuf of SARA/SERD.

The mission is being conducted with support from the SARSEA project, financed by the Agence Française de Développement and implemented

jointly by Expertise France and the OECS Commission.

SARSEA says it seeks to enhance technical expertise, strengthen governance structures, and promote ecosystem-based approaches to sargassum management throughout the Caribbean region.

Organisers state that the mission demonstrates the commitment of Martinique and Guadeloupe to share their experiences with neighbouring Caribbean territories through cooperation, solidarity, and innovation.

Highlighting the importance of regional collaboration, an OECS representative participating in the mission stated:

“Sargassum does not recognize borders. By combining our knowledge, expertise and resources, we can better protect our coastlines, our economies and our communities.”

The study tour is taking place in Martinique from June 1–2, 2026, and will continue in Guadeloupe from June 3–4, 2026. (Dominica News Online)

## UN experts raise concerns over U.S. measures targeting Cuba

A group of United Nations experts has voiced strong concern over what it describes as increasing pressure by the United States against Cuba, warning that a series of political, economic, and judicial actions could undermine the principles of sovereignty and international law.

In a recent statement, the experts criticized what they characterized as efforts to influence the political system of a sovereign nation through coercive means.

“Efforts to change the constitutional order of a sovereign State through threats and coercion echo colonial-era practices,” the experts said.

As per the UN press release, their concerns are linked to developments that followed the January 2026 abduction of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and to President Donald Trump’s March 2026 declaration of the so-called “Donroe Doctrine,” which asserted U.S. predominance in the Western Hemisphere. According to the statement, these developments have heightened concerns about regional stability and respect for national sovereignty.

They also referenced comments attributed to President Trump regarding Cuba.

“Statements by the US President regarding the “honour of taking Cuba” reflect a deeply concerning strategy of coercion against a sovereign State.”

“This assertion is not mere rhetoric, but part of a broader strategy involving the long-standing embargo on Cuba, its listing as a State-sponsor of terrorism, the recent fuel blockade and the imposition of coercive measures on third parties,” the experts said.

Particular attention was given to the recent federal indictment of former Cuban President Raúl Castro. The experts argued that the legal action appears connected to wider efforts aimed at pressuring Cuba and questioned the



use of domestic judicial mechanisms against current or former heads of state.

According to the statement, employing national court proceedings as an instrument of foreign policy may conflict with principles of sovereign equality and self-determination established under the Charter of the United Nations.

They further expressed concern about the announced deployment of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz to the southern Caribbean, describing it as an additional form of coercive pressure that they contend is inconsistent with provisions of the UN Charter.

The statement also highlighted the humanitarian consequences of restrictions affecting Cuba’s fuel imports since January 2026. The experts noted that shortages of fuel have contributed to significant energy challenges, including power outages and disruptions to essential services, with vulnerable populations bearing the greatest burden.

UN officials and independent experts have previously raised similar concerns regarding the humanitarian impact of fuel restrictions.

“These actions are part of a disturbing trend of lawlessness and contempt of multilateralism and the UN Charter. The normalisation of coercion and threats of regime change undermines the integrity of the entire international legal order.”

“A democratic and equitable international order requires that all States, regardless of size or power, participate on equal footing, free from undue pressure,” they said.

The release stated that experts called on the United States government to end threats against Cuba’s sovereignty and to withdraw unilateral coercive measures that they believe are inconsistent with international law.

They also urged UN member states not to recognize or implement measures that violate the principles of sovereign equality and non-intervention and encouraged the international community to take appropriate action within the UN framework to uphold international law.

Additionally, the experts appealed to both the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly to examine the situation as an issue with implications for international peace and security. (Dominica News Online)

## Man shot dead by FBI after taking hostages at California bank

A man who had been holding several people hostage overnight inside a California bank has been shot dead in a standoff with the FBI, police said.

The suspect was killed in “an officer-involved shooting involving Federal Bureau of Investigation personnel” on Wednesday, the Bakersfield Police Department said.

The fatal shooting ended a tense period after the suspect barricaded himself with several others inside the multistory Chase Bank building on Tuesday in Bakersfield, 110 miles (177km) north of Los Angeles. Police had originally responded to a bomb threat at the scene.

Two hostages were released on Tuesday during negotiations. The remaining hostages released on Wednesday were unharmed, police said.

Police arrived to the scene on Tuesday at around 13:00 PST (22:00 BST), after calls of a bomb threat and reports of a man who had barricaded himself inside with several people.

Bakersfield City Hall, the local police headquarters, nearby buildings and multiple roads were closed during the hostage situation, as the police department’s negotiation team began contacting the suspect via telephone.

“Every single resource is at the site’s disposal,” Bakersfield Police Sergeant Eric Celedon told the press on Tuesday.

“SWAT team, bomb squad, K9 team, gang unit, negotiators, drone team. Every single asset we have to bring this to the safest conclusion is out here right now,” he continued.

Members of the FBI’s Hostage Rescue Team were also on the scene, according to CNN.

Representatives for Chase Bank said on Tuesday the company was “aware of the ongoing situation occurring at the building where our branch is located on the ground floor”.



“The branch is currently empty, and we are working with authorities,” a Chase spokesperson told the BBC’s US partner CBS News in an earlier

statement.

Bakersfield mayor Karen Goh had said she was also monitoring the situation. (BBC)



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## Foreign nationals among at least 21 killed in Delhi fire

At least 21 people have been killed and dozens injured after a fire tore through a multi-storey building in south Delhi, police in India's capital say.

Many of the victims were foreigners - including people from South Asian and African countries - who had travelled to India for medical treatment or to accompany relatives undergoing care, local media reported.

The building in the Malviya Nagar area allegedly operated as a bed-and-breakfast catering to patients and relatives of those receiving treatment at a nearby private hospital.

More than 40 people were rescued and taken to hospital. It remains unclear how many were inside the building when fire broke out. Its cause is not yet known.

The blaze at the Flourish Stay B&B is one of the deadliest in recent years in the Indian capital.

"The fire was brought under control quite early on - it was contained very quickly. We have now cleared the building and opened it up for the police," fire officer AK Malik said.

Delhi minister Ashish Sood said authorities were investigating whether the building had the necessary permissions to operate as a bed-and-breakfast facility, adding that those found responsible for any violations would face criminal action.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences and announced compensation of 200,000 rupees (\$2,088; £1,552) for the families of those killed and 50,000 rupees for those injured.

Videos on social media showed flames shooting from the building as people gathered nearby. Footage broadcast by Indian news channels showed its exterior badly charred as



emergency workers searched the site.

Eyewitnesses and locals at the scene told BBC Hindi that, upon entering the building, they found many people unconscious - some lying beneath beds in hotel rooms and others collapsed in washrooms.

Wasim, who lives nearby and was among the first responders at the scene, recounted a particularly shocking incident. He said he found bodies of a couple in a washroom, holding each other in an embrace.

Another witness said they performed CPR on several unconscious victims and managed to revive some of them.

A shopkeeper who runs a quilt store opposite the building said he spread quilts on the ground below to cushion people attempting to jump to safety.

Several people jumped from the upper floors and some survived, he said.

Authorities have not yet released a full list of those killed or formally identified the victims. Local media reports, citing officials and other sources, said some of the victims were foreign nationals, including

people from neighbouring South Asian countries as well as countries in Africa and Central Asia.

Several people in the building were from Bangladesh and other parts of South Asia and had travelled to Delhi for medical treatment, local lawmaker Satish Upadhyay said.

By early evening, the search and rescue operation was nearly complete but ambulances were still on standby as officials continued clearing debris from the site.

Fires are common in India, where building safety laws are often poorly enforced.

From factories and coaching centres to hospitals and entertainment venues, many of Delhi's deadliest blazes have exposed a persistent gap between safety rules on paper and their implementation on the ground.

Investigations have repeatedly pointed to lax inspections, faulty electrical systems and buildings operating beyond their approved use. (BBC)

## Kenya health minister says US Ebola quarantine centre will proceed



Kenya's health minister said on Wednesday that the United States (US) funded quarantine centre would proceed, days after deadly protests erupted over the project.

The US-built facility at Kenya's Laikipia Air Base was due to open last week, according to US officials, to quarantine Americans arriving from the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is battling a major Ebola outbreak.

But it has been temporarily blocked by a court order, and triggered protests on Monday that killed two people, according to a rights group.

Speaking in Parliament, health minister

Aden Duale said the centre would serve both Kenyans and US citizens, dismissing fears it would be "exclusive".

"Quarantine is not only for Americans. Even Kenyans will be isolated at the facility," Duale said.

"Laikipia airbase is one of the 23 quarantine isolation centres we are building. And we will not stop it," he added.

Kenyans are angry their territory is being used by a foreign power in a way that has colonial undertones, and over the risk of Ebola spreading.

Kenya has recorded no cases of Ebola despite widespread testing of arrivals

but neighbouring Uganda has registered 15 cases including one death.

The centre — about 200 kilometres (125 miles) from the capital Nairobi — was set to have 50 isolation beds and be managed by US medical staff.

In his address, Duale said the government "will not consult citizens" on the establishment of the Ebola facilities.

"This epidemic does not require any consultation... We are dealing with a very abnormal situation," he said.

The minister said the centre comes under a 2015 agreement with the US, part of its Biological Threat Reduction Program. (Jamaica Observer)



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## Flyballers off to winning start in ABNA Village Netball League

The Michael Joseph Gray's Green Flyballers got off to a winning start in the Antigua and Barbuda Netball Association's (ABNA) Antigua Generators and Cool and Smooth Village League on Tuesday evening.

The Stingers launched their campaign in the female division of the Village League by snatching a narrow 37-33 victory over Lamin Newton All Saints United in their opening encounter at the Seatons Netball Court.

Krizia Duncan sank 19 of her 32 shots, and Most Valuable Player Kizzy Hughes converted 18 of her 32 attempts for the Gray's Green Flyballers.

Zhanira Pereira scored 23 of her 31 attempts, and Karol Carlton converted 10 of her 11 shots for All Saints United.

The Potters Defante Stingers started competition in the Mixed Division with a commanding 29-5 drubbing of Willikies in the second encounter of Tuesday's double-header in Seatons.

Most Valuable Player Tashana Bloomfield led the Potters attack by converting 14 of her 19 attempts.

In support, Molefi Joseph sank 11 of her 22 tries, Adina Andre scored two of her three shots, and Michael Buxton converted two of her four attempts for the Stingers.

Summer Buckleys sank four of her five shots, and N'Zae Williams scored one of her four attempts for Willikies.




**The Gray's Green Flyballers women's netball team**

The ABNA Village Netball League will continue with three matches at the Seatons Netball Court on Thursday evening.

In the female division, Newfield will take on Pares Net Masters at 6 pm, and



Seatons Stingers will meet Potters Defante Stingers at 7 pm.

All Saints and Swetes/Roman Hill will clash in a mixed division encounter at 8 pm.



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## India set for a blockbuster 12-match New Zealand tour



New Zealand's Blair Tickner, second right, and teammates celebrate after Ireland's Harry Tector was caught out by Tom Latham on day three of the test match in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Friday, May 29, 2026. (AP)

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — India will play 12 international cricket matches in New Zealand later this year in a tour billed as the biggest in New Zealand in a generation.

The all-format tour will feature India playing the Black Caps in five Twenty20 internationals, five one-day internationals and two test matches.

India will play more international matches than any inbound team ever on a tour of New Zealand. The tour begins with a T20 international at Hagley Oval, Christchurch on Oct. 22 and

concludes after the second test, which begins in Christchurch on Nov. 27.

“This will be about more than just the cricket on the field. It will be a celebration of New Zealand’s shared history and culture with India and our burgeoning rivalry and friendship through cricket,” New Zealand Cricket Marketing and Commercial Officer Glenn Critchley said.

“The passion and the following this team has is staggering, not to mention some of the players expected to tour such as Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bum-

rah. So we’re bracing for the intensity and fandom that will accompany the tour.”

New Zealand will then embark on a four-test tour to Australia, before returning home to play Sri Lanka in three ODIs, three T20s and two tests in January and February.

“We’re delighted to be able to bring 42 days of international cricket to Kiwi cricket fans across eight cities,” Critchley said.

## Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka goes out of the French Open

PARIS (AP) — After letting another big lead slip with an error-strewn performance at the French Open, top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka felt like getting as far away from the courts as possible.

“Just want to quit tennis right now,” Sabalenka said after wasting a lead of a set and two breaks in a 3-6, 7-5, 6-0 loss to Diana Shnaider in the quarterfinals on Wednesday.

“We’ll see in few days. Hopefully I’ll get back on track mentally.” Sabalenka’s wait for a first French Open title continues despite the four-time major winner leading 4-1 in the second set and being two points from victory while serving for the match at 5-4.

What followed was a complete collapse as she lost 12 of the last 13 games against a player appearing in her first Grand Slam quarterfinal, looking increasingly frustrated and forlorn in the windy conditions.

Just like her loss to Coco Gauff in last year’s final, when she also won the first set before becoming undone with a slew of unforced errors, this one will take some time to get over.

Shnaider next faces Maja Chwalinska, who extended her remarkable Roland Garros run by beating No. 22-seeded Anna Kalinskaya 7-6 (3), 6-3.

In the men’s quarterfinals, 10th-seeded Flavio Cobolli beat No. 4 Felix Auger-Aliassime 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 to ensure there will be an Italian finalist.

Cobolli will face one of two fellow Italians, Matteo Berrettini or Matteo Arnaldi — who were playing later — in the semi-finals.

The strong Italian showing comes despite top-ranked Jannik Sinner getting stunned in the second round. Second-seeded Alexander Zverev and No. 26 Jakub Mensik will meet in the other semi-final.



**Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus reacts after losing the quarterfinal tennis match against Russia’s Diana Shnaider at the French Open in Paris, Wednesday, June 3, 2026. (AP)**

Sabalenka stood still and screamed loudly after losing a point to fall 0-30 down in the sixth game of the decider and, although she saved two match points at 0-40 down, she lost when she sent a shot into the net.

Her struggles were reminiscent of the match against Gauff, when she remonstrated loudly, shouting to herself and glaring at her team box.

Shnaider, who was already on her best run at a major, broke Sabalenka before taking complete control.

Sabalenka looked increasingly frustrated as the third set wore on, and when she missed a volley at the net in the fourth game of the decider she crouched and rested her head on her racket.

It was another big upset in a tournament where defending champion Gauff (third round) and four-time winner Iga Swiatek (fourth round) already tumbled out.

Defending men’s champion Jannik Sinner served for the match in a second round defeat, and 24-time major winner Novak Djokovic wasted a two-

set lead in a third round loss.

That opened things up for lesser-known players. According to Opta, this is the first major without a former champion in either the men’s and women’s semifinals since the French Open in 1977.

The unseeded Chwalinska came through three qualifying rounds to become only the second Polish woman to reach the semifinals at Roland Garros, along with Swiatek.

Chwalinska said British player Emma Raducanu’s run to the 2021 US Open title as an 18-year-old qualifier had inspired her.

When Kalinskaya’s big forehand from the back of the court went out, the 24-year-old Chwalinska had her biggest win, having never been beyond the second round at any major before this tournament.

Chwalinska’s total prize money heading into Roland Garros was US\$864,030 and reaching the last four here earns her 750,000 euros (about US\$872,000).

## Spanish city cancels Congo's World Cup warmup game

MADRID (AP) — Congo was still hoping to play their World Cup warmup against Chile after the mayor of the Spanish city of La Linea de la Concepcion denied authorization for the match because of health concerns related to the Ebola crisis.

Congo's soccer federation said it was in discussions with the Spanish soccer federation and relevant international bodies to find solutions.

Government authorities in the southern city of La Linea de la Concepcion announced the decision to not authorize next Tuesday's friendly, citing possible health risks linked to the Ebola crisis.

Congo played a warmup against Denmark in Liege, Belgium, on Wednesday.

day.

An outbreak of a rare type of Ebola virus has plagued Congo and Uganda. The World Health Organization has declared it a public health emergency of international concern.

Congo had already canceled a three-day World Cup preparation training camp and a planned farewell to fans in the capital Kinshasa because of the outbreak the eastern part of the country.

All of the Congo players and the team's French coach, Sébastien Desabre, are based outside of the central African country with most of them playing in France.

Soccer's governing body, FIFA, previously issued a statement saying it

was aware of and monitoring the situation regarding an Ebola outbreak and was in close communication with Congo soccer officials to ensure the team was made aware of all medical and security guidance.

Congo will play in Group K at the World Cup. They will face Portugal for their opening game in Houston on June 17.

The Leopards then face Colombia in Guadalajara on June 23 before playing Uzbekistan in Atlanta for their final group game on June 27.

Congo's first World Cup qualification since 1974, when it was called Zaire, sparked scenes of jubilation across the nation, which has been battered by decades of conflict.



Congo players pose for a team photo before a World Cup qualifying soccer match against Cameroon in Rabat, Morocco, Thursday, Nov. 13, 2025. (AP)

## Stoneville's women and men advance to President's Cup finals



**The Stoneville women's volleyball team**



**The Stoneville men's volleyball team**

Both women's and men's teams of Theatric Lighting and JOMA Caribbean Stoneville advanced to the finals of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association (ABAVA) President's Cup Championships on Monday evening.

The third-seeded Stoneville booked their spot in the best-of-three women's President's Cup finals with a 3-0 victory over second-seeded Jets in their first-round encounter at the indoor volleyball stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Fans were once again treated to competitive volleyball as Stoneville ousted Jets in a closely contested women's encounter in three keenly contested sets.

The Jets pushed their opponents throughout the match and kept every set within reach, but Stoneville consistently found answers in the closing

stages.

Displaying composure under pressure and capitalizing on key opportunities, Stoneville edged all three sets to secure a hard-fought straight-set victory, winning 25-23, 26-24, and 25-23.

The third-seeded Stoneville booked their spot in the men's President's Cup final with a 3-1 victory over second-seed Cool and Smooth and Joma Caribbean Da Storming Lions in Tuesday's other first-round encounter.

The feature match of the night delivered plenty of excitement as Stoneville came out strong, claiming the opening two sets by narrow margins, 25-22 and 25-23, as both teams traded points in a display of attacking volleyball and determined defense.

Refusing to go quietly, Da Storming Lions roared back in the third

set, dominating play and producing a commanding 25-13 victory to extend the match to a fourth set.

With the match threatening to extend to a fifth set, Stoneville regrouped and responded like seasoned competitors. Stoneville regained control in the fourth set, closing out the match 25-18 with a composed performance to secure an impressive four-set victory.

Stoneville will face top-seed and defending champions Cool & Smooth & JOMA Caribbean Da Squad in the women's President's Cup finals.

Stoneville will also meet top-seed and defending champions Zamine Shipping Services and ABI Insurance Pytonz in the men's President's Cup finals.

Matches in both finals will take place on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday at the indoor volleyball stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.