

Massiah and Marshall Pledge Excellence in Foreign Service Roles

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Ambassadors-at-Large Samantha Marshall (left) and Joanne Massiah (right) at Government House on Monday during their swearing in ceremony

Massiah and Marshall Pledge Excellence in Foreign Service Roles



Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P. Chet Greene (center), Joanne Massiah (left) and Samantha Marshall (right)

Newly appointed Ambassadors-at-Large Joanne Massiah and Samantha Marshall have pledged to continue contributing to Antigua and Barbuda's national development through diplomatic service, following their swearing-in ceremony at Government House on Monday morning.

The two former government ministers took the oaths of allegiance, office and secrecy after being appointed by Prime Minister Gaston Browne, formally joining the country's foreign service at a time of increasing global challenges and opportunities.

Speaking following the ceremony, Ambassador Joanne Massiah expressed gratitude and humility at being entrusted with the role, describ-

ing it as an opportunity to continue contributing to national development.

"I am just incredibly humbled, thankful, appreciative of this opportunity to continue to play a very meaningful role in nation building as we seek to reposition Antigua and Barbuda on the global stage," she said.

Massiah acknowledged the challenges facing the international community and pledged to assist the government in navigating increasingly complex global affairs. She thanked her family, friends, colleagues and the people of Antigua and Barbuda for supporting her throughout her career, saying she accepted the appointment "with humility and grace."



No stranger to international representation, Massiah noted that serving the country regionally and globally was familiar territory for her.

"I can promise the people of Antigua and Barbuda that they can expect nothing but excellence from me, which is my minimum standard," she declared. "I will represent the nation and its people with integrity, honour, responsibility and patriotism."

Ambassador Massiah, an Attorney-at-Law, is a former Member of Parliament for the constituency of All Saints East and Saint Luke. She also served as a Minister of Government, and as a Senator in the Baldwin Spencer-led administration. She remains the leader of the political party Democratic National Alliance (DNA). With her appointment to the



There are things that you have to do at the last minute,” she said, adding that she looked forward to receiving her briefing and preparing accordingly.

Marshall described the role as an extension of her longstanding commitment to public service.

“I continue to make a contribution to overall national development, and I recognise the level of importance of this post,” she said. “I hope to carry it out with fairness, transparency and, of course, with a lot of pride for the people of Antigua and Barbuda.”

The appointments place both women in positions to represent Antigua and Barbuda internationally, advancing the nation’s diplomatic and strategic interests at a time of evolving global challenges.

diplomatic service, the party’s future is unclear.

Ambassador Samantha Marshall, who previously served as a Cabinet minister and Member of Parliament for the constituency of Saint Mary’s South and as Leader of Government Business in the Senate, likewise reiterated her eagerness to continue serving the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda.

During Monday’s ceremony, both diplomats received their first assignments from Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P. Chet Greene. Ambassador Massiah will attend conferences of the Organization of American States and Association of Caribbean States in Panama, while Ambassador Marshall will represent Antigua and Barbuda at the EU/CARIFORUM Meeting on 21st June 2026 in the Dominican Republic.

Despite receiving an immediate assignment following her appointment, Marshall said she is prepared to step into the role.

“I’ve served as a Minister of Government; I’m accustomed to this.

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New Ambassadors-at-Large Urged To Advance Opportunities In The Spanish-speaking World

The Government's vision of establishing Spanish as the second official language of Antigua and Barbuda featured prominently during the swearing-in ceremony of newly appointed Ambassadors-at-Large, Samantha Nicole Marshall and Joanne Maureen Massiah, held Monday at Government House.

The ceremony was officiated by Sir Clare K. Roberts, KCN, KC, Governor General's Deputy, acting in the absence of Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda.

In his remarks, Sir Clare highlighted the strategic importance of Antigua and Barbuda strengthening its engagement with Latin America and the wider Spanish-speaking world, describing the Government's language policy as both an economic and diplomatic imperative.

"The Government has articulated a clear vision of making Spanish our second official language. This is not simply a cultural objective; it is an economic and strategic imperative," Sir Clare stated.

He noted that Antigua and Barbuda is uniquely positioned at the crossroads of the Caribbean and the Americas and must take full advantage of emerging opportunities in trade, investment, tourism, education, healthcare, and cultural exchange with Spanish-speaking nations.

Pointing to the growing importance of Latin American centres such as Panama City and Cali, Colombia, Sir Clare observed that regional patterns of commerce, travel, and healthcare are changing rapidly. As a result, Antigua and Barbuda must be proactive in developing stronger relationships with countries throughout Central and South America.

"Our future prosperity will increasingly depend on our ability to engage effectively with our neighbours to the



Sir Clare K. Roberts, KCN, KC, Governor General's Deputy,

south. The Spanish-speaking world represents a vast market, a source of investment, innovation, and partnership, and Antigua and Barbuda must position itself to benefit from these opportunities," he said.

Sir Clare further emphasized that the appointments of Ms. Marshall and Ms. Massiah come at an important moment in the nation's development and foreign policy evolution.

"As Ambassadors-at-Large, they have an important role to play in fostering new relationships, opening doors for trade and investment, promoting Antigua and Barbuda abroad, and helping to build bridges with governments, businesses, institutions, and communities throughout the Spanish-speaking world."

The Governor General's Deputy noted that both women bring extensive experience in public service, law, gov-

ernance, and national development, and are well equipped to support Antigua and Barbuda's expanding international engagement.

The appointments reflect the Government's commitment to strengthening diplomatic outreach, advancing South-South cooperation, and ensuring that Antigua and Barbuda remains responsive to the changing economic and geopolitical realities of the region.

Following the administration of the Oath of Allegiance, Oath of Office, and Oath of Secrecy, Marshall and Massiah formally assumed their responsibilities as Ambassadors-at-Large for Antigua and Barbuda.

The Office of the Governor General extends congratulations to both appointees and wishes them every success as they undertake this important national service.

Foreign Affairs Minister Hails Bipartisan Spirit in Ambassadorial Appointments

Foreign Affairs Minister E.P. Chet Greene has described the appointment of Samantha Marshall and Joanne Massiah as Ambassadors-at-Large as a demonstration that national service transcends political affiliation, stressing that the development of Antigua and Barbuda is not the responsibility of any single organisation.

Speaking during Monday's swearing-in ceremony at Government House of the two newest diplomats, Minister Greene noted that the appointments—particularly that of Massiah, a former opposition senator—reflect the government's commitment to inclusivity and merit-based service.

“What we do here today is to show that post-election 2026, the job of our country is not the preserve of a single organisation,” Greene said. “It's not just like-minded persons who are called upon to provide national service.”

The minister said the appointments align with Prime



Minister Gaston Browne's vision of building “a single nation” where individuals contribute to national development based on merit and professionalism. He praised both newly appointed ambassadors for their extensive

experience in governance and law, noting that their expertise would strengthen Antigua and Barbuda's diplomatic efforts during increasingly complex global times.

“In these very challenging times, there is none who deny that Ambassadors Marshall and Massiah have extensive experience in governance,” he stated. “Both trained lawyers, they certainly bring an added and welcomed dimension to the work of the Foreign Service.”

The minister cautioned the new diplomats that their roles would demand significant effort and dedication.

“It's not business as usual,” Greene said. “You're actually committing yourselves to real, outstanding, heavy lifting on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda as we maintain global relations and continue to position Antigua and Barbuda as a global leader.”

Marshall and Massiah both bring years of public service to their new roles. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration highlighted that each had served as government ministers, while Massiah most recently held office as an opposition sen-



Local News



ator.

He emphasised that their appointments as Ambassadors-at-Large were intentionally designed to give the government flexibility in deploying experienced representatives on special assignments.

“That you’re not appointed or assigned to any particular jurisdiction or international agency is not by chance,” Greene explained. “It’s a very deliberate and determined position of government to have a cadre of ambassadors-at-large who can be deployed from time to time on special assignments.”

According to the minister, the ambassadors may be called upon to represent Antigua and Barbuda in areas including tourism, environ-



mental affairs, and women’s development.

Greene described the appointments as a fitting rec-

ognition of the women’s professionalism and long-standing dedication to national development.

“There’s none amongst us who can deny that Ambassadors Marshall and Masiah are fully deserving of the applause and congratulations,” he said. Welcoming the pair into the Foreign Service, Greene told those at the swearing-in ceremony that their appointments represent a crowning achievement in distinguished careers dedicated to public service.

“There’s nothing greater than serving one’s country,” he remarked.

The ceremony formally ushered Marshall and Masiah into Antigua and Barbuda’s diplomatic corps, where they are expected to undertake strategic assignments in support of the nation’s foreign policy objectives.

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PM Browne Cautions DPP Against Eroding Public Confidence



Prime Minister Gaston Browne has urged Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Clement Joseph to provide greater public reassurance regarding controversial prosecutorial decisions, arguing that accountability and transparency are essential to maintaining confidence in the justice system.

Speaking on his weekly Browne and Browne radio programme on Pointe FM on Saturday, Browne acknowledged the constitutional independence of the DPP but stressed that public concern over certain decisions places an obligation on the office-holder to provide sufficient explanation without breaching confidentiality.

“He’s right in terms of his independence, he’s right in terms of his constitutional authority,” Browne said. “But when you have situations in which the public becomes concerned about certain decisions, he has an obligation to allay the fears and to provide some level of justification for his decisions.”

The Prime Minister’s comments come amid public criticism surrounding two recent prosecutorial decisions allegedly made by the DPP. One involved the discontinuation of drug-related charges against a Jamaican national, while another concerned a Canadian woman, reportedly terminally ill, who had been incarcerated for importing a significant quantity of drugs into Antigua and Barbuda.

PM Browne suggested that media reports may have misrepresented remarks attributed to Joseph, including claims that the DPP owes the public no explanation for certain decisions.

“Maybe he didn’t say it in that way,” Browne stated. “I gave him the benefit of the doubt that possibly he was misquoted.” However, the Prime Minister added that if the remarks were accurately reported and conveyed a dismissive attitude toward public accountability, such a stance would be “very unfortunate.”

“Ultimately it’s the very public who pay the taxes to pay his salary,” Browne said, while emphasising that no public official’s authority is absolute.

The Prime Minister argued that accountability is a cornerstone of good governance, pointing to his own weekly radio programme as an example of public stewardship.

“I come here on a Saturday not only to inform the public, but also to give account of my stewardship,” he said.

Addressing the case involving the ill Canadian inmate, the head of government outlined what he described as an established process for commuting sentences, involving recommendations from prison authorities, the Attorney General, and ultimately the Governor General.

He questioned whether the DPP Clement Joseph should exercise sole discretion in matters involving narcotics offences, warning that such actions can fuel speculation and undermine public confidence.

“I’m not accusing him of any corrupt act here,” Browne said, describing Joseph as “a man of impeccable integrity.” Nonetheless, he warned that the perception of impropriety—even if unfounded—could damage both the DPP’s credibility and the country’s reputation internationally.

Browne noted that decisions involving drug trafficking cases attract scrutiny not only locally but also from international partners.

“People in other capitals, especially the U.S., may ask, ‘What’s going on in Antigua?’” he said.

The Prime Minister maintained that providing limited factual context—without disclosing confidential medical details or sensitive information—could help reassure the public while preserving the integrity of the justice system.

He further argued that controversial decisions can generate speculation implicating senior government officials, including himself and the Attorney General, despite their lack of involvement in certain matters.

“People almost invariably look at the Prime Minister,” Browne said. “So all I’m saying to the DPP here: be sensitive to the fact that those kinds of decisions even go beyond you in terms of consequences.”

Mr. Browne reiterated that while the DPP’s independence must be respected, public accountability remains essential to preserving trust in the administration of justice.

“I felt I was duty-bound to come and say to you that you’re wrong,” he said. “You’re dead wrong to say that you’re not accountable to the public.”

Environmental Awareness Group Announces New Leadership Appointments

Two persons have been named to take up key appointments with the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG) that will support the organization's continued growth and conservation impact across Antigua and Barbuda.

In a media release, the EAG names Monifa Thomas as its new Executive Director.

"While Ms. Thomas' journey with the EAG started in 2020, she has officially been with the organization for 3 years, serving as the Accountant. During her tenure, she has developed extensive knowledge of all areas within the organization and has played an important role in supporting its operations and long-term sustainability," the release stated.

It said her deep understanding of the EAG's culture, mission, and strategic direction, combined with her strong organizational and leadership skills, position her well to lead the organization into its next chapter.

"Monifa's experience within the organization and her strategic focus make her the ideal person to lead the EAG forward," said Jermaine Jarvis, Board President. "Her commitment to the organization and understanding of its work will help strengthen our impact and ensure continued growth in environmental conservation and community engagement."

Speaking on her appointment, Thomas said, "I am honoured to serve as Executive Director of the Environmental Awareness Group. Having worked within the organization for a few years, I deeply value the work we do and the difference we continue to make throughout Antigua and Barbuda and beyond. I look forward to working alongside our dedicated staff, partners, and communities as we continue advancing environmental protection and sustainability initiatives."

The EAG also extends its sincere



thanks to former Executive Director Dr. Mareba Scott for her contributions and service to the organization during her tenure and wishes her all the best in her future endeavours.

Meanwhile, the EAG has also announced the appointment of Joshel Wilson as the new Antigua Marine Conservation Programme Coordinator.

"Joshel has consistently demonstrated commitment and passion in his work as Wildlife Officer," said Jermaine Jarvis, Board President. "This appointment represents a natural progression in his career, and we are excited to see him take on this expanded leadership role within the organization."



Monifa Thomas



Joshel Wilson

Antigua and Barbuda Strengthens Global MICE Positioning At FIEXPO Latin America, 2026

Antigua and Barbuda continues to strengthen its position as one of the Caribbean's premier destinations for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE), with Chief Marketing Officer of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) Charmaine Spencer, and Marketing Officer Alfonsina Olmos, participating in FIEXPO Latin America 2026 in San José, Costa Rica.

Recognized as one of the most influential business events for the meetings and conventions industry in Latin America and the Caribbean, FIEXPO Latin America brings together destinations, international associations, meeting planners, event organizers, suppliers, policymakers and industry leaders to forge partnerships and drive growth within the global MICE sector. The event serves as a strategic platform for networking, education, business development and destination promotion.

Minister of Tourism, H. Charles Fernandez, welcomed Antigua and Barbuda's participation in FIEXPO, noting that the destination's presence at the event aligns with the government's strategic vision to diversify and expand the tourism product.

"Business events and conferences represent a high-value segment of the tourism industry. Our success in attracting and hosting major international meetings has demonstrated that Antigua and Barbuda can compete with the best destinations in the world. Participation in FIEXPO allows us to build new partnerships, engage directly with key decision-makers and position Antigua and Barbuda for even greater opportunities within the global meetings industry," Minister Fernandez said.

Antigua and Barbuda's participation comes at a time when the destination's MICE sector is experiencing growth and receiving international recognition. In 2025, the twin-island nation was named the Caribbean's Leading



Chief Marketing Officer of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA), Charmaine Spencer, and Marketing Officer, Alfonsina Olmos, participate in business meetings with industry stakeholders during FIEXPO Latin America 2026 in San José, Costa Rica. (Photo Credit: Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority)

Meetings & Conference Destination at the World Travel Awards, in recognition of its hosting of major regional and international conferences during the year.

In 2026, the destination also successfully hosted the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's (CHTA) Caribbean Travel Marketplace and is preparing to welcome delegates from across the Commonwealth at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in November.

Chief Marketing Officer Charmaine Spencer noted that FIEXPO provides an invaluable opportunity to showcase the destination's growing capabilities and establish new business relationships in emerging markets.

Spencer noted that one of the key takeaways from FIEXPO this year is the growing interest among Latin

American buyers and event organizers in identifying new destinations to host meetings, conventions and incentive programmes as they seek to diversify their portfolios and offer fresh experiences to their clients.

"Antigua and Barbuda is well positioned to meet that demand, offering world-class meeting facilities, excellent air connectivity, authentic cultural experiences and a safe, welcoming environment for international events," she added.

Beyond its exceptional meeting infrastructure and accommodations, Antigua and Barbuda offers delegates and organizers a unique blend of business and leisure opportunities, creating memorable experiences that enhance the value of every event hosted in the destination.

SLBMC Receives £25,000 Grant from The Linbury Trust

The Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) has been awarded a grant of £25,000 (*approximately XCD \$90,700*) from The Linbury Trust, a UK-based grant-making foundation.

The grant will primarily fund the acquisition of a portable ultrasound system, a critical piece of diagnostic equipment that allows medical teams to perform fast, high-resolution imaging directly at the patient's bedside. The remaining funds from the grant will be utilized at the hospital's discretion to procure other high-priority medical equipment.

Dr. Shivon Belle-Jarvis, Medical Director at Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, expressed direct gratitude for the investment and highlighted its clinical impact.

"This grant from The Linbury Trust directly enhances our bedside diagnostic capabilities," said Dr. Belle-Jarvis. "The acquisition of the portable ultrasound machine means our physicians can make faster, more accurate clinical decisions in critical moments, significantly improving patient outcomes. Having the flexibility to allocate the remaining funds to other high-priority equipment allows us to address our most immediate clinical needs efficiently."

The Linbury Trust, part of the wider Sainsbury Family Trust network, was established in 1973 by Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover KG, and his wife Anya, Lady Sainsbury CBE. The foundation funds work that improves quality of life, particularly in relation to arts, environment and social pur-



The Linbury Trust Awards £25,000 Grant to SLBMC

This grant (*approximately XCD \$90,700*) will support the purchase of a portable ultrasound system and other patient care priorities, helping to strengthen diagnostic services at Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre.

SIR LESTER BIRD MEDICAL CENTRE

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pose.

Stuart Hobley, Director of The Linbury Trust, noted the foundation's ongoing commitment to supporting projects that deliver meaningful and measurable impact within communities.

"We are pleased to support the team at Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre as they work to upgrade their diagnostic infrastructure," said Stuart Hobley, Director of The Linbury Trust. "Our

goal is to provide resources that deliver a measurable, positive impact on community well-being. By contributing to the acquisition of this portable ultrasound equipment, we are helping to ensure that healthcare professionals have the practical tools they need to deliver quality care to patients."

SLBMC extends its sincere thanks to The Linbury Trust and its Trustees for their generosity and partnership in advancing healthcare services in Antigua and Barbuda.



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ABYBT Convenes Two-Day Regional Summit

The Antigua and Barbuda Youth Business Trust (ABYBT) will host the Caribbean Youth Entrepreneurship (CYE) Summit 2026, which opens at the Royalton Resort and Spa, Five Islands, Antigua today (June 16).

The Summit, which convenes under the theme “Accelerating the Future of Youth Entrepreneurship,” will bring together entrepreneurs, policy-makers, business leaders, educators, and ecosystem builders from across the Caribbean to explore strategies for strengthening youth entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic development.

The Opening Ceremony and the featured High-Level Panel Discussion, “Building the Caribbean Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: A Practical Framework for Execution & Growth,” will examine the policies, partnerships, financing mechanisms, and coordinated actions required to accelerate entrepreneurial development across the Caribbean.

The Opening Ceremony will also feature the graduation and recognition of participants from the ABYBT EmpowerED Entrepreneurship Training Programme, celebrating the achievements of emerging entrepreneurs and the next generation of business leaders.

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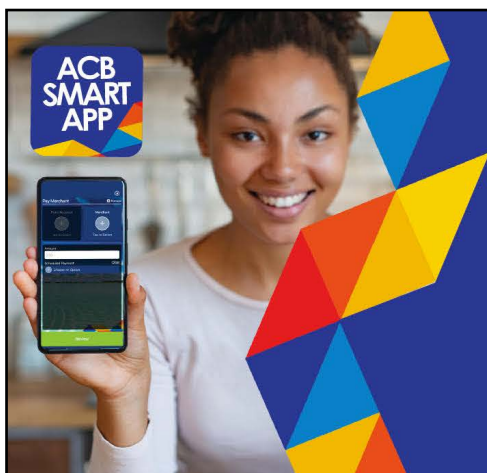
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Minister Michael Joseph Convenes Senior Technical Officers and Heads of Department Meeting

Since assuming office just over a month ago, Minister of Health, Wellness, Environment and Civil Service Affairs, Michael Joseph, has been meeting with key departments and agencies within his portfolio to gain a better understanding of their operations, challenges, and immediate priorities.

Recognizing the extensive nature of the Ministry and the wide range of departments and agencies that fall under its responsibility, Minister Joseph recently brought together senior technical officers and heads of departments for a collective meeting aimed at fostering dialogue, strengthening collaboration, and identifying some of the most pressing issues facing the Ministry.

The meeting provided an opportunity for representatives from across the Ministry's portfolio to openly discuss their concerns, priorities, achievements, and operational challenges while gaining a greater appreciation for the work being undertaken by their counterparts in other departments and agencies.

Among those in attendance were Permanent Secretary Stacey Gregg-Paige and senior staff from the Ministry's headquarters, as well as representatives from the Central Board of Health, AIDS Secretariat, Antigua and Barbuda Emergency Medical Services (ABEMS), National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA), Fiennes Institute, CARE Project, Clarevue Psychiatric Hospital, the nation's clinics and polyclinics, the Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS), Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC), the Nutrition Unit, the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), the Epidemiology and Surveillance



Unit, the Department of Environment and the Civil Service Affairs Department among other units.

During the meeting, Minister Joseph encouraged participants to remain committed to providing quality services and to continue working diligently to improve standards across the Ministry and its various agencies.

The Minister also stressed the importance of greater cohesion among departments, noting that while each agency and unit has a distinct mandate, they are all interconnected and play a critical role in the overall delivery of health, wellness, environmental, and civil service functions.

"Many of the challenges we face do not exist in isolation," Minister Joseph said. "As a Ministry, we must work more closely together, communicate more effectively, and support one another in order to deliver the highest standard of service to the

people of Antigua and Barbuda."

Minister Joseph further indicated that while he intends to continue meeting with management teams across the various departments and agencies, he also plans to engage directly with staff members at all levels.

He noted that employees often have valuable perspectives and insights that can contribute to improving operations and service delivery and emphasized that creating opportunities for open dialogue with staff will form an important part of his ongoing assessment of the Ministry.

The Minister reaffirmed his commitment to listening, collaboration, and continuous improvement as he works alongside stakeholders across the Ministry to strengthen operations and enhance services for the benefit of the people of Antigua and Barbuda.



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PM Browne issues urgent call for MVI implementation, warning that time is running out for SIDS



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Delivering some of his strongest remarks on the current threats facing island nations around the globe, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne has made an impassioned plea for the immediate operationalization of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI).

It was through Prime Minister Browne's leadership as co-chair of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the MVI that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) now have a tool that more accurately reflects their realities as vulnerable states. Previously, GDP measurements failed to account for the unique vulnerabilities facing small states. As a result, many islands continue to face significant challenges in accessing critical development financing, particularly in times of crisis and

disaster when it is needed most.

Addressing the High-Level Retreat on Operationalizing the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) at United Nations Headquarters, Prime Minister Browne lamented that while the world has changed dramatically in recent years, the rules governing access to development finance have not. The MVI was adopted by the United Nations in 2024, but has yet to be operationalized within the global financial architecture.

The one-day retreat, co-organized by Antigua and Barbuda, Portugal, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA),

was convened against a backdrop of growing global uncertainty and vulnerability. Organizers noted that the current context presents a timely opportunity to reinvigorate the global vulnerability discourse and showcase early efforts at implementing the MVI. The retreat was designed to serve as a strategic bridge between high-level intergovernmental mandates and practical implementation, helping to catalyze the next phase of the MVI's evolution.

The current energy crisis, Prime Minister Browne noted, is only exacerbating existing challenges and reinforcing the urgent need for the MVI's implementation. Nine Caribbean countries, he explained, generate more than eighty percent of their electricity from imported fossil fuels, while five import more than ninety percent of their energy.

"Electricity consumers across our sub-region pay some of the highest tariffs in the world, frequently approaching twice the average of developed countries. This is not because we are inefficient, but because we are trapped," he declared.

In explaining, he stated that island states are held captive by an energy model "built on imported petroleum, designed for larger economies with greater market leverage, and maintained at enormous cost to our public finances, our competitiveness, and our people."

"When global oil prices spike, as they



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did after COVID, as they did after the war in Ukraine and as we see currently with the war in Iran, our vulnerable countries absorb the full shock. We simply have no buffers," he further explained.

He noted that renewable energy is a realistic option, but the pathway to securing the concessional financing needed to build the necessary infrastructure remains out of reach because of the very barriers the MVI seeks to address.

"Here is the injustice. Because we are classified as middle-income countries based on GDP per capita, we are routinely denied the concessional access that our actual vulnerability demands. A country like Antigua and Barbuda, one of the smallest in the world and with a GDP per capita above an arbitrary threshold, is told it does not qualify," Prime Minister Browne told the retreat.

He reaffirmed his commitment to championing the MVI as Prime Minister of a country that has lived the consequences of a system that does not fully recognize its realities.

"We have rebuilt after hurricanes using borrowed money at commercial rates, while larger, wealthier nations accessed the same capital at a fraction of the cost. We have paid some of the highest energy prices on earth because we could not access the financing needed to build the solar capacity that would free us from that dependence," the Prime Minister said.

"We have been told we are too prosperous to qualify for support, even as we were told in the same breath that our debt was unsustainable and our infrastructure inadequate," he added.

Prime Minister Browne therefore urged the retreat to intensify its advocacy and push for the operationalization of the MVI. The retreat brought together member states, international financial institutions, UN entities and development partners to discuss pathways for integrating the MVI into financing and development deci-

sion-making.

"Integrate it into the World Bank, the IMF, the vertical funds, the OECD allocation frameworks," he told delegates.

He further encouraged them to make full use of the MVI's Vulnerability and Resilience Country Profiles (VRCPs) to guide national investment strategies and United Nations programming, a process already showing early promise. In a significant milestone for the region, St. Kitts and Nevis was selected as one of the first countries to pilot the VRCP, a development that signals growing momentum toward turning the MVI's framework into a practical

tool for vulnerable states. The selection of a fellow small island Caribbean nation underscores both the relevance and the readiness of the MVI to deliver meaningful, tailored insights that can shape real investment decisions.

"Make vulnerability visible in spreadsheets, in eligibility criteria, in boardrooms, and in budgets."

"The world made promises in Antigua and Barbuda. It made promises in Doha. It made promises in Seville, in New York, and in Baku. The time for promises has passed. The time for delivery is now," Prime Minister Browne stated.




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Press Release

23 young leaders selected for 2026 Commonwealth Youth Forum International Taskforce

Twenty-three young people have been selected to serve on an international taskforce that will lead the planning and delivery of the 2026 Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) at the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Antigua and Barbuda.

The taskforce will work with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to support the successful delivery of the CYF. This includes helping shape the forum programme, policy recommendations and logistical arrangements.

Representing a range of Commonwealth regions and interest groups, the taskforce will help deliver a forum, aimed at encouraging policymakers to support actions that promote sustainable development, prosperity and investment in the Commonwealth.

In 2010, the CYF was created to ensure governments consider the concerns and perspectives of young people. It has since become a critical platform for youth to share their views with leaders at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM). The 2026 CYF will be held in Antigua from 1 to 4 November 2026 under the theme ‘Investing in Youth Agency-Co-Creating Pathways towards Shared Prosperity,’ on the margins of CHOGM.

Supporting Youth-led Leadership

Reiterating the government of Antigua and Barbuda’s support for the CYF

Commonwealth Youth Forum International Taskforce







Taskforce, Senator Shenella Govia, Minister of State in the Ministry of Works and Housing, and Forum Lead, said:

“I’m pleased to announce the Official Commonwealth Youth Forum Taskforce; a team we are confident will design and deliver a successful forum

that reflects the diverse perspectives of our Commonwealth youth and provide a meaningful platform for dialogue and action.”

Speaking on the importance of the taskforce, the Officer-in-Charge, of the Social Development, Youth and Gender Directorate at the Commonwealth Secretariat, Jennifer Namgyal said:

“We are delighted to be collaborating with the official Commonwealth Youth Forum Taskforce, an important team of young leaders amplifying the aspirations of the Commonwealth’s 1.6 billion young people by highlighting their innovations, elevating their solutions to global challenges, and providing a global platform for their voices to be heard.”

Commenting on the work ahead, the Co-Chair of the taskforce and CYC Vice Chairperson for Inclusion and Engagement, Neema Sheikh Abdikadir Abdullahi, said:

“At a time when young people are questioning multilateralism in the current geopolitical context, this CYF will enable young leaders and other stakeholders to build their skills and co-create solutions that will shape the future.”

Donte Walter, Co-Chair, representing the host country, Antigua and Barbuda, said:

“I am deeply honoured to serve as Co-Chair of the Taskforce, representing the voices and aspirations of young people in Antigua and Barbuda and across the wider Caribbean region. I look forward to collaborating with fellow leaders and stakeholders to deliver a transformative and impactful youth forum, one that unites visionary youths, strengthens meaningful engagement, and empowers emerging leaders with the resilience and capacity to shape a more sustainable and inclusive Commonwealth.”

Meet the CYF International Taskforce members

Members, in alphabetical order by surname, are:

Co-Chairs

Neema Sheikh Abdikadir Abdullahi (Kenya)

Donte Walter (Antigua and Barbuda)

Members

Shacia Albertine (Antigua and Barbuda)

Stanley Anigbogu (Nigeria)

Eleala Avantele (Tuvalu)

Selena E. Jn Baptiste (Saint Lucia)

Byron Christopher (Antigua and Barbuda)

Lucia Ene-Lesikar (Tanzania/United Kingdom)

Fathima Haneekah Rahil (Sri Lanka)

Deborah Hatten (Antigua and Barbuda)

Kaiesha Joseph (Antigua and Barbuda)

Kristine Louisa (Antigua and Barbuda)

Bodh Maathura (Sri Lanka)

Desrie Markham (Antigua and Barbuda)

Rondell Nedd (Guyana)

Arielle Neely (United Kingdom, Turks and Caicos Islands)

Eunice Oluwafeyisayo Oladejo (Canada)

Christal Percival (Antigua and Barbuda)

Vida Betances Reyes (Antigua and Barbuda)

Janet Simon (Antigua and Barbuda)

Vikrant Srivastava (India)

Makiba Oliveia Ward (Antigua and Barbuda)

Amelia Williams (Antigua and Barbuda)

About 300 youth delegates are expected to attend the four-day forum.

For more information about the Commonwealth Youth Forum, please contact the Commonwealth Youth Programme at youth@commonwealth.int.



CHOGM
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA 2026

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SCAN ME!

Children's advocacy group calls for online safety framework amid proposal to restrict social media

While welcoming recent comments by Health Minister Dr Christopher Tufton indicating that Jamaica is exploring restrictions on children's access to social media, Fi We Children Foundation (FWCF) cautioned that limiting access alone will not be enough to protect children in the digital age.

In a statement issued on Monday, the advocacy group said that while efforts to shield children from online exploitation, harmful content and predatory behaviour are important, meaningful online protection requires a more comprehensive approach.

The organisation argued that safeguarding children online demands robust legislation, accountable technology companies and child-centred digital environments.

The group is now calling for urgent legislative reform, including amendments to the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA), to explicitly address online harms facing children, stressing that legal protections must evolve alongside technological developments to ensure children enjoy their rights both offline and online.

Among the key reforms proposed by FWCF are:

— Age-appropriate design: Digital platforms should be designed with children's safety and well-being at their core rather than maximising engagement and addictive scrolling;

— Stronger default privacy settings: Child accounts should automatically operate with the highest levels of privacy, including disabled location sharing and restric-



tions on unsolicited contact;

— Ending harmful profiling: The collection and commercial use of children's data for behavioural profiling should be restricted;

— Developmentally appropriate content: Algorithms should prioritise educational, creative and age-appropriate material while actively filtering harmful content, including self-harm, sexually explicit material and eating disorder content;

— A statutory duty of care: Technology companies should be legally required to identify, assess and mitigate risks to children; and

— Independent oversight: Regulators must have the authority to conduct audits, enforce compliance and ensure meaningful remedies where harm occurs.

The advocacy group also noted that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reaffirmed in 2026 that children's

rights apply fully within digital environments. Further, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which Jamaica is a signatory, requires states to uphold the best interests of the child under Article 3 and respect children's evolving capacities under Article 5.

"The digital world should be designed with children in mind. Children have the right not only to protection from harm but also to participation, information, privacy, and development in online spaces," FWCF said.

The group urged the Government to pursue evidence-based policies that balance child protection with children's rights, ensuring that any restrictions on social media are accompanied by comprehensive legal reforms and stronger obligations on technology companies.

"Every child deserves a safer internet — one built for children, not merely one that excludes them," FWCF said. (Jamaica Observer)

Search for missing aircraft in Southern Caribbean



Authorities across the southern Caribbean are urgently searching for a Dominican Republic-registered Beech 58P Pressurized Baron that vanished without a trace during a flight from St. Vincent to Tobago.

The aircraft, carrying the registration number HI-1145, disappeared over the Southern Caribbean Sea on the afternoon of June 12th.

The aircraft departed from Argyle International Airport in St. Vincent at 11:52 a.m. with two people on board. It was destined for the ANR Robinson International Airport in Crown Point, Tobago. Before its disappearance, the journey was monitored on Flightradar24, which indicated the plane was operating under visual flight rules (VFR) at an altitude of 4,025 feet and a speed of approximately 142 knots.

Contact with the aircraft was abruptly lost around 12:11 p.m. as it flew south of St. Vincent airspace. The sudden cessation of all tracking data placed its last known coordinates somewhere in the vicinity of Grenadian or Venezuelan territorial waters.

A massive regional search and rescue

operation involving multiple agencies has been launched in the wake of the plane's disappearance. Minister of Civil Aviation Eli Zakour confirmed that emergency protocols were immediately activated by the Piarco Area Control Centre after Argyle authorities alerted them to the lost contact.

"Both private and military aircraft have visually searched the area around the last known position of the aircraft," Zakour stated, adding that regional security services and the Coast Guard are actively involved. Local pilots in the area have also been instructed to be on the lookout for any signs of a crash or an oil spill. Despite these high-priority efforts, no wreckage has been located, and there has been no confirmation of a crash.

The circumstances surrounding the aircraft's vanishing have raised questions among aviation experts. Former head of civil aviation Ramesh Lutchmedial revealed that near Grenada, the aircraft made a turn to the south-east just before its transponder was switched off, cutting off all tracking signals.

Lutchmedial explained that while transponders cannot be disabled in large commercial airliners, the system can be turned off in smaller planes by pulling a circuit breaker. He noted that while such occurrences are rare, in small aircraft they can sometimes involve deliberate action, stating that the situation has rightfully gained the attention of national security officials across the islands.

Prior to the disappearance, HI-1145 had been operating without reported issues. It successfully completed several domestic trips between Canouan Airport and mainland St. Vincent between June 10th and June 12th. The aircraft was also known to frequently travel between Grenada and Trinidad.

This incident highlights a disturbing pattern in the region, marking the second unresolved aircraft disappearance along the Canouan to St. Vincent flight path in recent months, following a similar incident in December 2023. Aviation authorities and search teams are continuing their efforts in earnest as they await any communication or signs of the missing plane. (St Vincent Times)

SVG acquires advanced ballistics tech to combat gun crime



In a major effort to curb gun-related offenses, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has equipped the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force (RSVGPF) with state-of-the-art ballistics and forensic technology.

The acquisition, formalized on June 11, 2026, aims to significantly enhance the nation's law enforcement and investigative capabilities.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Major the Honourable St. Claire Leacock, accepted the advanced systems on behalf of the government during a regional firearms trafficking workshop in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The equipment was provided through an ongoing partnership between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and the United States Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

The newly acquired forensic tools in-

clude a Bullet Catcher system and the Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS) BRASSTRAX platform. These systems will modernize criminal investigations by enabling local forensic specialists to safely test-fire recovered weapons while preserving vital evidence. Furthermore, the IBIS BRASSTRAX platform allows investigators to capture high-resolution digital images of bullets and cartridge casings, which can then be cross-referenced against regional databases. This new technology will dramatically reduce the time it takes for local investigators to process ballistic evidence and link firearms to criminal acts.

Minister Leacock hailed the acquisition as a "pivotal and transformative leap forward" for public safety, border protection, and justice. He highlighted the technology's critical role in regional intelligence and law enforcement coordination. "If a firearm is used in a crime in a neighbouring territory and subsequently trafficked into Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, our investigators will now have the

ability to make critical connections far more quickly," Leacock stated. This capability is expected to bolster intelligence-led investigations and disrupt illegal firearms trafficking networks operating throughout the Caribbean.

While expressing gratitude to the United States Government and CARICOM IMPACS for their continued support, Leacock also challenged the RSVGPF to maintain the highest professional standards. "These tools are only as effective as the professionals who use them. I urge our officers to employ these systems with diligence, integrity, and precision," he told the officers, emphasizing the technology's potential to dismantle criminal enterprises and reduce gun violence.

The introduction of these advanced systems underscores the government's continued commitment to leveraging modern technology, evidence-based law enforcement, and strategic partnerships to build safer communities and strengthen national security across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. (St Vincent Times)

MSF warns of 'dangerous gaps' in Ebola response in DR Congo



“Dangerous gaps” remain in efforts to rein in an Ebola outbreak that has killed more than 180 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Doctors Without Borders warned Monday.

Despite a massive scale-up in the response to the deadly outbreak declared in the vast central African country on May 15, the medical charity, which goes by its French acronym MSF, said the true scale of the crisis remained unclear.

“One month on, the Ebola disease outbreak is outpacing the response effort,” Kate White, MSF’s emergency medical coordinator in the DRC, said in a statement.

“No-one knows the true scale or exactly where the disease is spreading,” she said.

“What we do know is that most treatment centres in Ituri province are overwhelmed; many of our patients arrive at a late stage of the disease, and the majority were never identified or monitored as contacts before seeking

care.”

So far, 782 Ebola cases, including 181 deaths, have been confirmed in the DRC, according to the latest figures from the World Health Organization. Another 19 cases, including two deaths, have been confirmed in neighbouring Uganda.

MSF warned the true numbers were likely significantly higher.

No approved vaccines or treatments exist for the Bundibugyo strain of the virus responsible for the current outbreak, which is centred on the DRC’s northeastern Ituri province, with cases also detected in North Kivu and South Kivu provinces.

The virus, which spreads through close contact and bodily fluids and can cause a fatal haemorrhagic fever, is believed to have been spreading under the radar for weeks before the outbreak was declared.

Insecurity in the areas where the disease is spreading has made it difficult

to reach some of the affected communities, MSF said, adding that “even in more stable areas, efforts to detect cases, test patients, identify contacts, and monitor transmission are insufficient”.

White warned that “testing remains one of the most significant weaknesses in the response”.

Even though laboratory capacity had been ramped up and mobile test kits designed specifically for the Bundibugyo virus had begun arriving

in the eastern DRC, “many communities... still have limited access to those kits”, she said.

At the same time, treatment centres were continuing to face “significant delays” in receiving laboratory results.

In North Kivu, meanwhile, there is only one laboratory able to test blood samples, MSF said.

“Without faster and more widely available testing, we will struggle to detect cases early enough to contain the outbreak,” White warned.

Ebola has killed more than 15,000 people in Africa over the past 50 years.

The deadliest outbreak in the DRC claimed nearly 2,300 lives out of 3,500 cases between 2018 and 2020.

Experts have cautioned that without urgent action, the current outbreak could eventually risk rivalling the scale of the 2014 West Africa epidemic, which saw over 28,000 cases and more than 11,000 deaths. (AFP)

Norwegian crown princess's son found guilty of two counts of rape



Marius Borg Høyby, the 29-year-old son of Norway's Crown Princess Mette-Marit, has been found guilty of two counts of rape and sentenced to four years in prison.

The three judges in courtroom 250 at Oslo District Court cleared him of two other counts of rape, but found him guilty of many of the other offences of which he had been accused.

Høyby was not in court for the verdict for unspecified health reasons, but joined the session via video link.

Prosecutors had called for Høyby to be given seven years and seven months in prison. His defence lawyers had called for a lesser term of 18 months and have said he intends to appeal.

Even though Marius Borg Høyby is not himself a royal figure, the trial has cast a shadow over the broader royal family. His mother married Crown Prince Haakon when he was four, and he grew up within the family. The palace has said it will not comment on

Monday's verdict.

Mette-Marit is very ill with a form of pulmonary fibrosis and has recently been placed on a lung transplant list.

Her son's lawyers have repeatedly sought his release from prison so he could spend time with his mother because of her declining health.

After the verdict, Høyby's defence lawyer Petar Sekulic again asked the court for his release. Although Oslo district court initially granted his release last week, the decision was overturned by the court of appeal.

One of the three judges in the trial, Judge Jon Sverdrup Efstad, began the session early on Monday with a summary of their conclusions, before going into a 128-page ruling explaining the verdict.

Høyby had denied all four counts of rape, but the judges convicted him of raping two women, including one on the Crown Prince's estate at Skaugum in 2018 and another involving a wom-

an in Oslo in 2024.

He was also convicted of abusing an ex-girlfriend, Norwegian influencer Nora Haukland and of causing serious bodily harm to another partner, in whose flat he was arrested in the up-market Frogner area of Oslo in August 2024.

However, he was cleared of two further rapes, involving a woman he met at a hotel in Oslo in November 2024 and another he met while on holiday in the Lofoten islands in 2023.

Sekulic said it was "in the nature of the case that there could be an appeal".

His defence colleague Ellen Holager Andenæs told reporters they were satisfied with the acquittals but were more critical of other aspects of the verdict.

Both lawyers then went to discuss the verdict with Høyby at Ila prison and detention centre outside Oslo.

The case against Høyby involved six women, but only one of the women was in court to hear the verdict and she

was seen crying as Høyby was found guilty of raping her.

Prosecutors said she had been either incapacitated or asleep when she was raped after a party in Oslo in March 2024, and after they had engaged in consensual sex.

The case rested on videos that Høyby had filmed at the time and, giving evidence in February, the woman told the court that she was asleep and would never have allowed it to happen.

The court agreed the victim had been unable to resist what had happened.

All four rape charges involved women who had been either asleep or incapacitated at the time.

The judges also found it proven that the woman in the 2018 rape case had been asleep at the time and unable to resist Høyby. She only found out that Høyby had filmed what had happened last year.

Høyby was also convicted of several offences including abuse and reckless behaviour towards the sixth woman in the case, who became known as the Frogner woman because of the area of Oslo where she lived.

The court ruled he should pay a total of 640,000 kroner (£50,000; €57,000) in compensation to four of the women, including Nora Haukland, the only woman judges ruled could be named in the case.

Høyby's defence lawyers will now have to decide whether to appeal against the four-year jail term, which is higher than the 18 months the defence had suggested, because of the less serious charges that Høyby had admitted including transporting 3.5kg of marijuana and traffic offences.

The palace said in an email to the BBC that "the matter has been considered by the courts, and we have no comment on the outcome". It has already made clear there will be no further statement on Mette-Marit's declining health until she has had a lung transplant.

"There is no doubt that this case has affected people's perception of the royal family," said Caroline Vagle, royal correspondent for Se og Hør

magazine.

That was further compounded by revelations on the eve of the trial that the crown princess had had a three-year friendship with late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

But Vagle believes the mood now is completely different: "Her health is the main concern now - and it overshadows everything else."

Peggy Simcic Brønn, who is a specialist in reputation and public rela-

tions and professor emirata at BI Norwegian Business School, believes the royal family is in the midst of an institutional crisis.

"[The Høyby case] is a tragedy and a crisis for any family," she said.

"The way they handle it is let the person be convicted, let him serve his sentence, but try to make amends as a family for what that person has done to their reputation and the impact on the royal house itself." (BBC)

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The US and Iran have agreed a deal. How soon could the economy go back to normal?

More than three months after the US and Israel first began their war with Iran, the White House and the Iranian regime have agreed a framework deal to bring about a more long-term end to hostilities.

The Middle East crisis sent global oil prices soaring as the conflict effectively closed one of the world's key water transport routes for oil, liquid natural gas and other essential commodities, limiting global supplies.

But experts warn a return to normal shipping through the Strait of Hormuz will take time, and the impact of the war will continue to affect the global economy for potentially months to come.

"Let the oil flow!" US President Donald Trump said in a social media post heralding the agreement, which he said would include the reopening of the strait to commercial shipping.

"Ships are starting to move," Trump declared later on Monday, "loaded up with oil, out of the Strait of Hormuz" which he said was "totally safe, secure and pristine".

BBC Verify has been checking ship-tracking data which appears to show that traffic levels remain low in the Strait of Hormuz, despite the announcement.

According to ship tracking website MarineTraffic, only two vessels with active location trackers have exited the waterway since Sunday - a bulk carrier and a tanker.

The strait has been closed to most shipping traffic since 28 February, with only limited numbers of vessels friendly to Iran able to pass through.

Hundreds of vessels have been stuck in the gulf, with the risk of sea mines or drone strikes driving up the danger to crews and preventing safe passage.

Neil Shearing, group chief economist for Capital Economics, said it remained to be seen whether the latest deal "represents a fragile truce or a durable settlement".



He added that it was likely it will "take some time for oil flows through the Strait to return to pre-war levels".

"Even if ships now have safe passage, tankers are in the wrong place, oil production/refining facilities need to get up to full capacity, and questions over the cost and availability of insurance for ships traversing the Strait will remain," he said.

Even before the agreement, during the ongoing ceasefire, shipping companies were largely reluctant to try to move their vessels out of the strait – and getting those vessels out will be their first focus.

Denmark's Maersk is the world's second biggest shipping line and has five ships that have been stuck in the Gulf because of this conflict. The firm said it was too early to assess how the agreement "will impact logistics", and that for now, there is no change to its operations in the region.

German shipping giant Hapag-Lloyd has four ships stuck in the strait and hopes to get them out over the weekend, once the deal is signed and any remaining mines are cleared.

Normally, about a fifth of the world's oil and LNG supplies flow through the strait, and the effective halt to traffic has increased oil prices. That in turn

has had a knock-on effect on petrol, diesel and jet fuel costs.

During the conflict, the price of Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, peaked at around \$120 a barrel, whereas before hostilities broke out it was just below \$70.

Following news of the framework deal, Brent fell to \$83.55 a barrel.

President Trump said that the Strait of Hormuz would open once the "deal" is signed on Friday. Senior energy strategist at Rabobank Florence Schmit said there was a "strong possibility that we'll see a lot of volatility" in the lead up to the deal being signed.

"Some things are not confirmed on both sides – important things: we don't know if the deal will be signed," she told the BBC.

"What we've seen so far is a deal for 60 days for the opening of the Strait – but what happens after that? What if the Iranians want to re-insert a toll system?"

"A full-scale peace agreement could still be a long way off."

Despite that, Schmit said normality in the system, including prices, "could return by the end of the year" if a full ceasefire is agreed upon. Normality would include the return of pre-war levels of 26 daily crude oil tankers go-

ing through the strait.

With the current positive news headlines and “sentiment-driven” sell-off, she said there is a chance the price could drop below \$80 a barrel, but then it could average by end of year in the mid \$80’s again as “the geopolitics is stripped out” and the market assesses the reality of the situation.

A line chart showing how Brent crude oil prices have fluctuated since the USA and Israel attacked Iran on February 28th. The price rose rapidly above \$80 from early March and peaked at just below \$120 in April. The current rate as of 15 June 2026 is \$83.51.

Global food prices could also be helped if supplies of fertiliser get closer to normal levels again. Fertiliser, a by-product of oil, has soared in costs, putting pressure on farmers.

Maurizio Carulli, global energy analyst at Quilter Cheviot, said the ceasefire “should help ease the immediate pressure on fertiliser markets” - but it won’t be instant.

He added that roughly a third of traded fertiliser and major volumes of natural gas, used for nitrogen-based fertiliser, flow through the Strait of Hormuz and that “lingering damage to energy infrastructure” will take time to repair.

“What’s more, the crop season has already begun in several parts of the world, so the resumption of deliveries of nitrogen and phosphate fertilisers will be too late for agricultural crops, which will negatively affect global produce.”

Jet fuel - another by-product of oil - traded in the Northwest Europe (NWE) has already seen a small fall in price.

NWE jet fuel is down to \$1,033 per tonne, compared with \$831 per tonne before the conflict, and around \$1,840 at its peak.

The Iran war has affected economies around the world, as the jump in energy costs has pushed up fuel prices leading to a pick-up in inflation. This

has put pressure on central banks to raise interest rates to keep inflation under control.

In the UK, before the war began, the Bank of England had been widely expected to cut interest rates this year. But these predictions were quickly changed as energy costs surged, with the Bank expected to hold rates, if not raise them later in the year.

Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell, said: “Just last week, markets were pricing in two rate hikes by early 2027.

“The probabilities have now shifted to just one rate hike by December and then potentially no change for at least the first half of 2027.

“That could mean companies having greater confidence to hire more people, consumers being more willing to spend money, and allow the property market to warm up after having gone cold for sellers in recent months.” (BBC)

UK PM announces ban on social media for under-16s



Children under 16 will be banned from using social media in the United Kingdom (UK), Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced on Monday, saying such platforms were making young-

sters “unhappy”.

Some children’s charities welcomed the sweeping change, which is likely to trigger a major fight with United States (US) tech giants, but others warned

it could make teenagers less safe online.

Starmer, likely to face a leadership challenge in the coming weeks, said social media sites were exposing children to content that is “dangerous” and “designed to be addictive”.

The ban will “include platforms like Snapchat, Tik-

Tok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and X” but not messaging services such as WhatsApp, the Government said.

Starmer said the upcom-

ing ban was influenced by the experience of Australia, which in December became the first nation to ban people under 16 from social media.

He added during a press conference in Downing Street that he hoped to pass the regulation by late December and for the ban to come into force in spring next year.

He suggested that YouTube Kids, Lego Play and Google Classroom would not be prohibited.

The Government said in a statement it would also be considering overnight curfews and breaks in infinite scrolling for minors, and would announce more details in July. (AFP)



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- **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 calm.



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- Stay within your assigned zone unless directed otherwise.



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- Escalate issues to security, police, or your supervisor.
- Always wear your official ID and apparel.



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



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Swetes/Roman Hill stay unbeaten in Village Netball League



The Swetes Roman Hill female netball team

Swetes/Roman Hill extended their unbeaten run in the Antigua and Barbuda Netball Association's (ABNA) Antigua Generators and Cool and Smooth Village League on Sunday evening.

Swetes/Roman Hill notched up their third win in as many matches with a 59-18 victory against Newfield in the female division at the Willikies Netball Court.

Everdine Parker-Barnard converted 40 of her 65 shots, and Jamila Fitz scored 19 of her 30 attempts for Swetes/Roman Hill.

Esther Emmanuel sank 13 of her 20 shots, and Sophia Wilkins converted four of her six attempts for Newfield, who suffered their second successive loss after winning all three of their previous matches.

The Under-16 National Team record-

ed their second win in four matches by pulling off a 13-8 victory over St. John's United Talented Youths in another female division encounter.

Judith Warrell converted five of her nine shots, Tina Graham made four of her 10 tries, and Deancia Lewis scored two of her eight attempts for the Under-16 National Team.

Reneka Anthony made six of her 11 attempts, and Trinecier Greenaway converted her only two shots for the St. John's United Talented Youths, who suffered their third defeat in as many games.

Lamin Newton's All Saints United claimed their second win in three matches in the mixed division with a commanding 42-14 victory over Willikies.

Rayana Regis sank 26 of her 31 shots, Andris Anthony converted 11 of his 26

attempts, and Zhanira Pereira scored five of her seven tries for All Saints United.

Carl Kirby sank seven of his 13 shots, Summer Buckleys converted five of her 10 attempts, and Sanchez Martin scored two of her five tries for Willikies, who lost for the second time in as many games.

The ABNA Village League will continue with three more matches at the Willikies Netball Court on Tuesday evening.

In the female division, Michael Joseph Gray's Green Flyballers Willikies will take on St. John's United Talented Youths at 6 pm, and Lamin Newton's All Saints United will meet Newfield at 7 pm.

Swetes/Roman Hill will clash with Willikies in a mixed division affair at 8 pm.



Police and Mahico continue winning start in Dave Joseph contest

Police and Mahico have maintained their successful starts to their campaigns in the Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League Dave Joseph Limited Overs Championship.

Both teams made it two wins in as many games by securing victories in their second encounters in the limited-overs Parish League competition on Sunday.

After claiming a three-wicket victory over PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks in their opening encounter, Police crushed Freetown by 116 runs at

Freetown.

Malik Marcellin slammed a century to propel Police to 262 for three. Marcellin smashed an even 100, Kenrick Scott cracked an unbeaten 52, and Deran Benta struck 47.

In reply, Freetown was restricted to 146 for nine. Jamaul Fernandez hit 44, and Hughan Tonge scored 41. Vincent Shadrach Jr. grabbed four for 23, and off-spinner James Cornelius claimed two for 12.

After launching their campaign by snatching a 10-run victory over Sting-

ray City Seatons, Mahico pulled off a four-wicket victory against the Liberta Blackhawks at Clare Hall.

The Liberta Blackhawks were bundled out for 92 in 14.2 overs. J. Thomas struck 27, and R. Joseph made 25. Samuel Peters snapped up four for 19, and Jayden Charles bagged three for 18.

Mahico achieved victory by scoring 93 for six in 18.1 overs. J'Quan Athanaze smashed 47 not out, and Michael Cornelius struck 19. Tron Payne captured two for 21.


 An advertisement for Curry House restaurant. The background shows a variety of colorful Indian dishes in small bowls. The text 'Curry House' is written in a large, stylized, red font. Below it, the text 'ANTIGUA' is written in a smaller, red font. To the right, the text 'Open Daily - 12:00pm - 10:30pm' is written in white. At the bottom, there are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, along with the phone number '(268) 736-7165'.

Cape Verde frustrate Spain on stunning World Cup

ATLANTA (Reuters) - Cape Verde announced themselves on the World Cup stage with a stunning 0-0 draw against Spain on Monday, frustrating the European champions who dominated possession and had 27 goal attempts but could find no way past 40-year-old keeper Vozinha.

The African side built a blue-shirted barricade in front of Vozinha and dared Spain, who dominated almost everything in the Group H draw except the scoreline, to find a way through.

Spain had almost 75 percent possession, but Cape Verde's first match at a World Cup became a heroic exercise in resistance, discipline and occasional survival.

At the final whistle, Vozinha was named player of the match and left the pitch in tears after a performance that turned him into the face of Cape Verde's historic night.

For Spain, it had uncomfortable echoes of their 2022 World Cup round-of-16 exit to Morocco. There was endless passing, a defensive wall at the other end, and a growing sense that all the possession in the world means little if the penalty area is locked shut and you cannot find the keys.

Cape Verde defended deep from the start in a five-man low block, often crowding their own box with almost the entire team. Spain moved the ball from side to side, probing for cracks, but the African debutants were organised, stubborn and impressively calm under pressure.

Luis de la Fuente's decision to rest Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams from the starting lineup against theoretically easier opponents removed much of Spain's usual thrust.

Ferran Torres and Gavi, used wide, struggled to provide the pace and one-on-one menace that have made Spain so dangerous in recent years.

Marc Cucurella, recently announced



Spain's Mikel Oyarzabal, left, and Cabo Verde's Sidny Lopes Cabral fight for the ball during the World Cup Group H soccer match between Spain and Cape Verde in Atlanta, Monday, June 15, 2026. (AP)

as a major signing for Real Madrid from Chelsea, sent an early long-range effort just over, before Mikel Oyarzabal failed to bring under control a promising through ball inside the area.

Then Vozinha took centre stage. The Cape Verde keeper produced a superb save from Pedri in the 36th minute before Spain almost broke through three minutes later, when Ferran's strike rattled the crossbar. From the rebound, Vozinha somehow clawed away Oyarzabal's header with one hand.

Ferran then wasted a fine chance in the 45th minute, shooting tamely at the keeper, before Vozinha again flung himself across goal to palm Aymeric Laporte's header round the post shortly before halftime.

Spain resumed control after the break, but their finishing remained poor. Oyarzabal mistimed a close-range header after a clever Pedri run down

the left, while Fabian Ruiz twice shot wildly from the edge of the box.

De la Fuente waited until the 70th minute to introduce Yamal and Mikel Merino, replacing Gavi and Fabian, and the teenager immediately changed the mood. His acceleration on the right forced Cape Verde to surround him with markers and finally stretched the defence.

In the 88th minute, Yamal slipped a fine pass into Oyarzabal, but the forward's effort was blocked at the last moment.

Cape Verde even earned a late corner, their only effort on target coming in added time, but by then they had already made their point. They even created late chances of their own as they threatened to cause an even bigger upset.

The other two teams in Group H are Saudi Arabia and Uruguay.

Tunisia sack coach after World Cup thrashing by Sweden



Sabri Lamouchi, Head Coach of Tunisia, looks on before the FIFA World Cup 2026 Group F match between Sweden and Tunisia at Monterrey Stadium in Monterrey, Mexico, on Sunday, June 14, 2026. (Getty Images)

MEXICO -- Sabri Lamouchi has been sacked by Tunisia after just one game of World Cup 2026.

The 54-year-old former France international was sacked the day after Tunisia's 5-1 trouncing by Sweden in their opening Group F football game in Monterrey, Mexico, on Sunday night.

Tunisian officials have installed Mondher Kebaier, who led the national team from 2019 to 2022 and has been in a technical director role since last year, as interim boss ahead of the second group game against Japan on Saturday, also in Monterrey.

The 56-year-old previously guided the Eagles of Carthage to the final of the Arab Cup in 2021, losing to Alge-

ria, before a quarterfinal exit in AFCON the following year.

Speaking before his departure, Lamouchi said his side had been punished for a string of costly mistakes and after the game admitted, "It's a difficult loss. It's painful. Starting the competition with this bad of a loss is indeed difficult. We made way too many mistakes."

Lamouchi was already under pressure after a 5-0 defeat to Belgium in the team's final warm-up game, while he has been forced to defend the presence of his son during their training camp in the media despite him not being an official member of the party.

Tunisia will face Japan and the Neth-

erlands, who played out a pulsating 2-2 draw in their opening match in Dallas on Sunday, in their final two group fixtures.

Lamouchi said, "We have our pride. We need to react. We need to give a better image."

Lamouchi, who holds dual Tunisian and French citizenship, represented clubs including Auxerre, Monaco, Parma, Inter Milan, and Marseille during his playing career before his first role in management saw him guide Ivory Coast to the 2014 World Cup, beating Japan in their first game only to exit in the group stage after a dramatic late defeat against Greece in their final game.

It was a second chapter of World Cup heartache for Lamouchi, who was cut from the final France squad for World Cup 1998 by coach Aime Jacquet, missing out on a place in history as Les Bleus claimed their first title on home soil.

He went on to manage Rennes and Nottingham Forest before short stints in Qatar, with Cardiff City and in Saudi Arabia before being appointed by Tunisia in January on a two-and-a-half-year contract following a disappointing Africa Cup of Nations campaign.

Tunisia will next play Japan on Saturday before finishing group play against the Netherlands on June 25.

Japan should feel confident heading into that contest after surprising the Netherlands with a late goal to earn a 2-2 draw in their World Cup group opener on Sunday.



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West Indies beat Sri Lanka to clinch the T20 series 2-1



The West Indies men's team celebrate after winning the T20 International Series against Sri Lanka at Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica, on Sunday, June 14, 2026. (CWI Media)

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP) — Sherrif Rutherford reached his half-century in the last over of a dramatic run chase as West Indies completed a series-clinching five-wicket win with two deliveries to spare in the third Twenty20 International (T20I) against Sri Lanka at Sabina Park in Jamaica on Sunday night.

Rutherford was not out on 54 from 40 deliveries and Jason Holder, who clobbered three sixes in the penultimate over, finished on 21 not out off five balls as West Indies achieved victory at 170 for five in reply to Sri Lanka's 169 all out from their 20 overs.

Two costly missed catches during Rutherford's innings hurt Sri Lanka's chances of taking the series after the first two games were split.

The West Indies went into the deciding game with an attacking focus, deciding to bowl first after winning the toss. Fast bowler Shamar Joseph backed up the decision by grabbing a

career-best five for 33 to contain Sri Lanka's innings in a player-of-the-match performance.

The West Indies won the first T20 International by seven wickets and Sri Lanka won the second by 37 runs on Saturday, leaving the series in the balance.

Joseph took two wickets in the sixth over and three in the last over of Sri Lanka's innings, twice missing hat-trick opportunities. Seamer Matthew Forde took a stunning one-handed catch off his own bowling to remove Kusal Mendis (5) with the ninth delivery of the match.

Sri Lanka accelerated to be 49 for one after five overs, then Joseph struck with wickets on consecutive balls in the sixth.

Pathum Nissanka hit 26 from 17 deliveries until he top-edged a catch to Roston Chase to end the 43-run second-wicket partnership. Joseph then dismissed Pavan Rathnayake for a

duck with the next delivery.

Dunith Wellalage hit a top score of 43 off 28 balls that anchored a lower-order rally for Sri Lanka. He shared a 49-run seven-wicket stand with Wanindu Hasaranga, who made 21 off 13 deliveries, before he was run out in the 19th over. Wellalage was the first of three wickets to fall in the 20th over to wrap up Sri Lanka's innings.

After losing Shai Hope on the third delivery of the run chase, bowled by Wellalage, West Indies raced to 52 before losing three wickets for one run in a 12-ball span that swung momentum back in Sri Lanka's favour.

Rovman Powell (33) combined with Rutherford to revive the run chase, putting on 81 for the fifth wicket until he was dismissed on the last ball of an eventful 17th over.

The over from pace bowler Dushmantha Chameera contained nine deliveries, including a no-ball and two wides, and yielded 24 runs for West Indies and the wicket of Powell. It left West Indies needing 36 runs from three overs.

The equation got down to 29 required from two overs. Holder clouted Chameera for three sixes in four deliveries to end the 19th and leave West Indies needing six runs for victory, which they achieved with two balls remaining.

Sri Lanka won the preceding rain-affected three-match One-Day International (ODI) series 1-0 after the final two matches were rained out. Sri Lanka won the first match by 41 runs at Sabina Park in Jamaica.

Following the T20 matches, the teams will now travel to Antigua to contest a two-match series at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium from June 25 to 29 and July 3 to 7.