

Government To Begin Accessing Road Programme Loan

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Urban and Social Transformation Minister Rawdon Turner with the Antigua Island Girls on Wednesday **Story on page 4**

Government To Begin Accessing Road Programme Loan Later This Month



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

The government will begin accessing the loan it secured for road rehabilitation by the end of this month.

That's the time line provided by Prime Minister Gaston Browne when he answered questions on the subject at this week's meeting of the House of

Representatives.

Last year, the government negotiated a \$100 million loan from a consortium of local banks to undertake the massive road programme. But despite carrying out major road rehabilitation over the past several months, PM Browne said the money from the loan remains in the bank untouched.

However, he said this would change shortly.

The prime minister also reported on the progress that is being made on a number of major highways, particularly the All Saints Road, now undergoing rehabilitation.

"We have made substantial progress on the All Saints Road where we have decided to utilize the services of the Ministry of Works and they are doing an excellent job. I don't have a precise time when this job will be completed, but from all indications it will be com-

pleted with less than half of what the Canadian firm was asking to do the thirteen miles of road up to English Harbour," he reported.

The prime minister complimented the team from PWD for doing 'a fine job' noting that work is progressing smoothly on the road repair and rehabilitation project. PM Browne said he anticipates that the work will be completed within the next couple of months although he indicated that he was unable to give a provide timeline at this time.

Regarding the cost to complete the Sir Sydney Walling Highway, the prime minister stated that this request presented a challenge as the rehabilitation of the major highway formed part of 'a bundle' of roads earmarked for rehabilitation through a loan facility secured from the Caribbean Development Bank to the tune of EC\$100 million.

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Accommodation Owners Urged To Registry Properties Early For CHOGM



The team planning Antigua and Barbuda's hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2026, is appealing to owners of accommodation of every kind to register their properties for this major event.

Executive Director of the Antigua and Barbuda's Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA) and Co-Lead of the Accommodations Sub-Committee, Patrice Simon, made the appeal during an appearance on Wednesday night's 'Road to CHOGM' programme on ABS Television.

Simon noted that property owners do not need to register with the ABHTA in order to host CHOGM delegations, however, they would need to undergo an intense inspection process.

"You do not have to register with the ABHTA in order to present yourself as an accommodation provider for CHOGM. However, you do have to be registered, inspected and approved through the Quality Assurance team at the Ministry of Tourism. That is one of the themes that we wanted to drive home is that any delegate who is coming into the destination for CHOGM is channeled through a central location," she revealed.

Her word to property owners is to register with the accommodations



Executive Director of the Antigua and Barbuda's Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA) and Co-Lead of the Accommodations Sub-Committee, Patrice Simon

team on the CHOGM website as not being registered means that the delegations are not seeing their properties.

"We want to know when we have measured and analysed the effect of the conference here in Antigua and Barbuda that we have a clear understanding of the numbers that came in; whether or not we achieved the numbers that we anticipated and that all our properties benefited," she remarked.

According to the association executive, this has been one of the factors driving the work of the accommodation team from the onset; to ensure that all properties, regardless the size, benefit from the hosting of this major conference.

Simon emphasized that the opportunity is open to all properties, including the short-term rental or Air-B-N-B, to benefit as with an anticipated 5,000 delegates, the demand for accommodation is huge. "In order to benefit, we have to see you, you have to be registered, inspected and listed on the CHOGM website," she repeated.



CHOGM
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Team Antigua Island Girls pledges EC\$350,000 for construction of safe haven for girls

Team Antigua Island Girls has pledged EC\$350,000 toward the construction of a multipurpose safe haven for girls. Minister of Social and Urban Transformation, the Hon. Rawdon Turner, met with the team and their manager at the Prime Minister's Office on Wednesday,

The project, under discussion since 2019, will house girls in conflict with the law alongside other vulnerable groups, including survivors of gender-based violence, under a single administrative structure with separate housing blocks.

“What we are trying to do is a multipurpose facility, so it is not [vulnerable] girls alone; what the vision is to have one central administrative unit with different branches that are isolated for girls in conflict, victim protection and others,” the Minister remarked. “I can promise you that construction will start over the summer.”

Turner specifically praised Team Antigua Island Girls for its continued commitment to the initiative, noting that the team would be offered a proposed seat on the facility's governing board.

“This is something to which they have been committed, something to which they'd like to be involved,” Mickel Brann-Challenger said, noting the team's preference to remain engaged with the project beyond the initial donation, including developing wellness initiatives for the women.

Also in attendance were Director of Family and Social Services Fio-

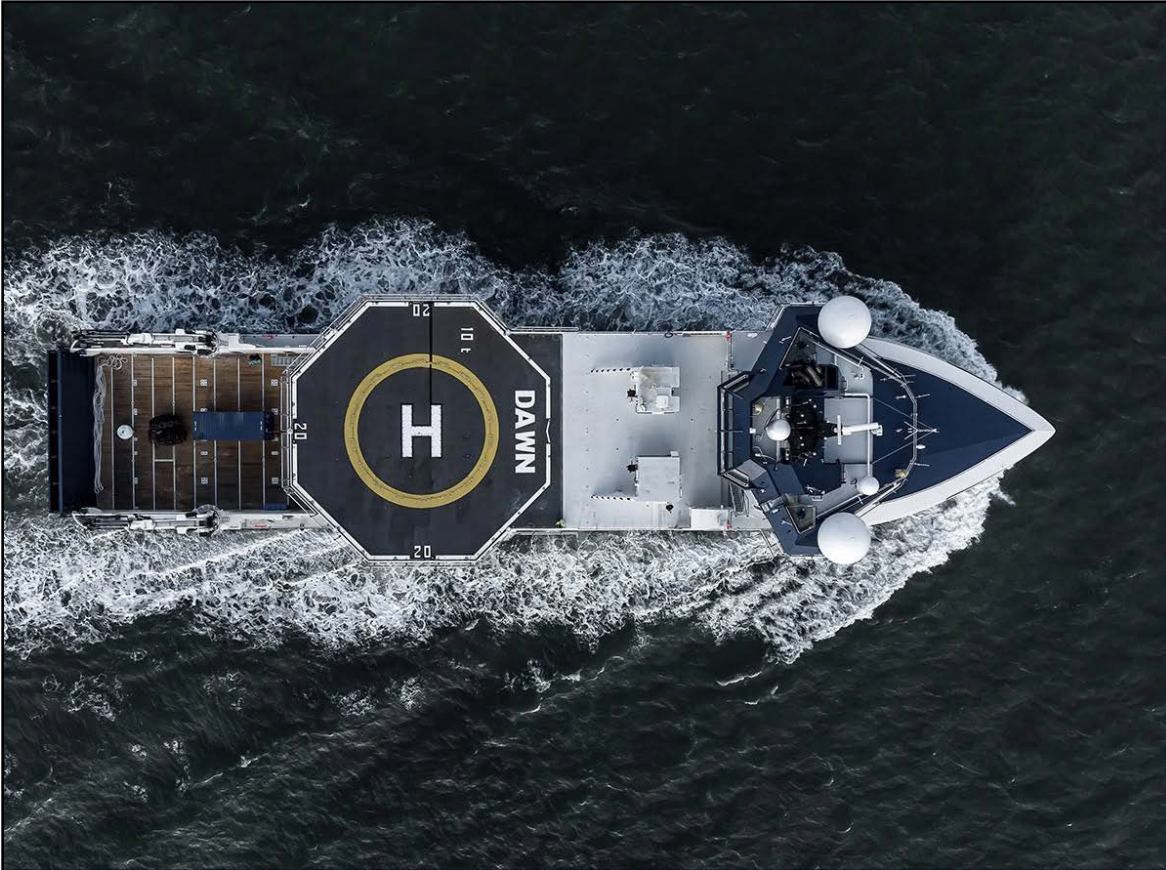


na Charles Richards and Vaughn Skerrit, representing Government Information Services.

A Memorandum of Understand-

ing formalizing the partnership between Team Antigua Island Girls and the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation is expected to be finalized next week.

Humanitarian Vessel MV Dawn to Dock in Antigua in August as Part of Disaster Preparedness Initiative



Antigua and Barbuda is expected to welcome a unique humanitarian vessel this August as part of efforts to strengthen disaster preparedness and emergency response capabilities across the country and the wider Caribbean.

The visit was announced during discussions between officials of Global Support and Development (GSD), Minister of State in the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation Hon. Kiz Johnson, and representatives of the National Office of Disaster Services (NODS).

GSD partners with local, national, and regional communities to prepare before disaster strikes and support their immediate needs through rapid response.

The vessel, the MV Dawn, was purpose-built for disaster preparedness and humanitarian response in

the Caribbean and will be used to facilitate training exercises, stakeholder engagements and emergency response planning.

According to GSD officials, the vessel can accommodate up to 60 people and is fully staffed and dedicated to supporting disaster operations throughout the region. It was developed from lessons learned following major disasters in island nations and was specifically designed to operate within existing national and regional emergency management systems.

The August visit will include a series of collaborative activities involving NODS, national stakeholders and members of the regional response network.

Plans are also being made to allow government officials and key partners to board the vessel and gain a

firsthand understanding of its capabilities and the role it can play before, during and after disasters.

The self-sufficient ship can operate without relying on local infrastructure and is equipped with advanced communications systems, medical facilities, aviation capabilities, cargo handling equipment, and the ability to produce up to 60,000 litres of fresh water daily.

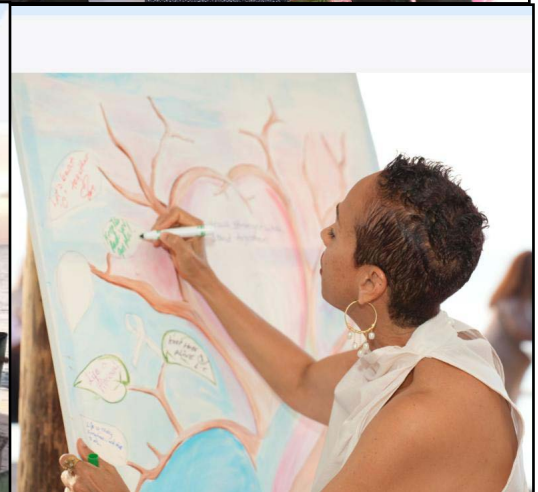
With the capacity to transport personnel, vehicles, supplies, and collect vital seabed data for safe navigation, the vessel serves as a mobile command and logistics platform capable of delivering rapid and flexible assistance to communities in times of crisis.

The arrival of the MV Dawn comes as Caribbean nations continue to face increasingly unpredictable weather events and other natural hazards. Officials say the vessel represents another important resource in building resilience and ensuring countries are better prepared to respond quickly and effectively when emergencies arise.

The initiative forms part of a growing partnership between Antigua and Barbuda and GSD, which has been working closely with NODS on disaster preparedness projects and capacity-building initiatives in recent years.

This is not the first time the vessel will dock here.

CIBC Caribbean's Gala for the Cure was lovely and enjoyable



CIBC Caribbean says its latest outing, Gala for the Cure hosted last Saturday at the Galley Bay Resort, turned out to be another successful venture that has been described as a lovely and enjoyable event and included a cocktail party at sunset, dinner & wine pairing.

Head of Country Priscilla Leonce indicated that Gala for the Cure has truly evolved into a remarkable fundraising initiative, bringing cancer survivors, sponsors, supporters of patients going through the treatment and the bank's Team together, as the fight for the cure

for cancer continues.

Walk Manager Natasha Charles added, "the event was a huge success with an increase in numbers from 86 persons in 2025 to over 100 this year, signaling commitment from our Antigua market to participate in this fight against cancer."

The event also featured an interactive art piece where guests were asked to write messages of hope to cancer survivors. Khadijah James, who also serves as a Walk Manager, advised that this art piece with the messages of hope was an added effort to inspire

and give a little more courage to cancer victims and survivors.

Walk Manager Jesseca Ormond - Byers also commented, that the Gala for the Cure brings another feel good experience which adds to the over healing in some way.

Natasha Charles expressed her appreciation for the overwhelming support from all persons who attended and invited guests to register for their next event, Jam for the Cure T-shirt mas in July during the carnival festivities.

All of these pre-events assist the committee to raise funds and awareness in preparation for this year's 16th annual Walk for the Cure to be held on Saturday 3rd October. Last year Walk for the Cure and its related activities raised EC\$177,000.00

The CIBC Caribbean Antigua head of country and the Walk Managers continue to encourage the general public to support the CIBC Walk for the Cure, noting the importance of this effort and



the impact it has on the cancer victims and the support organizations.

All proceeds from CIBC Walk for

the Cure events are equally shared between Breast Friends and the Oncology Department at Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre.

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Seventh Day Adventists host successful health walk



Over 60 persons participated in the Run, Walk, Bike health event over the weekend put on by the South Leeward Conference's Health Ministries.

The event encouraged persons to either run, walk, or bike ride around the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium and forms part of the mantra of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in practicing healthier avenues.

Organizers of the program deemed it a success and have already begun planning for bigger and better events as the year progresses.

Several prizes were handed out on

Sunday morning. Pastor Kay White was the first individual to complete the walk. Pastor Federick and his wife Avonella Alfred were the first couple. Gilda Williams, Samuel James and Al-

vin Common Jr were the top long-distance runners while St. Johns and Buckleys shared the award for the largest church group. Roland Haywood was the oldest participant.

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Flow Names Another Chromebook Winner



Osleena Cottam receives a Chromebook from Flow Antigua and Barbuda as part of the Riddim & Rewards promotion. Customers who top up \$25 or more, sign up for a new service, or activate a 3, 7, or 30-day plan can still win weekly Chromebooks and a chance to win a weekend stay at Galley Bay Resort.



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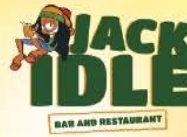
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The Best Investment a Nation Makes

Fund the whole pipeline, not just the peak, and keep the receipts

By Professor C. Justin Robinson

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal, The UWI Five Islands Campus



Extend the windfall tax, broaden its base and dedicate every new dollar to education. That is the idea Prime Minister Gaston Browne floated last Saturday. It deserves serious national consideration. I want to suggest that the version worth building must be wider, fairer, and more demanding than simply funding any one institution.

Let me be candid about where I sit. I lead an institution that already benefits from this tax, The University of the West Indies (UWI) Five Islands Campus. The easy argument would be to ring-fence every new dollar for my campus. I will make the opposite argument. If we are serious about education as nation-building, we must fund the whole pipeline, not just the peak.

Start not with the tax, but with what it buys. Education is the only investment that returns to a society in every direction at once. The child who learns to read becomes the nurse who steadies a frightened patient, the teacher who lifts another generation, the technician who keeps an economy moving, the entrepreneur who builds her own business. A nation's schools are not a cost reluctantly borne. They are the workshop where the country builds its future.

That is why education can never be the business of the Ministry alone. Every household, employer, and community has a stake. The family with a striving child needs the school down the road. The enterprise that wants reliable workers and stable communities needs the classrooms that produce them. Asking those who have prospered most to help strengthen that foundation is not punishment. It is shared responsibility.

So far, public discussion has centred on tertiary education, understandably, given that The UWI Five Islands has grown from fewer than 200 students in 2019 to nearly 1,500 today. That

growth is real but a university is the peak of a pyramid. A peak can rise only as high as the base beneath it can hold.

If a child cannot read fluently in primary school, no tertiary levy will rescue that child at nineteen. If secondary schools cannot hold, challenge, and stretch their students, the university simply inherits the deficit. If the Antigua & Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS) is not properly equipped, we lose one of the most important bridges in the system, gathering technical, vocational, hospitality, continuing education, and second chances under one roof.

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Fund the peak alone, and we keep manufacturing the gaps we later spend a fortune trying to close. Fund the entire pipeline, the infant school, the primary school fighting for literacy, the secondary school straining at the seams, the college giving a second chance, and the campus carrying our brightest to the doctorate and we build a society, not a showpiece.

The design of such a fund matters. It should be education-wide, transparent, and disciplined. One share for early childhood and primary literacy. Another for secondary quality, retention, and teacher development. A third to build ABCAS as the national bridge between school, work, and higher learning. And a continuing share for The UWI Five Islands, so more Antiguan and Barbudans can study, research, and lead from home.

But none of this will work, or deserve public confidence, without accountability. If the public creates a common fund for a common good, the public is owed a paper trail it can follow. I propose two disciplines.

First, a public education dashboard. Not a glossy annual report that vanishes into a drawer. A plain-language, regularly updated account of what was raised, where it went, and what changed because of it. Reading levels, attendance, CSEC and other exam outcomes, Technical and voca-

tional completions, ABCAS progression, university enrolment, retention, and graduation. Let the numbers be public and let them be uncomfortable



where they must be.

Second, reciprocity. Across the region, community service has long been part of student life, the understanding that a publicly supported education carries an obligation back to the public. Write that into our own system, from secondary school through ABCAS and The UWI Five Islands. Documented community-service hours should become a normal part of the education journey. Tutor a younger child, clean a beach or restore a community space. Sit with an elder, serve in a library, clinic, sports programme, or youth organization. The student then stops be-

ing merely a recipient and becomes a contributor to public life.

That is the deeper promise of this proposal. Not simply more money but a national bargain. Those who can contribute more will do so; those who benefit will give back; and the institutions that receive will show, clearly and publicly, what difference it made.

None of this is beyond us. A society that educates broadly lifts itself broadly. Fewer children left behind, more families secure, more enterprises finding the skills they need and more young people seeing a future at home. Lloyd Best taught us

that a people must build and own the institutions that shape them and not wait to be rescued from outside. No one is coming to educate the Antiguan and Barbudan child for us. No foreign donor, no departing empire, no benevolent hand will do for our children what we are unwilling to do ourselves.

The Prime Minister has opened an important door. Let us walk through it with ambition and discipline. Let us carry not just a campus, but the whole pipeline from the first reader to the first degree, from the trades certificate to the doctorate. And let us keep the receipts to prove the investment paid.



Deportee deal draws fire

The Dr Andrew Holness administration is facing pressure to justify Jamaica's involvement in a controversial United States (US) deportee arrangement as political analysts raise questions about the country's role as a transit point for third-country nationals.

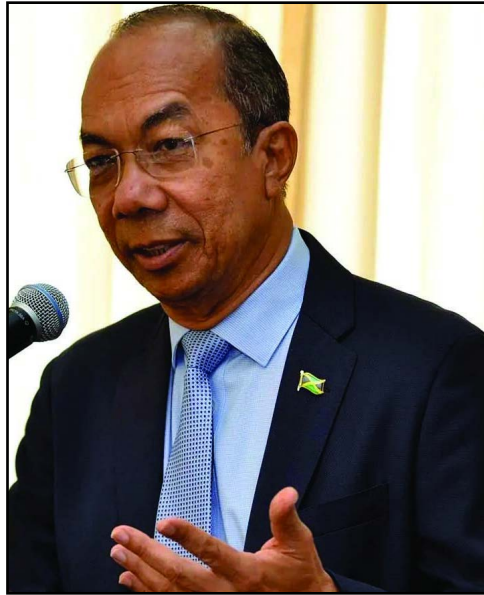
Minister of National Security and Peace Dr Horace Chang on Tuesday confirmed that the Government is negotiating the US-backed arrangement but said it is not opening the country's borders for an uncontrolled migration programme.

Chang said the safety and security of Jamaicans and visitors to the island as well as its obligations under international law "have guided every step of the discussions on this memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Jamaica and the United States of America concerning Third Country Nationals (TCNs)".

It followed an article published in The Gleaner yesterday that disclosed that the US had sent a proposal to the Government surrounding Jamaica's acceptance of third-country nationals.

"I want to first clarify that the individuals who may be transferred under this framework are not being brought to Jamaica as permanent migrants. These are nationals of other countries other than Jamaica who are being facilitated through a structured process to transit through Jamaica to a third territory, including return to their home countries. Jamaica is not opening its borders for an uncontrolled migration programme," Chang said, confirming, at the same time, that up to 25 deportees would be sent to the island every two weeks.

However, University of the West Indies (UWI) lecturer in the Department



of Government Damion Gordon said while he appreciated Chang's attempt to provide clarity, the proposed deal did not stand on any solid or justifiable foundation.

Gordon argued that the arrangement could not be a joint security cooperation since there are no perceptible security benefits for Jamaica.

He called the proposed deal a furtherance of the Donald Trump administration's "radical anti-immigration policy" that disproportionately targets immigrants of colour from Africa and Central America.

"We have to place this proposed deal within the broader context of discriminatory policies towards certain groups, predominantly from Third World African and Central American nations, and the extent to which Jamaica's involvement as a transshipment point could be seen as complicit in discrimination or unfair and unequal treatment of certain groups," he said.

Gordon asserted that this is because there have been concerns that many of the people being deported have been denied due process in the US.

He said some were "rounded up by ICE agents, separated from their families, detained, and are being sent to countries with which they have no ties against their wishes".

Gordon argued that this raises ethical concerns about the fair and humane treatment of the third-country nationals.

He noted further that these arrangements often involve poor Third World countries and not wealthy European countries. He said this is further proof of the discriminatory nature of this policy and how the Third World is broadly perceived by the US relative to Europe.

"I also cannot understand the basis for Jamaica being used as a transshipment point if the deportees are not stopping over. Why not just deport them to their native countries as has always been the case? Do we have the infrastructure to support this complex operation? Why wasn't the public consulted on such a radical policy matter?" Gordon questioned.

He said by facilitating the US migrant transit deal, Jamaica risks violating international human rights frameworks, damaging its global reputation and exposing itself to serious future legal and moral challenges.

"There may be an economic rationale, but this issue is fundamentally a humanitarian and moral one, and we have to tread carefully, or this may become a defining moment for the country and the Government, and not necessarily in a good way," he said.

Professor of Caribbean Sustainable Development at UWI Anthony Clayton noted that in most cases, the people being deported have applied for asylum in the US but have been rejected or have committed offences such as a visa violation.

Regional News

He said in the past, people would have ordinarily been deported to their country of origin except in cases where it was clear that they would face persecution or death if they were sent back.

He said under new policies, the Trump administration wants a faster, cheaper process, with fewer opportunities to challenge particular deportations in order to accelerate the rate at which undocumented immigrants and failed asylum seekers could be shipped out of the country.

Clayton said to cut repatriation costs, the US leverages development assistance or political support to incentivise receiving nations to accept deportees.

“The TCN agreement has been controversial because people are deported to countries where they do not have citizenship, no family, no history and no connections. In some cases, they do not speak the language of the receiving country, they do not understand their legal rights, and there are reports from UN and other agencies

that some have been badly treated, tortured, or sent on to the countries where they feared persecution or death,” he said.

He said there are several questions that still have to be clarified to include, what benefits will Jamaica receive in exchange for supporting the US’s TCN programme and hosting TCN deportees?

He asked, given that Jamaica would have no control over the US end of the programme, how could the Government ensure that Jamaica does not facilitate cases of human-rights abuse?

The professor added that given that most of the deportees are only supposed to remain in Jamaica for approximately a month, where would they be sent after?

“Is it possible to be confident that they can be sent on at about the same rate at which they arrive? If that is not possible, then they might have to remain in Jamaica until a suitable destination can be found. And what would happen if a deportee reported

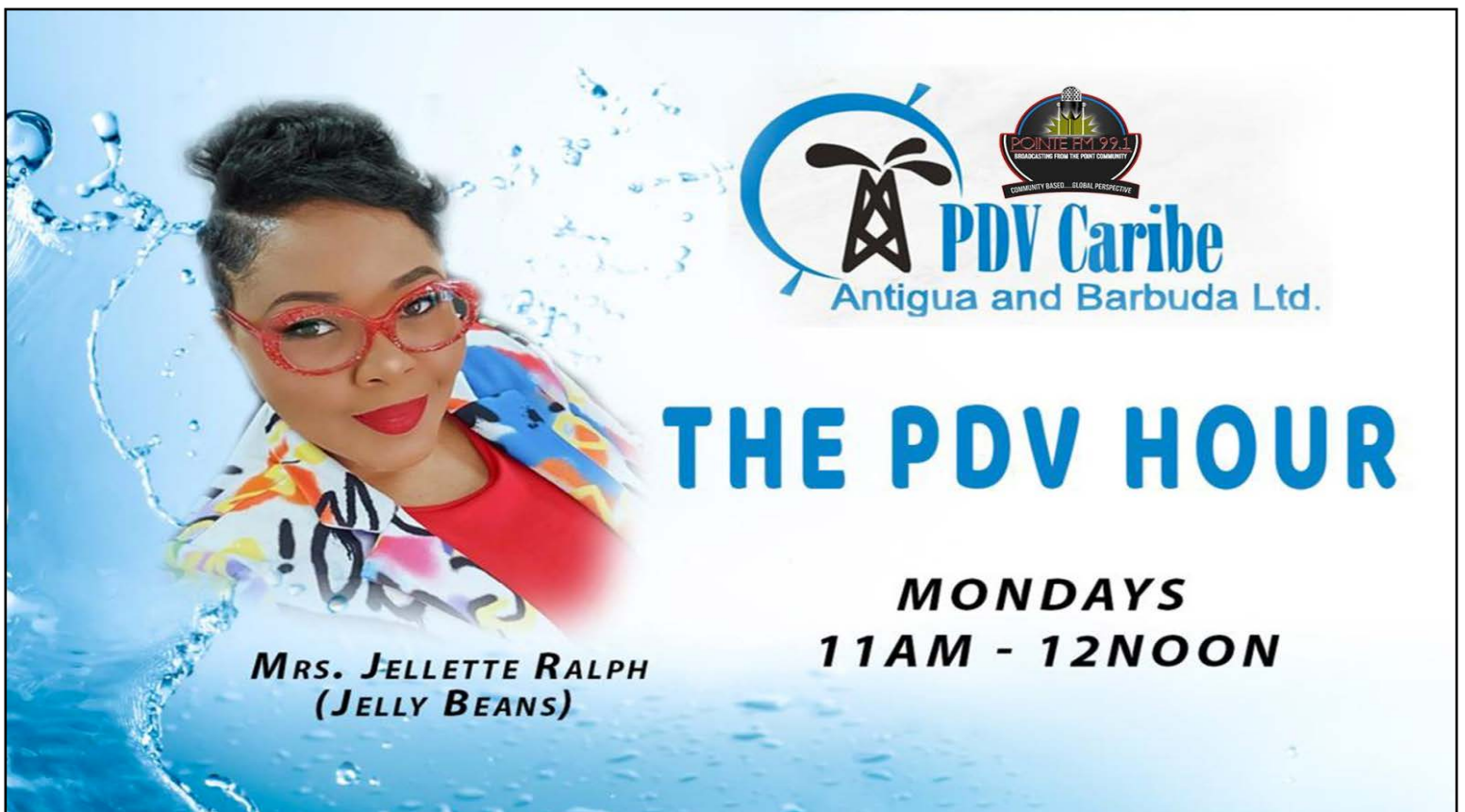
that they would face possible torture or death if they were sent back to their country of citizenship? Would they still be put on a plane?” he questioned.



At the same time, Opposition Spokesperson on Foreign, Regional and Diaspora Affairs Senator Donna Scott-Mottley is demanding that the Government urgently clarify the details of the arrangement.

Emphasising that the deal significantly impacts national sovereignty, immigration policy, security, and public resources, Scott-Mottley questioned whether Cabinet had authorised any discussions and who initiated them.

She called for full transparency regarding the criteria for accepting non-nationals, their legal status, transit duration, and the safeguards protecting Jamaica’s interests.

“The Jamaican people are entitled to a clear and timely explanation,” Scott-Mottley said. (Jamaica Gleaner)



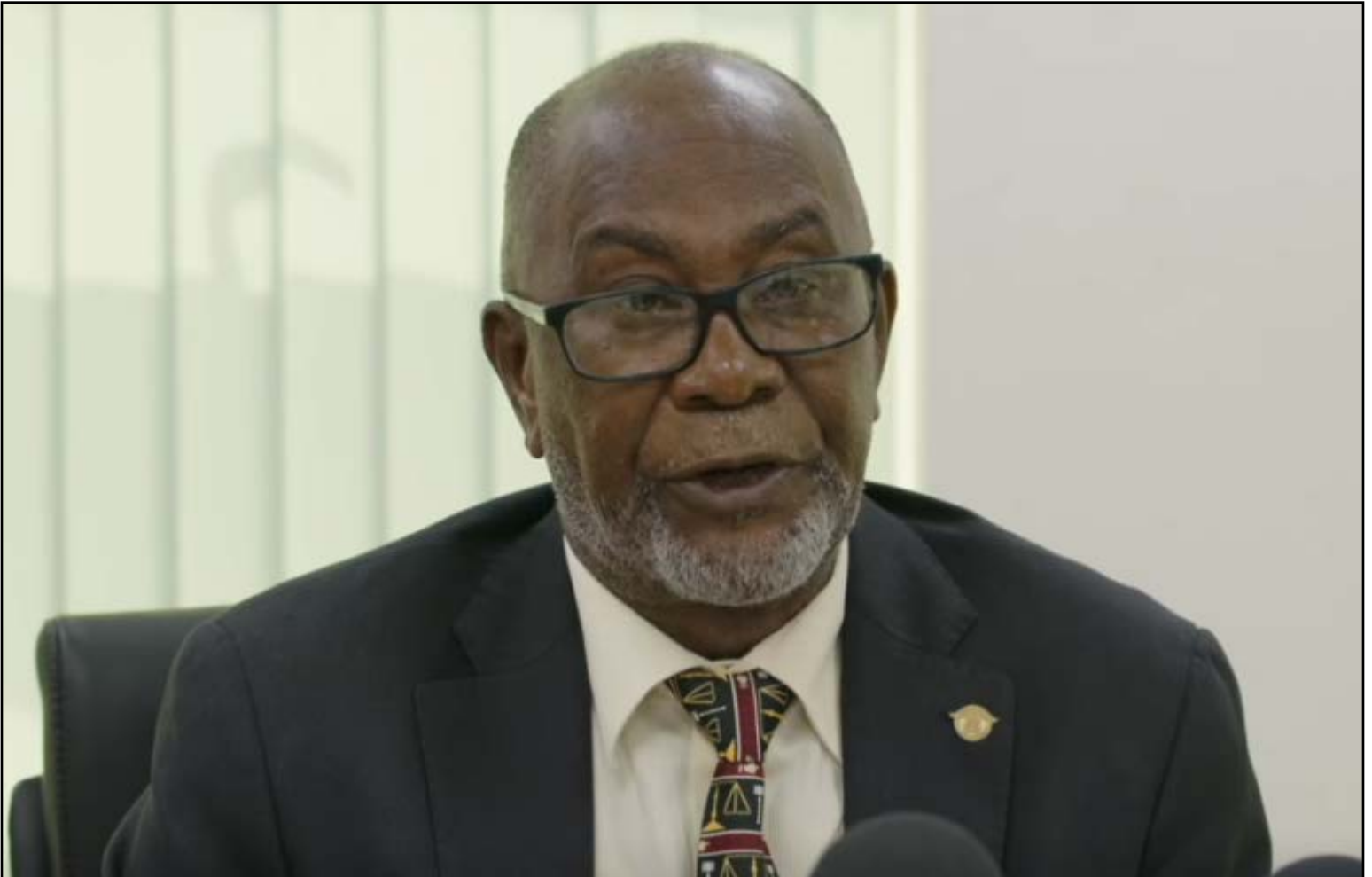
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SVG makes progress on completing forensic lab



Minister of National Security St. Clair Leacock recently announced that St. Vincent and the Grenadines is making significant progress in completing its own domestic forensic laboratory.

The upcoming facility represents a major upgrade to the nation's law enforcement capabilities, reducing reliance on neighboring countries for critical criminal investigations.

Speaking during an address on NBC Radio, Minister Leacock highlighted the necessity of the domestic facility. While the Regional Security System (RSS), Trinidad, and Barbados all have existing forensic labs, Leacock explained that these regional partners are often "busy and prioritizing their own needs". Having a local lab will ensure that St. Vincent and the Grenadines can process evidence more

swiftly and independently.

To ensure the new laboratory meets high standards, Leacock noted that he recently conducted an extensive tour of advanced forensic facilities in Taiwan to observe their operations. During his visit, he was shown the profound long-term impact of robust forensic capabilities, including instances where authorities successfully identified and prosecuted a serial offender 20 years after the fact using forensic evidence.

The development of the domestic forensic lab arrives alongside other recent technological upgrades aimed at modernizing St. Vincent's police force. Leacock confirmed the recent acquisition of specialized equipment, including a "bullet catcher" generously donated by the United States.

This new technology allows crime scene investigators to safely capture and analyze bullet shells recovered from crime scenes. By running these shells through domestic and regional databases, forensic experts can accurately trace whether a specific firearm was used in previous crimes, either locally or across the wider Caribbean.

Ultimately, these upgrades to St. Vincent and the Grenadines' investigative infrastructure are part of a broader strategy to support forensic and crime scene personnel with better analytical tools. By modernizing evidence collection and processing, Leacock emphasized that law enforcement is effectively working to "narrow the space" in which criminal elements can operate. (St Vincent Times)

Barbados firm wins top prize at 2026 Climate Smart Summit Investor forum competition



Trinidadian-born Dr Legena Henry, founder and CEO of Barbados-based Rum and Sargassum Incorporated, walked away with the top prize of US\$5,000 at the 2026 Climate Smart Summit Investor Forum pitch competition held in Bridgetown, Barbados, on Tuesday.

Henry was among six climate-focused entrepreneurs from across the Caribbean who were each given seven minutes to pitch their projects before a panel of five judges from regional and international financial institutions.

Dr Judlyn Telesford-Checkley, of GrenadaGrows, secured second place and a prize of US\$2,500, while Jamaica's Teka Smith of Cristeek Gold took third place and earned US\$1,500.

Rum and Sargassum is a climate infrastructure company that seeks to convert sargassum seaweed and rum distillery wastewater into renewable natural gas.

During her presentation, Henry

said the sargassum problem was a regional crisis, noting that massive seaweed blooms threaten marine ecosystems, hurt tourism-dependent economies and create health concerns when they rot along coastlines.

Henry, who is a mechanical engineer and lecturer of renewable energy at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Cave Hill Campus, said the project began in 2019, when she worked with students to explore how Barbados could transition its transportation sector towards a fossil-fuel-free future.

"I'm a mechanical engineer, all my three degrees are in mechanical engineering and I thought I'm not hearing a lot about how transport is going to transition, the transport sector. So I called these students and said let's look at what Barbados transport could look like and that's where it came from," she shared.

Amid rising fuel prices and global uncertainty, Henry stressed that Caribbean countries must develop their own energy solutions to improve en-

ergy security.

"If you think about the Straits of Hormuz, if you think about what's happening globally with energy right now. We need local energy products in our region," Henry said.

"We need to figure out our energy story because nobody's coming to rescue us," she continued. "Countries are running out of water, running out of electricity right now because of the conflicts around oil and gas and that industry. Even the price of plastic is going up because it's tied to the fossil fuel industry."

Henry said investment was crucial to the project's early growth, beginning with support from the Inter-American Development Bank and later a US\$100,000 contribution from an angel investor following a presentation at a United Nations event.

The entrepreneur said the US\$5,000 prize will help complete the company's pilot gas station project in Barbados, which she said is now 85 per cent complete.

The investor forum pitch competition formed part of the inaugural Climate Smart Summit, which is being held in Bridgetown, Barbados, from June 16 to 17 and features high-level dialogue, investment matchmaking and collaboration focused on accelerating climate-smart solutions across the Caribbean.

Chief Executive Officer of the Caribbean Climate-Smart Accelerator, Racquel Moses, announced on Tuesday that the organisation is seeking to help mobilise US\$11.5 million in capital for participating entrepreneurs and will track and publish the outcomes over the next 18 months. (Jamaica Observer)

UN food aid agency welcomes US\$800m donation from US

The United Nations (UN) food aid agency, which has been hit hard by steep European and United States (US) funding cuts, on Wednesday welcomed a US\$800 million contribution from the United States.

The World Food Programme (WFP), in a statement, said the funds would support “life-saving food and nutrition operations to reach more than 38 million of the most vulnerable across at least 37 countries”.

The Rome-based WFP said earlier this month it was facing a deep shortfall in its funding at a time of acute need.



The agency received US\$10 billion in contributions in 2024, but last year the amount had shrunk to US\$6 billion.

The deep cuts have come while the challenges have been multiplying, including from the war in the Middle East, which has piled on logistical difficulties and hiked prices for aid deliveries in a range of countries.

“At a time when needs are outpacing resources, this generous support from the United States is coming at a critical moment,” the WFP’s Acting Executive Director Carl Skau said.

The WFP has said it wants to reach 110 million people in the most acute need around the world this year, for which it would require US\$13 billion. (AFP)

Luigi Mangione will use a psychiatric defense in state murder case

Luigi Mangione will assert a psychiatric defense in his state murder trial in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, the judge overseeing the case said at a hearing on Wednesday.

If his attorney’s are able to prove he was experiencing an extreme emotional disturbance at the time of the alleged killing, Mangione’s second-degree murder charge be reduced to first-degree manslaughter if he’s convicted.

Mangione faces nine felony charges, including second-degree murder and several counts related to criminal possession of a weapon. If convicted in the New York case, he faces a possibility of life in prison.

New York State Judge Gregory Carro said he would be unsealing a notice from September regarding affirmative psychiatric de-



fense and emotional disturbance at the time of the killing.

Carro said that the defense needs to submit additional documentation regarding the psychiatric defense no later than tomorrow.

“Get it done,” Carro said.

Mangione appeared in the courtroom on Wednesday wearing a dark navy suit and a button down shirt. He looked down and was hand-

cuffed when he walked into the room.

He is accused in the fatal shooting of Thompson, 50, on the streets of New York City in December 2024.

A days-long manhunt for Thompson’s killer captivated the world and ended with Mangione’s arrest at a McDonald’s in Altoona, Pennsylvania, where he was apprehended.

Mangione is also facing

federal charges in New York and state charges in Pennsylvania in connection with the case. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges against him.

Carro ruled last month that prosecutors can use a gun and a red notebook found on Mangione during his arrest as evidence, rejecting the defense team’s argument that those items were seized illegally.

The next court hearing will be in August and it will be virtual. The trial is scheduled to begin on September 8.

CORRECTION (June 17, 2026 12:17 p.m. ET) A previous version of this article misstated the type of facility Mangione would serve his sentence, if convicted under a psychiatric defense. It would be a regular prison, not a psychiatric facility. (NBC)

Police rescue hundreds of cats from being eaten in Vietnam with bust of major animal theft ring



Police in Vietnam seized more than 400 cats in a major bust of a cat meat crime ring in Ho Chi Minh City, according to animal welfare groups and local media reports.

More than 40 of the rescued cats were reunited with their owners following the multiday operation last week, but several dozen of those rescued have died due to the harsh conditions that they were found in, the groups said.

This operation is “a sobering reminder of the enormous scale of Vietnam’s cat meat trade,” Karanvir Kukreja, who leads a campaign against dog and cat meat consumption for the international nonprofit Humane World for Animals, said in a statement.

An investigation last week into a spate of pet thefts in Ho Chi Minh City led police to track down the cat meat crime ring and detain nine individuals, according to local media.

Officers discovered 45 cages containing around 400 live cats and four ice-filled foam containers holding approximately 80 dead cats, with 21 live cats recovered at a separate location,

according to The Ho Chi Minh City Criminal Police Division.

With a total of more than 500 cats seized, local media has reported this as one of Vietnam’s largest cat welfare cases in recent years.

The suspects admitted to trapping and collecting cats across south Vietnam over the past three years in Ho Chi Minh City and the cities of Tay Ninh and An Giang, police said.

“The sad truth about this trade is that thousands of cats every month are being stolen, trafficked and slaughtered for meat across the country,” said Phuong Pham, the country director of the Humane World for Animals in Vietnam. “Thankfully, these survivors escaped.”

Several of the rescued cats were pregnant, leading to kittens being born in police custody this week, she said.

Chris Gindelhuber with the nonprofit Vietnam Cat Welfare, who is helping care for the rescued animals, said he “saw quite a lot of tears in the last few days.”

“It’s really beautiful to see how many Vietnamese families are coming, looking for their cats,” he said. “But it’s also heartbreaking because many families were looking for their cats and didn’t find them.”

Many veterinarians and volunteers are working around the clock for the cats, Gindelhuber said.

Consumption of dog and cat meat is legal in Vietnam. Vendors must have permits to validate the animals’ origins. But certain cities like Hoi An in central Vietnam are working with global animal welfare groups to stop dog and cat meat consumption in the city.

Not long after South Korea’s 2024 ban on dog meat, Vietnamese officials said the government plans to rebuild parts of the legal system to better protect pets and the rights of their owners.

“This event surprised a lot of people and has raised awareness among many to stop consuming cat meat,” said An Pham, a master’s degree student and avid cat lover in Ho Chi Minh City. (AP)

‘Get him out of here’: Judge sends Gilgo Beach killer to prison for rest of life



Rex Heuermann, known as the Gilgo Beach serial killer, who admitted to brutally murdering eight women, received the maximum sentence on Wednesday.

He will serve three life sentences for first-degree murder, plus 25 years to life on four second-degree murder charges, all running consecutively.

The sentencing followed a series of angry, poignant statements on Wednesday, as victims’ family members described how the brutal losses created “lifelong devastation” for them.

In April, Heuermann confirmed that he strangled and bound his victims before scattering their remains along Long Island’s remote beaches.

“You are a disgusting and despicable, small man, if you’re a man at all. And you’re a coward,” said Judge Timothy Mazzei as he handed down the maximum sentence in a Riverhead, Long Island courtroom. “Get him out of here.”

The courtroom erupted in cheers.

Heuermann, who appeared in a dark suit, blue shirt and grey tie, gave a brief statement before the sentence, claiming responsibility, then acknowledged that at this point, his words had

“no meaning.” When asked by the judge if he was “a little bit sorry”, he replied, “yes”.

The murders took place between 1993 and 2010, but the case took over a decade to solve.

After initially pleading not guilty, Heuermann ultimately admitted to the murders of: Melissa Barthelmy, 24; Megan Waterman, 22; and Amber Costello, 27; Maureen Brainard-Barnes, 25; Jessica Taylor, 20; Valerie Mack, 24; Sandra Costilla, 28; and Karen Vergata, 34.

After the hearing, Suffolk County District Attorney Ray Tierney gave credit to the families of the victims. “I want them to get their revenge by going on to have wonderful lives...now it’s time for them to heal,” he said.

BBC News At a distance, a man stands at a mic with a group of people surrounding him. they are in front oiif a courthouse outside with blue sky behind themBBC News

Suffolk County District Attorney speaks after the sentencing of Gilgo Beach killer Rex Heuermann.

The hearing started with fiery statements from victims’ family members.

Amanda, sister of Melissa Barthele-

my, described to the court the phone calls Heuermann made to her family after killing her sister, detailing how he was letting her sister’s body “rot” and how he raped her. “I was 15,” she said.

She addressed him directly: “You can look at me when I’m talking to you. It’s been 17 years since we last spoke.”

For the first time, Heuermann, who had been staring straight ahead blankly, turned towards the podium, then immediately back.

“The things I’d do to you are worse than what you’ve ever done to anyone,” she said as gasps were heard in the court. “Save me a spot in hell because I’ll see you there.”

Taylor’s cousin told the court on Wednesday that she will never forget getting calls that parts of her cousin’s body had been found on Gilgo Beach.

“I couldn’t wrap my head around the word ‘torso,’” she said, repeating “headless and handleless”.

She called Heuermann “sick, twisted, heartless”. “23 years we waited. For a while it felt like this day would never come,” she said.

Police arrested Heuermann, a married father of two living in the suburb of Massapequa Park, in 2023. The 62-year-old architect was taken into custody by Suffolk County police who swarmed his Midtown Manhattan office after tying him to the murders with DNA from a pizza box.

Heuermann was first charged in the murders of seven women, but in April, he pleaded guilty to an additional killing in 1996. Though many of his victims were missing for years, the case came to light in 2010 when investigators found four sets of remains within a quarter mile of each other on Gilgo Beach.

“Mr Heuermann, you have done hor-

rendous things to Valerie’s earthly body, but you have not touched the real Valerie,” said Mack’s father.

“I can only imagine when my day comes and I stand before Jesus, Valerie will be at his side.”

Heuermann’s victims are all believed to be sex workers at the time of their death, some of them contacted by him through their advertisements on Craigslist.

At the time, some of them had young children - now adults - who the court heard from during the hearing.

Nicolette Brainard-Barnes, daughter of Maureen, acknowledged that her mother was a sex worker, which she said led her name to be “slandered”.

“Like every sex worker, my mother was an entire human being,” she said.

She said she was only 7 when her mother disappeared. “I had to wonder where she was,” she said. “I was a little girl and I needed my mom.”

Her whole life has been shaped by her mother’s absence, she said.

“She was young at heart, but she was also just young,” she said. “Now I’m nearly two years older than she will never be.”

Liliana Waterman, Megan’s daughter, was 4 when her mother’s body was found. She said she learned details of the crime on the internet when she was 9.

“I remember asking my grandparents what the words ‘prostitute’ and ‘pimp’ meant,” she said.

She wondered if her mother was scared or if it was her fault, she said.

The sister of Maureen Brainard-Barnes broke down into sobs as she talked about how much she missed her.

“Nothing could have prepared me for the day Maureen didn’t come home,” she told the court Wednesday. “This was not only a destruction of life, this has become a lifelong devastation of a family.”

Police investigated the deaths for

over a decade, and had been sitting on a tip that - once acted upon - led to the killer within weeks.

The Suffolk County Police Department did not involve federal investigators in the probe at first, and leaders of the investigation faced separate obstruction scandals. In 2022, with new leadership, Suffolk County Police created a task force to investigate the murders - bringing together federal and local law enforcement - which led them to Heuermann in six weeks.

The police acted on a description giv-

en to police in 2010 by the roommate of Costello, after she had a run-in with a client. The roommate described a large man he described as looking like “an ogre” who drove a first-generation Chevrolet Avalanche, an unusual vehicle.

Family members of the victims have alleged police investigations were not aggressive enough because the victims were sex workers. Some Long Island residents agreed, saying they were horrified by how long it took to get justice. (BBC)

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Flyballers among winners in Village Netball League

Michael Joseph Gray's Green Flyballers were among the winners in the Antigua and Barbuda Netball Association's (ABNA) Antigua Generators and Cool and Smooth Village League on Tuesday evening.

The Flyballers notched up their second win in three matches with a 39-5 victory against St. John's United Talented Youths in the female division at the Willikies Netball Court.

Krizia Duncan converted 23 of her 35 shots, and Kizzy Hughes scored 16 of her 26 attempts for the Gray's Green Flyballers.

Trienecia Greenaway sank three of her five shots, and Reneka Anthony made two of her seven tries for the St. John's United Talented Youths, who suffered their fourth defeat in as many games.

After losing their two previous matches, Lamin Newton's All Saints United recorded their first win in the female division by surging to a commanding 53-16 victory against Newfield.

Zhanira Pereira scored 34 of her 49 shots, and Rayana Regis sank 19 of her 24 attempts for All Saints United.

Esther Emmanuel converted 14 of her 23 shots, and Sophia Wilkins made two of her five tries for Newfield, who suffered their third successive loss after winning all three of their previous matches.

Swetes/Roman Hill maintained their unbeaten run in the Mix Di-



The Gray's Green Flyballers female netball team

vision by securing their third win in as many games with a 46-16 drubbing of Willikies in their latest outing.

Akiel Hazelwood sank 29 of his 34 shots, Elijah James scored 10 of his 13 attempts, and Jamila Fitz made seven of her 12 tries for Swetes/Roman Hill.

Carl Kirby and Summer Buckleys each converted eight of their 14 attempts for Willikies, who lost for the third time in as many games.

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

In the female division, Lamin Newton's All Saints United will take on Seatons Eastsiders at 6 pm, and Potters Stingers will meet the Under-16 National Team at 7 pm.

Michael Joseph Gray's Green Flyballers will clash with Pares Net Masters in a mixed division affair at 8 pm.

El Hombre off to winning start in defense of title in All Saints League



The El Hombre football team

El Hombre made an impressive start in defense of their title in the All Saints Community Football League on Tuesday.

After securing their title last year by beating Police 7-6 in a penalty shootout in the final, El Hombre launched their campaign with a commanding 5-0 drubbing of Overdose at the Mock Pond Playing Field.

Eugene Kirwan had a double conversion with strikes in the seventh and 57th minutes. The other goals for the defending champs were scored by Sean Tomlinson in the ninth minute, Defrante Braithwaite in the 54th minute, and D'Andre Bishop in the

66th minute.

Last year's losing finalist Police open their campaign by pulling off a 3-1 victory against Green Forest.

Iandre Hodge struck twice with conversions in the 33rd and 52nd minutes, while his teammate Malik Marcelling scored the other goal for Police with a strike in the 12th minute. Malik Charles scored in the 31st minute for Green Forest.

Last year's losing semi-finalists, Darg A Bark, also began their campaign on a winning note by securing a 3-1 victory over Sea View Farm.

Joylan Sinclair struck twice for

Darg A Bark with conversions in the seventh and 24th minutes. The other goal for Darg A Bark was scored by Shakwon Simon in the 41st minute.

Joshua Ferdinand scored a consolation goal for Sea View Farm with a 64th-minute conversion.

A winning start as well for Basa, who snatched a one-nil victory against Ovals in their opening encounter.

Following a goalless first half, Karmarie Benjamin broke the deadlock by scoring the winner and only goal of the match in the 54th minute.

CWI announces squad for Test series against Sri Lanka



Antiguan fast bowler Alzarri Joseph, second right, returns to the West Indies Test squad. (CWI Media)

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced a 15-member squad for the two-match test series against Sri Lanka, which will be played at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua from June 25 to July 7.

The West Indies will look to make the most of home conditions and conclude the current World Test Championship cycle on a positive note. The men in maroon will complete the cycle later this year with a home Test series against Pakistan and a two-match series tour of Bangladesh.

Roston Chase will captain the squad, which includes the return of wicket-keeper-batter Joshua Da Silva, who amassed 996 runs across the last two seasons of the West Indies Championship.

Also returning is Amir Jango, who earned a recall following an impressive showing in this year's Championship, finishing second in runs scored including a double century. It will be his first Test squad selection since January 2025.

Fast bowlers Alzarri Joseph and Shamar Joseph are back in the Test set-up after missing the tours of India and

New Zealand through injury. The pair last featured in a Test squad during the home series against Australia in 2025.

Head Coach Daren Sammy welcomes the challenge of playing Sri Lanka at home this summer.

“Every Test series is an opportunity for us to grow as a team and strengthen our identity. Sri Lanka are a quality side, so we know we’ll have to be at our best, but we’re excited about the challenge ahead.”

Sammy added that there is a common belief within the group.

“For us, it’s about playing with discipline, showing character when the game gets tough, and representing the West Indies with pride. The players have been putting in the work, and we’re looking forward to putting on a strong display for our fans across the Caribbean.”

As part of the team’s preparations for the series, the squad is currently participating in a high-performance training camp in Antigua which commenced on June 12 and runs until June 22, with those players who competed in the white-ball series in Jamaica

joining on June 15.

The camp is focused on technical development, match-specific training, fitness conditioning and team-building activities. The programme also provides the coaching staff with an opportunity to assess player readiness and fine-tune plans ahead of the series against Sri Lanka and the final home series against Pakistan.

Speaking on the camp, Sammy said, “This is a key component of our preparations heading into the series, providing players and coaches with valuable time to enhance and improve the skills we want to see sharpened, based on the areas we need to focus our attention on when facing this opponent. It also gives us the opportunity to put clear objectives and plans in place for the conclusion of the summer against Pakistan.”

“Additionally, the four-day warm-up game prior to the series provides the chance for some of our test hopefuls to play in high intensity action and create the avenue for more competition within the squad ahead of the upcoming and future series.”

Tevin Imlach will captain the 13-man WI Select XI in the four-day warm-up match against Sri Lanka from June 18 to 21 at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua.

West Indies Test Squad vs Sri Lanka: Roston Chase (captain), Jomel Warican (vice-captain), John Campbell, Tagerarine Chanderpaul, Joshua Da Silva, Justin Greaves, Kavem Hodge, Shai Hope, Amir Jango, Alzarri Joseph, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Anderson Phillip, Kemar Roach, and Jayden Seales.

WI Select XI vs Sri Lanka: Tevin Imlach (captain), Joshua Bishop, Jonathan Drakes, Karima Gore, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Kirk McKenzie, Keemo Paul, Kemol Savory, Ojay Shields, Nial Smith, Gilon Tyson, and Kevin Wickham.

Portugal held to draw by DR Congo in their World Cup opener



Congo's Yoane Wissa, left, celebrates after scoring his side's first goal during the World Cup Group K soccer match between Portugal and Congo in Houston, Wednesday, June 17, 2026. (AP)

HOUSTON (Reuters) - Portugal and their talisman Cristiano Ronaldo were left frustrated after Democratic Republic of Congo fought back to earn a 1-1 draw on Wednesday in the African nation's return to the World Cup stage after 52 years.

It looked like it would be a long afternoon for DR Congo with Portugal taking the lead inside six minutes when Pedro Neto crossed for Joao Neves who headed home from 15 metres.

It gave one of the pre-tournament favourites the perfect start, though ended as their only effort on target in the game.

Portugal, led by 41-year-old Ron-

aldo looking to score in his sixth World Cup, dominated possession as DR Congo sat back and soaked up the pressure for much of the match, looking to strike on the counter in the Group K encounter.

DR Congo grew into the game and were rewarded deep in first-half stoppage time when an unmarked Yoane Wissa scored the African nation's first-ever goal at a World Cup when he headed in a cross whipped into the box from Arthur Masuaku.

Portugal came out for the second half with more urgency after an opening period that lacked intensity and at times more resembled a training session with their formidable midfield

knocking the ball around but with nothing to show for it.

Cedric Bakambu came close to an upset when he struck the post for the Congolese in the second period, while Ronaldo twice fired wide from close range as he appeared at a sixth World Cup, a record he shares with Argentina's Lionel Messi.

Ronaldo, who became the oldest player to ever start a World Cup match, was largely ineffective and saw little of the ball as DR Congo defenders denied him space to operate inside the box.

Debutants Uzbekistan faced Colombia in the second Group K match in Mexico City on Wednesday.

Antigua get first win in Billie Jean King Cup in El Salvador

Antigua and Barbuda secured their first win during their campaign in the Americas Group III of the Billie Jean King Cup competition, which is currently taking place on the hard court surface in Santa Tecla, El Salvador, from June 15 to 20.

After losing their opening encounter to Barbados in Group A of the 10-team women's round-robin competition, the Antiguan hit back to surge to a commanding 3-0 victory against Suriname in their second encounter on Tuesday.

Brasha Dyer won the opening singles 6-1, 1-6, 6-4 against Faith Bab of Suriname. Jolie George-Alexander increased Antigua's advantage with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Kayla Currie.

Sibley Charles and Ariel Naomi Kelsick completed the Antiguan clean sweep by soaring to victory in the doubles via a 7-5, 6-2 triumph over the Surinamese duo of Faith Bab and Cybelle Ferrier.

Antigua and Barbuda were beaten 3-0 by Barbados in their opening encounter on Monday. Barbadian Hannah Chambers crushed Ariel Naomi Kelsick 6-0, 6-0 in the opening singles.

Gabrielle Leslie trounced Jolie George-Alexander 6-0, 6-1 to give Barbados a two-nil lead, and Hannah Chambers joined forces with Cherise Slocombe to wrap up the tie for the Bajans by dispatching the Antiguan pair of Sibley Charles and Brasha Dyer 6-0, 6-1 in the doubles.

Antigua and Barbuda was expected to face host El Salvador in their next encounter on Wednesday and will face Cuba in their final match in Group A.

El Salvador is currently leading Group A with two wins in as many



Members of the Antigua and Barbuda team that is contesting the Americas Group III Billie Jean King Cup competition, which is currently taking place on the hard court surface in Santa Tecla, El Salvador, from June 15 to 20. (Photo courtesy of the ABTA)

games after dispatching Cuba 3-0 and prevailing 2-1 against Barbados.

They are followed by Barbados and Antigua and Barbuda with identical records of one win and a loss in two matches.

Costa Rica, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Bermuda are contesting Group B. Costa Rica is currently leading Group B with two wins in as many games after securing 2-1 wins over Panama and Trinidad and

Tobago.

They are followed by Panama and Trinidad and Tobago with identical records of one win and one defeat from their two matches so far.

The top two teams in each group at the end of the round-robin phase will compete in a playoff for promotion. The two promotional playoff winners will advance to compete in the Americas Group II in 2027.