

Cabinet Reaffirms Its Commitment To Expanding Access To Education

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Centenarian Alberta Roberts-Nicholas (centre) is congratulated by the Governor General's Deputy Sir Clare Roberts (on her left) and Minister of State Kiz Johnson (her right) along with officials of the Ministry of Social Transformation on the occasion of her 100th birthday

Cabinet Reaffirms Its Commitment To Expanding Access To Education

Cabinet reaffirmed the Government's unwavering commitment to expanding access to higher education and building a highly skilled workforce to support the continued development of Antigua and Barbuda.

At its regular meeting on Wednesday, the Cabinet recalled that, during the lead up to the recent general election campaign, the Government pledged to provide free university education for eligible students pursuing studies at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Five Islands Campus. This commitment was made in recognition of the transformative role education plays in social mobility, economic growth, and national development.

Consistent with this pledge, the Government has already instituted a policy of free tuition for students pursuing CSEC subjects and students attending institutions under the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advance Studies and remains committed to removing financial barriers to tertiary education. Cabinet therefore agreed that:

1. Free tuition will be available to students pursuing their first undergraduate degree at the UWI Five Islands Campus, subject to established eligibility requirements.

2. Students pursuing postgraduate and professional degrees shall continue to bear the cost of their tuition, except in areas where the Government may determine that national development priorities warrant special support.



3. Recognizing the strategic importance of legal education, Cabinet agreed that students enrolled in law programmes at UWI Five Islands will receive Government assistance of up to 50 per cent of tuition costs.

Cabinet further established a sub-committee comprising the Minister for Education, the Minister responsible for Social Transformation, and the Minister for Information Communication Technology to engage with the administration of the UWI Five Islands Campus.

The committee is tasked with identifying programmes and partnerships that align with Antigua and Barbuda's national development agenda and to support the continued expansion of the campus.

Special attention will also be given to the development of technical and professional programmes, including associate and degree programmes in areas such as engineering, construction management, project management, and other disciplines essential to the country's economic transformation.

Cabinet noted that collaboration with institutions such as the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS) will be explored to create clear educational pathways for students seeking technical qualifications.

Cabinet emphasized that the Government's investment in education is an investment in the future of Antigua and Barbuda. The policy framework adopted seeks not only to honour the promises made to the electorate but also to ensure that the UWI Five Islands Campus evolves into a premier institution capable of meeting the educational and workforce needs of the nation and the wider region.



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Government Gives Serious Consideration To Amending the Windfall Tax



Director General of Communications, Maurice Merchant

In keeping with its declared intention to broaden access to tertiary level education in Antigua and Barbuda, the government is giving serious consideration to amending the Windfall Tax to raise funds to support that policy initiative.

Director General of Communications, Maurice Merchant reports that already Cabinet has commenced discussions on expanding the scope of the Windfall Tax to encompass all businesses operating in Antigua and Barbuda that earn annual profits of EC\$1 million or more.

Under the current legislative framework, **the Windfall Tax applies exclusively to the telecommunications,**

banking, insurance, and energy sectors and imposes a ten percent levy on profits of EC\$1 million or more. Cabinet is now examining amendments to the existing regime that would broaden the tax base to ensure that all highly profitable enterprises contribute equitably to the nation's social and economic development.

The discussions centered on the growing investment being made by the Government in education and human capital development. Cabinet noted that Antigua and Barbuda has embarked on an ambitious expansion of its tertiary education sector, which includes continued support for the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus as well as the insti-

tutions that comprise the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS), namely the Alister Francis Campus (AFC), the Eustace Hill Campus (EHC), the Muriel O'Marde Campus (MOC) and The Harrison Centre.

Cabinet considered that as access to higher education continues to expand and as the Government invests significantly in facilities, programmes and student opportunities, it is appropriate to explore innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms to support these initiatives. The proposed expansion of the Windfall Tax is therefore being examined as one possible means of generating dedicated revenue to strengthen and sustain the country's educational institutions.

The matter will continue to be deliberated in subsequent meetings of the Cabinet, with careful consideration being given to the legal, economic and social implications of the proposed changes.

When Cabinet ultimately agree on amendments to the Windfall Tax regime, the necessary legislative proposals will be brought before Parliament for debate and consideration.

Cabinet reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that the nation's economic growth is shared broadly and that investments in education remain a central pillar of Antigua and Barbuda's development agenda.



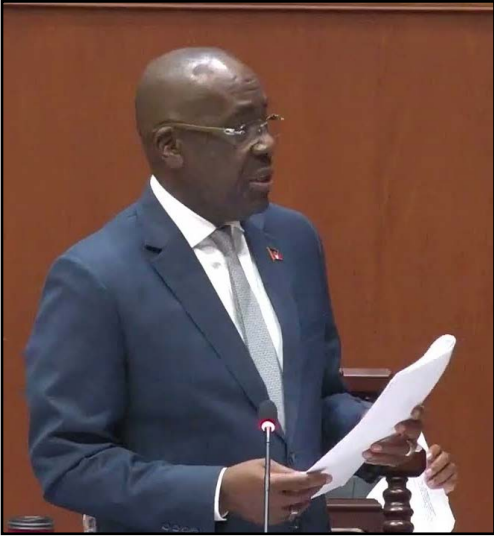
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No Special Privileges After Amnesty, Minister Warns Illegal Immigrants



Foreign Affairs Minister E.P. Chet Greene has served notice that undocumented immigrants who fail to regularise their status during the upcoming amnesty period should not expect special treatment once the programme ends.

Presenting the Immigration and Passport Amendment Bill 2026 in Parliament on Tuesday, Greene stressed that the amnesty programme is designed not only to regularise the status of undocumented residents but also to ensure the government has an accurate account of those living in the country. This includes maintaining accurate population data, which he stated is critical to national planning and development, as the government seeks to better understand the size and composition of the population while strengthening immigration management and national security.

“If you wish not to be accounted for within the census, within the national government thrust of this country, I’m sorry, when the amnesty is over, you cannot be expected any special privileges or considerations,” the minister said.

He added that individuals who choose not to regularise their status during the amnesty period should expect immigration authorities to continue enforce-

ing existing laws, including deportation and removal proceedings through the courts.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration explained that the amnesty will run from 1st July to 31st August, 2026, offering eligible undocumented residents an opportunity to regularise their immigration status in the country. Under the proposed legislation, individuals who have resided illegally in Antigua and Barbuda for four years or more may qualify for amnesty. The provisions also extend to persons who would ordinarily qualify for citizenship but experienced a lapse of six months or more in their period of legal residency.

Applicants will be required to submit police records from every country or territory in which they resided during the previous four years, pay a processing fee of \$500, and a change-of-status

endorsement fee of \$150.

During his presentation, Minister E.P. Chet Greene made clear that the amnesty is not intended to benefit criminals or persons who pose a threat to the nation. Those deemed ineligible include individuals considered threats to national security or public safety, persons who provide false or misleading information, individuals subject to active deportation orders or international arrest warrants, and those who have previously applied for amnesty on three occasions.

All applications for amnesty will be processed through the Department of Immigration.

Minister E.P. Chet Greene urged the public to view the measure objectively and avoid politicising the issue, describing the bill as an important step in managing immigration and strengthening national security.



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CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

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Youth Consultation On Mental Health Reform Report Presented To The Government

The findings of a national consultation process on mental health care and proposed mental health legislation involving children and adolescents in Antigua and Barbuda has been presented to the government.

The findings are documented in two companion reports, National Youth Consultation on the Mental Health Care Bill 2026: Findings and Recommendations Report and Youth Voices: A Mental Health Care Bill Survey Report, which were formally handed over to Health Minister, Michael Joseph, by Jameel Lee of the Zenith Centre.

The documents represent the culmination of a collaborative initiative involving the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Environment and Civil Service Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Zenith Centre, UNICEF and the Pan Ameri-



Led by Health Minister Michael Joseph, Ministry of Health Officials accept copy of the report from Jameel Lee


 An advertisement for Curry House Antigua. The background is a dark, textured surface with several bowls of different curries and rice. The text is overlaid on the image.

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can Health Organization (PAHO).

The initiative formed part of the Government's ongoing efforts to develop modern, rights-based mental health legislation and reflected a commitment to ensuring that the voices of children and adolescents are meaningfully incorporated into mental health reform.

Through age-appropriate and supportive approaches, children and adolescents were provided with opportunities to share their experiences, concerns, expectations and recommendations regarding mental health and mental health services.

The exercise engaged approximately 1,000 young people through surveys and a further 300 participants through ten focus groups. Participants represented a broad cross-section of children and adolescents from primary and secondary schools and the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS). The resulting findings and recommendations are intended to strengthen mental health awareness, improve access to services, reduce stigma and ensure that the legislative framework adequately reflects the needs and priorities of children and adolescents.

In accepting the findings, Minister Joseph welcomed the contribution of the nation's youth to the development of the Mental Health Care Bill and underscored the importance of inclusive and evidence-informed policymaking.

"The perspectives of our children and young people matter. Meaningful reform requires that those who will live with the outcomes of our decisions have an opportunity to contribute to them. The findings contained in these documents will help ensure that the Mental Health Care Bill and the broader mental health system are responsive to the needs and realities of young people in Antigua and Barbuda" Minister Joseph stated.

Minister Joseph also commended the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Zenith Centre, UNICEF, PAHO and all those involved



The Youth Consultation on Mental Health Reform Report is presented to the government

in facilitating the initiative, noting that meaningful mental health reform requires collaboration across sectors and sustained engagement with communities.

The Government of Antigua and Bar-

buda remains committed to strengthening mental health services and advancing legislation that promotes dignity, protects human rights and reflects the needs and aspirations of the people it is intended to serve.


 An advertisement for State Insurance Company Limited. At the top, the logo and name "STATE INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED" are displayed, along with the tagline "Live in a better State of mind". Below this, a spiral-bound notebook is open, showing the handwritten text "I am grateful for:" in black ink. A large, solid green heart is drawn on the page below the text. A black pen lies on the right side of the notebook. At the bottom of the advertisement, contact information is provided for Antigua and Barbuda, including phone numbers and an email address, along with the website URL and social media icons.

Sir David Harrison Recommended to Lead UWI FIC Campus Council and Endowment Fund

The Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda has approved a recommendation for Sir David Harrison to serve as Chairman of The University of the West Indies (UWI) Five Islands Campus Council and Chairman of the Campus Endowment Fund, citing his distinguished record in business, philanthropy and education.

Once ratified by the University Council, Sir David will succeed Sir Aziz Hadeed who held the position of Campus Council Chair since 2019, but who died suddenly on 23rd May, 2026 in the United States of America.

The recommendation of Sir David is viewed as a significant step in strengthening the governance and future development of The UWI Five Islands Campus, which has emerged as a key institution of higher education in Antigua and Barbuda and the wider Eastern Caribbean.

In announcing the decision, Cabinet highlighted Sir David's exceptional leadership credentials and longstanding commitment to creating opportunities for young people. With more than 40 years of experience in business, Sir David is recognised as one of



Sir David Harrison

the United Kingdom's most successful entrepreneurs. He currently serves as Chairman of True Potential LLP, a Newcastle-based financial technology and financial services company that ranks among the fastest-growing firms in its sector. Prior to that, he founded Positive Solutions, which became the largest financial advisory firm in the United Kingdom.

Cabinet also praised Sir David Harrison's contributions beyond the business world, particularly his efforts to

promote education and social mobility. Through the Harrison Foundation and the Harrison Centres for Social Mobility, he has invested heavily in programmes aimed at assisting disadvantaged youth and expanding access to education and employment opportunities.

His philanthropic work has extended to Antigua and Barbuda, where he established the first overseas Harrison Centre and has provided substantial support for educational and youth development initiatives. Recent reports have noted his commitment to investing millions of pounds in programmes designed to enhance social mobility and educational advancement within the country.

In recognition of his contributions to business, education and social mobility, Sir David Harrison was awarded the Knight Grand Cross of The Most Distinguished Order of the Nation by Antigua and Barbuda in 2022.

Cabinet has expressed confidence that his experience and vision will help propel The UWI Five Islands Campus to new levels of achievement.



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Minister Michael Joseph Wants Greater Support for Communities on the Frontlines of Climate Change

Environment Minister, Michael Joseph, has called for greater investment in communities on the frontlines of climate change as he addressed the Berlin Climate Mobility Forum 2026 in Germany.

Speaking during discussions on the Global Principles for Addressing Climate Mobility, Minister Joseph welcomed the Principles and emphasized the importance of ensuring that adaptation efforts are both locally driven and adequately financed.

Addressing representatives of governments, international organizations, development institutions, and climate experts, the Minister noted that communities are often best placed to identify their vulnerabilities and priorities but frequently lack the resources needed to respond effectively to the growing impacts of climate change.

“Communities know what they need. They know which homes flood first, which roads fail, which coastlines are retreating, which families need support, and which ecosystems once protected them. But knowing what is needed is not the same as having the resources to act,” the Minister stated.

Minister Joseph stressed that, for Small Island Developing States such as Antigua and Barbuda, climate change is placing increasing pressure on housing, healthcare, food security, public infrastructure, and community well-being. He underscored the need for financing mechanisms that strengthen national institutions and enable governments to deliver support directly to vulnerable populations.

The Minister highlighted Antigua and Barbuda’s Home Assistance Programme for the Indigent (HAPI) as an example of a practical initiative that helps vulnerable citizens, including the elderly, unemployed persons, displaced individuals, and disaster victims, remain safe and secure within



Minister Michael Joseph (second from left) with colleagues at meeting in Berlin, Germany

their communities through housing construction and rehabilitation support.

In his remarks, Minister Joseph also drew attention to the often-overlooked mental health impacts of climate change, noting that repeated exposure to storms, displacement, livelihood disruption, and uncertainty can have lasting psychological effects on affected populations.

He further emphasized the importance of protecting ecosystems such as beaches, wetlands, reefs, mangroves, and fisheries, which provide essential services that support food security, livelihoods, cultural heritage, and protection from extreme weather events.

The Minister warned that rising global temperatures continue to pose a significant threat to Small Island Developing States and reiterated Antigua and Barbuda’s support for efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

“For Antigua and Barbuda, 1.5 degrees is the difference between manageable risk and permanent damage,” he said.

Minister Joseph also highlighted the growing challenge of loss and damage, noting that adaptation measures have limits when communities face repeated climate shocks, land loss, damaged infrastructure, failing water systems,

and disappearing livelihoods.

Referencing the experience of Caribbean countries, he pointed to the substantial economic and social costs associated with recent hurricanes and emphasized the need for a more responsive and equitable international financial architecture to support vulnerable nations.

The Minister reaffirmed Antigua and Barbuda’s support for the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States as important frameworks for improving access to climate finance and ensuring that vulnerability is appropriately recognized within international development and financing systems.

Minister Joseph is attending the Berlin Climate Mobility Forum 2026 with support from Antigua and Barbuda’s Climate Ambassador, Ruleta Camacho Thomas

The Berlin Climate Mobility Forum brings together high-level representatives from governments, international organizations, development institutions, and civil society to advance practical solutions that address the growing challenges associated with climate mobility while strengthening resilience and adaptation efforts worldwide.

Department of Culture to Host Soca and Calypso Adjudicators' Workshop

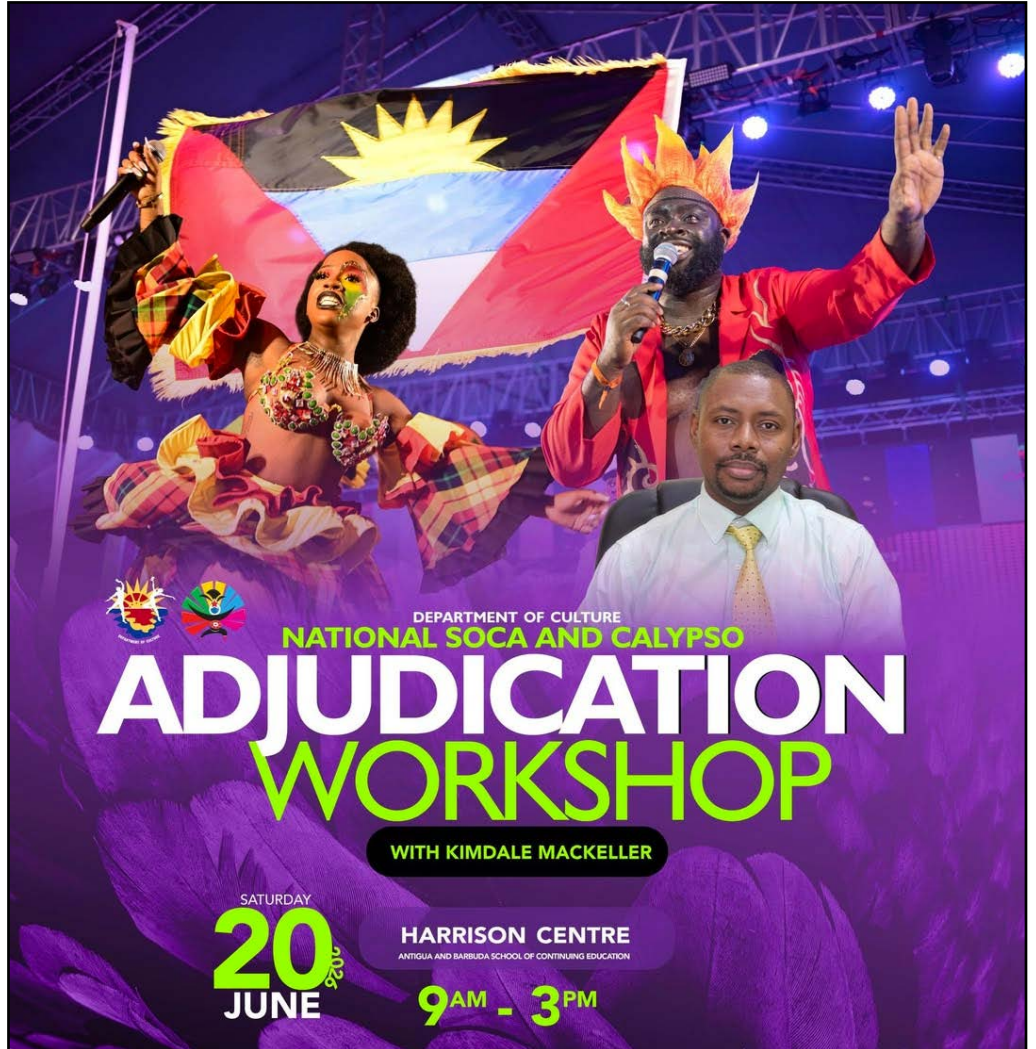
The Department of Culture will host a comprehensive **Soca and Calypso Adjudicators' Training Workshop** on **Saturday, 20th June, 2026**, aimed at strengthening integrity, professionalism, and credibility of Antigua and Barbuda's Carnival competitions.

The workshop, which will be held at the Harrison Centre Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies, from 9am - 3pm will bring together current and prospective adjudicators responsible for evaluating performances in the major competitions, including the Soca Monarch, Party Monarch, and Calypso Monarch contests. They will receive practical instructions in scoring methodologies, rubric application, performance analysis, and bias awareness.

The training, which will be facilitated by cultural practitioner and adjudication specialist, Kimdale Mackellar, will also examine key areas of assessment including lyrics, musical composition, originality, stage presentation, audience engagement, communication, and overall performance quality.

Interactive and hands-on methodology featuring group discussions, mock adjudication exercises, calibration activities, audio and video analysis, score comparison exercises, and guided feedback sessions will also be included.

As Carnival competitions continue to



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NATIONAL SOCA AND CALYPSO
ADJUDICATION
WORKSHOP
 WITH KIMDALE MACKELLER
 SATURDAY
20
 JUNE
 HARRISON CENTRE
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9AM - 3PM

evolve and attract increased public interest, the Department recognises the importance of ensuring that adjudicators possess a thorough understanding of official judging criteria and are equipped to apply them fairly, consistently, and transparently.

Through initiatives such as the training workshop, the Department of Culture continues to strengthen the systems that ensure artistic achievement is assessed consistently, objectively, and with the highest degree of professionalism.



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ANTIGUA Carnival 2026
 JUL 25TH - AUG 11TH
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Minister Daryll Matthew Encourages Greater Support for Young Entrepreneurs



Minister Daryll Matthew has reaffirmed the importance of creating greater opportunities for young entrepreneurs, highlighting access to finance, mentorship, and business support as critical to unlocking the next generation of innovators and business leaders.

Speaking at the Caribbean Youth Entrepreneurship (CYE) Summit 2026, held at the Royalton Antigua Resort this week, Minister Matthew joined a panel of representatives from the banking sector, the credit union movement, and the Prime Minister's Entrepreneurship Development Programme

to discuss practical ways of strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem across Antigua and Barbuda and the wider Caribbean.

The summit brought together regional stakeholders to advance youth-led enterprise through collaboration, investment readiness, and innovation.

Reflecting on the discussions, Minister Matthew said:

“Our young people have the ideas, the talent and the determination to build successful businesses. Our responsibility is to ensure they have access to the financing, mentorship and oppor-

tunities needed to turn those ideas into thriving enterprises. When we invest in youth entrepreneurship, we invest in stronger communities, a more resilient economy, and the future of Antigua and Barbuda.”

Minister Matthew commended the organisers of the Caribbean Youth Entrepreneurship Summit for creating an important platform for dialogue, collaboration and action, noting that partnerships between government, financial institutions and the private sector remain essential to fostering sustainable economic growth led by young entrepreneurs.

Alberta Roberts-Nicholas celebrates her 100th birthday



Governor General's Deputy Sir Clare Roberts, delivered remarks that spoke to the breadth of Mrs. Roberts-Nicholas' legacy.



Grand daughter in law delivers a tribute



Minister of State Kiz Johnson handing over a check of \$10,000 to the country's latest centenarian



Senator Hon. Lamin Newton offered brief remarks congratulating Mrs Alberta Roberts-Nicholas

The family, friends and community of Old Road Village came together on Thursday to honour Alberta Roberts-Nicholas on the occasion of her 100th birthday, celebrating a century of faith, service, and unwavering dedication to family and community.

The Community Development and Citizen's Engagement Division, under the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation, also joined in celebrating this remarkable milestone in Alberta Roberts-Nicholas' life.

Born on June 18, 1926 in Old Road Village to Joseph and Grace Roberts, Mrs. Roberts-Nicholas has spent her life as a seamstress, homemaker, devoted churchwoman, and pillar of her community.

For nearly 80 years, she has been a faithful member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, serving in various ministries and extending compassion to the sick, the disabled, and those in need.

Minister of State in the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation, Hon. Kiz Johnson, attended the celebration and presented Roberts-Nicholas with a cheque of EC\$10,000 on behalf of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, affirming the government's commitment to recognising citizens who attain the milestone of 100 years.

"Reaching 100 years of age is a rare and remarkable blessing," Minister Johnson said. "It represents strength, perseverance, faith, and the support of

family over many decades.

"Roberts-Nicholas' life reminds us of the importance of caring for the elderly. Our seniors are not only witnesses to history, but they are also teachers, caregivers, mentors, and pillars within this community."

Governor General's Deputy Sir Clare Roberts, delivered remarks that spoke to the breadth of Mrs. Roberts-Nicholas' legacy.

"Her life has been a blessing to her family, her church, her community, and indeed our nation," Sir Clare said. "Her strength of character, her enduring faith, and her positive outlook continue to inspire all who know her."

Local News



Dejonte Buckley Charged With Larceny, Assault And Weapon Offences

The police have arrested and charged 21-year-old Dejontè Buckley of Nut Grove in connection with a larceny and assault incident that occurred at Cashew Hill on Tuesday, June 16.

Buckley has been charged with Larceny, Assault and Battery, Making Use of Threatening Language, and Possession of an Imitation Firearm.

The charges stem from an incident in which he is alleged to have entered a vehicle belonging to a resident of Cas-sada Gardens and stolen several items, including two wallets, cash, a white AirPods case, identification cards, bank cards, and other personal documents, collectively valued at approximately \$3,716.00 EC.

Buckley was subsequently apprehended and taken into police custody. Several items were later recovered by the police, including a ski mask and an imitation firearm.

The police are reminding members of



the public to always secure their vehicles and avoid leaving valuables unattended inside.

Anyone with information that may assist in this ongoing investigation is

asked to contact the Criminal Investigations Department at 462-3913/14, the Grays Farm Police Station, or Crimestoppers at 800-TIPS (8477).

Investigations are ongoing.

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ANTIGUA Carnival 2026

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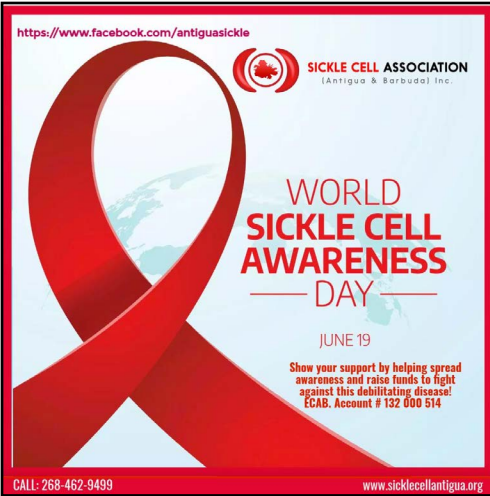
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World Sickle Cell Awareness Day 2026: Caring for the Whole Person. Why Mental Health Matters in Sickle Cell Disease



observance to increase public awareness and understanding of sickle cell disease and its impact on individuals, families, and communities globally.

This year’s theme, “Closing the Survival Gap: Equity in Sickle Cell Disease,” reminds us that true equity in care means addressing not only physical health but also mental and emo-

tional well-being. As an adult living with sickle cell disease, I know firsthand that mental health is an integral part of the conversation; one that deserves greater attention, understanding, and support.

Living with sickle cell disease often requires a heightened level of vigilance. We are constantly reminded to

By Aneka Lee

Recently, I had the privilege of joining a cohort of adults living with sickle cell disease to speak with students at the American University of Antigua. During our conversation, the students asked thoughtful questions about our lived experiences, treatment journeys, and daily challenges. One question, however, stood out to me: *“How does sickle cell disease affect your mental health, and do you experience anxiety?”*

It was a powerful reminder that while sickle cell disease is often viewed through the lens of physical symptoms and pain crises, its impact extends far beyond the body. Living with a chronic illness means navigating uncertainty, managing pain, coping with hospitalizations, and balancing everyday responsibilities, all of which can affect a person’s emotional and psychological well-being.

As we observe World Sickle Cell Awareness Day on June 19, that conversation remains fresh in my mind. Each year, this important day highlights the realities faced by millions of people living with sickle cell disease worldwide. In 2008 the United Nations General Assembly designated June 19 as World Sickle Cell Awareness Day, an annual day of

Sickle Cell Disease can be devastating.



We need your help to help them.

stay hydrated, get enough rest, avoid extreme temperatures, manage stress, and pay attention to any changes in our bodies. While these precautions are important, the need to be hyper aware of our health can contribute to feelings of anxiety. Yet one of the most difficult realities is that, despite best efforts, a pain crisis can still occur without warning. When that happens, many people living with sickle cell disease may find themselves questioning what they did wrong or replaying the days leading up to the crisis in search of an explanation. This can lead to feelings of guilt, frustration, and self-blame, even when the episode was completely beyond their control. Understanding that not every crisis can be prevented is an important part of protecting our mental well-being and extending ourselves the same compassion we would offer to others facing a chronic illness.

Mental health deserves the same attention and care as physical health. While living with sickle cell disease can bring unique emotional challenges, there are steps which individuals can take to support their well-being.

First, it is important to acknowledge and talk about difficult emotions rather than suffering in silence. Feelings of anxiety, frustration, sadness, fear, or even guilt are not uncommon among people living with a chronic illness. Speaking with a trusted friend, family member, healthcare provider, counselor, or support group can help lighten the emotional burden.

Building a strong support network is also essential. Connecting with others who understand the realities of sickle cell disease can reduce feelings of isolation and provide a safe space to share experiences and coping strategies.

Practicing self-care is another important tool. This may include prioritizing rest, maintaining healthy routines, engaging in hobbies, exercising as advised by healthcare providers, journaling, praying or meditating, and setting realistic expectations for oneself. Learning to extend grace to ourselves is particularly important when a pain crisis occurs despite our best efforts to prevent it.

Finally, seeking professional mental health support should be viewed as a sign of strength, not weakness. Ther-

apists, counselors, and psychologists can provide valuable tools for managing anxiety, stress, depression, and the emotional demands of living with a lifelong condition.

For family members, friends, caregivers, and colleagues, support often begins with listening. Sometimes the most meaningful thing you can do is create a safe space for someone living with sickle cell disease to speak honestly about their experiences without fear of judgment.

Educating yourself about sickle cell disease can also make a significant difference. Understanding that the condition affects both physical and emotional health helps foster empathy and reduces misconceptions about pain, fatigue, and limitations that may not always be visible. It also signals to your loved one that you are invested in their well-being.

Loved ones can provide practical support by checking in regularly, assisting during or after a pain crisis, accompanying individuals to medical appointments, or even helping with daily responsibilities when needed. Small acts of kindness can have a lasting impact.

It is important to avoid placing blame when a crisis occurs. People living with sickle cell disease often carry enough guilt and self-questioning on their own. Remind them that a pain crisis is not a personal failure and that their worth is not defined by their illness.

As we observe World Sickle Cell Day, let us be reminded that supporting mental health is a shared responsibility. By fostering understanding, compassion, and open conversations, we can help ensure that those living with sickle cell disease feel seen, heard, and supported, not only on June 19, but every day of the year. The journey with sickle cell may be lifelong, but no one should have to walk it alone.

If the OAS did not exist, it could not be created today



By Sir Ronald Sanders

I have spent a decade in the councils of the Organization of American States. I have watched governments come and go, seen some crises handled well and others handled badly, sat through more commemorative meetings than sessions discussing pressing issues, and occasionally had the satisfaction of watching this Organization do exactly what it was built to do: bring governments together to tackle problems that none of them could solve alone. In that time, I have chaired the Permanent Council on three occasions, led OAS delegations to Haiti in 2016 and Guatemala in 2023 to help resolve political crises, and engaged closely with the questions of Charter compliance raised by the withdrawal of Venezuela and Nicaragua from the Organization. It gives me a clear-eyed sense of what this institution is, what it could be, and what is genuinely at stake.

As member states gather in Panama for the 56th Regular Session of the General Assembly, from 22 to 24 June, what follows is a reflection on all this.

If we did not have the OAS, we could not create it today. The architecture of

hemispheric multilateralism is a remarkable inheritance. It includes 34 member states (32 active), a shared Charter, a permanent secretariat, obligations on democracy and human rights, and institutions through which citizens can seek recourse. It was built over decades through compromise, setbacks and hard lessons. The idea that we could assemble that consensus from scratch in today's fragmented and sceptical world is, frankly, fanciful. That is not a reason for complacency — it is a reason to take what we have seriously and work to make it better.

Increasingly, we have heard representatives of one government or another remark that “the OAS is not fit for purpose.” Usually that means the OAS is not fit for the purpose of the government making the remarks.

Asymmetry of power among member states often overrides the Charter's commitment to equality of membership. But in a world organised around power and scale, the OAS is one of the few places in the hemisphere where nations — large and small — can gather to consider critical issues and try to build a consensus for action. It does not always happen, but that is good reason for persistence. The basis for this Organization is worth preserving — the pursuit of peace and prosperity.

As the OAS meets in Panama, its financial picture alone should concern anyone paying attention. The Organization's core operating fund is under strain. Its reserves — the buffer meant to protect it against shocks — have been depleted. To keep basic operations running, the Secretariat has had to rely on limited internal cash resources. Meanwhile, member states have restricted new mandates, reduced staff, and have not provided the resources to adequately carry out even the reduced tasks they have approved. The approved budget ceiling for 2027 stands at USD 95.6 million — less in

real purchasing-power terms than the Organization's budget fifteen years ago.

This is not a technical problem; it is a political problem that requires a political decision. Governments that genuinely value the OAS must be prepared to sustain it. If the General Assembly in Panama is to mean anything beyond ceremony, member states must have an honest conversation about what predictable, adequate financing requires — and then commit to it. No government benefits from an Organization too constrained to do its job well.

Closely related is a question that receives less public attention but is no less consequential: the independence of the Secretary General and the international civil service created by the Charter. The Secretary General is not the representative of one government, nor should the office be treated as subject to the preferences of the political moment. The Charter creates it as part of the institutional balance of the Organization itself — a structural requirement if the OAS is to serve all its members fairly.

Accountability is essential in any healthy institution. But it must be pursued through the Organization's established mechanisms: the Inspector General, the external auditors, the relevant oversight bodies, and the political organs in which member states collectively sit. Those mechanisms can always be strengthened, but they should not be bypassed or replaced by less formal and less even-handed means.

Governments change, priorities shift, and the OAS must be flexible enough to accommodate the full range of views that democratic elections produce across 34 member states. But that flexibility must operate within the framework of the Charter, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and the rules and procedures that all mem-

ber states have accepted. Those rules are what make orderly cooperation possible across differences of size, ideology and influence — and they protect every government, regardless of its moment of influence.

Defending institutional independence does not, however, mean defending the status quo in all things. Reform is necessary. Its Permanent Council spends a disproportionate amount of time on commemorations, symbolic resolutions and procedural exercises, while the issues that most directly affect the peoples of the hemisphere receive less focused attention than they deserve. Migration, organised crime, democratic fragility, climate vulnerability, food and water security, digital governance — these are the matters that shape the daily lives of our peoples and the stability of our governments. They do not respect borders and cannot be addressed by any country acting alone. The Organization should be spending the majority of its their working time, at all levels, on exactly these kinds of questions, building practical cooperation rather than reading out established



positions.

The most underappreciated asset of the OAS is the forum for dialogue it provides. In a hemisphere as diverse and occasionally fractious as ours, having a permanent, rules-based space where governments can speak to one another — even in disagreement, even in tension — is of immense value. That space should be enhanced, not undermined. It is through dialogue, conducted with mutual respect and anchored in agreed rules, that confidence is built and practical progress becomes possible.

Over a long diplomatic career, I have had to learn patience with multilateral institutions. They move slowly; that is partly a virtue. It forces deliberation and guards against impulsive decisions. But patience is not the same as passivity. There are moments when those who believe in an institution must say plainly that it needs correction, renewal and investment. This is such a moment.

The OAS faces real strain — financial, institutional, and in its focus. That is not a reason to disparage it. It is a reason to resolve to improve it. The OAS is not perfect, but a hemisphere without any such common table is so obviously worse. Panama is a fitting place to have a conversation about connecting divides in ways that deliver prosperity.

(The writer is the Dean of the OAS Corps of Ambassadors and Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the US and the OAS. He is also Chancellor of the University of Guyana. The views expressed are his own)



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‘You are a bully,’ Holness tells Campbell as House descends into chaos again

SPEAKER of the House of Representatives Juliet Holness was forced to call a five-minute recess during Wednesday’s sitting of Parliament after the proceedings descended into what has become the usual noisy crosstalk and barbs thrown by both Government and Opposition members at each other.

It followed a statement from National Security Minister Dr Horace Chang about the decision by the Jamaican Government to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the United States of America about Jamaica accommodating third-country nationals (TCN).

As the sitting descended into chaos, and as the Speaker indicated that the Member of Parliament (MP) for Westmoreland Western Dr Dayton Campbell was openly defying her rulings by persisting with the same question, Prime Minister Dr Andrew Holness could be heard, off microphone, telling Campbell, “You are a bully” numerous times.

Opposition members led by Opposition Leader Mark Golding and the Opposition spokesman on national security Fitz Jackson had asked a series of questions about the MOU. These included the benefits to Jamaica, the motivation behind the MOU, whether Jamaica was coerced into the agreement, whether the TCNs would be allowed



to roam freely in Jamaica, and whether Haitians and Cubans were treated differently from TCNs.

When he rose to ask his questions, Campbell tried to quote from the Standing Orders but was stopped by the Speaker who told him the statement by Minister Chang had nothing to do with the Standing Orders.

When he tried to ask the question about whether Cubans were treated differently for about the third time, the Speaker said, “Member Campbell, if you believe that you manage

the House and you do not follow the instructions given, I will move to the next member.”

Campbell appeared to back off and proceeded with his questions, but came back to the Cuba issue time and again until his microphone was cut.

Earlier, when he posed questions, the MP for St Catherine North Western Damion Crawford was heard saying, “Is lie dem a tell pon mi,” when he was repeatedly told by the Speaker that his questions were previously asked by other members.

When the Speaker indicated to Chang that it was time for him to respond to the questions, the MP for St James Southern Nekeisha Burchell insisted that she be allowed to ask questions. Chaos ensued when Opposition MPs rose to their feet, forcing the adjournment.

On the resumption, Chang told the Parliament that the TCNs will be allowed to roam freely in Jamaica as they will not be incarcerated. He indicated that they will be properly vetted and can ask for asylum. Chang also said the details of the MOU which was signed last Thursday will not be tabled in the Parliament.

The Speaker, like she has done on several occasions recently, gave members a talk on proper behaviour in the Parliament. (Jamaica Observer)



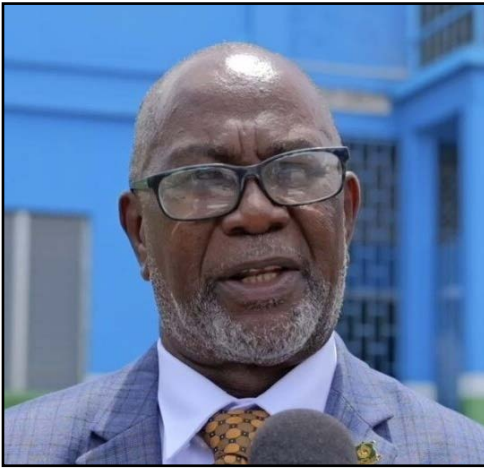
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Leacock condemns 'irresponsible' media coverage of missing plane



St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Minister of National Security, St Clair Leacock, has publicly criticised a media outlet for "very very irresponsibly" coverage of the ongoing investigation into a missing aircraft.

Addressing the issue during a recent radio broadcast, Leacock pushed back against the pressure to release sensitive operational details to the public. He expressed frustration with at least one media house, stating that they acted irresponsibly because "they simply expect because I am a minister of national security that can just simply open up my mouth and with utterances be all over the place".

Leacock stressed that he is deliberately handling the "moving story" with strict "due diligence and due care" to fulfill his duty to the public without compromising ongoing efforts.

He explained that his need to be guarded stems from his dual roles; he is not only the Minister of National Security for St. Vincent and the Grenadines but also the current Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Regional Security System (RSS).

Releasing unauthorized information, Leacock warned, could embarrass the executive members of the RSS and disrupt the professional duties of regional and international agencies, such as CARICOM IMPACS and Interpol,

which are currently involved in the situation.

He noted that international agencies are closely monitoring the aircraft—which intentionally turned off its transponders to avoid detection and the individuals involved with it. Leacock emphasized that he must ensure "nothing that comes from St. Vincent and the Grenadines on this subject matter compromises that international agency".

Despite withholding the specific location to protect the investigation, Leacock confirmed that there is no evidence the aircraft crashed, noting that neighboring Caribbean nations would have reported any such incident.

He reassured the public that the aircraft's location "is known to those who should know," adding that intelligence suggests the plane may have recently moved from one South American destination to another nearby. (St Vincent Times)

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I, Stephanie Delores Knight, DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the Liquor Licence Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, High Street, St. John's, Antigua on 6th July, 2026 next ensuing for a Tavern Retail License in respect of premises known as "KDS NEIGHBORHOOD GROCER" situated at Piggotts Main Road, in the Parish of St. George, Antigua pursuant to Section (11) (5) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act Cap 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda, Revised Edition 1992.

**Dated the 18th June 2026
Stephanie Delores Knight
268-720-5608**

Afreximbank advances push for Caricom EXIM bank



The Caribbean could soon move a step closer to establishing its own regional export-import bank, as Afreximbank pushes forward a proposal aimed at improving access to development financing across the Caribbean Community (Caricom).

Okechukwu Ihejirika, acting chief operating officer of Afreximbank's Caribbean Office, said the proposed Caricom EXIM Bank has already been presented to the Council of Foreign Ministers and is now moving through the regional review process.

"It's an initiative that is now undergoing review. In fact, it was presented to the Council of Foreign Ministers recently, so very soon we should get it cleared by the heads," Ihejirika told Observer Online on Wednesday during the Climate Smart Summit in Bridgetown, Barbados.

"The study has been done, it's been presented, it's now being reviewed, and once there is affirmation as to the need for that EXIM bank, then we will go into implementation," he added.

The proposed institution is expected to support trade and development financing within the region at a time when Caribbean governments and businesses continue to face challenges accessing affordable long-term capital.

Speaking during the two-day summit at the Hilton Barbados Resort, Ihejirika also said Afreximbank has increased its approved investment envelope for the Caribbean to US\$5 billion, up from an initial US\$1.5 billion when the bank es-

tablished its regional office in Barbados in 2023.

He said the bank remains focused on financing qualifying projects across sectors including infrastructure, trade and climate resilience.

Afreximbank has approved nearly US\$700 million in credit facilities for

projects across the region since opening its Barbados office, according to Ihejirika.

More details on the proposed Caricom EXIM Bank and what it could mean for regional financing will be published in Friday's Business Week. (Jamaica Observer)

VACANCY: RECORDS MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

An established organization is seeking a highly organized, detail-oriented professional to join its Operations team as a **Records Management Administrative Officer**.

This role is central to the integrity, efficiency, and security of the organization's records and information management system. The successful candidate will be responsible for ensuring the accurate control, tracking, retrieval, and safeguarding of all physical and electronic records.

Reports to: Manager, Operations and Customer Support

KEY PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The Records Management Administrative Officer is responsible for the effective day-to-day management of filing room operations, ensuring that all records are properly maintained, securely stored, and readily retrievable.

The role also supports the ongoing improvement and modernization of records management processes, including the transition from paper-based systems to an electronic records management system.

This position requires strong attention to detail, sound judgment, and the ability to manage multiple priorities in a structured and controlled environment.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

The successful candidate will:

- Manage the movement, tracking, retrieval, and return of records within the filing system in a controlled and timely manner
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all records movements across the organization
- Ensure the confidentiality, security, and integrity of all records at all times
- Receive, process, scan, and properly file incoming documents in accordance with established procedures
- Distribute records and related documents to relevant departments in a timely manner
- Support the review and improvement of standardized records management processes and procedures
- Assist with the transition to an electronic records management system
- Prepare reports through the collection, analysis, and summarization of records-related data
- Provide professional customer service to internal stakeholders and external partners

KEY COMPETENCIES AND ATTRIBUTES

The ideal candidate will demonstrate:

- Strong problem-solving and analytical skills
- High attention to detail and accuracy
- Ability to manage multiple priorities in a structured environment
- Sound judgment and the ability to follow established procedures
- Strong organizational and time management skills
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision
- High level of integrity, confidentiality, and professionalism
- Strong interpersonal and customer service skills
- A proactive approach to improving efficiency and records accuracy

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Candidates should meet the following minimum requirements

- Associate Degree or higher in Business Administration, Records Management, Information Management, or related field
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint)
- Understanding of records management principles and administrative systems
- Minimum of five (5) years' experience in records management, administrative operations, or a related field

APPLICATION PROCESS: Email applications to: hrtalentmanagement268@gmail.com
Deadline for submission: 19th June, 2026

New heatwave disrupts trains, schools in France



A new heatwave swept across much of France on Thursday, with temperatures forecast to approach 40 °C later in the week, dozens of trains cancelled and classes suspended.

Although astronomical summer does not begin until Sunday, this is already France's second heatwave of 2026, following an unusually hot spell in May that shattered records across half the country.

A fourth of the country, including Paris, was placed on orange alert, the second-highest, with authorities urging residents to be "very cautious" and drink lots of water.

National weather agency Météo-France said the heatwave was expected to last into next week, peaking on Sunday or Monday, when temperatures could reach up to 40 °C in several regions, including the French capital.

Sunday's summer solstice, the longest day of the year, will reinforce the

rise in temperatures with extended hours of sunshine.

Mayors across the country, where many school buildings remain poorly equipped to cope with extreme heat, were set to decide whether to suspend classes.

Several schools announced adjustments to class schedules starting Thursday afternoon due to the heatwave, according to academic authorities, unions and documents reviewed by AFP.

In Paris, around 10 middle schools have already modified arrangements for Thursday and Friday.

In the town of Tours in the Loire Valley, Mayor Emmanuel Denis said he would not hesitate to close its 58 teaching establishments if it became too hot.

"At 40 degrees, I'll close the schools," he said.

During a heatwave in June last year,

around 2,200 schools were closed nationwide.

Rail operator SNCF cancelled 71 long-distance trains between Thursday and Monday to "prevent potential air-conditioning failures linked to very high temperatures".

In Paris, swimming has been permitted since Wednesday, under lifeguard supervision, in the Canal Saint-Martin in the east of the city.

"Take advantage of it, and stay safe in the heat," mayor Emmanuel Gregoire said on X, posting photos of swimmers.

Scientists warn that heatwaves in Europe are becoming more frequent as a result of climate change.

France is experiencing "heatwaves that are increasingly frequent, more widespread and more intense — a clear sign of climate change", said Matthieu Sorel, a climatologist at Météo-France. (Jamaica Observer)

Suspected gang leader shot dead in flower bouquet ambush at airport



An Ecuadorean man, who police accuse of leading a faction of one of the country's most feared criminal gangs, has been shot dead as he was leaving the airport in Ecuador's largest city, Guayaquil.

Security footage shows two young men waiting outside the arrivals' terminal holding stuffed toys and flowers before one of them approaches the victim, pulls his gun from behind a teddy and shoots him point-blank.

Police have detained two teenagers in connection with the crime, the latest in a widespread wave of gang violence.

This latest deadly shooting came just a day after Ecuador's president declared a fresh state of emergency in 10 provinces, including Guayas, where the attack unfolded.

Ecuador's interior minister, John Reimberg, identified the victim of Wednesday's attack as 39-year-old Carlos Alberto Suástegui Villanueva, who he said was the leader of the Los

Águilas gang in El Triunfo, a region east of Guayaquil.

Los Águilas, which was designated as a "terrorist organisation" by Ecuador's President Daniel Noboa in 2024, is accused of being heavily involved in drug trafficking and extortion.

It is one of several gangs whose criminal activities have turned Ecuador from a relatively safe haven to a crime hotspot with one of the highest murder rates in the Western Hemisphere over recent years.

Ecuador is located between Colombia and Peru, the world's two largest producers of coca, the base ingredient in cocaine, and has become the key corridor for the drug to be smuggled to the US, Europe and beyond.

While Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city, has been particularly badly hit by drug and gang-related violence, the daylight attack right outside the airport's arrival hall has shocked locals.

Newspaper El Universo described

how passengers scattered in panic as the shots rang out.

Police said one bystander was injured in the attack and video footage of the incident showed a man pulling a suitcase collapsing on the floor as the shooting unfolded.

The security footage also captures the first gunman running away while the second fires another shot at Suástegui.

The arrivals hall was closed for more than two hours while forensic experts and police carried out investigations at the scene.

President Noboa has been trying to quell the gang violence by declaring states of emergency, which give the security forces extra powers such as being able to search homes without a search warrant provided they have reasonable grounds to suspect illicit activity.

Despite this measure, the murder rate reached a record high in 2025. (BBC)

Equatorial Guinea government resigns after missing targets, vice president says



The entire Cabinet in Equatorial Guinea has resigned after failing to achieve the vast majority of the government's goals, Vice President Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue said.

Obiang, who is also the son of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, said Tuesday that Prime Minister Manuel Osa Nsue Nsuga had submitted the Cabinet's resignation after falling far short of government targets.

He said the government had achieved

only 10% of its targets, but did not say how those targets were measured.

"The degree of execution achieved is clearly insufficient in relation to the expectations and commitments undertaken," the vice president said in a statement posted on X.

The ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea, or PDGE, said the president was dissatisfied with the government's performance, citing corruption, delays in development projects, and a

failure to diversify the economy.

A new government was expected to be appointed in the coming days.

The move is unlikely to alter the balance of power in Equatorial Guinea. President Obiang, who has been in power since 1979 as Africa's longest-serving president, dominates the political system and appoints the government. (AP)



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Trump defends Iran deal from critics he calls ‘fools’

United States (US) President Donald Trump lashed out at critics of his agreement with Iran on Thursday, calling those who accused him of offering concessions to end the war “fools”, ahead of negotiations in Switzerland on implementing the deal.

Oil prices tumbled after Trump and his Iranian counterpart separately signed their accord to end the Middle East war, with the Strait of Hormuz to reopen but two months of negotiations lying ahead.

In a sudden development after uncertainty over when the deal agreed earlier this week would be formally signed, Trump put his name to it in thick black ink at a candlelit dinner with French President Emmanuel Macron at the Palace of Versailles outside Paris on Wednesday.

Macron — for whom the signing at the palace, which hosted the signing of the treaty that ended World War I, was an immense coup following his hosting of the G7 summit — shouted “bravo” as Trump signed.

“These fools, who think I haven’t been tough enough on Iran, when the Stock Market Just Hit A RECORD HIGH, and Oil prices are ‘tumbling’ down, are either jealous, bad people, or stupid,” Trump posted on social media hours after signing the deal.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian also signed the agreement, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said, adding that “now it is time to test the implementation of the agreement”.



Crude fell more than three per cent Thursday, extending the losses sustained since news of the deal broke at the weekend.

The deal should bring an end to the current US-Israeli conflict with the Islamic republic, which saw five weeks of all-out war until a ceasefire early April and led to shipping being greatly restricted in the Strait of Hormuz, causing a spike in energy prices.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan, which helped mediate the agreement, said it “shall enter into force with immediate effect” and Iran “will instantly reopen the Strait of Hormuz”. He also signed the accord.

A two-month negotiating period now begins with all eyes on the reopening of Hormuz and if progress can be made in talks over Iran’s nuclear

programme, which Washington has long suspected of concealing secret bomb-making ambitions.

Macron hailed the deal “which allows for peace, the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz without tolls, and 60 days to conclude an agreement on nuclear, ballistic, and regional activities”.

There remained confusion over the next steps, with the accord originally supposed to have been signed at an exclusive mountain-top resort in Switzerland on Friday by Iran’s chief negotiator and parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and US Vice President JD Vance.

Baqaei said an in-person ceremony was no longer needed. But Sharif said an official ceremony will take place on Friday in Switzerland and technical talks will commence.



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Under the text, Washington commits to immediately waive oil sanctions crippling Iran's economy.

And, once a final agreement is reached on Iran's nuclear programme, the United States will also facilitate the release of a \$300 billion reconstruction fund supported by regional nations, the deal says.

UN atomic agency chief Rafael Grossi told reporters in Geneva it was ready to begin defining the "concrete steps" that will need to be taken to implement a US-Iran deal.

US officials also said Iran will dilute its enriched uranium stocks, possibly by "down-blending on site" under the supervision of the UN watchdog.

Iran's ballistic missile programme was not mentioned in the agreement, despite Israel's longstanding push for its dismantling.

"Iranian missiles are only for firing, not for negotiations. Iran's defence capability will not be discussed in any way, in any process or with any party," Baqaei said.

There has been some criticism from hardliners within Iran, where the conflict was described as an "imposed war" and compared to the 1980-1988 conflict with Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

But Ghalibaf insisted the deal represented a US "failure", while Pezeshkian called it "historic".

And Trump's decision to end the war, in which 13 US service members were killed and a vast proportion of US ammunition stockpiles was used, has unsettled some of his allies at home.

Apparently anticipating such criticism, Trump said at the G7 that he was prepared to "bomb the hell" out of Iran if they violated the agreement.

But US Senator Bill Cassidy from Trump's Republican Party described it as the "worst foreign policy blunder in decades".

"Iran's nuclear ambitions were not curbed, and they have learned that threatening the Strait of Hormuz works," he said.

Even Fox News, the usually Trump-friendly news channel, cited critics who said the agreement gave Iran "huge financial benefits" without requiring the dismantlement of its nuclear programme.

And while the deal specifies that Lebanon should be part of the equation, it is unclear whether the war on that front will be discussed in the next 60 days.

Lebanon was drawn into the conflict when Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel on March 2 in support of Iran. Israel responded by launching a massive campaign of strikes and a ground invasion.

While violence has declined in Lebanon following the announcement of the deal, an Israeli drone strike in south Lebanon killed one person on Thursday, according to Lebanese state media. (AFP)

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Second loss for Antigua in Billie Jean King Cup in El Salvador



Antigua and Barbuda's players Brasha Dyer, left, and Jolie George-Alexander, second left, with the El Salvador's doubles team of Camila Morataya and Sienna Poma after their match at the Americas Group III Billie Jean King Cup competition in Santa Tecla, El Salvador, on Wednesday, June 17, 2026. (Photo courtesy of the ABTA)

Antigua and Barbuda suffered their second loss in three matches 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.

The Antiguan players were beaten 3-0 by host El Salvador in their third match in the five-team Group A round-robin competition on Wednesday.

Michelle Irigoyen of El Salvador won the opening singles by beat-

ing Antiguan Sibley Charles 6-1, 6-0. Susana Souhrada increased the home team advantage with a crushing 6-0, 6-0 victory over Antiguan Ariel Naomi Kelsick in the second singles.

El Salvador completed their clean sweep in the doubles, with the combination of Camila Morataya and Sienna Poma prevailing 6-3, 7-5 over the Antiguan duo of Brasha Dyer and Jolie George-Alexander.

After losing their opening encounter 3-0 to Barbados in Group A of

the 10-team women's round-robin competition, the Antiguan players hit back to surge to a commanding 3-0 victory against Suriname in their second encounter on Tuesday.

Antigua and Barbuda were expected to face Cuba in their final match in Group A on Thursday.

It means El Salvador remains at the top of Group A with a perfect record of three wins from as many matches. Antigua and Barbuda slipped to second from the bottom of the group.

Cuba claimed their second win in three matches with a 3-0 drubbing of Suriname on Wednesday.

Suriname remain in the cellar after failing to win either of their two matches so far.

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 Trinidad and Tobago, who notched up their second win in three matches with a 3-0 victory over Panama on Wednesday.

Jamaica recorded their first win in two matches by prevailing 2-1 over Bermuda on Wednesday.

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.

Bendals and New Winthorpes to clash in Girls' Primary School Cup final

Bendals and New Winthorpes will battle for the Ministry of Sports Cool & Smooth/JOMA Caribbean Girls' Primary School Football Cup title.

Both teams booked their spots in the championship final by securing contrasting wins in their respective semi-finals at the Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) on Wednesday.

Corniah Jean-Pierre struck a hat trick to lead Bendals Primary to a 4-0 drubbing of JT Ambrose Primary. Phyana Peters scored the other goal for Bendals Primary.

But it was much tougher for New Winthorpes Primary, who secured their spot in the final by snatching a 2-1 win against Buckley's Primary in a penalty shootout.

Jaida Bryan and Juliana Morgan converted their penalty kicks for New Winthorpes Primary, while Dahlia Charles scored for Buckley's Primary School.

The keenly contested semi-final was forced to be decided via the penalty shootout after both teams fought to a goalless draw at the end of regulation.

Bendals and New Winthorpes primary schools will clash in the final at the Antigua Recreation Grounds on Friday, June 26, at 3 pm.

But there will not be a playoff for third place by the two losing semi-finalists. Instead, both JT Ambrose and Buckley's primary schools will receive a semi-finalists trophy.

Meanwhile, the final four teams will continue their quest for the title in the boys' Primary School Cup in the semi-finals at the ARG in St. John's on Friday (today).

New Winthorpes will tackle T.N. Kirnon Primary at 3:30 pm, while JT. Ambrose will clash with 2024 champions Five Islands Primary at 4:30 pm in the boys' semi-finals.

The four teams advanced to the semis

after winning their respective matches in the quarter-finals at Buckley's village on Friday, June 12.

New Winthorpes ousted 2025 champions St. Peter's Academy by prevailing 3-1 in a penalty shootout after both teams battled to a 2-2 draw at the end of regulation in their keenly contested quarter-final affair.

In the other boys' quarter-final matches, JT Ambrose defeated Old Road Primary 4-1.

Lonnie Browne had a double conversion to lead Five Island to a 5-0 victory against Parham Primary, while a lone conversion by Sean Jackson was sufficient to give T.N. Kirnon Primary a one-nil victory against Villa Primary.



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SEMI-FINALS

FRIDAY
JUNE 19, 2026

ARG

NEW WINTHORPES	VS	T.N. KIRNON	3:30 PM
J.T. AMBROSE	VS	FIVE ISLANDS	4:30 PM

Road to the Championship

CWI forges partnership with Bronx Colors



OFFICIAL COSMETICS PARTNER

West Indies Senior Women's Team

ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026

*WE ARE
WEST INDIES*

Cricket West Indies (CWI) today announced a new partnership with BRONX COLORS, the internationally recognised urban-inspired cosmetics brand, which will serve as the Official Cosmetics Partner of the West Indies Senior Women's Team for the duration of the current ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 in England and Wales.

The partnership brings together one of the Caribbean's most iconic sporting teams and a beauty brand renowned for its commitment to inclusivity, self-expression and confidence.

Through the agreement, BRONX COLORS branding will appear on the non-leading sleeve of the team's playing shirts throughout the World Cup.

The "Maroon Warriors" are currently competing in the Group stage of the global tournament, with aspirations of advancing to the knockout stages and challenging for global honours, particularly after taking down defending champions New Zealand in their opening fixture.

CWI Event Manager, Dario Barthley, who initiated the partnership, wel-

comed BRONX COLORS to the West Indies cricket family and highlighted the significance of the partnership for the continued growth of women's cricket.

"Cricket West Indies is delighted to welcome BRONX COLORS as an official partner of our Senior Women's Team during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup. This partnership represents the growing commercial appeal of women's cricket and the tremendous value our players continue to create both on and off the field.

"BRONX COLORS is a brand that celebrates confidence, individuality, and inclusivity, qualities strongly displayed by our women. We look forward to collaborating throughout the tournament and building a relationship that showcases both the personalities of our players and the values shared by the two organisations."

Expressing their excitement about the partnership was BRONX COLORS' Head of Sales, Development & Communications, Tanita Caroline Le Roux.

"We are incredibly proud to partner with the West Indies Senior Women's

Team during such an important global moment for women's cricket. BRONX COLORS is built on the belief that makeup is not about perfection. It is about confidence, identity and self-expression.

"Today's beauty consumer is looking for more than coverage; they want quality, performance, value and products that help them express who they are.

"As colour cosmetics continues to rebound and bold makeup returns in a more intentional, wearable and social-first way, this partnership allows us to celebrate women who embody confidence, individuality and fearless expression both on and off the field. The West Indies Women represent energy, pride, resilience and cultural power — values that sit at the heart of BRONX COLORS."

The partnership further demonstrates Cricket West Indies' commitment to growing the commercial profile of women's cricket while creating valuable opportunities for brands to connect with the passion, pride and global reach of West Indies cricket.

FIFA hydration breaks spark backlash



Uruguay's Agustín Canobbio cools off during a hydration break in a World Cup Group H soccer match against Saudi Arabia in Miami Gardens, Fla., Monday, June 15, 2026. (AP)

ATLANTA (AP) - Curaçao fans went wild. The Germans were in shock. Livano Comenencia had scored a goal for the smallest nation by population to ever qualify for the World Cup against four-time champion Germany.

At 1-1 in Houston a famous upset looked possible. Then came the hydration break. Curaçao lost the initiative, conceding two goals before halftime in what eventually became a 7-1 defeat to the Germans.

"I actually felt sorry for them," former England striker Alan Shearer told The Rest is Football podcast. "They scored and then it was maybe 30 seconds after that it stopped. So it's killed their momentum."

FIFA's new hydration breaks midway through each half - a novelty for this World Cup - were introduced to help players deal with the summer heat in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

But critics say they're having unintended consequences, ruining the

flow of the game and giving coaches a chance to tactically shift momentum in their team's favour.

While player welfare is a real concern with temperatures expected to exceed 90 F (32 C) in the hottest World Cup venues, some say the hydration breaks are just an excuse for broadcasters to go to commercials in the middle of the game.

"We're in America, right? So, it's like it is a timeout," former Ireland international Roy Keane said on The Overlap, a podcast that he co-hosts with long-time Manchester United teammate Gary Neville.

"We love football because of the pace of the game ... what it's doing is stopping the flow of the game, the momentum."

Rather than players merely taking on fluids, coaches have been seizing the opportunity to pass on in-game tactical instructions that would normally not be possible. And early indications are that it is having an effect.

"You can use the break to tell the players what they need to improve or what is good or what they should do better," Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman said.

"So you can use it in different ways to your advantage, and this is what we will be doing."

In eight of the first 16 games there were goals scored within 10 minutes of the rehydration break. Curaçao never recovered after the restart against Germany.

Morocco paid the price against Brazil in New Jersey, having dominated the game from the start and scored just before the first break. Less than 10 minutes after play resumed the game was level with Vinicius Junior equalizing.

Canada, the USA, Australia, Scotland, Sweden, and Iran have all benefited with goals soon after the break. Momentum maps have shown how games have shifted after the new stoppages in play.

The hydration breaks also affect the experience of fans watching at stadiums. There were boos from the crowd for the first one in the game Tuesday between Iraq and Norway in Foxborough, Massachusetts.

Referees pause the games 22 minutes into each half, with players given three minutes to rehydrate.

FIFA stipulated that the breaks would occur regardless of the weather, venue or location, meaning the Spain vs. Cape Verde match in Atlanta on Monday was interrupted despite being under a roof and in an air conditioned stadium.

The governing body said it was to "ensure equal conditions for all teams, in all matches."

ABAVA names training squads for senior ECVA tournaments

The Antigua and Barbuda Volleyball Association (ABAVA) has announced provisional men's and women's national training squads as preparations officially begin for the 2026 Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association (ECVA) Senior Championships, which are set to take place in the British Virgin Islands (BVI) this summer.

This marks the beginning of the journey toward the country's participation in the sub-regional competitions, which will be held simultaneously in Road Town, Tortola, from August 12 to 16, bringing together many of Antigua and Barbuda's finest volleyball talents.

The selected athletes represent clubs from across the ABAVA domestic leagues and comprise a blend of experienced national team players and exciting emerging prospects.

Over the coming weeks, both squads will undergo intensive training and evaluation as coaches focus on building team chemistry, refining systems of play, and preparing the athletes for the demands of international competition.

Final selections will be based on commitment, performance, fitness, and overall readiness. The final traveling teams will be announced following the completion of the preparation programme.

The ABAVA extends congratulations to all athletes named to these provisional squads, saying, "The opportunity to wear the Antigua and Barbuda colours is both an honour and a responsibility, and we have every confidence that these athletes will rise to the occasion with pride, passion, and determination."

Antigua and Barbuda are current



The Antigua and Barbuda team in celebration of their achievement of winning the inaugural 2025 Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association's Men's Final Four Championship at the YMCA Sports Complex in St. John's, Antigua, on Sunday, September 21, 2025. (Photo courtesy of ECVA)

back-to-back champions of the ECVA's senior men's championship, winning the titles in 2024 and 2025 on home soil in St. John's.

Senior Men's National Training Squad - Middle Blockers: Dwight Bonnie, Kemarni Joseph, Gladstone Joseph, Abner Farquhar, Jervon Carbon, Shamar Bannis, and Ronel Richards.

Setters: Miguel Pena Lugo, Stefan Warren, Barrymore Daley, Dominique Anthony, and Collin Thomas. Opposite Hitters: Asafa Donovan, George Freeland, Paul Richards, Joshua Roberts, and Jayden Daniel.

Outside Hitters: Erwin Mathurin, Jamarie James, Cairon Davis, Amali Mannix, Ozan Williams, Kahlique Joseph, Raenor Sharpe, and Kylon

Cabrall. Liberos: Jedidiah Christian, Yashid Auguiste, and Cruz Benitez. Coaches: Fitzroy Benjamin and Braulio Estrada-Lopez.

Senior Women's National Training Squad - Middle Blockers: Nyota Peters, Alliyah Smith, Alexia Farrell, Keyanna Geran, Jaanai Jacobs, and Dairilys Cruz.

Setters: Alisha Jno-Baptiste, Jerri-Ann Barnes, and Aliya Alfred. Opposites: Jahzara Donovan, Nashea Brown, Jaya Carr, and Anik Jarvis. Outside Hitters: Rayanna Regis, Josanne Lewis, Faith Gibson, Phillisha Burnette, and Ismay Caraballo. Liberos: Sharifa Simmons, Tiffany Kaladin, and Sabrina Rodriguez. Coaches: Carl Williams and Rosemarie Simon.