

ECCB Posts \$121.6M Profit as Assets Climb to Record \$6.68 Billion

Story on page 2



From L to R - Chef Dwaney Roberts, Chef Paul Lawrence, Chef Caden Dobson and Chef James Hibbert

See Page 20

ECCB Posts \$121.6M Profit as Assets Climb to Record \$6.68 Billion

The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) recorded a profit of **\$121.6 million** for the financial year ended March 31, 2026, as higher earnings from its foreign reserve assets helped offset increased operating expenses.

According to the Bank's 2025-2026 Annual Report, the profit represented a modest decline of **\$4.7 million**, or 3.7 per cent, compared with the **\$126.2 million** earned in the previous financial year. Despite the slight reduction, the ECCB described its performance as another year of solid financial results, underpinned by continued balance sheet growth and stronger investment returns.

Operating income rose by **\$14.8 million**, or 6.7 per cent, to **\$236.4 million**, driven largely by a **\$14.7 million** increase in net interest income. The improvement reflected higher yields earned on the Bank's foreign reserve assets as global interest rates remained favourable.

However, operating expenses climbed by **20.1 per cent to \$117.4 million**, up from **\$97.7 million** in the previous year. The increase was attributed mainly to lower recoveries on impaired financial assets, higher administrative and general expenses, increased staff costs, and greater depreciation expenses.

The report noted that administrative costs rose because of increased spending on information technology upgrades, software support and maintenance contracts, while salaries and staff benefits increased following the recruitment of additional personnel during the year.

The Bank's financial position also strengthened, with **total assets rising by \$544.3 million**, or 8.9 per



cent, to **\$6.68 billion** as at March 31, 2026.

The growth was driven primarily by an increase in foreign reserve assets, which expanded by **\$503.5 million to \$5.99 billion**. The rise reflected higher holdings in money market instruments and money at call, fueled by inflows from loans disbursed to participating governments by regional and international institutions, as well as purchases of regional and foreign currency notes from commercial banks.

Domestic assets also increased by **\$40.8 million to \$694.3 million**, supported by additional lending to participating governments, growth in pension assets and continued investment in property and equipment.

Total liabilities increased by **\$506.8 million to \$6.16 billion**, largely due to higher currency in circulation and increased balances in participating governments' operating and call accounts. The increases were partially offset by a decline in bankers'

reserves and lower foreign demand liabilities.

Meanwhile, the ECCB's equity position improved, with **total equity increasing by \$37.5 million**, or 7.8 per cent, to **\$520.5 million**. The growth reflected allocations from the year's profit to the Bank's general reserve, as well as gains in its pension reserve resulting from strong investment performance of its defined benefit pension plan.

The Bank said that although profit was slightly lower than the previous year due to rising operating costs and reduced impairment recoveries, stronger returns from its foreign reserve portfolio enabled it to deliver another year of robust financial performance.

The ECCB added that its strengthened balance sheet and improved earnings position leave it well placed to continue supporting its monetary policy objectives while advancing strategic initiatives across the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union.



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

AMNESTY PROGRAMME 2026

The Honourable Minister E.P Chet Greene, Minister responsible for Immigration, together with the Department of Immigration, wishes to advise the general public that, pursuant to the Immigration and Passport (Amendment) Act, 2026, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda will implement the 2026 Immigration Amnesty Programme.

The Amnesty Programme offers eligible individuals the opportunity to regularize their immigration status in accordance with the laws of Antigua and Barbuda.

Amnesty Period

Commencement Date: Wednesday, 1st July 2026

Conclude: Wednesday, 30th September 2026.

Who is Eligible to Apply?

Applications are invited from persons who:

- Have resided in Antigua and Barbuda for **four (4) years or more**; and
 - Have experienced **gaps or irregularities in their immigration status** during that period.
-

Required Documents

Applicants are required to present the following documents when submitting their application:

- One (1) passport-sized photograph;
- A completed Amnesty Application Form (available at the Department of Immigration on the day the application is lodged);
- Police Record(s) from every country or territory in which the applicant has resided during the last four (4) years;
- Processing Fee: **EC\$500.00**; and
- Change of Status Fee: **EC\$150.00**.

Applicants are encouraged to ensure that all required documents are submitted with their application. Incomplete applications may delay processing or may not be accepted until all outstanding requirements have been satisfied.

Submission of Applications

Applications will be received at the Immigration Headquarters from:

Monday to Friday

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Applications will be processed on a **first-come, first-served basis**, utilizing a **numbered queue system** to ensure an orderly and efficient process.

General Enquiries

For general enquiries outside of the designated application hours, members of the public may:

- Visit the **Amnesty Information Desk**, located at the entrance of the Immigration Headquarters; or
- Contact the Department by telephone at **(268) 562-6693, Monday to Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.**

Further information, guidance, and any additional requirements will be provided to applicants upon the lodging of their applications at Immigration Headquarters.

Important Information

Applicants are reminded that eligibility to apply under the Amnesty Programme does **not** guarantee approval. Each application will be assessed on its individual merits in accordance with the **Immigration and Passport (Amendment) Act, 2026**, and all other applicable immigration laws and policies.

Further information, guidance, and any additional documentary requirements will be provided to applicants upon submission of their applications at the Immigration Headquarters.

The Department of Immigration encourages all eligible persons to take advantage of this opportunity to regularize their immigration status within the prescribed amnesty period.

Minister Greene Chairs CHOGM 2026 Preparatory Committee at Marlborough House, UK

Antigua and Barbuda’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P. Chet Greene, is chairing the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2026 Preparatory Committee, known as PrepCom, at Marlborough House, London.

The meeting is being held from 30 June to 3 July 2026 and brings together Commonwealth Member Countries to advance preparations for the 28th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, which will be hosted by Antigua and Barbuda in St. John’s from 1 to 4 November 2026, under the theme “Accelerating Partnerships and Investment for a Prosperous Commonwealth.”

Opening the meeting, Minister Greene welcomed Heads of Delegation and representatives on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda, as incoming Chair-in-Office and host of CHOGM 2026. He thanked the Secretary-General, Shirley Botchwey, for her stewardship, and expressed appreciation to Samoa, Chair-in-Office and host of the last CHOGM, for its support and advice.

“As host, Antigua and Barbuda looks forward to welcoming you all to St. John’s in November, and we are determined that this PrepCom lay the strongest possible foundation for a successful CHOGM,” Minister Greene said.

PrepCom marks an important milestone on the road to CHOGM 2026, providing Member Countries with an opportunity to shape the draft Communiqué and advance discussions on key priorities for the Commonwealth,



Antigua and Barbuda’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P. Chet Greene

including democracy, development finance, climate resilience, trade and investment, digital inclusion, reparatory justice, and shared prosperity

Minister Greene encouraged delegations to work towards an ambitious and action-oriented outcome, noting that Heads of Government had called for “not just declarations, but decisions that make a tangible difference.”

As part of the proceedings, High Commissioner for Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom, Karen-Mae Hill provided an update on Antigua and Barbuda’s preparations

for CHOGM 2026, including arrangements being advanced in coordination with the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Minister Greene reaffirmed Antigua and Barbuda’s commitment to working closely with Member Countries and the Commonwealth Secretariat to deliver a successful and consequential CHOGM.

The Antigua and Barbuda delegation included High Commissioner Hill, Minister Counsellor Chantal Phillip; Second Secretary Brent Scotland and Third Secretary Caleb Gardiner.



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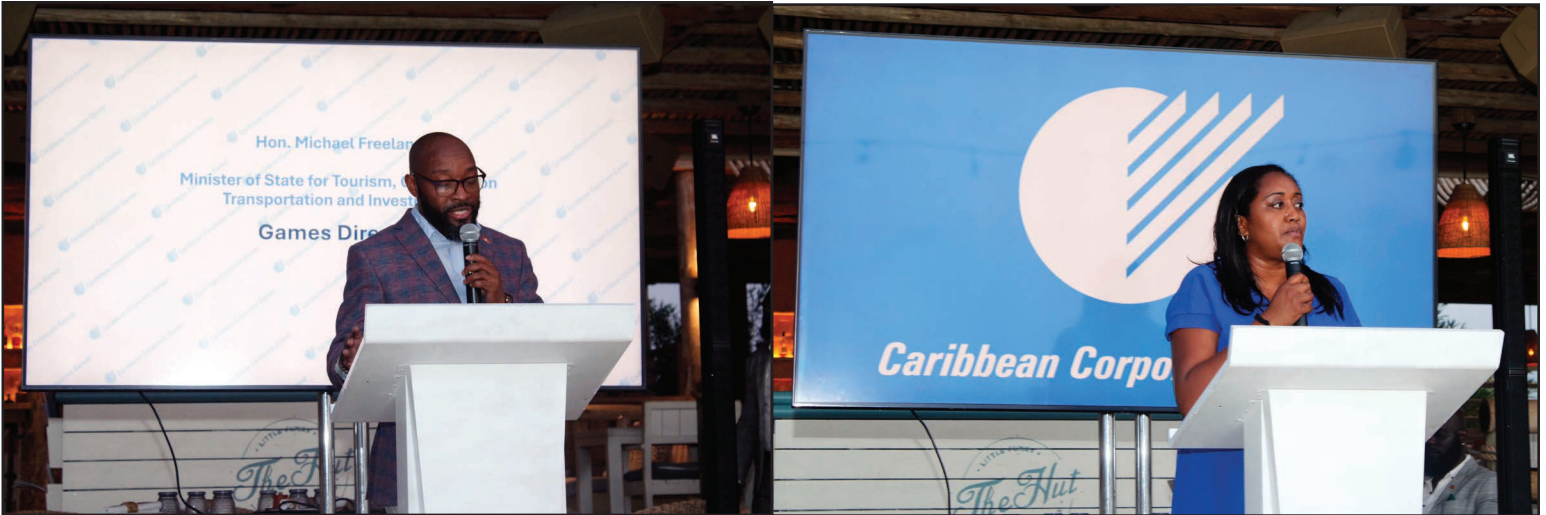


- ↑ Thursdays, 7:30pm - Karaoke
- 🎸 Saturdays, 8pm - Live Band
- 🍳 Breakfast served from 7:30am
- 🎮 Games Night - COMING SOON!

Local News



Antigua and Barbuda to Host Inaugural Caribbean Corporate Games, 2027



Antigua and Barbuda will host the inaugural staging of the Caribbean Corporate Games next year that will bring together close to two thousand participants participating in a hosts of sporting activities over a three-day period.

The event was officially launched on Tuesday evening at The Hut restaurant on Little Jumbay Bay by Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism, Michael Freeland, who gave the event the full endorsement of both the Ministry of Tourism and the Antigua and Bar-

buda government.

Minister Freeland noted that sports have become one of the fastest-growing sectors of global tourism.

“Around the world, destinations are using sporting events to attract visitors, extend hotel occupancy, generate economic activity and showcase their countries to new audiences. Antigua and Barbuda has embraced that vision.

“From international cricket and sailing to running events, swimming



competitions and now the Caribbean Corporate Games, we continue to di-

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verify our tourism product beyond our beautiful beaches by creating experiences that encourage visitors to return time and time again.

“The Caribbean Corporate Games fits perfectly into that strategy,” he remarked.

According to the minister hosting the Caribbean Corporate Games will provide a boost to the hospitality sector and elsewhere in the local economy.

“The benefits extend well beyond the competition itself. Events like these create opportunities for our small businesses, entertainers, taxi operators, tour guides, restaurants and vendors. They support jobs, encourage repeat visits and generate economic activity across multiple sectors.

“That is why sports tourism continues to be a major priority for the Ministry of Tourism,” he declared.

The driving force behind the Caribbean Corporate Games is Lisa Weston of the UK, who as a lawyer worked for the UK company that owned the franchise for the Games there. Weston, who has ties to Antigua and Barbuda, inquired who owned the rights to the Games in the Caribbean. When she was told no one did, she made an offer for it and it was accepted.

“The launch marks the start of a recruitment and partnership drive aimed at attracting businesses, sponsors and participants from across the Caribbean, North and South America, the UK and Europe. The Games provide a unique opportunity for the host nation (Antigua and Barbuda for 2027) to bring together the international business community, regional organi-

sations, and local economies through sports, networking and meaningful social impact, increasing visibility of the tourism, sporting and unique business proposition of the host nation and the wider region,” she stated.

The dates for the inaugural games are June 18 to 20, 2027. It is anticipated that closer to two thousand participants will compete in cricket, football, basketball, open water swimming, netball, beach volley ball, pickleball, tennis, running and sailing among others.

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ECAB ASPIRING LEADERS SCHOLARSHIP

PRESS RELEASE

St. John's, Antigua – July 2, 2026 - Last year, the Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated launched the ECAB Aspiring Leaders Scholarship to help develop the next generation of leaders in Antigua & Barbuda.

The scholarship covered full tuition for the entire three-year duration of undergraduate studies at The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus.

Individuals aged 17 to 25 who were interested in pursuing their first degree in the School of Business & Management or the School of Science & Artificial Intelligence were invited to apply.

Following a competitive selection process, Tajhere Browne emerged as the scholarship recipient. We are incredibly proud of his achievements, including earning a place on the Honour Roll during his first semester.

While we anticipated celebrating many more success stories through this initiative, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda has confirmed that tuition at UWI Five Islands Campus for most degree programmes, including those covered by the scholarship, will now be free of charge to those pursuing a first degree. We welcome this important development, as we firmly believe that education is a transformative tool that should be accessible to all. However, this announcement has also changed the purpose and relevance of our scholarship programme.

As a result, we will discontinue the ECAB Aspiring Leaders Scholarship. Nevertheless, our commitment to youth development, education, and community support remains unwavering.

We will continue to honour other aspects of our scholarship with Tajhere Browne.

Additionally, for the third consecutive year, we are proud to sponsor the Mr. and Miss Teenage Pageant as part of this year's Carnival celebrations, and we look forward to introducing additional initiatives that will continue to nurture and empower the aspiring leaders of Antigua & Barbuda.

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ABEMS' Brandon Browne Earns Master's Degree in Acute Medicine

The Antigua and Barbuda Emergency Medical Services' (ABEMS) Brandon Browne has successfully completed of a Master of Science in Acute Medicine from the University of South Wales.

Browne, a highly respected Critical Care Paramedic at ABEMS and Instructor with the ABEMS Academy, has served the Antigua and Barbuda Emergency Medical Services with distinction for several years. Throughout his career, he has consistently demonstrated a commitment to clinical excellence, professional development and the advancement of emergency medical care in Antigua and Barbuda.

Among those offering congratulations to Browne is Health Minister, Michael Joseph, himself a pharmacist by profession with a strong appreciation for the medical sciences, who commended Browne for his dedication to furthering his education while continuing to serve on the front lines of healthcare.

“Brandon’s accomplishment is one that deserves to be celebrated. It is encouraging to see young professionals investing in their education and continuously striving for excellence in their chosen fields. His achievement not only represents personal success but also strengthens the quality of healthcare services available to the people of Antigua and Barbuda,” Minister Joseph said.

The Minister noted that, as one of the country’s younger ministers, he is particularly inspired by young professionals who choose to invest in their



Health Minister Michael Joseph congratulates Brandon Browne on his achievement

personal and professional growth.

Reflecting on his achievement, Browne said the programme has strengthened his ability to make sound clinical decisions in high-pressure environments while bringing valuable knowledge back to Antigua and Barbuda’s emergency medical system.

“Completing this Master’s programme has broadened my understanding of acute medicine and evidence-based emergency care. It has enhanced my clinical decision-making and equipped me with advanced knowledge that will ultimately benefit the patients we serve. As a Critical Care Paramedic and trainer with

the ABEMS Academy, I now have an even greater opportunity to share current best practices with our personnel, helping to build an even stronger Emergency Medical Service for Antigua and Barbuda,” Browne stated.

The Ministry of Health, Wellness, Environment and Civil Service Affairs joins the management and staff of the Antigua and Barbuda Emergency Medical Services in congratulating Browne on this outstanding academic accomplishment and wishes him continued success as he advances his career and contributes to the continued development of emergency medical services in Antigua and Barbuda.



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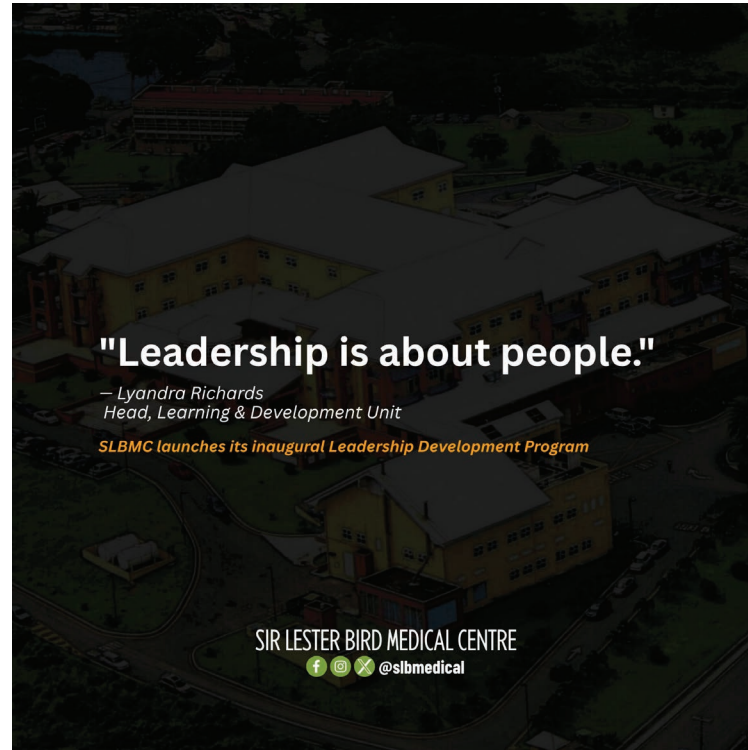
Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre Launches First Leadership Development Programme

Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) has reached an important milestone in its commitment to strengthening healthcare leadership with the launch of its first comprehensive Leadership Development Program.

The six-month initiative, led by the Learning & Development Unit within the Human Resources Department, was developed by Lyandra Richards, Head of the Learning & Development Unit. The program brings together leaders from both clinical and administrative departments in a structured curriculum designed to strengthen leadership capability, improve team performance, and enhance the overall patient and employee experience.

The program reflects the hospital's ongoing investment in its people and recognizes the critical role effective leadership plays in delivering high-quality healthcare.

*"Strong leadership is fundamental to everything we do at Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre," said **Danley Philip, Director of Administration.** "The way our leaders support their teams, make decisions, and respond to challenges has a direct impact on our staff, our patients, and the quality of care we provide. This Leadership Development Program is an investment in our people and in the future of our organization. By strengthening leadership at every level, we are building*



stronger teams, improving the workplace experience, and ultimately enhancing the care we deliver to our community."

Over the next six months, participants will complete an intensive leadership curriculum featuring interactive workshops, virtual learning, coaching sessions, workplace projects, leadership assessments, and practical exercises designed to strengthen communication, strategic thinking, team development, and organizational effectiveness.

Unlike traditional classroom-based training, the program emphasizes immediate workplace application, allowing participants to implement new skills within their departments throughout the duration of the program.

*"Leadership is about people," said **Lyandra Rich-***

***ards, Head of the Learning & Development Unit.** "Every interaction a leader has with a colleague, patient, or family member has the power to shape someone's experience. This program was designed to give our leaders practical skills they can immediately apply in the workplace. We want participants to become more confident in leading their teams, communicating effectively, developing and empowering their staff, and driving positive change while strengthening the culture of continuous learning across Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre."*

Throughout the program, participants will also compete for Leadership Excellence Awards recognizing achievement in areas such as innovation, coaching, servant leadership, strategic thinking, team development, professionalism, and over-

all leadership performance. The program will culminate in a formal graduation ceremony recognizing those who successfully complete all program requirements.

For **Destine Reid, Radiology Manager** and a member of the inaugural cohort, the opportunity represents more than professional development.

"As leaders, we never stop learning," Reid said. "This program is an opportunity to strengthen our leadership skills, learn from one another, and bring new ideas back to our teams. I'm excited to be part of the first cohort and to contribute to a culture of continuous learning and improvement at SLBMC."

The Leadership Development Program also supports the hospital's long-term succession planning efforts. Successful completion of the program is intended to become an important consideration for future leadership appointments and promotional opportunities, alongside organizational needs, qualifications, experience, and performance.

By investing in today's leaders, Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre is strengthening its workforce, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and ensuring the organization remains well-positioned to meet the evolving healthcare needs of the people of Antigua and Barbuda for years to come.

Sir Ronald Sanders Assumes Chairmanship of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI)

Sir Ronald Sanders, Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the United States and to the Organization of American States (OAS), on Wednesday assumed the Chairmanship of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) for a six-month term running through December 31, 2026.

A distinguished diplomat and long-standing advocate for sustainable development, regional integration, and multilateral cooperation, Sir Ronald brings to the Chairmanship an extensive record of leadership within the OAS. He has served as President of the OAS Permanent Council on three separate occasions — a distinction that armed him with unique experience to guide decision-making by member states.

As Chair of CIDI, Sir Ronald will preside over the Council's deliberations and guide its efforts to advance integral development throughout the Americas. His priorities for the Chairmanship include strengthened cooperation in the areas of education, science and technology, tourism, energy resilience, port security, and maritime infrastructure. Each of these areas is critical to building the sustainable and inclusive development that Latin America and the Caribbean urgently require.

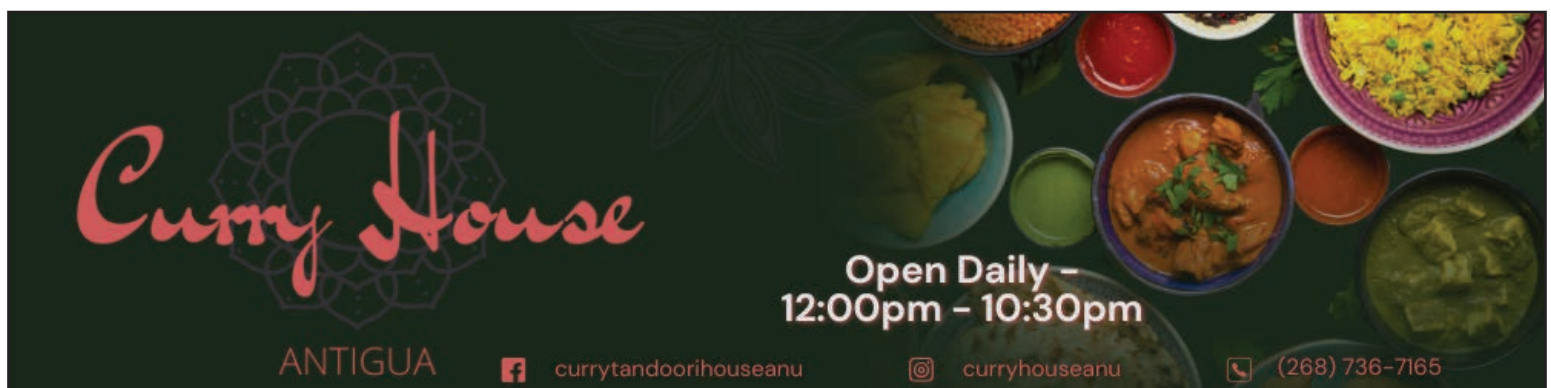
The Inter-American Council for Integral Development was established under the Protocol of Managua, which entered into force on January 29, 1996,



Ambassador Sir Ronald Sanders, Joy Dee Davis - Antigua and Barbuda Mission, Isabelle Valois - Executive Secretary Inter-American Secretariat for Integral Development, and Georgina Mayorga, Secretary to the Council

to strengthen cooperation among OAS member states and to coordinate efforts in support of integral development throughout the Hemisphere. Integral development is one of the four foundational pillars of the OAS — alongside democracy, human rights, and multidimensional security — and these pillars are mutually reinforcing, reflecting the Organization's comprehensive approach to promoting peace, prosperity, and cooperation.

Sir Ronald's assumption of the Chairmanship coincides with a landmark moment: CIDI's 30th anniversary of advancing inter-American cooperation and sustainable development. His leadership comes at a pivotal juncture as member states continue to navigate evolving social, economic, environmental, and technological challenges, and as the demand for inclusive, resilient development solutions across the region has never been greater.



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Minister Welcomes Preliminary Findings on Regional Conservation Initiative)



The International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) through the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus (UWI FIC), recently presented its preliminary findings under the Advancing Conservation in the Eastern Caribbean Programme to the Minister of Health, Michael Joseph, and Jaabari Reynolds, Biodiversity Focal Point within the Department of Environment.

The UWI FIC delegation comprised Dr. Branson Belle, Executive Director of the Centre of Excellence for Oceanography and Blue Economy, and Dr.

Christopher Waters. The programme seeks to strengthen political commitment to environmental conservation by supporting the establishment of bipartisan parliamentary conservation caucuses across countries in the Eastern Caribbean.

To date, Saint Lucia, Grenada, and Suriname have successfully completed the programme and established non-partisan parliamentary conservation caucuses. Antigua and Barbuda is now poised to join these regional counterparts as the UWI FIC team concludes bilateral consultations with

key stakeholders ahead of a national validation workshop scheduled for 22 July at the Department of Environment.

The workshop will be conducted in two sessions to facilitate broad stakeholder participation and promote a Whole of Society approach to environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Welcoming the initiative, Minister Joseph underscored the importance of collaborative action in addressing the growing impacts of climate change.

“The effects of climate change are far-reaching and touch every aspect of our lives. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated Whole of Society approach that brings together government, civil society, the private sector, academia and our communities. Initiatives such as this are essential in strengthening our national commitment to conservation while fostering innovation and building resilience for future generations,” the Minister said.

The Advancing Conservation in the Eastern Caribbean Programme is expected to provide a framework for enhanced parliamentary engagement in environmental policy and strengthen regional cooperation in advancing biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

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Ministry of ICTs Representatives Participate in International Digital Government Training in Chile



Two officers from the Ministry of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), Isoke Perry, Director of the eGovernment Department, and Heidi Skerritt, Digitization Manager, participated in the Singapore–Chile Third Country Training Programme: Workshop on Digital Government held in Santiago, Chile.

Jointly sponsored by the Singapore

Cooperation Programme and the Chilean International Cooperation Agency for Development (AGCID), the workshop brought together public sector leaders from across the Caribbean and Latin America to exchange best practices in digital government, public service innovation, data management, and cybersecurity.

Reflecting on the experience, Perry

said the most impactful lesson was the importance of implementing a national Digital Identity system.

“A Digital ID will allow citizens to securely access government services anytime and anywhere using a single identity. While it is an ambitious undertaking, every successful digital transformation begins with clean, digitized data. Once we successfully introduce one digital service through Digital ID, it will create momentum for many more citizen-focused services.”

Skerritt emphasized that quality data is the foundation of every successful digital service.

“This workshop reinforced that clean and accurate data is essential to efficient government. By strengthening our data quality standards and investing in skilled personnel, we can deliver faster, more reliable services while creating new opportunities for innovation and economic growth.”

The Ministry expects the knowledge gained will assist to strengthen Antigua and Barbuda’s digital transformation by improving public service delivery, enhancing digital governance, strengthening cybersecurity, and supporting the development of secure and resilient digital infrastructure.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda and the Minister of ICTs, Melford Nicholas, remain committed to investing in innovation, international partnerships, and capacity building as it continues to modernize public services for the benefit of all citizens.



ABRSC Announces Winners of 2026 Essay Competition

The Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Commission (ABRSC) is pleased to announce the winners of its 2026 Essay Competition, held under the theme “Reparatory Justice: Reflection and Projection.”

This year’s competition attracted submissions from students of the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS), as well as secondary and primary schools across the nation. The essays were highly creative, well-researched, and demonstrated a strong grasp of the subject matter. Dr. Lenworth Johnson, Coordinator of the competition, commended the participants, noting: “All winners performed exceptionally across the four judging criteria - clarity, historical awareness, structure, and language. Their essays were imaginative, insightful, and enriched with vivid imagery.”

The winners in each category are as follows:

Category 1: University Students

- ◆ First Place: Elena Etinoff
- ◆ Second Place: Neilisha Maragh
- ◆ Third Place: Makkedah Lawrence

Category 2: Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies / Secondary Schools

- ◆ First Place: Shemika David (Clare Hall Secondary School)
- ◆ Second Place: Uriah Francis (ABCAS – Dr. Alister Francis Campus)
- ◆ Third Place: Ariana Goodluck (ABCAS – Eustace Hill Campus)

The ABRSC extends its deep appreciation to all participating students and institutions for their commitment to promoting education, critical thinking, and awareness of reparatory justice and African-Caribbean history.

Prizes

- ◆ *Category 1:* First Place – EC\$600; Second Place – \$400; Third Place – \$250, plus books
- ◆ *Category 2:* First Place – EC\$500; Second Place – \$300; Third Place – \$150, plus books



On behalf of the Commission, Chair H.E. Dorbrene O’Marde and members warmly congratulate all winners and

participants for their outstanding contributions.

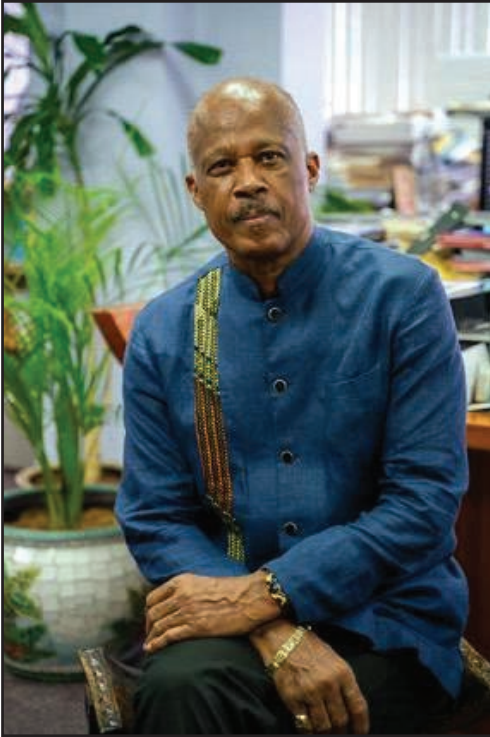


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Sir Hilary Beckles to Headline Emancipation Watchnight Gathering



Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, one of the Caribbean's foremost advocates for reparatory justice, will be the feature speaker at this year's Watchnight Gathering hosted by the Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Commission (ABRSC).

The event will take place on **Friday, July 31**, at Victoria Park as part of the Commission's 2026 Emancipation Observances.

The Watchnight Gathering, themed as a night of reflection, remembrance and renewal, is expected to draw members of the public for an evening focused on

honouring the sacrifices of enslaved ancestors while renewing the call for reparatory justice.

Sir Hilary, Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies and Chairman of the CARICOM Reparations Commission, is expected to provide an update on developments in the global reparations movement. His presentation will examine recent milestones, including the **2026 CARICOM Ten Point Plan for Reparatory Justice: A Manifesto for the Coming Enlightenment**, the **United Nations Declaration on the Trafficking of Enslaved Africans and Racialized Chattel Enslavement of Africans as the Gravest Crime Against Humanity**, and outcomes from the NEXT STEPS High-Level Consultative Conference on implementing the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolution.

Widely regarded as one of the Caribbean's leading historians and public intellectuals, Sir Hilary has played a central role in advancing the regional reparations agenda on the international stage. As chairman of the CARICOM Reparations Commission, he has represented the region before the United Nations, the African Union, the UK Parliament, the United States Congress and numerous academic and civil society institutions, advocating for reparatory justice as an issue of human rights, historical accountability

and sustainable development.

His research has focused extensively on slavery, emancipation, colonialism and their lasting economic and social impacts on the Caribbean. He has authored more than 20 books, including *Britain's Black Debt: Reparations for Caribbean Slavery and Native Genocide*, *The First Black Slave Society*, *How Britain Underdeveloped the Caribbean* and *Cricket's First Revolutionary: Frank Worrell's Political War Against Colonialism in the West Indies*.

The Watchnight Gathering forms part of a week of activities marking Emancipation 2026.

Observances begin with **Africa Dress Day** on July 24, followed by the **UHURU Television Programme – Spiritual Awakening** on July 29. After the Watchnight Gathering, activities conclude on **Emancipation Day, August 1**, with an Emancipation Breakfast Service at Greenbay Moravian Church beginning at 6 a.m. and the Emancipation Village at the V.C. Bird Bust from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The ABRSC has invited the public to participate in the observances, describing them as an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of emancipation, honour those who fought for freedom and reaffirm the nation's commitment to justice, dignity and the continued pursuit of reparatory justice.



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Report of July 1, 2026, on the situation in Venezuela following the June 24, 2026 earthquake (Approx. 2:10 p.m.)

By Jorge Rodríguez (President of National Assembly)

Seven days after the tragedy: Seven days have passed since the two earthquakes that occurred on June 24, which primarily affected La Guaira, as well as areas of Caracas, Carabobo, and Aragua.

Seismic activity: 782 aftershocks have been recorded since the main earthquake. Authorities report that:

- The frequency of aftershocks has decreased
- Their magnitude has also decreased.
- Although the trend is positive, the risk has not yet disappeared.

Rescue operations:

- A girl was rescued in the last few hours.
- The total number of people rescued has reached 6,461.
- More than 26,000 national personnel continue search and rescue operations, with the support of 4,099 international rescue workers and 17,832 volunteers.

Call to First Responders:

- Healthcare workers, firefighters, police officers, and military personnel whose homes were affected are asked to register for temporary relocation to hotels while their housing situation is resolved.

Updated Emergency Report:

- **2,295 deaths.**
- **1,267 injuries.**
- **12,841 people affected.**
- **A total of 26,403 people have been affected, including those suffering physical and psychological harm, or loss of housing.**

Humanitarian Assistance:

- **81,589 families have received assistance.**
- **8,893,000 kilograms of food have been distributed.**



- **27,714 food bags have been delivered directly.**

Medical Assistance:

- **5,565 people required hospitalization.**
- **13,942 patients have been discharged after their recovery.**

Temporary Camps:

- There are 25 temporary camps in operation, 13 of which are in La Guaira.
- The opening of new camps has been announced to expedite the relocation of affected families.
- The Government reiterated that these will be short-term shelters while permanent housing solutions are being built.

International Support:

- International humanitarian aid continues to arrive.
- Authorities expressed their gratitude for the support of governments and international organizations.

Combating Disinformation:

- An appeal was made to refrain from

spreading rumors or fake news, noting that disinformation can endanger lives and hinder rescue efforts.

Reconstruction:

- The Government reported that it is already working on plans to accelerate the construction of new homes to replace those destroyed by the earthquakes.

Venezuela's soul is torn by the human losses caused by the devastating earthquakes. Today, we share the grief of the families who have lost their loved ones, and we raise our prayers for the injured, the missing persons, and the affected communities.

In tribute to the memory of the victims, I have decided to decree a National Mourning for seven (7) days, starting at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday.

In these moments of profound sadness, we embrace those who suffer from this tragedy and reaffirm our commitment to accompany and protect them.

Acting President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Delcy Rodríguez Gómez



JUMPY ARTISTE

LINE - UP

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 2. CHAPO-GAD | 21. KING MONTGOMERY | 40. MENACE XL |
| 3. LADY CUTE | 22. TWENTY 2 DE HOUR | 41. SUPA D |
| 4. SOCA GRAMPA | 23. SOCA VILLIAN | 42. BLAZE |
| 5. SOCA JAY | 24. LIKKLE JOHN | 43. LYRICAL REDS |
| 6. ROMEL | 25. MR.SHY GUY | 44. SHABBA DABBA |
| 7. TARDA FOOT | 26. WILLOW-G | 45. SAMPLE |
| 8. SOCA GIANT | 27. PURXZ PURIST | 46. DESTINY |
| 9. GMAN | 28. VICIOUS | 47. ZAMONI |
| 10. DA WIZZ | 29. DIOR | 48. TRINITY |
| 11. DAN KNOWLEDGE | 30. PEETRON | 49. ABUMBA |
| 12. NAYCHA KID | 31. KID FRESH | 50. MIGHTY ROVER |
| 13. PROJECT | 32. SMILEY (EMOJI MAN) | 51. MONA LISA |
| 14. SAZZELLE | 33. LOLUCKS | 52. LYRICAL G |
| 15. KING YOUNG VICE | 34. PLASTIC BAG | 53. 23 STYLE DEM |
| 16. ACE OF HEART | 35. DAN DISH | 54. ISLAND PRINCE |
| 17. EZZY RATIGAN | 36. BOASTA | 55. BALLO |
| 18. SOCA SOLDIER | 37. 3 PACK BANTAN | 56. YOUNG LYRICS |
| 19. JR ALSTAR BRAFFER | 38. BIRDY | |
| 20. DWIGHT | 39. FRANKIE FIRE | |

2ND JULY
JACK IDLE AT THE GATE
7:00PM \$20



ANTIGUA Carnival 2026



INTERNATIONAL



JULY 30TH

8:00PM @ CARNIVAL CITY

EARLY BIRD
GENERAL

\$100

RHYTHM
ROOM

\$350



Four Elite Island Resorts Chefs Earn Prestigious American Culinary Federation Certified Executive Chef Designation



Photo caption: From L to R - Chef Dwane Roberts, Chef Paul Lawrence, Chef Caden Dobson and Chef James Hibbert

The Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA) is proudly recognising four outstanding culinary professionals from Elite Island Resorts who have earned the internationally recognised Certified Executive Chef (CEC) designation from the American Culinary Federation (ACF), one of the highest professional certifications in the global culinary industry.

- ▶ **The newly certified chefs are:**
- ▶ **Chef Dwane Roberts, CEC – Executive Chef, Pineapple Beach Club**
- ▶ **Chef Paul Lawrence, CEC – Executive Chef, The Verandah Antigua**
- ▶ **Chef James Hibbert, CEC – Executive Chef, St. James Club Antigua**
- ▶ **Chef Caden Dobson, CEC – Executive Sous Chef, St. James Club Antigua**

The Certified Executive Chef credential is one of the highest professional certifications awarded by the American Culinary Federation. Candidates must successfully complete

rigorous practical and theoretical assessments that evaluate advanced culinary techniques, food safety, nutrition, cost control, kitchen management, leadership, and operational excellence.

For each chef, the certification represents years of dedication, continuous learning, and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

Chef Dwane Roberts, Executive Chef at Pineapple Beach Club, described the certification as the pinnacle of his career after more than two decades with Elite Island Resorts:

“Earning the Certified Executive Chef credential gives me the opportunity to give back even more as I continue my culinary career. The certification process was both demanding and rewarding, requiring practical and theoretical assessment. Successfully completing it is a testament to my commitment to continuous learning and excellence in the culinary profession.

As I prepare for an exchange programme in St. Lucia, this achievement has given me an added boost of confidence and has prepared me

to represent both Pineapple Beach Club, Elite Island Resorts and Antigua and Barbuda on an international platform.

I’ve spent more than 20 years with the Elite family, growing through the ranks and now serve as Executive Chef at Pineapple Beach Club. Achieving the Certified Executive Chef designation is the highest professional milestone in my career so far. The investment the company has made in my development has been immeasurable, and it has given me the skills, knowledge, and confidence that I use every day to lead my team and continue striving for excellence.”

Chef Paul Lawrence, Executive Chef at The Verandah Antigua, said the journey challenged him both personally and professionally:

“Becoming a Certified Executive Chef wasn’t simply about earning a title, it was about proving to myself that I could meet one of the highest professional standards in the culinary industry. The journey required discipline, extensive preparation, and the ability to demonstrate both technical expertise in the kitchen and a deep understanding of culinary

management, food safety, nutrition, cost control, and leadership. Every stage of the process pushed me to grow as both a chef and a leader.

At The Verandah Antigua, I have the privilege of working alongside a team, and leaders whose passion and authenticity inspire me every day. One of the most fulfilling parts of my role has always been being humbled by the culture and genuine spirit of the people I work with. Their commitment motivates me to continue raising the bar, not only for myself but for the entire culinary team.

Achieving the Certified Executive Chef (CEC) credential is an important milestone in my career because it validates years of dedication to continuous improvement. It reinforces my responsibility to mentor younger chefs, embrace innovation, and ensure that every guest who dines with us experiences the highest standards of culinary excellence.

I hope this milestone inspires aspiring chefs to continue investing in their development, embrace every opportunity to grow, and recognize that excellence is achieved through dedication, continuous learning, and an unwavering passion for the craft. It is my hope that this achievement reflects the exceptional talent within Antigua and Barbuda and encourages others to pursue internationally recognized standards of culinary excellence.”

Chef James Hibbert, Executive Chef at St. James’s Club Antigua, reflected on a career built on passion and perseverance:

“My culinary journey began in my grandmother’s kitchen, by her side, where I discovered my passion for cooking at an early age. From my formative years of studying Food and Nutrition to mastering flavour profiles in a vegan kitchen, every step built my foundation. Joining the

culinary profession as a line cook in 2000, I committed myself to growth and excellence, which led to my first Senior Executive role in 2020. With more than 26 years of Culinary Service, earning my Executive Chef certification from the American Culinary Federation (ACF) is a proud milestone that honours my years of consistent focus. I am incredibly thankful to my current employer for actively investing in my career progression, and I am excited to continue driving culinary excellence alongside an organization that champions growth.”

For Chef Caden Dobson, Executive Sous Chef at St. James’s Club Antigua, the achievement represents a journey that began in his mother’s small restaurant:

“My culinary journey began rooted in family tradition. Spending hours alongside my mother in her small restaurant, I discovered my passion for cooking while helping her prepare meals. Recognizing this drive, my mother encouraged me to formalize my training at HEART Trust/NTA. There, I built a rigorous foundation in culinary arts, mastering essential kitchen principles, strict safety standards, and precise knife skills.

Discipline and hard work earned me a coveted work-experience placement at one of Jamaica’s premier hotels. This pivotal opportunity exposed me to high-volume luxury environments and accelerated my professional growth. Years later, I joined the Elite Island Resorts group, a prestigious collection of properties spanning Antigua and the wider Caribbean. This chapter significantly refined my international culinary skills, leadership capabilities, and industry reach.

Earning my Certified Executive Chef (CEC) credential from the

American Culinary Federation (ACF) represents the pinnacle of my dedication, continuous growth, and unwavering commitment to culinary excellence. I am deeply grateful to the Elite Island Resorts group for their ongoing investment in my career and development. This milestone inspires me to continue pushing culinary boundaries, mentoring the next generation, and consistently striving for excellence.”

Managing Director of Elite Island Resorts, Sanjay Ambrose, congratulated the chefs on their outstanding accomplishment:

“We are incredibly proud of these four extraordinary chefs for reaching this pinnacle of professional excellence. Their dedication to mastering their craft reflects the exact standard of culinary quality we strive to deliver to our resort guests every day. Earning this certification required immense sacrifice, passion, and skill. These chefs now join an elite tier of culinary professionals worldwide. This collective achievement highlights Elite Island Resort’s ongoing commitment to investing in talent development and elevating the culinary experiences across our resort portfolio.”

The certification significantly strengthens Antigua and Barbuda’s culinary landscape by increasing the number of internationally certified executive chefs serving within the destination’s hospitality industry. Their success reflects the exceptional calibre of local culinary talent while reinforcing the value of continuous professional development and mentorship.

The ABHTA congratulates each chef on this outstanding accomplishment and celebrates their contribution to advancing culinary excellence throughout Antigua and Barbuda’s tourism industry.



RHYME AND RESOLVE: CLIMATE CALLS

Good Humans
268 Inc

The Colours That Lead the Way



July arrives with voices strong,
A month where every soul belongs.
A time to stand, a time with pride,
With hope and purpose as our guide.

The world has learned, though still not all,
That barriers were built too tall.
Not by our bodies, minds, or sight,
But systems slow to do what's right.

The Disability Pride Flag flies,
Beneath both hopeful hearts and skies.
Its colours tell a story true,
Of every person, every view.

Green speaks softly of our senses' grace,
How differently we hear life's pace.
Blue reflects emotional light,
Through darkest days and longest nights.

White remembers those unseen,
The invisible space where struggles have been.

Gold reminds us minds can shine,
In countless beautifully different designs.

Red reflects the body's way,
How movement differs every day.
Together all the colours stand,
United hearts across the land.

DISABILITY PRIDE FLAG
by Ann Magill
Each element *symbolizes* a different part of the disability community.

BLACK: represents disabled people who have experienced ableist violence and abuse, as well as those who have lost their lives not only due to their illness, but also to negligence, suicide and eugenics.

BLUE: mental illness/psychiatric disabilities

GREEN: sensory disabilities

WHITE: invisible and undiagnosed disabilities

GOLD: neurodivergence, cognitive and intellectual disabilities

RED: physical disabilities

The Diagonal Band represents "cutting across" the walls and barriers that separate the disabled from normate society, whilst also representing *light and creativity cutting through the darkness.*

@FINDYOUROWNHOPE

The charcoal background bold and wide,
Represents the walls denied.
The barriers people often face,
Yet still we move with strength and grace.

The climate changes day by day,
Its warnings growing hard to sway.
The winds grow fierce, the oceans rise,
Their message written in the skies.

Yet every storm that comes our way,
Still asks us one important day:
Will everyone be safe at last?
Or repeat mistakes from our past?

Can every warning now be heard?
Can every shelter keep its word?
Can every pathway, road, and street,
Help every neighbour safely meet?



The Earth belongs to all who live,
To all who dream, create, and give.
No life is lesser in her eyes,
No voice beneath another's rise.

A bottle saved, a tree once grown,
Becomes a future all our own.
The smallest act, the smallest hand,
Can help restore both sea and land.

Inclusion is the strongest seed,
For every climate goal we need.
For every mind brings something new,
A different way to see it through.

Some build with words, some build with art,
Some lead with wisdom from the heart.
Some solve problems none have seen,
Creating futures fresh and green.

The greatest forests first began,
With one small seed held in one hand.
The biggest change the world has known,
Began where hope itself had grown.

So let the colours proudly wave,
For every life we're called to save.
Not just through rescue when storms appear,
But through opportunity every year.

Let schools include each child who learns,
Let workplaces value what each earns.
Let governments remove each wall,
Creating equal paths for all.

For disability is not defeat,
Nor something hidden in retreat.
It is diversity displayed,
A brighter world together made.

The planet calls both you and me,
To build a future all can see.
Where climate action, side by side,
Walks hand in hand with human pride.

When every barrier disappears,
We'll celebrate throughout the years.
For greener worlds and justice, too,
Begin with me and start with you.

The colours shine, the message clear,
That every voice deserves to hear.
Together stronger we shall be,
Protecting both humanity and sea.



ANTIGUA
Carnival
2026

VOICE

Caribbean
Rhythm



JULY 30TH

8:00PM @ CARNIVAL CITY

EARLY BIRD
GENERAL

\$100

RHYTHM
ROOM

\$350





CAVALIER
RUM
CALYPSO
MONARCH
SEMI-FINALS

16th JULY 2026
CARNIVAL CITY | 7:30PM

ADM: \$20

FEEL THE RHYTHM



Antigua's Carnival Festivals Commission @antiguacarnival @antiguacarnival @antiguafestivalsofficial

Gonsalves urges Bermuda to pursue full CARICOM membership



Former St Vincent Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, has strongly encouraged Bermuda to transition to a full member of Caricom, emphasizing that Caribbean nations must work together to combat shared challenges like climate change, health crises, and crime.

Gonsalves made the remarks during a recent episode of the Caricom Conversations broadcast, hosted by Progressive Labour Party MP Christopher Famous.

Pointing to the region's shared background, he explained, "All Caricom members" have a common history, our systems have evolved in particular ways, all of us speak European languages, and there's a geographic closeness to each of

us". These factors, he argued, naturally predispose Caribbean nations toward integration.

Without uniting through institutions such as Caricom or the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Dr. Gonsalves warned that Caribbean countries risk remaining "separate and inchoate". He highlighted that the necessity for "functional co-operation" has been clear since 1962, following the collapse of the multinational West Indies Federation.

For Bermuda, which currently holds associate membership in the organization, Gonsalves noted that full Caricom membership could specifically protect and develop the island's financial regime. While

acknowledging the global interest in curbing money laundering and terrorism financing, he warned that international regulations can sometimes be designed in a way that could "emasculate your financial services". To counter this, he argued that Bermuda needs the collective support of non-colonial territories facing similar issues, such as Barbados, Antigua, and St Kitts & Nevis.

The Bermudian Government has already begun exploring the possibility of deeper integration, recently publishing a Green Paper titled The Story of Us and hosting three town hall meetings on the prospect of full membership. (St Vincent Times)

British man fined \$50k for attempting to bribe Jamaican cop to avoid traffic ticket

A British man received a fine of \$50,000 or 30 days imprisonment for attempting to bribe a local police sergeant into not issuing him a traffic ticket.

The judgment was handed down at the Kingston and St Andrew Parish Court on Tuesday.

It was alleged that on June 24, 2026, 31-year-old Shawn Tyrell, who is currently visiting the island for vacation, offered the cop \$4,000 not to issue him a traffic ticket.

Tyrell's attorney told the court that he was instructed by his client that, as a British citizen, he is permitted in some instances to pay a

traffic ticket immediately in cash. He said that when the cop issued the ticket, his client believed he could pay it in a similar manner and asked the officer, "if that is something that can be done now".

However, the Crown maintained that the \$4,000 was not an offer to pay the ticket but an offer to persuade the sergeant not to issue it.

Tyrell pleaded guilty to the charge of attempting to bribe the police officer.

Senior Parish Court Judge Sanchia Burrell also demanded an apology from Tyrell to the police personnel in the courtroom for attempting to bribe a law en-



forcement officer.

"There are no circumstances under which any citizen, any individual hands to a police officer while he is doing his job a dollar. There is no legitimate circumstances where money changes

hands with an officer during the course of his duty and the individual with whom the police is interacting. It is disrespectful, it is obviously corrupt and it is perverse," Burrell said. (Jamaica Observer)

Police detail alleged assassination plan



The Special Branch has alleged that police uncovered a conspiracy by Blue Waters Products Ltd owner Dominic Hadeed and his wife Genevieve to assassinate Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar and senior Cabinet ministers as the State defended the continued detention of the couple under the State of Emergency (SoE).

The allegations are contained in an affidavit sworn by police Cpl Eldon Calliste, an intelligence officer attached to the Special Branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS), which was filed in the High Court in response to the Hadeeds' habeas corpus application.

Justice Frank Seepersad yesterday dismissed the application, ruling that the couple's detention under Preventive Detention Orders (PDOs) issued during the SOE was lawful.

In his affidavit, Calliste said confidential intelligence received from what he described as a credible security agen-

cy indicated that the Hadeeds were engaged in, or preparing to engage in, acts 'highly prejudicial to public safety, public order and the defence of Trinidad and Tobago'.

The affidavit stated that investigators subsequently obtained warrants to search the couple's properties and seize electronic devices as part of the investigation.

Dominic and Genevieve Hadeed were detained during coordinated police operations at about 6 a.m. on June 24 under the Emergency Powers Regulations, 2026.

According to the affidavit, the PDO signed by Minister of Homeland Security Roger Alexander alleged that Dominic Hadeed was linked to a conspiracy to assassinate the Prime Minister and other members of the Government.

The order stated that, following statements made during Parliament's debate on the extension of the SoE, Ha-

deed 'expressed violent intentions by stating words to the effect that persons would be shot in their head'.

The order further described him as 'a person of substantial financial means and influence with the resources, access and capability to facilitate serious organised criminal activity', and alleged that his continued liberty posed a threat to public safety.

The affidavit also outlined similar allegations against Genevieve Hadeed.

According to her PDO, intelligence gathered during the SoE indicated that she allegedly stated that the deaths of the Prime Minister, and other Government members 'were required' following the parliamentary debate on the extension of the emergency measures.

The order alleged that her continued release presented a substantial risk that plans to commit acts of violence against members of the Government could be carried out. (Trinidad Express)

Chang: No criminal will find safe haven in Jamaica



Deputy Prime Minister Dr Horace Chang has rejected suggestions that the Government would allow criminals to be imported into Jamaica, describing the claim as “ridiculous” and politically distorted.

Closing the Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, Chang, who is also the minister of national security and peace, said it was “absolutely ridiculous” to believe that after years of sustained efforts to reduce crime and violence, the State would blindly introduce criminal deportees into the country.

“To consider that I would bring criminals into Jamaica, from anywhere of any kind, after we have done all we have done to reduce crime and violence, it is ridiculous!” Chang said, noting that social media has the capacity to “make these things go viral”.

“But it’s just absolutely ridiculous,” he added. “No criminal will find a safe haven anywhere in Jamaica while this Government is here, and I’m sitting in this seat. None – of any colour or creed – no matter where they are from.”

Chang’s assertion follows public out-

cry and confusion regarding the Third Country Nationals (TCN) agreement between Jamaica and the United States. It allows for the temporary transit of non-Jamaican deportees from the US through Jamaica. Several other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have been approached with similar arrangements.

In Jamaica, however, commentators have criticised the lack of transparency in negotiations, the potential national security risks, and concerns that Jamaica could become a holding space for US migration policy. The Government has denied those claims, emphasising what it describes as a controlled, limited cooperation with the United States.

Pointing to a 23 per cent decline in homicide figures, Chang insisted that under the current administration, criminals – regardless of origin – would find no safe haven in Jamaica.

“Those who are Jamaican citizens, they come back and understand that there is a new order in place in Jamaica. We welcome them as our brothers and sisters, but they will have to remain within the order and behave

themselves,” he said, noting that the Government remained committed to strengthening border security and removing criminals from within.

“We will incapacitate those who commit criminal activities within our borders, wherever they are and whatever colour they are,” Chang charged.

On the reduction in crime, Chang credited deliberate policy decisions and sustained investment in the security forces. He said the decline in homicides, if the trend continues, could see Jamaica end the year with fewer than 600 murders – once “a dream, a miracle”, he said.

“Today, it is within sight and is actively being achieved because the country, the Government and the people have stayed the course,” he said.

Chang said the reduction was the result of deliberate policy, sustained investment and the determined work of members of the security forces. Upgrades to police infrastructure and the strengthening of law enforcement institutions, including the Major Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency (MOCA), have also contributed, he noted.

He said MOCA has expanded its regional footprint, assisting countries across the English-speaking Caribbean, including Turks and Caicos, the British Virgin Islands, St Lucia, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Chang also pointed to ongoing reforms in healthcare, agriculture and land administration, highlighting a 10-year national agricultural plan aimed at strengthening rural resilience. He said the Government would also move with alacrity on issuing land titling and initiatives to address informal settlements as part of broader national development and disaster recovery planning. (Jamaica Gleaner)

TikTok settles with US teenager ahead of social media addiction trial



TikTok settled a lawsuit with a teenager just weeks before the company was set to go to trial in a second landmark case over whether social media companies are responsible for the harms their products might cause.

The 15-year-old Florida teenager, identified only by his initials R.K.C., has accused four social media companies of harming his mental health and previously reached a settlement agreement with YouTube on June 23.

This leaves only Meta and Snapchat as defendants in the trial, which is scheduled to begin July 27 in Los Angeles.

“We can confirm that a settlement in principle has been reached with TikTok,” law firm Morgan & Morgan, which represents the teenager, told AFP on Wednesday without specifying the terms.

TikTok also previously settled a similar case, the first of its kind, in January before the trial started.

This second trial, to be held in a Los Angeles courtroom, is considered another benchmark for how thousands of social media addiction lawsuits could play out in the United States.

The Florida teenager claims that years of compulsive social media use contributed to severe psychological disorders — anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts — for which he is still receiving treatment.

“These social media companies have been strategising for years to hook children early and maximise their usage with insidious features like autoplay and infinite scroll, all with the aim of increasing profits at the expense of the mental health of our youth,” the plaintiff’s attorneys at Morgan & Mor-

gan said in a statement after settling with YouTube.

In March, a Los Angeles jury ordered Meta and Google, YouTube’s parent company, to pay the young woman known as K.G.M. \$6 million.

TikTok and Snap both settled before the trial without any admission of liability.

In May, Meta, Snap, TikTok, and YouTube agreed to pay about \$27 million to a school district in Kentucky to avoid a trial. That case was also seen as a test for around 1,200 other lawsuits filed by representatives of 13,000 public schools nationwide.

In a separate case that could go to trial in August in Oakland, more than thirty US states are suing Meta over similar allegations. (AFP)

Climber couple arrested after scaling Empire State Building antenna for apparent marriage proposal

A daredevil couple scaled the Empire State Building's antenna Wednesday and unfurled a banner about "the power of love" and peace, apparently as part of an audacious, high-altitude marriage proposal — soon followed by their arrest.

The Russian climbers, who go by Angela Nikolau and Ivan Beerkus, were the subject of the 2024 Netflix documentary "Skywalkers: A Love Story" about their "rooftopping" exploits and budding romance.

Dressed in black and wearing masks but not tethers, the two balanced on a narrow ledge and appeared to kiss atop the New York skyscraper's antenna, news helicopter video showed. The banner, reading "when the power of love beats the love of power the world knows peace," waved from the structure, which rises 1,454 feet (443 meters) above midtown Manhattan.

After lingering for a time, the two collected the banner and began to climb down, picking their way along the latticework of metal to a wider ledge, where one seemed to set up a piece of photography equipment and got down on one knee. After the two kissed again and hugged, the other person took selfies with an outstretched left hand, as if examining a ring.

Police Emergency Services Unit officers started ascending a ladder in the spindly structure to intercept them. Police body camera video showed an officer calling out a greeting and explaining, "Well, you can't be up here."

An off-camera voice replied with what sounded like, "We are engaged."

A few seconds later, officers reached a landing within the antenna and met the couple, who were coming down a ladder and calmly spoke with police, the video showed.

Nikolau posted images of the escape on her social media accounts,



including a photo that modeled an engagement-style ring above a bird's-eye view of Manhattan.

The two climbers — whom police identified by their formal names, Angelina Nikolau and Ivan Kuznetsov — were arrested on burglary, reckless endangerment and other charges. It wasn't immediately clear whether they had attorneys who could speak to the allegations. Messages seeking comment were sent to the couple.

"Skywalkers: A Love Story" follows Beerkus and Nikolau as they make often unauthorized ascents of tall structures, sometimes posing as construction workers to sneak in.

It wasn't clear how the pair gained access to the Empire State Building's antenna, which rises well above public areas of the 102-story building. Building management said in a statement that the episode was "unauthorized" and didn't endanger anyone in the skyscraper.

The management didn't answer questions about how the two reached the antenna and what interactions, if any, they had with security workers. Empire State Building visitors are screened and told not to bring large packages, sports equipment, costumes

or masks, among other items.

Tourist Julie Morris told local TV stations that she was on one of the building's observation decks when she saw two people pass through some mesh gates into an off-limits area. She said she assumed the pair, who weren't masked, worked there.

As the stunt unfolded, onlookers gaped from the sidewalks near the Art Deco office tower.

"It's crazy — it's like being in the movies," said Jonathan Roman, a tourist visiting from the Scottish city of Glasgow. He and his 15-year-old son had observation platform tickets but arrived to find the building blocked off because of the antenna activity.

Still, the spectacle was "probably more exciting than going up to the viewing platform for the second time," Roman reasoned.

Daredevils have previously climbed the antenna and other parts of the Empire State Building. Those ascents have largely been unauthorized, but actor and musician Jared Leto was allowed to climb up to the base of the antenna from the 86th floor in 2023 to promote a tour. (AP)

US blocks long-term renewal of North American trade deal



The US has declined to renew the landmark US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) in its current form, according to a senior US official.

This decision means the trilateral trade pact will miss out on an automatic 16-year extension.

The official said the administration “chose not to rubber stamp a USMCA renewal without addressing existing issues,” and “the United States did not agree to renew the USMCA in its current form”.

If the countries fail to unanimously agree to renew the agreement, “it essentially sets a ten year shot lock to termination,” per the official.

Under the pact guidelines, each country must decide whether to renew the agreement for another 16-year term.

While the free trade deal remains in place for now, the lack of a long-term

commitment creates fresh economic uncertainty across North America.

The agreement, which underpins around \$2tn (£1.5tn) in trade each year, is facing pressure over unresolved disputes. US trade officials are pushing for major changes before committing to a long-term extension.

Washington has consistently raised concerns over automotive rules of origin, dairy market access, and stopping third-party countries like China from exploiting the regional agreement.

Under the USMCA’s original terms, unanimous agreement on an extension would have seen the trade deal kept in place until 2042.

The US opting out will force the nations to meet every year to negotiate changes. Business groups across the continent had called for the pact to be extended. The decision also kicks off a

ten-year countdown towards the deal expiring as early as 2036.

The US Chamber of Commerce had warned that sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture rely heavily on cross-border certainty.

However, US domestic trade groups such as the American Iron and Steel Institute and the Steel Manufacturers Association have welcomed the shift, arguing annual reviews give American negotiators leverage to fix parts of the deal.

The friction comes six years after the USMCA entered into force, replacing the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

It updated rules around digital trade, workers’ rights, and regional manufacturing, specifically requiring more vehicle parts to be made within North America. (BBC)



TICKET OUTLETS

ROTI KING ST. MARY'S STREET & CORN ALLEY

COOL & SMOOTH LOWER ALL SAINTS ROAD

APUA INET OLD PARHAM ROAD

EXOTIC ANTIGUA REDCLIFFE STREET

SIPS & TIPS CEDAR GROVE MAIN ROAD



CASHLESS PAYMENTS AVAILABLE CARNIVAL CITY



Potters Stingers stay unbeaten in Village Netball League

The Potters Stingers have continued to enjoy success in the female division of the Antigua and Barbuda Netball Association's (ABNA) Antigua Generators and Cool and Smooth Village League.

The Potters Stingers maintained their unbeaten run, surging to their eighth win in as many matches with a 49-12 drubbing of Willikies at the Seatons Netball Court on Tuesday evening.

Adina Andre made 31 of her 40 tries, Jonnet Samuel scored 16 of her 27 shots, and Anayjah Anthony converted two of her four attempts for the Potters Stingers.

Summer Buckley sank seven of her 15 shots, and Alesha Roberts made five of her seven tries for Willikies, who lost for the sixth time in eight matches.

The Seatons Eastsiders wrapped up their campaign with a victory in their final match.

The Seatons Eastsiders finished their campaign by soaring to their seventh win in nine matches with a 37-30 victory over Michael Joseph Gray's Green Flyballers in their final outing in the female division.

Amey Lake converted 28 of her 42 shots, and Christina Lloyd scored nine of her 21 attempts for the Seatons Eastsiders.

Kizzy Hughes sank 17 of her 23 shots, and Krizia Duncan scored 13 of her 27 attempts for the Gray's Green Flyballers, who suffered their third loss in seven matches.

Lamin Newton's All Saints United notched up their fifth win in eight matches with a 42-9 drubbing of



The Potters Stingers female netball team

the Under-16 National Team.

Karol Carlton converted 18 of her 25 shots, Paula Jackson scored 15 of her 21 attempts, and Azaliya Simon made nine of her 12 tries for All Saints United.

Deancia Lewis scored four of her seven shots, Judith Warrell sank three of her seven attempts, and Leannie Darroux converted two of her three tries for the Under-16 National Team, which lost for the fifth time in eight matches.

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

In three female division matches,

Willikies will tackle Lamin Newton's All Saints United at 6 pm, the Under-16 National Team will face Michael Joseph's Gray's Green Flyballers at 7 pm, and Swetes/Roman Hill will meet the Potters Stingers in a top-of-the-table clash at 8 pm.

Both Swetes/Roman Hill and Potters Stingers are undefeated, and the winner of their final match will be crowned female division champion.

There will also be the resumption of a disrupted mixed division encounter between Lamin Newton's All Saints United and Michael Joseph Gray's Green Flyballers on Thursday.

UWIFIC off to winning start in New Winthorpes football league

The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus (UWIFIC) got off to a winning start in the New Winthorpes Community Football League on Tuesday.

The UWIFIC launched their campaign by snatching a 2-1 victory against Strike Force in the opening game of the eight-team round-robin community league at the New Winthorpes playing field.

Tyrique Thwaites snatched the winner by converting a penalty kick in the 61st minute.

His team-mate Kerron Mc Kenzie also scored a penalty kick in the 18th minute to equalize and tie the match at 1-1.

Akanni Thomas gave Strike Force a one-nil lead with a conversion in the 12th minute.

Eight teams, which are equally divided into two groups, are contesting the league.

In Group A are UWIFIC, Wile Syde, Enforcers, and Strike Force, while Cedar Grove, North Side Juvies, The Palace, and New Level Unlocked are contesting Group B.

The top two teams in each group at the top of the standings at the end of the round-robin preliminary stage will



qualify for the semi-finals.

The two winners in the semi-finals will advance to the final. The winner of the final will receive a grand prize of EC\$1500.

The league will continue with a double header at the New Winthorpes

playing field on Thursday. North Side Juvies will meet Cedar Grove CG at 5:30 pm, and The Palace will face New Level Unlocked at 7 pm.

The re-birth of the New Winthorpes Community Football League is a collaborative venture by Nat Pan My Team and Real Blizzard FC.

CWI board meets to advance strategic vision for WI Cricket



Cricket West Indies (CWI) held a meeting of its Board of Directors in Antigua on Saturday, June 27, 2026, as it continued to advance its strategic vision for the future of West Indies cricket.

Chaired by President Kishore Shallow, the Directors engaged with the executive management team on organisational performance, strategic initiatives, and the continued growth and development of West Indies cricket, with discussions closely aligned to the strategic priorities outlined in CWI's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan "The Long Run."

The meeting marked the Board's only scheduled face-to-face meeting for 2026, complementing the regular virtual meetings held throughout the year. The in-person format enabled Directors to engage in comprehensive strategic discussions on several major initiatives currently being advanced by Management to strengthen the future of West Indies cricket.

Ahead of the Board meeting, on June 26, CWI also held a meeting

of its executive committee, comprising the presidents of each member territory together with Shallow and Vice-President Azim Bassarath. The executive committee considered several strategic matters in advance of the full Board meeting, supporting an efficient governance process while ensuring robust discussion on issues of regional importance.

A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to management's long-term vision for the continued development of the Cricket West Indies Campus at Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua.

Directors received updates on plans to transform the campus into an all-encompassing, world-class cricket operations facility, centered around an enhanced High-Performance Centre and supported by complementary commercial, technological and infrastructure developments designed to strengthen player development while improving the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

This transformational project di-

rectly supports "The Long Run's" pillars of elite and high-performance and facilities and infrastructure by strengthening player development pathways while establishing world-class facilities capable of serving West Indies cricket for generations.

The board also reviewed progress made on several strategic initiatives being advanced by CEO Chris Dehring and the executive management team.

Collectively, these initiatives reflect key objectives identified within the commercial and financial sustainability pillar of the 2024-2027 strategic plan, with priority being placed on modernizing Cricket West Indies operations and management, strengthening high-performance systems, diversifying the organisation's revenue streams, unlocking new commercial opportunities and positioning West Indies cricket for sustained success both on and off the field.

Approval was also granted for the establishment of the standing committees for the 2026-2027 term, together with updated terms of reference. These committees will continue to provide strategic guidance across key areas of the organisation, with the composition of the committees to be published in due course.

Dr. Shallow said the meeting reflected the board's continued commitment to providing strong governance while supporting the long-term growth of West Indies cricket.

CEO Chri Dehring said the Board's engagement was critical to advancing the organisation's long-term vision.

CWI said further announcements on specific initiatives and decisions arising from the meeting will be made in due course.

Kane leads England past Congo into round of 16 at FIFA World Cup

ATLANTA (AP) — England handled the pressure and is now headed to Mexico City.

Harry Kane ensured England avoided an early exit from the inaugural 48-team World Cup by scoring two second-half goals in a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Congo in the round of 32 on Wednesday.

The late victory, England's second ever at the World Cup after conceding the first goal, earned the 1966 champions a spot in the round of 16 and a match against co-host Mexico.

"It was just about pounding the rock, keep pounding the rock and our moment would come," Kane said after scoring his fourth and fifth goals of the tournament.

England's next match will be played at the Azteca Stadium, the site of Argentina great Diego Maradona's infamous "Hand of God" goal that eliminated England from the 1986 World Cup quarterfinals.

Getting there didn't come easy against a Congo team that nearly pulled off one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history. England's only other World Cup victory after trailing 1-0 came in the 1966 final against West Germany at Wembley Stadium.

"That's a good sign. It just shows you the level of determination and the level of belief and also the level of focus," England coach Thomas Tuchel said.

Kane made sure the early deficit wasn't a problem Wednesday at Mercedes-Benz Stadium by extending his record as his country's leading scorer in tournament history to 13. He has record 84 goals for the national team in total.

His first goal came in the 75th minute. Substitute Anthony Gordon lifted a cross from the left and despite Congo goalkeeper Lionel Mpsi getting a hand to Kane's header, he didn't stop it from nestling into the bottom corner.

Eleven minutes later, Kane sent his shot into the top corner to put the thoughts of



an upset to rest.

Brian Cipenga had put Congo in the lead in the seventh minute after collecting a cross on the left of the box and shooting low past England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford at the near post.

Mpsi did his best to keep that 1-0 lead alive. He denied Jude Bellingham on three occasions — blocking two close-range headers before halftime and then clawing away another deflected effort after the break.

Kane nearly made a breakthrough late in the first half, but Mpsi blocked a powerful shot at the near post. And the keeper was also caught up in a collision with Kane in the box. England thought it should have been awarded a penalty, but referee Adham Makhadmeh waved away appeals.

Congo had a chance to double its lead when Yoane Wissa hit the post in the first half.

"We're disappointed because we really believed we could do it," Congo coach Sébastien Desabre said.

England's only major soccer title came in that 1966 tournament at home. But the team has been getting closer to an-

other in recent years, reaching back-to-back European Championship finals and the semifinals of the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

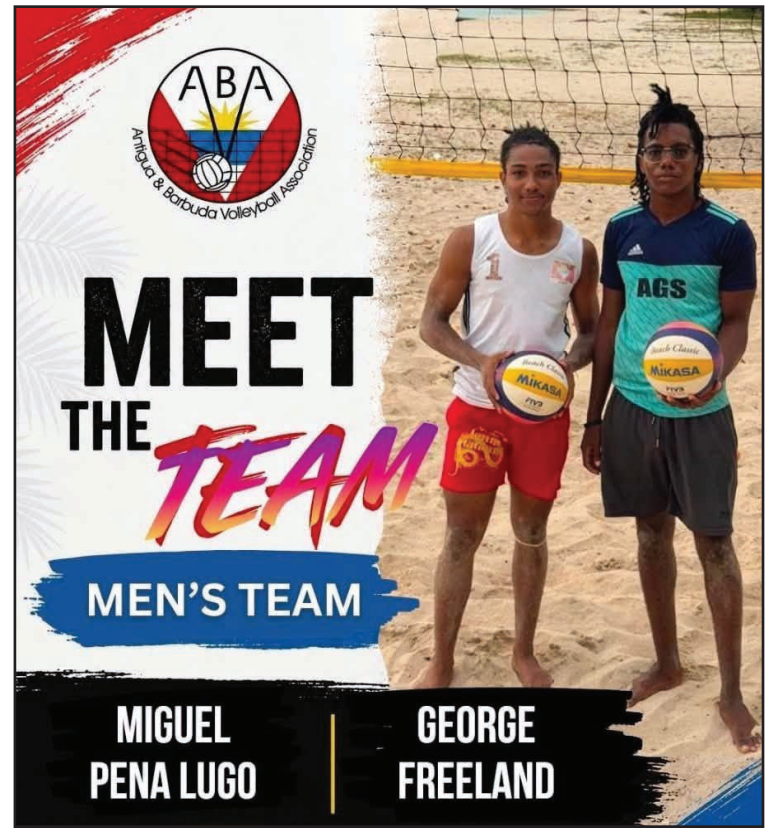
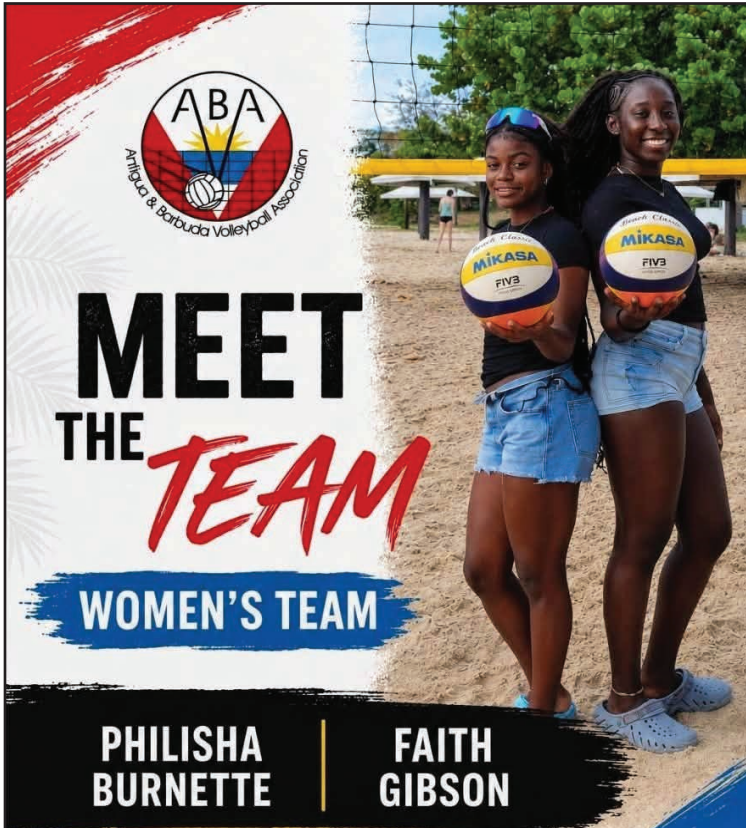
Tuchel has been hired to end that winless run. As a German, his appointment was a controversial choice given England's long-standing rivalry with his country. So anything other than a deep run in this year's tournament would likely reignite questions over the wisdom of that decision.

Despite winning Group L with two wins and a draw at this year's World Cup, there has been a mixed response to England's performances.

And in a tournament that has seen traditional powers like Germany and the Netherlands eliminated early, the fear was that England could follow that trend against a Congo team that already held Portugal to a 1-1 draw in the group stage.

The 46th-ranked Congo team had already made history with its first goal, point, and win at a World Cup, 52 years after its only previous appearance when competing as Zaire at the 1974 tournament in West Germany.

ABAVA names teams for ECVA Under-20 Beach Championships



The sand is calling, and the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association (ABAVA) has announced its men's and women's teams that are ready to shine at the Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association's (ECVA) Under-20 Beach Championships to be held in St. Kitts next week.

The ABAVA released the names of the talented athletes who will be representing Antigua and Barbuda at the ECVA beach tournament, which will be held at the St. Kitts Marriott Resort, Frigate Bay, from July 10 to 12.

The men's team will comprise Miguel Peña-Lugo and George Freeland. They will be accompanied by coach Jamarie James.

The women's team consists of Philisha Burnette and Faith Gibson, and they will be accompanied by coach Rosemarie Simon.

This premier event will bring together

the Eastern Caribbean's brightest young beach volleyball stars for an unforgettable showdown.

The ABAVA said the four athletes have earned the opportunity to wear the flag of Antigua and Barbuda with pride as they compete against the region's best.

"Representing Antigua & Barbuda is both an honour and a responsibility, and we have every confidence that our teams will compete with determination, sportsmanship, and the fighting spirit that defines our nation.

"Join us in wishing our athletes and coaches every success as they prepare to fly the Antiguan and Barbudan flag on the regional stage," the ABAVA stated in a media release.

The competitions are part of a full week of beach volleyball development activities being hosted by the ECVA in Frigate Bay, St. Kitts, bringing together coaches, referees, and athletes from

across the region from July 6 to 12.

In collaboration with regional and international partners, ECVA will also stage a Beach Volleyball Coaches Course, a National Referee Course, an International Continental Referee Course, and a Training Camp & Athletes Development Forum.

All activities are scheduled around the ECVA Under-20 Beach Volleyball Championship and will take place primarily at the St. Kitts Marriott Resort, Frigate Bay.

These initiatives reflect ECVA's ongoing commitment to building capacity and raising standards in all areas of beach volleyball, including coaching, officiating, and athlete performance.

By bringing world-class instructors and facilitators to the Eastern Caribbean, the ECVA is investing in the sustainable growth of the sport and creating new pathways for regional talent.