

Prime Minister Browne Is In St. Lucia For CARICOM Summit

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(L-R) Lady Sandra Williams, Venezuela Ambassador Carmen Velasquez, GG Sir Rodney Williams and Roman Catholic priest pose for photo outside the Family Cathedral on Sunday

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Prime Minister Browne Is In St. Lucia For CARICOM Summit

Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Gaston Browne left the country on Sunday to participate in the Fifty-First Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which will be held in Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, from 5–8 July 2026.

The Prime Minister will be accompanied by Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to CARICOM, Ambassador Clarence Henry and Senior Foreign Service Officer, Kurt Williams.

The Meeting brings together Heads of Government from across the Caribbean Community to deliberate on a broad range of regional issues aimed at advancing economic integration, sustainable development, regional security, public health, climate resilience and foreign policy coordination.

Among the principal matters for discussion will be the continued advancement of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), the regional climate change and climate finance agenda, food and nutrition security, regional health preparedness, security cooperation, the situation in Haiti and Cuba, financing and governance of the Community, reparations, border issues, and applications for CARICOM membership by Bermuda



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

and the Turks and Caicos Islands. The Heads will also receive reports on cricket, CARIFESTA and other matters of regional importance.

A key agenda item will be the advancement of the CARICOM Agri-Food Systems Agenda, as regional leaders review progress under the Vision 25 by 2025+5 Initiative, which seeks to transform Caribbean food systems, reduce the Region's dependence on imported food, strengthen food and nutrition security, increase agricultural production, expand intra-regional trade and improve resil-

ience to external shocks. Heads of Government will also consider measures to stimulate greater private sector investment, strengthen regional agricultural cooperation and accelerate implementation of initiatives designed to enhance food self-sufficiency throughout the Community.

Commenting on his participation, Prime Minister Browne said, "This Meeting comes at a particularly important time for our Region as CARICOM confronts a rapidly changing global environment marked by geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, climate change and emerging public health threats. No Member State can effectively address these challenges in isolation. Our collective strength lies in regional cooperation, coordinated policymaking and a shared commitment to protecting the interests of our people. I look forward to engaging my fellow Heads of Government as we advance practical solutions to strengthen food and nutrition security, enhance economic resilience, deepen regional integration and ensure that the Caribbean remains well-positioned to navigate the uncertainties of the global landscape. Antigua and Barbuda will continue to play its part in shaping policies that promote sustainable development and

improve the quality of life for all Caribbean citizens.”

The Conference will also examine a Regional Food Security Response Matrix developed by the CARICOM Secretariat in response to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and its potential implications for the Region. The strategic framework outlines measures to mitigate the impact of rising energy prices, fertilizer shortages, shipping and logistics disruptions, food price inflation and broader macroeconomic pressures that could affect Caribbean food security. Proposed actions include strengthening regional food production, expanding renewable energy use in agriculture, establishing strategic food reserves, enhancing regional shipping arrangements, promoting import substitution, strengthening social protection systems and deepening cooperation with international partners to safeguard the Region against external shocks.

Prime Minister Browne is expected to contribute actively to these discussions, reflecting Antigua and Barbuda’s longstanding advocacy for regional food sovereignty, increased agricultural productivity, resilient supply chains and greater collaboration among CARICOM Member States to address emerging global challenges.

The Conference will also consider regional health security and preparedness in light of emerging global public health threats. Leaders will review recommendations from the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) aimed at strengthening surveillance at ports of entry, enhancing regional coordination and information sharing, improving national preparedness and ensuring greater access to medical countermeasures. These discussions follow the World Health Organization’s declaration of the Ebola outbreak in parts of Africa

as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and underscore CARICOM’s commitment to protecting the health and well-being of Caribbean citizens.

Prime Minister Browne has consistently championed deeper regional integration and coordinated Caribbean action on issues affecting Small Island Developing States. His participation at the Conference provides another opportunity to advance Antigua and Barbuda’s national interests while contributing to collective regional solutions in the areas of economic development, food and nutrition security, climate resilience, public health, security cooperation and sustainable growth.

The Prime Minister is expected to return to Antigua and Barbuda following the conclusion of the Meeting on July 8.

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Customs Revenues Are Set To Record Another Strong Year



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The Customs Division, the country’s largest revenue source, is set to record another strong year in growth when compared with the collections for 2025, itself a record year for collections.

This comes as the Cabinet received the Government’s Second Quarter Fiscal Performance Report from the Ministry of Finance, which outlined the country’s continued fiscal strength, sustained growth in customs revenue collections, prudent expenditure management, and the Government’s decision to maintain current retail fuel prices.

The Cabinet was informed that the Antigua and Barbuda Customs and Excise Division has continued its strong upward trajectory in revenue collec-

tions, reflecting improved compliance, enhanced enforcement measures, and increased economic activity. Annual customs revenue has risen steadily from EC\$392 million in 2022 to EC\$402 million in 2023, representing a 5 percent increase. Collections grew further to EC\$502 million in 2024, an increase of 25 percent, before reaching EC\$573 million in 2025, an additional 14 percent increase.

It was reported that for the first six months of 2026, Customs collected EC\$276.85 million, surpassing the EC\$255.37 million collected during the corresponding period in 2025. Revenue collections for the month of June totaled EC\$35.97 million, contributing significantly to the Division’s year-to-date performance.

The report also detailed Government expenditure during the second quarter. Excluding recurring payroll costs, the Government processed 38 discretionary payments totaling EC\$158.8 million, reflecting its commitment to meeting statutory obligations, supporting critical public institutions, and advancing infrastructure development.

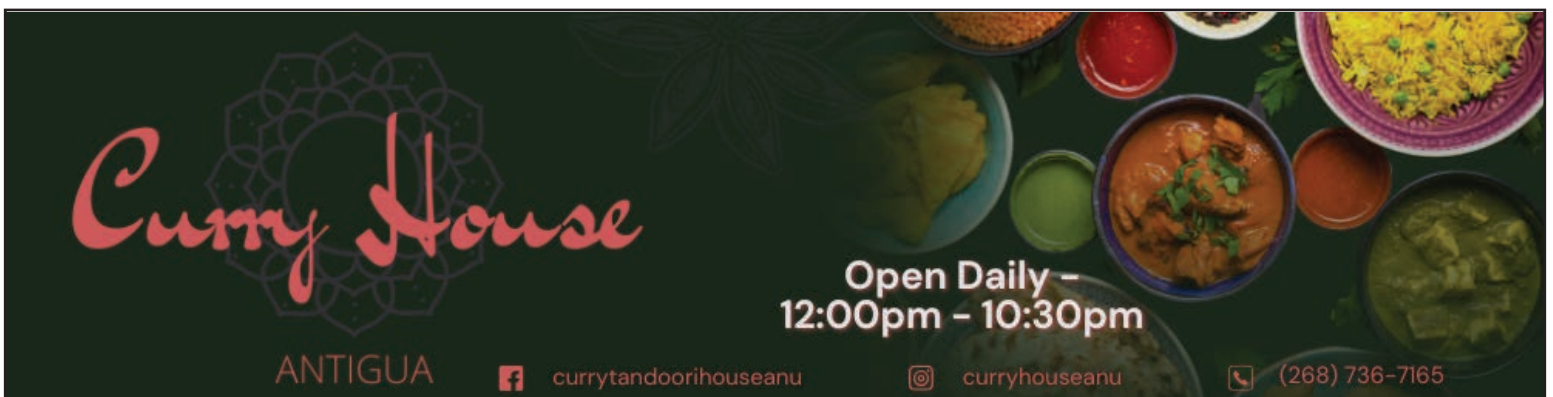
Among the most significant expenditures was EC\$44.2 million disbursed through the Capital Infrastructure Development Fund to finance major public works and capital projects. Other substantial payments included EC\$16.37 million to the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre in support of healthcare services, EC\$12.76 million to the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism

Authority as a statutory subvention, and EC\$6.35 million toward the Government’s Eastern Caribbean Central Bank loan obligations.

Cabinet also welcomed a significant update on the Government’s external debt portfolio, noting the substantial reduction in loans financed by the People’s Republic of China. Members were advised that the Government has reduced its outstanding Chinese-funded loan obligations from more than US\$300 million to approximately US\$120 million, reflecting the success of the Government’s prudent fiscal management strategy and disciplined approach to debt reduction.

Cabinet was informed that the original portfolio included financing for the V.C. Bird International Airport, the Fifth Cruise Berth and Port Redevelopment Project, the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (Mount St. John’s Medical Centre), and the Wadadli Power Plant. The original loan amounts totaled approximately US\$80 million for the airport redevelopment, US\$100 million for the seaport development, US\$20 million for the medical centre, and US\$55 million for the Wadadli Power Plant.

Members of the Cabinet expressed satisfaction that the loan associated with the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre has been fully liquidated, representing another important milestone in the Government’s debt reduction programme.



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An Initiative To Transform Perry Bay/Keeling Point Gets the Greenlight



An initiative to transform the Perry Bay/Keeling Point area into a modern mixed-use development that will expand housing opportunities, stimulate economic activity, and enhance the country's tourism product has received the stamp of approval from the Cabinet.

The area includes approximately 15 acres of reclaimed lands that have largely been left to idle. Now the government wants to change all that in the

interest of the people in the neighbouring communities and Antigua and Barbuda as a whole.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne updated Cabinet on the proposed development, which will include a new residential housing community, a marina, and commercial lots designed to attract investment, create employment, and support sustainable economic growth.

Additionally, the Cabinet also received an update on plans to transform

Darkwood Beach into a public park that will preserve and enhance one of the country's most treasured natural spaces while providing residents and visitors with improved recreational amenities.

The Cabinet agreed that concept designs for both projects will be presented for its consideration as planning advances. Ministers emphasized that the Government remains committed to ensuring that development is undertaken in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Accordingly, Cabinet supported the decision that comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be conducted before either project proceeds. The assessments will inform the planning process and ensure that environmental considerations are fully integrated into the final designs.

Cabinet reaffirmed its commitment to pursuing development that balances economic progress with environmental stewardship, while creating new opportunities for homeownership, investment, recreation, and national prosperity. The Government will continue to keep the public informed as both projects advance through the planning and consultation process.



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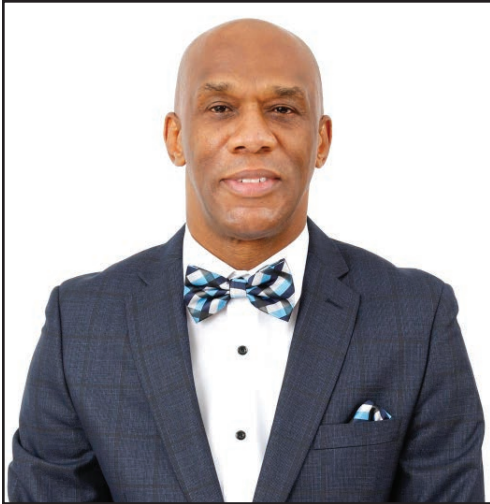


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Local News



Grade six Results 2026: A Study In Commitment and Steady Performance



Director of Education, Clare Browne

Director of Education, Clare Browne, said he is ‘encouraged’ by the results of the 2026 Grade Six National Assessments which were disclosed nationally last Friday.

Director Browne said the story that the results show is one of commitment and steady performance by the nation’s youth. He indicated that while the results overall do not match the results from last year, which he termed ‘a bumper year’, nonetheless, the results were not ‘too far removed from where we were then’.

“We want to congratulate our scholars from across the country, our schools, our principals, our Grade Six teachers, every teacher in every school. Lest we forget that our students did not begin at Grade Six and so we thank their parents because students who excel



Acting Director of Education responsible for Measurement and Evaluation, Jewel Hurst

are students whose parents are behind them,” he observed.

Acting Director of Education responsible for Measurement and Evaluation, Jewel Hurst, provided a closer look at the 226 results. She reported that there were 1,284 students who wrote the Grade Six National Assessments in the following subject areas; language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

Of that total, there were 588 females or 46 percent and 696 males, representing 54 percent. There were 756 students from government schools and 528 from private schools.

“We are encouraged that our students held their own this year with 89 percent of students attaining at least ac-

ceptable results. More than fifty percent of our students attained results in the top tier of the rankings. The remaining eleven percent with results in the third and fourth tiers. We in the ministry of education will continue to monitor these students even as they enter the secondary school system. We will work along with our schools to ensure that they continue to achieve,” she stated.

The education official had encouraging words for parents of male students as she indicated that these students showed no let up as they continued the march of improvements.

“Forty-seven percent of our male students continue to show consistency and determination as the results showed improvements,” she noted.

Female students however, continue to outpace their male counterparts with 61 percent of females attaining Level 1 results. This according to Hurst can be described as ‘excellent’. Additionally, when added together, over ninety percent of female students attained Levels 1 & 2 results.

Comparatively, there was a slight decline of approximately two percent in the results from 2025 and 2026. In 2025, the number of students who attained Level 1 results stood at 55.4 percent. This was down to 53.4 percent for this year. The results for the Level 2 achievements remained largely unchanged year to year.

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Antigua and Barbuda Participates IMF/ECCU Fuel Price Study



Antigua and Barbuda participated in an International Monetary Fund (IMF)/Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) Fuel Price Study, that was conducted in March this year as one of two pilot countries.

Government sources say the study examined fuel pricing mechanisms across the region against the backdrop of rising global fuel costs, increased importation and operational expenses, and ongoing regional discussions on improving fuel price transparency.

Following careful consideration of the study's findings and the policy op-

tions presented, the Antigua and Barbuda Cabinet agreed that retail fuel prices in Antigua and Barbuda will remain unchanged.

Cabinet noted that Antigua and Barbuda continues to maintain some of the most affordable fuel prices within the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union. Retail gasoline remains at EC\$14.50 per gallon, while diesel remains at EC\$14.25 per gallon—both among the lowest prices in the sub-region. Cabinet observed that consumers in several neighbouring jurisdictions continue to pay significantly higher prices for both

gasoline and diesel.

Members of the Cabinet emphasized that maintaining current fuel prices represents a deliberate policy decision by the Government to shield households, businesses, and productive sectors from additional financial pressures arising from global energy market volatility. While international fuel prices and importation costs have increased, the Government has opted to absorb these pressures rather than pass them on to consumers.

Cabinet recognized that this policy constitutes a meaningful concession to the people of Antigua and Barbuda and reflects the Government's broader commitment to protecting the cost of living, preserving household purchasing power, supporting business competitiveness, and sustaining economic growth.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who also holds the Finance Ministry portfolio, had announced earlier that the government has had to pay the West Indies Oil Company (WIOC) \$6 million as a subsidy in order to keep fuel prices at the current levels.

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Ministry of Finance Official attends Prestigious Oxford Sustainable Finance Executive Programme



Carlon Knight, Senior Projects Officer in the Project Management Office of the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Governance, has been selected to participate in the Sustainable Finance Executive Programme at the University of Oxford — ranked the world's number one university for ten consecutive years by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

Running from 6 to 10 July at Oxford's Rhodes House, the programme is delivered by the Oxford Sustainable Finance Group, the world's largest research and teaching centre dedicated to sustainable finance, under founding Director Dr Ben Caldecott and Senior Associate Dr Alex Money. Knight is the sole representative from a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) and the only participant from the Caribbean in this year's cohort, joining a

select group of finance, policy and sustainability leaders from institutions including the International Sustainability Standards Board, Fidelity International, GFANZ, WWF-UK and the Bank of England.

As Senior Projects Officer, Knight works closely with the Director, Gail Imhoff-Gordon, to oversee and coordinate Antigua and Barbuda's portfolio of externally funded infrastructure and development projects, including climate finance initiatives supported by the World Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Saudi Fund for Development, and other multilateral and sovereign financing partners. He also serves as the PMO's Chief Risk and Compliance Officer.

Knight is also an Adjunct Lecturer at The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, where he teaches undergraduate economics courses and convenes a graduate course in Sustainable Finance. In 2024, he was selected as an Alliance of Small Island States Fellow, supporting Antigua and Barbuda's climate finance negotiating team at COP29 in Baku.

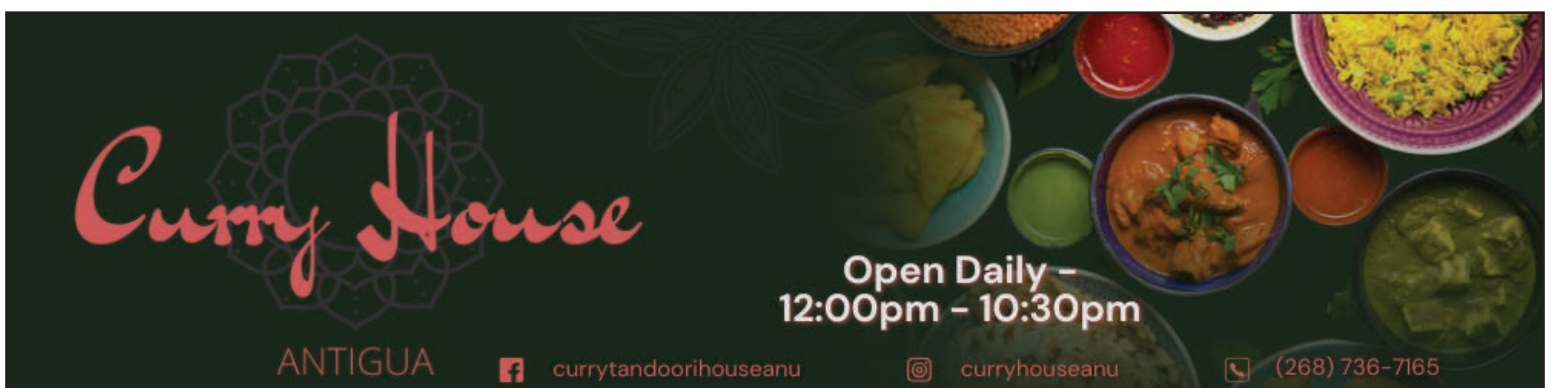
"Programmes like this at a world-leading institution such as Oxford are enormously important for small island developing states like Antigua and Barbuda," Knight said. "We are on the front line of climate risk, yet we are too often on the margins of the conversations shaping global sustainable finance. Building technical capacity at this level allows us to bring that ex-

pertise home and put it to work for our country. I am deeply proud to represent Antigua and Barbuda, and small island states more broadly, as the lone participant in this cohort."

He extended his thanks to Financial Secretary Rasona Davis-Crump and Director Gail Imhoff-Gordon for their confidence in him and their continued support in providing opportunities such as this to build capacity within the Ministry. He also thanked Dr Karen Murdock, Head of the UWI Five Islands School of Business and Management, for recommending his participation, and Denise Gardiner and the Board of Education for their support toward his attendance.

"To the Financial Secretary, my Director, Dr Murdock, Gardiner and the Board of Education — thank you for believing in this and for backing me every step of the way," he added.



His selection reflects the Government of Antigua and Barbuda's wider drive to strengthen technical capacity across the public service, with particular emphasis on sustainable and climate finance — an area of growing strategic importance for a country especially exposed to climate-related risk. Officials say continued investment in specialised training at institutions of Oxford's calibre will be central to equipping the Ministry of Finance to access, structure and manage the climate and development financing the country needs in the years ahead.



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Government Reaffirms Commitment to Regional Intelligence Cooperation



The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to strengthening regional intelligence cooperation as the 35th Regional Intelligence Meeting officially opened in Antigua and Barbuda.

Delivering the feature address on behalf of Prime Minister Gaston Browne, Attorney General and Minister Legal Affairs, Sir Steadroy C. Benjamin, conveyed the Prime Minister's regrets at being unable to attend and underscored the Government's strong support for the Regional Intelligence Meeting and the wider Caribbean security architecture.

Sir Steadroy commended the longevity of the forum, noting that thirty-five consecutive meetings reflect the trust, professionalism and sustained collaboration among intelligence agencies across the Caribbean.

Addressing delegates from across the Region, the Attorney General highlighted the increasingly complex security environment confronting Caribbean states. He pointed to transnational organised crime, narcotics trafficking, illegal firearms, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, violent extrem-

ism and cyber-enabled fraud as some of the most pressing threats requiring coordinated regional action.

He stressed that cyber-enabled fraud has evolved into a sophisticated form of organised crime capable of undermining economies, compromising personal data and financing other criminal enterprises, while urging intelligence agencies to play a greater role in identifying and disrupting these networks.

A significant focus of the address was Antigua and Barbuda's preparations to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2026. Sir Steadroy noted that welcoming leaders from 56 Commonwealth nations presents both an honour and a responsibility, emphasizing that the success and security of the summit will depend on robust intelligence sharing and regional cooperation.

He described intelligence as the cornerstone of effective policing, border security, counter-terrorism and financial crime investigations, while encouraging intelligence leaders to continue building trust through the timely and secure exchange of information.

Speaking in his capacity as Attor-

ney General, Sir Steadroy also underscored the importance of strengthening legislative frameworks governing intelligence operations, including cybercrime laws, intelligence-sharing agreements, financial intelligence legislation and data protection measures, to ensure agencies operate effectively and within sound legal authority.

Concluding the address, Sir Steadroy reaffirmed the Prime Minister's message that safeguarding the Caribbean is a shared responsibility requiring close collaboration among intelligence professionals throughout the Region. He expressed confidence that the discussions over the three-day meeting will strengthen regional security partnerships and contribute meaningfully to protecting Caribbean citizens.

The 35th Regional Intelligence Meeting brings together Heads of Intelligence Units, national security officials and regional security partners from across the Caribbean to discuss emerging threats, strengthen intelligence cooperation and enhance the Region's collective security capabilities.

Irenie Mussington: 103 Years And Counting



Miss Irenie Mussington, believed to be the nation's oldest living citizen, celebrated her 103rd birthday on Saturday with both Governor General Sir Rodney Williams and Prime Minister Gaston Browne among those offering her congratulations on reaching another remarkable milestone.

Irenie Mussington is an Antiguan by birth now living on Casmur Lane in Clarks' Hill, who was born on the 4th of July 1923 to Victoria Eli and Jeremiah Mussington.

Her life began in Green Bay, and she attended Green Bay Primary School. At the tender age of nine (9) years old, her mother died and she relocated to Dickenson Bay Street with her maternal grandmother Louisa Martin.

At age eleven (11) years old, her grandmother affectionately called "Mama Lou Lou" was injured, and Irene had to leave school and began doing domestic work to support Mama Lou Lou and herself.

At age eighteen (18) years old a



friend suggested that she work for herself, so she transitioned into vending on the corner of Market Street and St. Mary's Street. She started with homemade sweets, sugar cakes, fudge, candy, baby Ruth and parched peanuts. Later she added local drinks, then clothing to attract tourist when ships docked at Heritage Quay. This she did outside Bata Shoe Store, later



Cecil Shoe Store, until age 83 years.

Irene is the mother of three (3), grandmother of nine (9) and great-grandmother of nine (9).

"Your life is one of resilience, determination and service. Despite experiencing hardship at a young age, you persevered with courage and industry, building an honest livelihood through your years as a vendor and



making a meaningful contribution to our community. Your story reminds us that true greatness is often found in quiet acts of perseverance and selfless dedication.

“Today, our nation celebrates not only your longevity but also the values you represent: hard work, resilience, faith and commitment to family and community. Thank you for the example you have set for generations of Antiguans and Barbudans. May Almighty God continue to bless you with His peace, strength and joy. Happy 103rd Birthday, Miss Irenie. It is an honour to celebrate this special occasion with you,” Sir Rodney told the centenarian during a visit with her on Saturday.

During his Saturday afternoon radio/television programme, Prime Minister Browne paused to extend congratulations and best wishes to Mussington on attaining the age of 103 years, making her the oldest citizen in the country. “Happy Birthday, Irenie Mussington,” the prime minister offered. He described her as ‘a national treasure’ and as he jokingly asked her to share with the nation the secrets to her longevity.

Mussington was also presented with a cheque for \$10-thousand as a gift from the government and the nation.

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Scores Turn Out For Special Service For Venezuela Earthquake Victims



A special service was held on Sunday at the Roman Catholic Family Cathedral to offer prayers for the victims of the double earthquakes that struck Venezuela on June 24.

Led by the Venezuelan Ambassador, Carmen Velasquez, those in attendance included the Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Williams, Foreign Minister, E.P Chet Greene, Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez and Mrs Fernandez, Sen. Colin O'Neal and his wife, Chief of Staff, Sir Lionel Hurst, Prime Minister Gaston Browne's Executive Secretary, Lynnette Thwaites, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Karen Cabrall, other senior officials of the government, members of the diplomatic corps, the Venezuela diaspora as well as friends of the people of Venezuela.

In his remarks, Foreign Minister Greene said the entire Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Browne, join with the people of Antigua and Barbuda to empathise with the government and people of Venezuela on this sad occasion.

"We have watched with deep dismay the harrowing images and reports emerging from your soil in the wake of the catastrophic earthquakes that have struck your nation.

"The loss of thousands of precious lives, the anguish of families searching for their missing loved ones and the heartbreaking sight of communities reduced to rubble have moved us to our core. Beyond the immediate human toll, we fully comprehend the staggering social and economic devastation, the destruction of homes, hospitals, schools and critical infrastructure that will take

years to rebuild. This is not merely a natural disaster; it is a profound national tragedy that tests the very fabric of your society," he remarked.

According to Minister Greene, in this dark hour, the people of Antigua and Barbuda stand not as distant observers but as steadfast friends and partners. "We recognize that no words can fully erase the pain of those who have lost everything nor can they bring back the lives that have been so cruelly taken. We however hope that our expressions of solidarity bring at least a measure of comfort, knowing that you do not face this ordeal alone," he stated.

In her remarks, Ambassador Velasquez noted that date June 24, was one where the Venezuelan people gather to observe a national historic event. Yet it was the day when death and destruction were

Local News



visited upon the people.

“Today we pay tribute to those who have passed away. We honour their lives, their legacy, and the love they sowed in their families and communities. We offer our prayers that the Lord may grant them eternal rest and strengthen all their loved ones with His peace and comfort.

“We also pray for the speedy recovery of the injured, for those who have lost their homes and now face uncertainty, for the rescue workers who continue to work courageously to save lives, for the healthcare workers, law enforcement, and all the authorities who, with dedica-

tion and sacrifice, remain at the service of our people during these very difficult,” she observed.

A Book of Condolence was also available and many of those signed by offering words of prayer and comfort to the victims of the earthquakes.

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3

WEEKS TO



ANTIGUA
Carnival
2026

Their Excellencies Sir Rodney and Lady Williams highlight successful London visit



Their Excellencies with Sir Kier and Lady Starma at the Prime Minister's Residence.



Her Excellency with some of the guests at Wings of Charity 2026, including editors of major papers, television show hosts, museologists and historians and owner of travel agency chain in Bermuda



File photo: Wings of Charity held in London, in 2017, when Prince Harry heard Sheku Kanneh-Mason's moving rendition on cello for the first time.



Their Excellencies Sir Rodney and Lady Williams greet Prince Edward in London.

By Sandra Lady Williams

In June this year, my husband and I undertook a demanding itinerary in London, traveling from Antigua and Barbuda to commence a series of high-profile engagements that began with preparations for the Halo fundraising ball and continued through a broad schedule of diplomatic, cultural, and philanthropic activities.

The 10th Halo Ball, held at the Chancery Rosewood in Mayfair this year (hosted by the Peninsula, the Dorchester, the Royal Lancaster, the Rosewood High Holborn and the Waldorf Hilton in previous years), was set to accommodate well over 400 guests, including pre-CHOGM invitees. Funds were raised on the night through live and silent auctions.

Among other benefactors, the event was meaningfully supported by the indomitable Calvin Ayre Foundation, PLH in Barbuda, and Moongate — a distinguished boutique resort soon to be opened in Half Moon Bay.

Music for the evening was provided by acclaimed local artists such as The Strays featuring Hani Hechme, Tony Mayers, Adam Kirby, Jashan Hughes, Rey Wowor Graham and the phenom-



enal Annie on acoustic guitar, with overall audiovisual productions managed by Antigua and Barbuda’s Visual Echo.

In addition to introducing locally handcrafted items, art and tastily cured alcoholic beverage, Wings of Charity is known for bringing talented performers to the world stage. It is here that Prince Harry first heard the haunting cello-playing of the now renowned Sheku Kanneh-Mason. The rest is history, when Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex consequently requested that he perform at their wedding, after a detailed account of his talent from Future Husband Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex. This initiation by the Halo Foundation was carried in both the UK above the line media, as well as on Royal websites.

The world has never been the same for the talented Kanneh -Mason family since — a family of both Antiguan and Sierra Leonean descent — very much

akin to the entertaining Von Trapp family of 7 children in the 1960’s movie, “The Sound of Music” .

The all-black, world-renowned Kingdom Choir, a group originating out of the UK and who performed at the wedding of Prince Harry and the Duchess of Sussex, also performed at Wings of Charity on a previous occasion.

It is interesting to note that one of Halo’s Goodwill Ambassadors, Kathy Sledge of Sister Sledge Fame (“We are Family”, “I want your love” and “Greatest Dancer”, to name a few hits) has hunkered down on helping the charity in terms of its high grade musical output for a number of years in the past. It is always so refreshing when world-class performers are willing to give of themselves and their time to help an ailing world, and are not primarily driven by the profit motive. This gives a little hope for the future of humanity.

The Halo Foundation is also always so grateful to our only living National Hero, Sir Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards, once G-BOAT (our in-house acronym for greatest batsman of all time in the world of test cricket). Never a flinch. Never any drama. He gives from his limited selection of autographed items with pure heart and soul, knowing that the end result lifts suffering people from patches of darkness into ribbons of light.

Local produce, including locally made gin, was slated for auction, illustrating a robust blend of philanthropy, culture, and diplomacy. Proceeds from the Halo Ball are intended to support five selected charitable initiatives for 2026, aligned with Antigua and Barbuda’s development priorities and partner organisations within the Commonwealth network, underscoring the country’s commitment to local, regional and international benevolence.

The itinerary also featured a wide

Feature



array of engagements designed to strengthen diplomatic ties, cultural exchange, and heritage preservation. At the Royal Ascot, safely tucked away within the Royal Enclosure, I watched in awe and fascination as the event welcomed a vast audience of almost 80,000 people. I humbly crawled into the spotlight for Antigua and Barbuda by selecting the best turned-out horse at the races and distributed a cash prize to the winning stable. I note, “I’m a stickler for underdogs. I’m rather happy that the horse which caught my eye originated from a small stable. I’m hoping it meant something special to the groomsmen and stable hands.

His Excellency the Right Honourable Governor General Sir Rodney, distributed trophies and prizes to winning teams at the races, highlighting the collaboration between sport, philanthropy, and governance.

Our invitation to an annual St. James’s Palace dinner spearheaded by the Royal Drawing School, reinforced ongoing partnership with this venerable institution, and, the day following Wings of Charity, we engaged in constructive discussions with Sir Keir Starmer, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and Lady Starmer at No. 10 Downing Street before being seated

beside the Prime Minister and spouse at the spectacular Trooping the Colour ceremony.

I set out from the word “go” to also concentrate my efforts on outreach to museum authorities and opportunities for nonprofit financial support, meeting groups in need of moral and financial assistance, and leaning across to young Antiguan and Barbudans who currently reside in England or were visiting at the time. We emphasised the importance of community engagement and the role of philanthropy in enabling sustainable cultural and educational initiatives.

Reflecting on fundraising progress, I offer this statement: “We are still awaiting the amount raised, as it takes the auctioneers a little time to collect all the pledges. But every penny is for giving back to a good cause. We really want to kick off with a big push for Generation Next Football Club, as we need to seriously start to search for opportunities for our local talent in the sports export market.”

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourist Office in London, headed by Cherrie Osborne, was lauded for providing annual gift bags to high-profile visitors and friends of Halo alike, which included many charities from Antigua and from

other areas of the world — and Karl Williams from London contributed an entire gospel choir to perform during the evening, enhancing the event’s magical atmosphere and communal spirit.

Tourist office outreach expanded the scope of Halo’s Wings of Charity, inviting top wholesalers, travel writers, and retailers to participate in the evening’s momentum, while major UK media outlets—broadsheets and tabloids—sent senior editors to cover the event at the invitation of the Halo Foundation. I also managed to organically put together a series of collected material for articles on Antigua in International Kreole Magazine, among other initiatives.

Meanwhile, His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams stressed Antigua and Barbuda’s role as a keen and integral player on the world stage, noting that the mission was to augment our nation’s image, heighten its profile gracefully, and celebrate a tiny nation brave enough to host CHOGM. As Patron of the Commonwealth Heritage Forum and President of the West India Committee, Sir Rodney’s role of meeting, planning and executing continued throughout the visit. Additionally, as I hold the office of President



of the Antigua and Barbuda Branch of the Royal Commonwealth Society (of which His Excellency Sir Rodney is Patron), there was a clear chance for us to delve into 2026-2027 scheduled activity in more significant detail.

We are delighted to take this opportunity to commend H.E. Karen-Mae Hill, Antigua and Barbuda's High Commissioner to the UK, for the tireless work of her team and the effective, discreet leadership she continues to provide in advancing many shared objectives. Our selective joint efforts reinforce Antigua and Barbuda's diplomatic and philanthropic missions as we navigate a rigorous schedule that includes collaborative discussions with Commonwealth bodies and cultural institutions.

An extract from the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission's social media post stated

"A truly memorable moment meeting Former Commonwealth Secretary-General Baroness Scotland and Honourable Richard Evans at Wings of Charity. Grateful for the opportunity to spend time with such inspiring individuals whose dedication to community and service continues to make a difference."

The Commonwealth Secretariat was

well represented at the senior level at Wings of Charity, although unavoidable circumstances which involved important overseas travel prevented the much-anticipated presence of the Hon. Shirley Botchwey, seventh Secretary General (SG) of the Commonwealth and first female SG from the African continent. (The Hon. SG was present at the 2025 event).

The June programme advanced ongoing partnerships with Commonwealth and regional organisations to promote heritage preservation, philanthropy, and community development. Cultural diplomacy remained a cornerstone, strengthening ties between Antigua and Barbuda, the United Kingdom, and broader Commonwealth partners. We reaffirmed our dedication to engaging with museum authorities, non-profit funding avenues, and community groups in need, as well as maintaining meaningful contact with young Antiguan and Barbudans in the UK.

This continuous flow of activities demonstrates our commitment to serving our nation on both the local and international stage while nurturing constructive dialogue with key partners and beneficiaries.

The personal Communications Executives for Their Majesties King and

Queen Camilla, as well various Private Secretaries and the King's Personal Biographer and Spouse, were also in attendance.

Unfortunately, I need to add that "the high demand and careful capacity management proved somewhat tricky, and we were forced to reject more than 15% of potential guests — necessary to preserve the evening's quality and pace."

Wings of Charity and Halo Ball activities commenced with a drinks reception attended by distinguished guests, including His Honour the Duke of Gloucester (first cousin of the late Queen Elizabeth II) and his Danish wife, Her Grace Brigitte. The couple engaged primarily with local Antiguan charities and European business leaders, signalling the event's cross-border philanthropy and its role in uniting charitable, business, and cultural communities in support of Antigua and Barbuda's development priorities while strengthening international ties.

Finally, without the grit, grace and energy of the volunteer team, much of which is being achieved would not have been possible. Intellectual and technical talent in Antigua and Barbuda abounds. Let's not fool ourselves. Let's give ourselves a chance.

We Are Failing Our Children



By Minister Rawdon Turner

The Social Transformation Minister pens his reaction to what he sees as a light sentence handed down to a convicted sexual offender.

There are some stories that stop you in your tracks.

Yesterday was one of those days.

I read that a 56-year-old man had been sentenced to three and a half years in prison for sexually abusing a five-year-old child. I read the report once. Then I read it again, hoping I had misunderstood what I was seeing.

I had not.

I am heartbroken.

I am deeply disturbed.

And I am angry.

Three and a half years.

For a crime that will likely leave a child carrying emotional scars for the rest of her life.

As the Minister with responsibility for Social Services and as a Member of Parliament, I cannot remain silent.

Nor should any Member of Parliament. When the punishment imposed for crimes against children appears so disconnected from the lifelong trauma suffered by the victim, it is our responsibility to ask whether our laws are producing outcomes that reflect the

Man Sentenced to 3.5 Years for Sexually Assaulting Five-Year-Old Great-Niece

values of our society.

This is not about attacking any individual judge. Judges are sworn to apply the law that Parliament gives them and to sentence within the legal framework before them. But when sentences in child abuse cases repeatedly leave the public asking whether justice has truly been done, no institution should escape scrutiny.

Parliament must examine the laws it has enacted. The legal profession must examine whether the sentencing framework is fit for purpose. The justice system must ask whether the protection of children is receiving the priority it deserves.

The Family and Social Services Division within my Ministry has already recorded more than 105 reports of child abuse this year.

One hundred and five.

That is not merely a statistic. It is one hundred and five children whose innocence has been threatened or stolen. One hundred and five families whose lives have been turned upside down. One hundred and five reminders that there are predators and abusers among us who continue to prey on the most vulnerable members of our society.

Across our region, there has been growing public concern whenever sentences imposed for the sexual abuse of children are perceived as failing to reflect the devastating and lifelong im-

pact of these crimes.

Whether those concerns ultimately point to the sentencing laws, the available judicial discretion, or broader systemic issues, they deserve serious attention. We cannot dismiss them, because public confidence in the administration of justice matters, and so does the protection of our children.

A child who has been sexually abused does not serve a three-and-a-half-year sentence.

That child serves a lifetime sentence.

A lifetime of memories that cannot be erased.

A lifetime of emotional healing.

A lifetime of asking why the adults who were supposed to protect them did not do enough.

That is why I believe Parliament must urgently review the laws governing offences against children. If the sentencing framework is inadequate, we must strengthen it. If mandatory minimum penalties deserve consideration, then let us have that debate. If sentencing guidelines need reform to better reflect the gravity of these offences, then let us confront that reality.

If procedural reforms are needed to better protect child victims, then we must act without delay.

The words of Jesus in Matthew 18:6 are a solemn reminder of the value God places on children: "Whoever causes

Opinion

one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

If Scripture speaks with such gravity about harming children, our laws must also demonstrate that these crimes rank among the gravest offences against our society.

We are failing our children.

We are failing them in our homes when abuse is hidden.

We are failing them in our communities when people stay silent.

We are failing them when victims wait too long for justice.

And we are failing them whenever the justice they receive appears unequal to the suffering they have endured.

Although social services were never my profession or my career path, and although I have spent my entire professional life in architecture and construction, this responsibility has changed me. It has opened my eyes to a reality that I will not ignore.

I make this promise to the people of Antigua and Barbuda: whether I re-

main the Minister with responsibility for Social Services, whether I remain a Member of Parliament, or whether I hold no public office at all, I will dedicate my time, my voice and my energy to fighting for the protection of our children and defending the rights of every child in this country.

This is no longer simply a ministerial responsibility. It is a personal commitment that I will carry for the rest of my life.

I say this not only as a Minister, but as a parliamentarian who shares responsibility for the laws of this country. My colleagues and I have an obligation to ensure that our legislation reflects the seriousness of crimes committed against children. If the law is not achieving that objective, then we must change it.

But legislation alone is not enough.

Silence protects predators. Education protects children.

That is why the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation will, in the coming weeks, begin a national series of Child Protection Town Hall Meetings across Antigua and Barbuda. The country will be divided into four zones

so that every community has an opportunity to participate.

These meetings will begin an honest national conversation about the dangers confronting our children, how predators groom and manipulate their victims, how families and communities can identify the warning signs of abuse, and what every citizen can do to help protect the next generation.

This is not a conversation that belongs only in Parliament or in the courtroom. It belongs in every village, every church, every school, every sports club and every home across our nation.

A nation is ultimately judged by how it protects those who cannot protect themselves.

Today, I do not believe we are meeting that standard.

Every child in Antigua and Barbuda deserves better.

Every child, from Freetown to Five Islands from Cedar Grove to Old Road, deserves to grow up safe, protected and free from abuse.

And together, we must ensure that they do.

Curiosity: The Seed of Caribbean Scientific Excellence



By Ambassador Dr. Clarence E. Pilgrim

My interest in science began long before I understood the meaning of the word itself. As a boy growing up on East Street in St. John's, Antigua, I was fascinated by how things worked, especially how plants grew. The small space where I experimented no longer exists today, but the lessons I learned there have remained with me throughout my life.

Two plants particularly captured my imagination: pumpkins and spinach.

I became convinced that feeding milk to a pumpkin plant would help it grow larger and stronger. With youthful enthusiasm, I regularly gave the plant what I believed was a secret ingredient. To my delight, the pumpkin flourished, and I proudly regarded the result as proof of my theory. Looking back, I now understand that healthy plant growth depends upon nutrients, soil quality, moisture, sunlight, and biological processes. Yet that childhood experiment taught me a lesson that has guided me ever since: progress begins

with observation, experimentation, and a willingness to learn from results.

My spinach patch was equally rewarding. Enriched with a generous supply of manure, the plants grew lush, green, and abundant. I inspected them daily, fascinated by every new leaf and eager to discover what would happen next.

Although I did not realize it then, I was practising the fundamentals of scientific inquiry. I was observing, testing ideas, evaluating results, and refining my approach. In many respects, I was a homemade scientist.

That experience taught me an important truth: science does not begin in a laboratory. It begins with a question. Children naturally ask, Why does this happen? What caused that result?

What if I tried something different? Those simple questions have inspired some of humanity's greatest discoveries.

Schools, colleges, and universities help transform that natural spirit of inquiry into expertise by providing knowledge, mentorship, and opportunity. Across the Caribbean, one organisation has been instrumental in nurturing that journey—the Caribbean Science Foundation (CSF).

Established in 2010, the Caribbean Science Foundation has been guided by Professor Cardinal Warde of MIT and other regional STEM leaders in advancing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, research, innovation, and entrepreneurship throughout the Caribbean. Through initiatives such as the Student Program for Innovation in Science and Engineering (SPISE), teacher development, mentorship, and research partnerships, the Foundation is preparing a new generation of Caribbean innovators.

Most importantly, the Foundation recognises a fundamental truth: the Caribbean's greatest resource is neither its land nor its sea, but the limitless potential of its people.

History has shown that Caribbean people can excel on the world stage when opportunity is provided. From Nobel Laureate Sir Arthur Lewis to today's emerging generation of researchers, engineers, physicians, and entrepreneurs, our region has repeatedly demonstrated that talent flourishes when it is identified, nurtured, and encouraged.

Today, decades after those childhood experiments on East Street, my fascination with discovery remains undiminished. The questions have become more complex, but the desire to learn remains unchanged. That is why I firmly believe scientific inquiry should never be viewed as a stage of life but as a lifelong journey.

Scientific inquiry should not be limited by age.

Experience is not the enemy of innovation; it is often one of its greatest allies.

Science belongs to everyone. It belongs to the child conducting an experiment in a backyard garden, the student in a classroom, the researcher in a laboratory, the entrepreneur developing a new idea, and the retiree whose decades of experience may hold the key to solving tomorrow's challenges.

While considerable attention is rightly placed on inspiring young people to pursue STEM disciplines, there is also an untapped reservoir of knowledge, experience, and insight among our senior citizens.

Across the Caribbean, retired teachers, farmers, engineers, healthcare professionals, public servants, entrepreneurs, and community leaders pos-

sess decades of practical wisdom that could enrich scientific inquiry and innovation.

The remarkable life of George Washington Carver reminds us that science is driven not merely by knowledge, but by a lifelong commitment to observation, experimentation, and service to humanity. His example demonstrates that learning and discovery never have an expiration date.

For that reason, I respectfully challenge the Caribbean Science Foundation to pioneer a regional “Mature Citizens for Science” initiative. Such a programme could engage retirees and senior professionals in mentoring, citizen-science projects, innovation forums, research discussions, and lifelong learning. An annual symposium bringing together experienced professionals, researchers, educators, entrepreneurs, and students would further strengthen collaboration across generations.

Science has never been more important to the Caribbean than it is today. Whether strengthening food security, improving healthcare, developing renewable energy, protecting our environment, harnessing artificial intelligence, or creating the next generation of technology companies, science will

shape much of our region’s future prosperity. Investing in scientific inquiry is therefore not simply an educational priority; it is an economic and developmental imperative.

The Caribbean Science Foundation is already demonstrating what is possible when vision meets action. From 25–27 June 2026, it hosted the inaugural Caribbean SEED Summit in Barbados, bringing together innovators, investors, entrepreneurs, and regional partners to strengthen the region’s innovation ecosystem.

A highlight was the Caribbean STEM Startup Challenge, where sixteen technology ventures pitched their innovations to investors, opening doors to funding, incubation, and commercial growth. The Foundation is also advancing a regional Small Business Innovation Research and Development (SBIRD) framework to help governments support emerging technology enterprises through strategic investment and partnerships.

These initiatives demonstrate that the Foundation is not only inspiring scientific excellence but also creating practical pathways for innovation, entrepreneurship, economic diversification,

and sustainable development.

As I reflect on those youthful experiments on East Street, I am reminded that every scientific journey begins with a simple question. The Caribbean Science Foundation has demonstrated the transformative power of nurturing that spirit of inquiry among our young people. The next step is to embrace an even broader vision—one that recognises that scientific discovery belongs to all of us, regardless of age or background.

By investing in STEM education, encouraging lifelong learning, and creating opportunities for both youth and senior citizens to contribute, we can build a Caribbean where innovation flourishes, discovery becomes part of our culture, and every citizen has an opportunity to shape our shared future.

The future of the Caribbean may not begin in a laboratory. It may begin, as it once did for me on East Street, with a child nurturing a pumpkin plant, asking a simple question, and daring to discover the answer.

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If using a mosquito net, ensure it is securely fitted and kept well away from your baby’s face at all times. Avoid loose or hanging nets inside the crib or bassinet, especially once your baby begins to roll or grab, as they may pull the netting into their sleep space.

Safe alternatives

- Installing window or door screens
- Using air conditioning or fans to help keep mosquitoes away
- Dressing babies in lightweight clothing that covers the arms and legs
- Using mosquito repellents approved for the baby’s age on clothing or surrounding areas — never directly in the sleep space

CONSUMERS BE AWARE

Choose breathable, non-toxic material like polyester or cotton. Ensure the net is flame-resistant with holes of 1.2 mm - 1.5 mm or less to ensure even tiny insects cannot pass through. The World Health Organization recommends at least 156 holes per square inch.



CLIMATE CONSCIOUS

RHYME AND RESOLVE: CLIMATE CALLS



Waste Is All of Our Business

Where does it go when the truck drives away? Do you ever stop to think where your garbage will stay? We put it in bags. We throw it in bins. But that is not where the waste story ends.

We buy it. We use it. We throw it away. Then expect someone else to manage the day. But who pays for the trucks? Who pays for the fuel? Who pays for the workers, the systems and tools?

Who pays for the bins? The machines? The land? Who pays when waste gets out of hand? So we are asking one question, simple and straight:

Do you think those who generate waste should help pay to manage it?

Yes or no. That is all you must do. Less than 30 seconds to share your view.

But before you click, before you decide, think about the waste we create far and wide.

Think of the bottles. The tyres. The food. The cardboard and plastics that could be reused. Think of the garbage we throw every day. It does not disappear because it is taken away.

Where does it go? How long will it stay? And what price will our children eventually pay? This year alone, four landfill fires. An oil spill too.

How many warnings do we need before the message gets through? Smoke in the air. Pollution at sea. Waste affects you. Waste affects me.

A landfill fire does not care where you live. Pollution can take more than we can afford to give. Waste does not stop at a property line.



Environmental damage does not wait for a convenient time. So can we do better? Of course we can.

But doing better requires more than a plan. We need education so people understand.

We need bins and machines to support every hand. We need outlets and facilities to complete the chain, Or the waste we collect becomes waste once again.

Across the Caribbean, change is in sight. Dominica has started to move things right. Separate at the source.

That is the call. Because better waste management must start with us all.

At the source. That means me. That means you. Every household. Every business too. Every school. Every event. Every shop. Every office. Every place where the waste does not stop.

We say tourism is everyone's business. We say it with pride. But can tourism thrive with pollution outside?

Can visitors ignore what residents can see? Can we sell sun, sand and sea

While waste enters our land and our sea? A clean country cannot be one person's fight.

Waste management cannot remain out of sight. Government has a role. Businesses do too. But every person who



generates waste has a role to pursue. We all make waste. So here is the truth:

Waste is all of our business, from the elder to the youth. We must do better as a nation. Not tomorrow. Not only through frustration. Not only when smoke is covering the sky. Not only when another environmental headline passes by.

Now. Answer the survey. One question. One click. Your response is data. Your answer can help.

Then send it to a friend. Ask them to send it again. Tell a friend to tell a friend. Let the sharing begin.

Put the flyer in every group chat you know. Send it to your employees. Help the responses grow. Send it to businesses. Parents. Family. Friends.

Because better waste systems must start from the ground. Waste is not "their" problem. It is not "over there."

It is in what we purchase. It is everywhere. Tourism is everyone's business. We know that line. Now let us give waste management equal time.

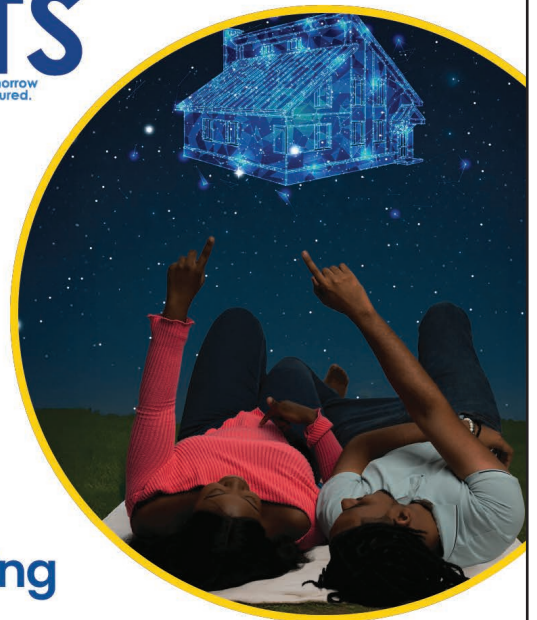
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Regional News

Push for US inquiry into deportee deal - Federal lawmakers urged to launch probe into third-country nationals' agreement

A Jamaican American advocate has formally requested that members of New Jersey's congressional delegation launch an inquiry into the third-country nationals (TCN) agreement signed between Jamaica and the United States (US).

In a letter sent to federal lawmakers, New Jersey constituent Patrick Beckford asked US senators Cory Booker and Andy Kim, as well as Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman, to demand full transparency from the US Department of State about the memorandum of understanding (MOU) governing the transfer, housing, and screening of migrant populations.

Beckford also wants clarity on potential US taxpayer expenditures, the specific categories of individuals slated for "transit" through Jamaica, and the legal authority under which the deal was brokered.

"Because this agreement appears to involve immigration policy, foreign relations, and potentially the expenditure of US taxpayer resources, I respectfully request that your offices seek clarification from the US Department of State and any other relevant federal agencies regarding the following matters," he said.

He asked the US lawmakers to request disclosure on the operational, financial, and legal framework of the deal, Minister of National Security and Peace Dr Horace Chang said was signed three weeks ago.

Beckford wants the lawmakers to press federal agencies to clarify the exact demographics of the transferred individuals, including whether the arrangement covered families, children, asylum seekers, or persons with criminal records.

He said the agencies must also disclose the legal authority, diplomatic origin, and specific US and Jamaican officials responsible for executing the agreement.



Further, Beckford wants an inquiry to outline the precise duration of stays, the implementation of human rights and medical screening protections, and whether any financial compensation or taxpayer-funded grants were exchanged to facilitate the arrangement.

He also questioned whether Congress was bypassed prior to the signing and demanded reporting mechanisms and periodic public disclosures to ensure ongoing accountability.

"As Americans, we recognise that immigration policy is often complex and politically challenging. Nevertheless, democratic societies function best when governments operate transparently and remain accountable to the people they serve. Agreements affecting sovereign nations, taxpayer resources, and vulnerable individuals should be subject to appropriate public scrutiny rather than uncertainty or speculation," he said.

"The Jamaican-American community has long maintained strong cultural, economic, and civic ties to both countries. Many of us simply seek factual information so that public discussion may be guided by evidence rather than rumour.

"Accordingly, I respectfully request that your offices make formal inquiries

of the Department of State and any other appropriate federal agencies and, where possible, share the resulting information with your constituents," said Beckford in the three-page letter.

The Jamaican Government has maintained that the controversial migration agreement with the US is a "non-binding, temporary transit arrangement" and not a permanent resettlement programme.

Chang said the MOU establishes a tightly controlled processing mechanism, capping intake at a maximum of 25 deportees every two weeks.

They are expected to remain on the island for a 14-day period while awaiting transit to their home countries or final destinations. However, he said they will not be detained and could apply for asylum through the court. They are expected to be monitored by the International Organization for Migration.

The minister said a strict operational safeguard exists where if the number of transit individuals remaining in the country exceeds 10 at any point within a 30-day window, the arrangement will be paused.

At the same time, both Chang and Information Minister Dr Dana Morris Dixon have insisted that the MOU is a US-initiated arrangement, even as a diplomatic note from the US Embassy in Kingston identified former ambassador to the US and Cabinet Minister Audrey Marks as proposing the deal.

Marks earlier this week denied that she made the proposal for Jamaica to receive up to 10,000 TCNs, arguing that separate issues have been conflated.

She said the discussions around the TCN MOU were being conflated with a proposal she made to recruit skilled workers to Jamaica while serving as Jamaica's ambassador to the US in March 2025. (Jamaica Gleaner)

SVG is first in region to launch RIEWSS

St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) has set a new benchmark for public health in the Caribbean by becoming the first country in the region to successfully implement the Regional Integrated Early Warning Surveillance System (RIEWSS).

The Ministry of Health, Wellness, Environmental Health and Energy announced the milestone following a week-long technical mission by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) from June 24–30, 2026. This landmark achievement was formally celebrated during a High-Level Ministerial Meeting held in Kingstown on June 29-30, where regional partners and national stakeholders gathered to review the country's progress in strengthening health security.

The RIEWSS is an integrated digital platform designed to help the nation detect, monitor, and respond rapidly to public health threats. By providing timely and reliable data, the system allows for more informed decision-making and coordinated public health actions. According to the sources, the implementation is a major step forward following the Regional Health Security (RHS) Workshop and is expected to enhance tourism resilience, improve emergency preparedness, and strengthen cross-sector collaboration.

The implementation process involved several critical milestones supported by CARPHA, including the sensitization and training of healthcare professionals and the full operationalization of the digital platform. To support the system's rollout, ten tablets were provided for the field operation of specific surveillance modules.

The modules currently active in the RIEWSS platform include:

Caribbean Vessel Surveillance System

Mass Gathering Surveillance System
 Vector Borne Disease Surveillance



System

Officials emphasized that the project's success relied on strong multisectoral collaboration between the Ministries of Health, Tourism, and National Security, alongside other government agencies and international partners.

Looking ahead, the next phase of implementation will focus on expanding the platform's capabilities. Future plans include the real-time integration of laboratory surveillance data and the

introduction of new modules addressing One Health and antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The Ministry stated that while this achievement is a significant victory for national health security, continued technical support from regional partners will be essential to ensure the long-term success of the system and the protection of both residents and visitors in SVG. (St Vincent Times)

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Regional News

Wrongly suspected for plot against PM...but 2011 SoE detainee holds no grudge, agrees with police action

Fifteen years after he was detained over an alleged plot to assassinate then-prime minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar and several cabinet ministers in 2011—a plot for which he was never charged—David “Buffy” Milliard says the experience devastated his reputation and livelihood.

Yet, despite the personal cost, he insists national security authorities were right to investigate any credible threat against the country’s leadership.

David “Buffy” Milliard made the statements during an interview with the Sunday Express at Express House, Port of Spain, yesterday, adding he understands why the State needed to act the way it did.

At the height of the 2011 state of emergency, then-prime minister Persad-Bissessar stunned the nation by announcing an alleged plot to assassinate her and three Cabinet ministers. She claimed the conspiracy was retaliation by criminal elements targeted in the Government’s anti-gang campaign.

Milliard, one of 16 men (15 of them being Muslim) detained under a Preventive Detention Order (PDO) during the state of emergency, said he has always maintained his innocence and was ultimately never charged, in addition to none of the other men who were held.

Reflecting on the experience 15 years later, he said while the detention severely damaged his livelihood, he believes national security authorities had a responsibility to investigate any credible threat against the country’s leadership.

“I categorically deny being involved,” he said, insisting he had no knowledge of any plot to assassinate the prime minister or cabinet ministers.

Milliard recalled that he was liming at a barbecue stand on Independence Square, Port of Spain, shortly before midnight when several police officers



approached him.

According to him, the officer in charge identified himself, informed him there was a warrant for his detention and asked if he would cooperate.

“I looked up and said, ‘Chief, you have about 30 police officers here, so I guess I’ll come in quietly,’” he recalled.

He said officers searched his van before taking him first to the Besson Street Police Station, then to the Central Police Station and eventually to the Diego Martin Police Station where a senior officer informed him why he was being detained.

“He (police officer) said, ‘We have detained you because we believe you may be involved in an assassination plot to assassinate the prime minister and four sitting ministers.’”

Milliard said he was stunned by the allegation.

“I said, ‘Please say it again.’ He said it again. I said, ‘Say it one more time. I’m hoping on the third time it will disappear.’”

The following morning, Milliard said

he was interviewed by approximately 15 officers representing several intelligence and security agencies.

He said investigators questioned him for several hours, and he voluntarily handed over his cellphones and other electronic devices.

“I opened my phones willingly and I set it down. I said, ‘You can go through my phones,’ Milliard said, adding: ‘I said, ‘And please provide me with whatever electronic recordings or evidence you have that might have led you to believe that I am involved in this.’ We spoke for a while. The only thing that I will say is that there were no electronic pieces of evidence.”

Milliard said investigators never presented him with any electronic recordings or any other type of evidence linking him to the alleged plot and said the authorities did not have to.

Despite that, he said he does not believe the authorities acted maliciously but were responding to intelligence which they felt required urgent investigation.

“The police are not crazy men,” he said, adding, “If somebody, anybody,

said to them somebody is planning to kill the prime minister of our country and four ministers, would you not establish a net and start investigating? Of course, you would.”

Milliard said he fully cooperated with investigators because he understood the seriousness of the allegation.

He also dismissed suggestions that authorities deliberately framed those who were detained.

“If they wanted to set us up, we would have been charged,” he said.

“They could have locked us away easily because the same way people were willing to believe that the 15 of us had a plot, the same way when (if) they charged us, people would have said, ‘Good, I’m happy they charged them.’”

Instead, he noted none of the detainees were charged in connection with the alleged assassination plot.

While he escaped criminal prosecution, Milliard said the damage to his reputation and business was immediate.

“Perception is reality to he or she who perceives,” he said, explaining: “Once you are detained for something like that, your business disappears.”

He said some clients distanced themselves while others demanded explanations before continuing to do business with him.

Recalling one encounter, Milliard said a man approached him in a supermarket and bluntly asked why he wanted to kill Persad-Bissessar.

“I said, ‘Chief, I have no intention of

killing anybody.’”

After speaking with him for about 20 minutes, Milliard said the man apologised.

He said the experience reinforced his belief that public perception can be changed through honest communication.

Although several people, including attorneys, encouraged him to sue the State, saying he could have received millions of dollars in compensation, Milliard said he deliberately refused.

“The government has no money of their own,” he said, stressing: “The government has money that is derived from taxation.”

Arguing that any compensation awarded would ultimately come from taxpayers, he said: “Why would I take \$15 million from the people who live around me because somebody heard something and took the necessary steps to prevent it?”

Milliard asked: “Who pays taxes? Ordinary citizens. My neighbours, whether they are 1%ers or they are 99%ers like me. Sufferers. You pay taxes. And when you pay the taxes, that money goes into the treasury. And when that money is spent, people perceive it to be Government funds, but it’s not. The lineage of that money is the pocket of a hardworking man.”

Milliard also praised the treatment he received from both police and prison officers throughout his detention.

He said officers were professional and respectful, prisoners were allowed to pray, halal meals were provided,

and there was no attempt to intimidate those being held.

“They treated us well and there was no attempt to intimidate us.”

He also recalled that on the night detainees were released on December 5, 2011, then-commissioner of prisons Martin Martinez ensured each man contacted relatives to arrange transportation home rather than leaving them stranded late at night.

“He said, ‘I cannot in good conscience let you go to stand on the highway at 12 o’clock at night.’

“Who does that?” Milliard asked.

‘I feel sorry for Hadeed’

Drawing comparisons with the recent detention of businessman Dominic Hadeed; his wife, Genevieve Hadeed; and relative Star Sabga, Milliard said he sympathises with them but urged the public to allow investigators to carry out their work.

“I feel sorry for Mr Hadeed. It’s a very hard experience for himself and his wife, but in actuality, if there’s any truth whatsoever, any reason for the national security apparatus to operate, they have no choice.”

Asked if he had any advice for Hadeed, Milliard replied: “May the truth come out. I can’t speak on his behalf. Or I cannot speak derogatory about him because I don’t know him. Never met him. But one thing I can say for myself. This Government is not the same government that detained me. But it’s led by the same people. And, bro, they could have sank me.” (Trinidad Express)



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Regional News



Escaped murder accused hunted after fleeing Arima hospital

A nationwide manhunt is underway after a prisoner facing murder and other violent crime charges escaped from custody while receiving medical treatment at the Accident and Emergency Department of the Arima Health Facility on Friday night.

Police said Robby Khadoo escaped at about 7.15 p.m. while under lawful custody at the hospital.

Khadoo is before the courts on charges of murder, attempted murder and wounding with intent.

Police said he was last seen wearing a red T-shirt and light blue pants. His last known address is Naparima-Mayaro Road, Iere Village, Princes Town.

The TTPS said a coordinated, intelligence-led operation involving the Police Service, the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service



(TTPrS) and the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF) has been launched to recapture him.

Investigators said they are actively pursuing numerous leads and assessing all information received regarding his possible whereabouts.

Police warned members of the public not to approach Khadoo, saying he should be considered armed and dangerous. Anyone with information on his whereabouts is urged to contact police immediately.

In a separate advisory is-

sued on Saturday, the TTPS reminded the public that knowingly harbouring, concealing or assisting an escaped prisoner is a serious criminal offence under the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.

Police said anyone who provides shelter, transportation, money, clothing, food or any other form of assistance to help the escapee evade capture could face criminal prosecution. The warning also extends to anyone who knowingly provides false information to investigators, conceals evidence or alerts the escapee to police operations.

“Harbouring a fugitive is not an act of loyalty—it is a criminal offence,” the TTPS said, urging anyone with knowledge of Khadoo’s whereabouts to report the information rather than assist him. (Trinidad Express)

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Wildfires rage in Portugal, Greece and Spain while Greek authorities warn of toxic smoke

Hundreds of firefighters battled wildfires in Portugal, Greece and Spain on Sunday, with Spain and Italy sending reinforcements to Portugal to help with a massive blaze burning for more than three days.

Authorities urged residents in parts of Thessaloniki, Greece's second largest city, to remain indoors and shut their windows and doors due to toxic smoke from a burning recycling plant that was engulfed by a wildfire.

Another major wildfire broke out Sunday afternoon west of the Greek capital, Athens. The fire department said 155 firefighters, backed up by volunteers, specialized teams, 16 water-dropping planes and six helicopters were deployed to battle the blaze burning through pine forest in the Mandra area.

In central Portugal's Vouzela area, more than 1,200 firefighters backed up by nearly 400 vehicles and 15 aircraft tried to put out a blaze that broke out on Thursday, according to the Civil Protection authority. The wildfire had burned across an area of 12,000 hectares (30,000 acres) by Sunday, information from the European Union's Copernicus satellite mapping agency showed.

The EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid said that Spain sent 120 firefighters and 45 vehicles as reinforcements to Portugal on Friday, while three firefighting aircraft from Italy and Spain were also dispatched to help.

By Sunday afternoon, the fire appeared to be abating somewhat, with Portuguese media quoting officials as saying it no longer had major active fronts but that some hot spots remained.

In Spain, a wildfire burning since Friday in the northeastern Girona region had burned nearly 2,200 hectares (5,400 acres), the EFE news agency said. Catalan Fire Service head of operations Eduard Martinez said the blaze had a perimeter of 40 kilometers (25 miles) and firefighters may not be able to bring it under control on Sunday, EFE said.

Trump touts America's 'golden age' and his political agenda in a July Fourth



speech roiled by severe weather

On the other side of southern Europe, in Greece, a fast-moving blaze at a recycling plant broke out Saturday evening near the Oraïokastro suburb of Thessaloniki, triggering evacuation alerts for three suburbs and a facility housing 157 people with disabilities.

Strong winds fanned the flames, and around 160 firefighters were deployed to battle the flames through the night until water-dropping aircraft could take off at dawn, the fire department said.

Oraïokastro Mayor Pandelis Tsakiris said on Greece's state broadcaster ERT that several businesses and homes were damaged but a clearer picture would emerge after authorities conduct a full evaluation.

A 76-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of having started the blaze through negligence by generating sparks with his vehicle that set vegetation near the road alight, the fire department said. He was due to appear before a prosecutor Sunday.

The fire came days after another wildfire in a nearby area killed a 12-year-old boy and his father.

Most fires in Greece caused by negligence, fire department says.

Fire department spokesman Brig. Ioannis Artopoios, speaking on ERT TV Sunday, said that about 85% of wildfires in Greece were caused by negligence, including through sparks generated through the use of agriculture machinery, discarded cigarettes and the use of outdoor barbecues. "This means most of them could have been avoided," he said.

Greece suffers frequent, often devastating, wildfires during its hot, dry summers. In 2018, a blaze east of Athens killed more than 100 people, while a massive fire in 2023, which tore through a remote nature reserve in northeastern Greece, was the largest wildfire recorded in the EU.

The country has increasingly turned to technology to combat the threat of fires, exacerbated by climate change. It is integrating an array of four satellites, launched into low orbit in May, that will monitor for wildfires.

So far this summer, Greece has been spared the heatwaves that have scorched much of western Europe in recent weeks. But it has still seen dozens of blazes across the country, both on the mainland and the country's islands. (AP)

Prosecutors to lay out their case against the man accused of killing Charlie Kirk

Charlie Kirk's widow and parents are expected this week in a Utah court where prosecutors seeking the death penalty will argue that the man charged with killing the conservative activist should stand trial for murder.

The five-day preliminary hearing that starts Monday will be the first time members of Kirk's family are in the Utah courtroom with defendant Tyler Robinson. The hearing will be livestreamed.

Robinson turned himself in after the shooting. Prosecutors allege that he also sent a text message confession to his partner and left a note saying he had an opportunity to kill one of the nation's leading conservative voices "and I'm going to take it."

He has not entered a plea in the case, however.

Robinson, 23, is charged with aggravated murder in the Sept. 10 assassination of Kirk, who was addressing a crowd of thousands at Utah Valley University. His attorneys have not commented on his guilt or innocence.

Months of legal jostling leading up to the hearing centered largely on media access. Beginning Monday, the focus shifts to whether there is enough evidence for a trial and if the death penalty is warranted, said Paul Cassell, a University of Utah law professor and former federal judge.

Cassell said evidence made public to date in court filings suggests prosecutors have "an overwhelming case."

"This seems like the proverbial slam dunk at this stage of the case, where the only issue is whether there is a sound basis for moving forward with a trial on the merits," he said.

A death sentence is an option in Utah only when a crime has aggravating circumstances. Prosecutors will argue in Robinson's case that Kirk's shooting endangered others in attendance.

The proceeding will resemble a mini-trial, with prosecutors planning to offer DNA evidence linking Robinson to the suspected murder weapon, testimony from investigators, autopsy findings, witness statements and video of Kirk's



killing. They are not required to present all their evidence and can use second-hand information, or hearsay.

After the hearing concludes, state District Judge Tony Graf must determine if the case should proceed.

Reporters and the public will be allowed to attend after Graf denied a defense request to restrict access.

Kirk's killing drew backlash from his Republican allies, including President Donald Trump, who first announced Robinson's arrest in a Sept. 12 interview on Fox News and said, "I hope he gets the death penalty."

This week prosecutors need only demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds to believe Robinson killed Kirk. The standard is lower than for a trial, where prosecutors have to prove guilt "beyond a reasonable doubt."

Authorities have said DNA consistent with Robinson's was found on the trigger of the rifle used to kill Kirk, the fired cartridge casing, two unfired cartridges and a towel used to wrap the rifle.

Robinson's parents had confronted him after authorities released a surveillance photo of the suspect and details about the rifle, authorities have said. His parents convinced him to meet with a family friend, who is a retired sheriff's deputy, who reportedly helped arrange for Robinson to turn himself in.

Prosecutors have said Robinson left a note for his roommate, who was also his

romantic partner, that read, "I had the opportunity to take out Charlie Kirk and I'm going to take it." They also said he wrote to his roommate in a text message about Kirk: "I had enough of his hatred. Some hate can't be negotiated out."

Defense attorneys unsuccessfully sought to block prosecutors from using recorded statements from Robinson's roommate during the hearing. The defense wanted the roommate to testify in person so Robinson could exercise his right challenge the credibility of witnesses against him. Graf said the time for challenging witnesses would come later.

Before his death, Kirk and the organization he co-founded, Turning Point USA, galvanized the conservative youth vote to help Trump win a second term.

His widow, Erika Kirk, who took the helm of the organization after his death, pushed to maintain public access to Robinson's prosecution when defense attorneys sought to exclude cameras from the courtroom. She forgave Robinson during her husband's memorial service.

She is expected in court throughout the week with her husband's parents, Robert and Kathryn Kirk, according to a person familiar with the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly. (AP)

The world's oceans are the hottest on record for June... and El Niño is set to turn up the heat even more



THE world's oceans are the hottest on record for June, pushing past records set during the 2023–24 El Niño years.

Right now, the average sea surface temperature is just under 21°C across the world's tropical and temperate oceans. Before widespread industrialisation in 1870, the temperature was about 19.6°C.

That may not sound like a big difference but heating the world's oceans this much requires a truly enormous amount of energy. Of all the extra heat trapped by greenhouse gases from burning coal, gas and oil, more than 90 per cent has gone into the world's oceans.

As a result, the oceans are getting rapidly warmer. In 2025 the heat added was the equivalent of about 12 Hiroshima-scale nuclear bombs exploding every second of every day.

To find a climate analogue compa-

rable to what's happening now in the oceans, we would have to go back around 120,000 years to before the last Ice Age. Back then, slow shifts in Earth's orbit led it to heat up gradually over thousands of years. Humans have accomplished a similar result in a little over a century.

But the heat in the ocean doesn't just stay there. Hotter oceans fuel stronger cyclones, a more humid atmosphere, more intense rainfall, and more heat in air masses over the seas — which can in turn make heatwaves over land more likely and more intense.

The El Niño forming in the tropical Pacific right now is likely to be a big one. As it develops, we can expect to see warmer temperatures and extreme events such as marine heatwaves in the western Indian, tropical Atlantic, and eastern Pacific Oceans.

Europe is sweltering through a record-breaking heatwave. The oceans

surrounding the region and in enclosed seas are also exceptionally hot.

Parts of the Mediterranean are up to 6°C hotter than the long-term average.

Parts of the North Sea are up to 3°C warmer than average.

The forming El Niño has led to sea surface temperatures about 1.24°C warmer than average across a large area of the central eastern Pacific.

There's much more heat below the surface as well. Sub-surface conditions in the eastern Pacific are more than 6°C above average.

A typical El Niño lasts about a year. The full effect on atmospheric heat becomes clearest towards the end of the cycle. That means while we can expect 2026 to be very hot — perhaps a new record — next year is very likely to be even hotter as ocean heat is moved back to the surface. We saw this during El Niño events over 2023–24 and

International

AROUND THE WORLD



2015–16.

Steady ocean warming coupled with longer-lasting and more intense marine heatwaves pose huge threats to marine ecosystems such as coral reefs, sea grass meadows, and coastal reefs. Research on the 2023–24 El Niño and the warm 2024 year showed widespread impacts.

What happens in the oceans doesn't stay there.

In June 2023 a record-breaking marine heatwave broke previous temperature records across the North Atlantic Ocean. Soon afterwards, large areas of Europe were hit by intense heatwaves while extreme rains triggered deadly floods in Spain and severe bushfires broke out around the Mediterranean.

Rising ocean temperatures have many consequences.

A warmer ocean is less able to cool the land over summer. Warmer oceans also lead to more evaporation, boosting humidity and fuelling more intense and more sudden extreme rain and floods. These can have devastating consequences.

During El Niño events there's a clear geographical pattern. The regions we expect to be warmer or cooler during

an El Niño roughly reflect where we are more or less likely to get marine heatwaves and more intense tropical cyclones.

Typical cyclone areas such as the western Indian Ocean could see stronger cyclones dumping heavier rainfall when they hit land. El Niño tends to bring extreme rain and floods to the western South America and dry conditions over parts of Australia and Southeast Asia.

We are gaining a better understanding of how big climate drivers like El Niño shape weather, and how to use ocean data from around the world to develop better seasonal forecasts authorities can use to prepare.

Over the past two years we have improved our ability to forecast marine heatwaves three to four months ahead in Australia, the United States, and other regions. Forecasts give marine authorities a chance to act early by reducing allowable fishery catches and beginning conservation efforts for vulnerable species.

This early success in ocean forecasting may be short-lived. The current US Administration last year slashed funding for climate data-gathering

networks and has worked to dismantle the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

This year, the Administration announced it would end funding for a key ocean monitoring network before backing down.

Ongoing collection of ocean data is crucial for ocean and land forecasts. If they are weakened or discontinued we could face the challenge of dealing with worsening climate impacts blind.

Ending the measuring of climate change won't stop it happening. The only way to keep climate change from steadily worsening is to reach net zero as soon as humanly possible. Until then, we must use forecasts to prepare for what we can't avoid.

Matthew England is director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Our Future Oceans and scientia professor in oceanography at UNSW Sydney. Alex Sen Gupta is associate professor in climate science, also at UNSW Sydney. Alistair Hobday is chief research scientist – environment at Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. The article was originally published on The Conversation. (Jamaica Observer)

DAILY PROGRAMMING

EARLY VIBRATIONS 6AM-10AM MON. - FRI.
WITH GREMSTA

THE RUSH HOUR SHOW 5PM-7PM MON. - FRI.
WITH ROGER LAKE
6AM-9AM SATURDAYS

TOUCHLINE 7PM-9PM MON. - THURS.
WITH EPILUS

BAD COMPANY 2PM-6PM THURS. 12PM-4PM SATURDAYS
LIVE FROM THE V.I. & 1PM-5PM ON SUNDAYS

REGGAE INSPIRATION 9PM-12AM MON. THURS. SUNDAY
WITH SELECTOR KEEGAN

JAH WADADLI 7PM-9PM FRIDAYS
WITH DJ JAH WADADLI

Antiguans beat St. Lucians in a friendly ahead of CONCACAF U-20 Men's Finals



Players of the Antigua and Barbuda under-20 men's national team during a break in a practice match in St. Lucia on Saturday, July 4, 2026. (File Photo)

The Antigua and Barbuda national team continued their preparation for the 2026 CONCACAF Under-20 Men's Finals in Mexico later this month with a victory in a practice match in St. Lucia on Saturday.

The 21-member squad, which left the island on Thursday, prevailed 3-0 over a combined under-17 and under-20 St. Lucia team in their latest warm-up match.

The goals were scored by Lauchland Thomas in the 74th minute and Brandon Satchell in the 85th and 89th minutes.

The team will continue their preparation with more practice matches ahead of representing Antigua and Barbuda in the 12-team CONCACAF tournament in Puebla, Mexico, from July 24 to August 9.

They will leave St. Lucia for Barbados, where they will stay overnight before departing for Panama to continue their preparation with two more prac-

tice matches. After completing their preparations in Panama, the Antiguan will depart for Mexico.

Antigua and Barbuda qualified for the finals by winning Group C of the 2026 CONCACAF Under-20 Men's Qualifying Championships in Costa Rica from February 23 to March 4.

The 2026 CONCACAF Under-20 Championship Finals include the six top-ranked nations that are pre-qualified directly for the tournament.

The six national teams pre-seeded in the championship are (in ranking order) the United States (1), Mexico (2), Honduras (3), Panama (4), Cuba (5), and Guatemala (6).

The championship will feature the region's 12 best men's under-20 national teams divided into three groups of four.

Antigua and Barbuda will contest Group B alongside Mexico, Guatemala, and Costa Rica. In Group A are

the United States of America, Cuba, El Salvador, and Haiti, while Group C will comprise Jamaica, Panama, Honduras, and Canada.

Antigua and Barbuda will contest group stage matches at the Estadio Cuauhtemoc in Puebla, Mexico, against hosts Mexico on July 24. The young Benna Boys will face Guatemala on July 27 and tackle Costa Rica in their final group stage match on July 30.

After round-robin play, the two top teams of each group and the two best third-place teams will advance to a knockout stage, comprised of the quarterfinals, semifinals, and final.

The tournament will also serve as the qualifying competition for both the 2027 FIFA Men's Under-20 World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympics.

In the previous edition of the CONCACAF Under-20 Championship, played in Mexico in 2024, Mexico won the title by defeating the United States 2-1 in the final.

Sports News



Titles for Swetes/Roman Hill and Potters Stingers in Village Netball League



The Swetes/Roman Hill team celebrate after capturing the mixed division title in the ABNA Village League at the Seatons Netball Court on Saturday, July 4, 2026. (Photos courtesy of the ABNA)

Swetes/Roman Hill and Potters Stingers have captured the titles in the Antigua and Barbuda Netball Association's (ABNA) Antigua Generators and Cool and Smooth Village League, which concluded at the Seatons Netball Court on Saturday night.

Roman Hill capped an unbeaten campaign, recording their fourth win in as many games, by prevailing 38-25 against Potters Defante Stingers in their final outing.

Akiel Hazelwood sank 30 of his 41 shots, and Jamila Fitz converted eight of her 15 attempts for Swetes/Roman Hill.

Molefi Joseph scored 17 of her 25 shots, Michael Burton made five of his eight tries, and Adina Andre converted three of her five attempts for the Potters Defante Stingers, who finished in third place after losing for the second time in their four matches.

Lamin Newton's All Saints United snatched a narrow 34-32 victory over Michael Joseph Gray's Green Flyballers in their final outing to clinch the runners-up spot in the mixed division.

Rayana Regis sank 21 of her 29 shots, and Anjis Anthony converted 13 of his 21 attempts for All Saints United, who finished their campaign with three wins and one defeat during their quota of four matches.

Krizia Duncan scored 17 of her 24 shots, and Kizzy Hughes sank 15 of her

26 attempts for the Flyballers, who finished winless and at the bottom of the standings in the five-team round-robin competition after losing all four matches.

Meanwhile, the Potters Stingers played unbeaten to clinch the female division title by prevailing 41-34 over Swetes/Roman Hill in a top-of-the-table clash in their final outing.

Adina Andre made 26 of her 35 attempts, and Tashana Bloomfield scored 15 of her 20 shots for the Potters Stingers, who finished at the top of the 10-team round-robin competition with a perfect nine wins from as many matches.

Everdine Parker-Barnard converted 22

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The Potters Stingers team celebrate after winning the female division title in the ABNA Village League at the Seatons Netball Court on Saturday, July 4, 2026.

of her 30 shots, and Jamila Fitz sank 12 of her 20 attempts, and for Swetes/Roman Hill, who claimed the runners-up spot after suffering their first and only defeat in the competition.

The Seatons Eastsiders finished in third place with a record of six wins, one tie, and two losses during their quota of nine matches.

Lamin Newton's All Saints United wrapped up their campaign by securing fourth place with their sixth win in nine matches with a 42-21 victory over Willikies in their final outing.

Azaliya Simon converted 30 of her 41 shots, and Paula Jackson scored 12 of her 20 attempts for All Saints United.

Summer Buckley sank 14 of her 16 shots, Alesha Roberts made four of her nine tries, and Sanchez Martin scored three of her eight attempts for Willikies, who finished their campaign third from the bottom of the standings with their seventh loss from their quota of nine matches.

Michael Joseph Gray's Green Flyballers finished in fifth place by recording their sixth win in their quota of nine matches with a 38-14 victory over Newfield in their final outing.

Krizia Duncan converted 24 of her 38 shots, and Wendy Ophelia sank 14 of her 19 attempts for Gray's Green Flyballers. Esther Emmanuel scored 10 of her 18 tries, and Judy-Ann Jarvis made three of her nine shots for Newfield, which fin-

ished in sixth place after losing for the fifth time in their nine matches.

The Gray's Green Flyballers also prevailed 23-12 against the Under-16 National Team in their penultimate match of the competition.

Krizia Duncan sank 11 of her 19 at-

tempts, Kizzy Hughes converted 10 of her 19 shots, and Shakea O'Garro made two of her nine tries for the Gray's Green Flyballers.

Tina Graham sank seven of her 14 attempts, and Deancia Lewis scored four of her 20 shots for the Under-16 National Team, which finished their campaign in seventh place with their sixth defeat during their quota of nine matches.

The outstanding teams and individuals were recognized during the awards and closing ceremony.

Everdine Parker-Barnard of Swetes/Roman Hill claimed the most goals award in the female division, while her teammate Akiel Hazelwood won the same accolade in the mixed division.

Tanya Green took the best defender award in the female division, while Marcus Cornelius claimed the same accolade in the mixed division.

The Under-16 National Team won the most disciplined team award. Safiya James of Willikies captured the league spirit award as well as the youngest player accolade. Olivet James of Willikies claimed the oldest player award.



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Antiguan swimmers off to PanAm Aquatics Swimming Championships

A nine-member team left the island on Friday to represent Antigua and Barbuda at the fifth PanAm Aquatics Swimming Championships in Colombia later this week.

The Antigua and Barbuda Swimming Federation (ABSF) announced a team of nine swimmers who will represent the nation at the event, which is taking place in Ibagué, Colombia, from July 8 to 12.

The Antiguan team includes Anya DeGannes and Willow

Zreibi, who will compete in the girls' 13 to 15 age group. Also included are Alessandro Bazzoni, Jamie Tranter, and N'Yriq Weste, who will be seeking top honours in the boys' 13 to 15 age group events.

The team also includes Reuben Edwards, Espriit Shaw, and Jai Sindhi, who will take part in competitions in the boys' 16 to 18 age group, and Tony Goodwin, who will contest events in the boys' 19 and over category.

Also attending the champion-

ships is Vipers Club swimmer Malique Josephs, who will compete in the boys' 13 to 15 age group contest.

The Antigua and Barbuda swimming team is being led by Head Coach Wayne Mitchell, Team Manager Anna Salerno-Mitchell, and Chaperone Daniela Casmiro.

The ABSF is encouraging the nation to rally behind the athletes as they compete against the best young swimmers from across the Americas.



Members of the Antigua and Barbuda team for the fifth PanAm Aquatics Swimming Championships in Colombia from July 8 to 12. (Photo courtesy of the ABSF)



Blackhawks dethrone Rising Sun to capture Thursday League T20 title

The PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks have dethroned back-to-back winners Rising Sun to become the new champions of the Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League Sir Vivian Richards Thursday League T20 competition.

The Blackhawks won their first Parish League title for the season by pulling off a 32-run victory against Rising Sun, who won the contest during the previous two years, in the 2026 final at the Rising Sun playing field in St. John's on Thursday.

The Liberta Blackhawks made 256 for five off their 20 overs after winning the toss and opting to bat.

All-rounder Rahkeem "Jimbo" Cornwall smashed 77, and Bartlette Henry struck 69. Andra Samuel captured three for 56.

In reply, Rising Sun fell short in their challenge as they were re-

stricted to 227 for seven off their 20 overs.

Demari Benta led the way with an unbeaten 83, Jewel Andrew struck 46, and young Kerry Mentore chipped in with 29. Left-arm spinner Karima Gore claimed three for 28.

The Liberta Blackhawks are still in contention for a second title in the current Parish League domestic season.

The Blackhawks are currently battling for top honours in the Dave Joseph limited overs contest, which is the last of the four competitions in the 2026 Parish League season.

Police beat the Liberta Blackhawks in the final to win the Curtly Ambrose limited overs title, while Mahico won this year's Sir Richie Richardson limited overs championship.

Meanwhile, Rackaman Construc-

tion Strictly Business have continued their winning run in their campaign in the Antigua and Barbuda Softball Cricket Association's (ABSCA) WTP 93.5 FM and Chet Greene T20 Championships.

Strictly Business made it three wins in a row by pulling off a seven-wicket victory over Goody's Advent 300 at the Clare Hall playing field in their latest outing.

Batting first, 300 was restricted to 60 for nine off their 20 overs. Andra Samuel struck 14, and Bryan Burton scored 13. Arthur Crogman bagged two for 14, and Melvin Charles claimed two for 16.

Strictly Business achieved victory by scoring 61 for three in 18 overs. Player of the match Kim George slammed an unbeaten 35 as 300 crashed to their third defeat in as many encounters.

Success for Antigua athletes at ANOCES championships in St. Kitts



Geolyna Dowdye

Several of Antigua and Barbuda's athletes achieved success at the 2026 Association of National Olympic Committees of the Eastern Caribbean (ANOCES) Track and Field Championships in St. Kitts over the weekend.

Sprinter Geolyna Dowdye secured the first gold medal for Antigua and Barbuda at the two-day event at the Kim Collins Stadium in Basseterre.

Dowdye established a new Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) record to claim gold in winning the women's 200-meter final in a time of 23.28 seconds.

The Antiguan sprinter erased the previous record of 23.30 seconds that was established by Tahesia Harrigan Scot of the British Virgin Islands on July 2, 2017.

Antigua and Barbuda's CARIFTA silver medalist Zonique Charles also set a new national record in finishing second in the women's javelin.

Charles threw a distance of 42.92



Zonique Charles

meters to break the old record of 41.11 meters, which was held by Amanda Edwards. Edwards' record was established in 2007 at the CARIFTA Games in the Turks and Caicos Islands, where she claimed a silver medal.

Edwards finished second in Saturday's women's javelin final, which was won by Suerena Alexander of Grenada with a throw of 48.51 meters. Naya Jules of St. Lucia took bronze with an effort of 41.98 meters.

Christopher Johnson also secured a silver medal for Antigua and Barbuda by finishing second in the men's shot put final. Johnson claimed silver with a throw of 16.31 meters.

The British Virgin Islands athletes secured a double-podium finish in the men's shot put final. Djimon Gumbs won the gold medal with a new meet record of 19.01 meters, while his twin brother Diamante Gumbs claimed the bronze with a throw of 15.55 meters.



Christopher Johnson

Antigua and Barbuda also copped two medals in the men's 200-meter final. Jalen Dyett and Kadeem Campbell capture silver and bronze, respectively, in the event.

Dyett posted a time of 20.94 seconds to finish second, while Campbell clocked 21.11 seconds to secure third place. Wanyae Belle of the British Virgin Islands won the men's 200-meter title in a time of 20.67 seconds.

Antigua and Barbuda's athletes also celebrated success by winning the bronze medal in the men's 4x100-meter relay final.

The Antigua team, comprising Amori Jules, Jalen Dyett, Terrance Thomas, and Kadeem Campbell, finished third in a time of 40.68 seconds.

The men's 4x100-meter relay final was won by the British Virgin Islands in 39.97 seconds, while St. Vincent and the Grenadines took silver by clocking 40.07 seconds.