

Prime Minister Browne Calls for Bold Regional Action to Transform ECCU Economies

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L-R Commonwealth Secretary-General, Shirley Botchwey, Former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark, High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom, Karen-Mae Hil and High Commissioner of Canada to the United Kingdom Bill Blair

Prime Minister Browne Calls for Bold Regional Action to Transform ECCU Economies



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, the Rt. Hon. Gaston Browne, has called for a new era of bold regional action to transform the economies of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU), urging Member States to convert decades of monetary stability into greater prosperity, expanded ownership opportunities and sustainable wealth creation for the people of the Eastern Caribbean.

Prime Minister Browne delivered the address as he presented his report at the Meeting of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) Monetary Council in Dominica, marking the conclusion of his tenure as Chairman of the Council.

Reflecting on his year as Chairman, Prime Minister Browne said the Currency Union had successfully navigated a period marked by geopolitical uncertainty, inflationary pressures, volatile energy markets and shifting global trade dynamics while preserving macroeconomic stability and strengthening the foundations for future growth.

“I am pleased to report that, through sound leadership, prudent policy and

unwavering regional cooperation, our Currency Union has remained stable, resilient and well-positioned for future growth,” the Prime Minister stated.

He noted that despite significant global headwinds, the economies of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union demonstrated remarkable resilience, recording estimated economic growth of 3.3 percent during 2025. Antigua and Barbuda also achieved growth of more than three percent, driven largely by significant investments in road infrastructure and the continued expansion and modernization of the V.C. Bird International Airport.

Prime Minister Browne observed that while these achievements were encouraging, regional leaders must now focus on translating economic resilience into lasting prosperity.

“Our challenge now is to transform that resilience into greater prosperity, stronger institutions and expanded opportunities, including ownership and earning opportunities for our people. Our people must be positioned to control the commanding heights of

the economies of our respective countries,” he declared.

The Prime Minister also reflected on one of the Eastern Caribbean’s most significant monetary achievements—the fiftieth anniversary of the fixed exchange rate of EC\$2.70 to US\$1.00.

Describing the exchange rate as one of the world’s most enduring and successful monetary arrangements, he said its longevity reflected decades of prudent monetary management, fiscal discipline and unwavering commitment to regional integration.

He further welcomed the unveiling of a new family of EC banknotes commemorating the historic milestone and praised the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank for its continued stewardship of the regional financial system.

Prime Minister Browne also commended ECCB Governor Timothy Antoine and the Bank’s management team for delivering a profit of EC\$121.6 million during the 2025/2026 financial year, describing the achievement as evidence of prudent financial management that will allow for greater returns to Member Governments.

The Prime Minister noted that the banking sector continues to remain highly liquid, with excess liquidity exceeding EC\$1.3 billion, while more than 300 businesses have already benefited from financing through the Partial Credit Guarantee Corporation.

He encouraged commercial banks to make greater use of the programme by extending more favourable lending terms to small and medium-sized businesses, arguing that increased access to affordable capital would stimulate entrepreneurship, expand regional production and create new employment opportunities throughout the Currency Union.

IRD Records Big Increase In Revenue Collections This Year

The Inland Revenue Department collected 38 million dollars more as at June 30th 2026 when compared to the same period in 2025.

When comparing the first half revenue performance over the past two years, it is quite evident that revenue collection continues to improve.

During the first half of each year, the department collected \$290.2 million in 2024, \$339.9 million in 2025 and 377.9 million in 2026.

This increase in revenue collection in 2026 is due to legal action taken against taxpayers, increase audit activity, arrears collection activity and increase efficiency in tax operation which led to improve compliance in filing and tax payment by taxpayers.



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Officials Urge Cooperation, Understanding For Exercise Stronghold Day 2

Security forces and other stakeholders have set aside the first half of Friday to implement Day 2 of Exercise Stronghold, the pre-CHOGM event designed to test the country's overall state of readiness ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November.

A spokesman acknowledged that while there will be disruptions to the normal operations of many businesses, especially those in the Red Zone, the exercise is critical to the advanced planning necessary for hosting such a major event.

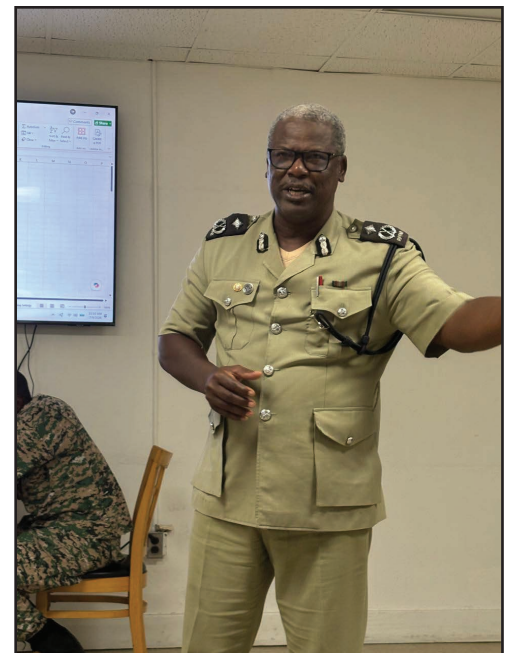
"We have had meetings with organisations such as the Antigua Chamber of Industry and Commerce and other stakeholders within the affected areas asking for their patience and understanding as we undertake this exercise," the spokesman stated.

Over the past two weeks, teams from the security forces traversed homes and businesses in the Red Zone explaining the purpose of the exercise and solicited their cooperation and support for the success of the venture. They also engaged in a series of media outreach activities to help sensitise the public on the exercise as well as its value to the planning process.

Chair of the National CHOGM Task Force and Foreign Minister, E.P Chet Greene issued a statement where he too called for the support for Exercise Stronghold by members of the public.

"To the public, I extend my sincere gratitude. Your cooperation and patience are indispensable to the success of this exercise. Your participation demonstrates the 'all-of-country' support that defines us as a people and signals to the world our collective readiness to host this global event.

"We fully anticipate and sincerely apologize for any inconveniences to your daily routines; be it traffic delays or restricted access. Please understand



that these temporary adjustments are necessary. Proper and effective planning is the only path to ensuring the safety of our international guests and our own people and the overall success of the event," Minister Greene emphasized.

On Thursday, the security forces and stakeholders met to review the staging of Day 1 of Exercise Stronghold held on Wednesday which was implement-

ed with a 'soft-lockdown' and to plan for a more extensive 'hard-lockdown' slated to take place on Friday.

No one without accreditation will be allowed within the security or Red Zone for the duration of the exercise. There will also be firm restrictions on both vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the Red Zone during the exercise.

Commonwealth Secretariat Hosts Discussion on Small States Ahead of CHOGM 26 in Antigua and Barbuda

The Commonwealth Secretariat in London hosted a discussion on small states as the grouping of 56 nations, many of which are small states, prepares for its next meeting of Heads of Government slated for Antigua and Barbuda from November 1 to 4.

Former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark, High Commissioner of Canada to the United Kingdom Bill Blair, joined the Commonwealth Secretariat as guests for a Marlborough House Conversation in the lead up to CHOGM 2026.

Small states must be given the space to help build a fairer, revitalised international system, the **former Prime Minister Helen Clark**, said Thursday at a Marlborough House Conversation hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat on the question: *‘What space is there for Commonwealth small states in a multipolar world where middle powers are also increasingly assertive?’*

The **Commonwealth Secretary-General, Shirley Botchwey**, opened the event, welcoming Ms Clark back to the Commonwealth family and setting out her determination that the Commonwealth will be an instrument for the transformation of its small states.

Speaking at the event, **Secretary-General Botchwey** said, “We must change the narrative around small states. We cannot speak only of vulnerability. Commonwealth small states are often the clearest voices in global affairs: they understand interdependence because they live it. In the Commonwealth, 56 nations, large and small, developed and developing, island and continental, speak with an equal voice. That is not a procedural detail; it is a political principle. Our task now is to turn that principle into



influence, and I am determined that the Commonwealth will be an instrument for the transformation of its small states.”

The Conversation was moderated by **High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom, Karen-Mae Hill**, who assumes the role of Commonwealth Chair-in-Office.

“As Antigua and Barbuda prepares to welcome Commonwealth leaders to CHOGM 2026, this conversation could not be more timely. Small states are not asking for a seat at the margins of a new world order; we are asserting our place at its heart. I look forward to a time when the contribution of small states to multilateralism is fully recognised and supported, building on the Commonwealth’s decades of championing the voices of small states,” High Commissioner Hill stated.

Small states are a vital part of the Commonwealth, accounting for 33 of its 56 member countries. During

Thursday’s panel, the speakers noted that while the current multilateral system has served the world for decades, it is under growing strain. Institutions designed for a different age are struggling, cooperation is in retreat, climate impacts fall heaviest on those least responsible, and many countries feel that decisions affecting their futures are taken elsewhere. Yet the contribution of small states to multilateral engagement is often disproportionately high relative to their size, particularly on climate, ocean and environmental action.

The Marlborough House Conversation forms part of the Commonwealth Secretariat’s programme of dialogue in the lead up to CHOGM 2026, hosted by Antigua and Barbuda in November under the theme ‘Accelerating Partnerships and Investment for a Prosperous Commonwealth’, bringing together leaders from across the Commonwealth to deliver shared prosperity for its 2.7 billion people.

PM Browne reflects on Antigua and Barbuda's Historic First Nomination for United Nations Secretary General

Following the successful conclusion of the CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in Saint Lucia, I reflect with immense pride on a truly historic moment for Antigua and Barbuda. For the first time since achieving Independence, our nation has put forward a candidate for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations—a significant expression of our confidence, our diplomacy, and our growing role in global affairs.

Antigua and Barbuda is deeply honoured to nominate and fully endorse H.E. María Fernanda Espinosa for this distinguished office. Her exceptional record of leadership, unwavering commitment to multilateralism, and proven advocacy for sustainable development, climate resilience, gender equality, and the interests of Small Island Developing States make her uniquely qualified to lead the United Nations at this critical juncture. We are confident that she possesses the vision, experience, and integrity required to guide the Organisation through the complex challenges of our time.

I am equally pleased that CARICOM is represented by two highly accomplished candidates for this important office. Their candidacies reflect the depth of talent, principled leadership, and international credibility that continue to emerge from our Caribbean Community.

As the global community prepares to select the next Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antigua and Barbuda will continue to champion a more inclusive, responsive, and representative multilateral system—one in which the voices of all nations, regardless of size or economic power, are heard, respected, and reflected in global decision-making. We are proud to have nominated a candidate who embodies those ideals and who is exceptionally well placed to lead the United Nations into its next chapter.



Prime Minister Gaston Browne (left) and HE Maria` Fernanda Espinosa


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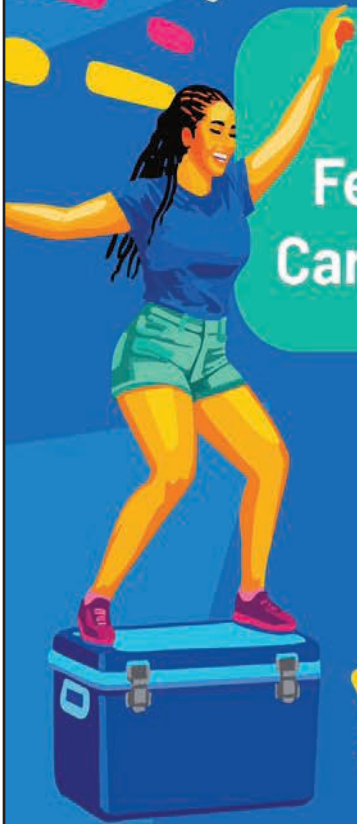
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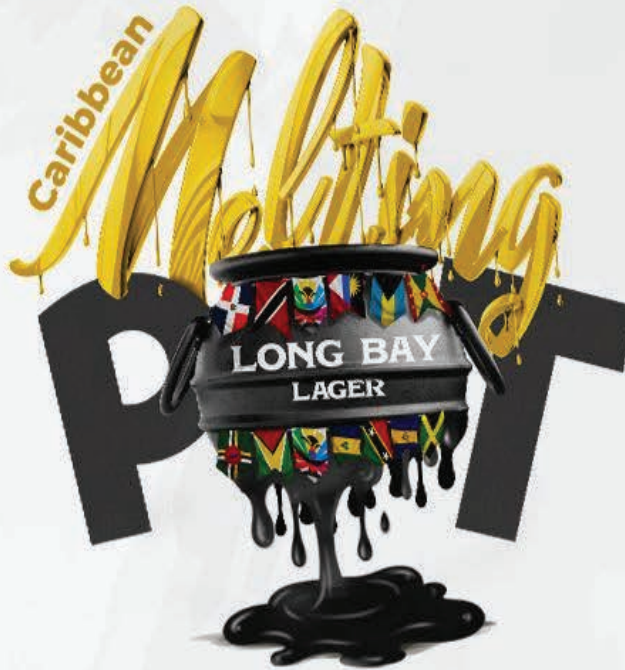




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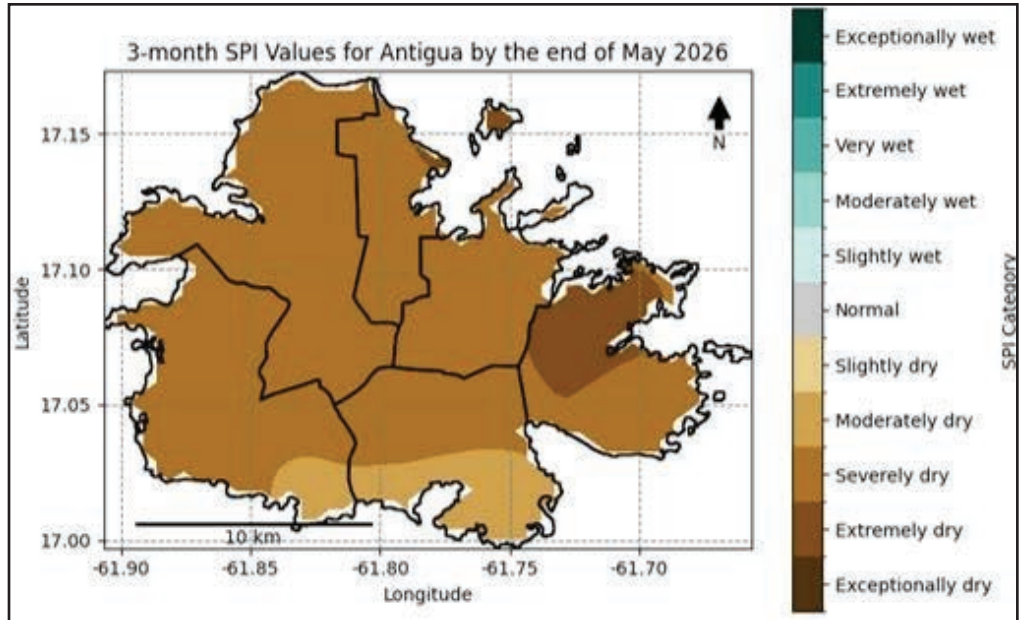
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Local News



Dry Spell Set to Deepen Across Antigua and Barbuda



Antigua and Barbuda could experience one of its driest years in recent memory, with climatologist Dale Destin warning that drought conditions are expected to persist—and potentially worsen—as 2026 progresses.

In a post on his 268Weather blog, Destin said the latest climate forecasts point to a strong likelihood of below-normal rainfall throughout the year, raising concerns about water security, agriculture, and the country’s overall resilience to prolonged dry conditions.

“The message from the forecast is clear: 2026 is shaping up to be a dry year, with drought conditions expected to persist and likely intensify as the year progresses,” Destin wrote.

According to him, the outlook is being driven largely by the influence of El Niño, which is expected to reduce

rainfall during the traditional wet season. As a result, the rainy season is forecast to underperform, much like the dry season already has.

Destin cautioned that the anticipated lack of rainfall leaves little room for complacency and stressed that careful management of the country’s water resources will be essential in the months ahead.

He noted that continued reliance on reverse osmosis plants, prudent water use, and proactive planning will be vital to mitigating the effects of prolonged dry weather. He also encouraged residents and businesses to reduce their water consumption, arguing that lowering the nation’s overall water footprint would deliver both economic and social benefits.

The warning comes as Antigua and Barbuda continues to depend heavily

on desalination to supplement its water supply, particularly during extended periods of drought.

While acknowledging that all weather forecasts carry some degree of uncertainty, Destin said the current climate signals are strong enough to justify immediate action rather than waiting for conditions to deteriorate.

He urged government agencies, farmers, businesses, and households to begin preparing now to lessen the potential impacts of what could become a significant drought year.

Dale Destin concluded with a reminder that water conservation should remain a constant priority despite seasonal forecasts.

“Regardless of the forecast, we all need to conserve water and use it as efficiently as possible, all the time,” he said.



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Police Welfare Association Seeks Urgent Help for Injured Senior Sergeant

The Police Welfare Association has issued an emotional public appeal for urgent intervention to secure overseas medical treatment for Senior Sergeant Jeffery Benjamin, warning that delays could cost the veteran police officer his right leg.

Benjamin remains hospitalised at Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre after he was struck by a truck while walking along Valley Road last Friday evening. Reports are the vehicle was being driven by a 19-year-old man.

The senior law enforcement officer sustained severe injuries to his right leg that colleagues say require specialised treatment that is unavailable in Antigua and Barbuda. They are urging the authorities to facilitate his transfer to Martinique, where the necessary medical care is available.

On Thursday morning, members of the Police Welfare Association and fellow officers gathered outside Police Headquarters on American Road in a public show of solidarity, calling for swift action before Benjamin's condition worsens.

Vice Chairman of the Police Welfare Association, Constable Stacey Thom-



as, made an emotional plea for assistance from anyone in a position to help.

"Whatever assistance, whoever can step in, use their position—whatever assistance that can be offered to Mr. Benjamin at this moment—we need somebody to step up with us and fight for him to get that medical assistance," Thomas said.

She stressed that officers do not want amputation to become the first option if there is still a chance to save Benjamin's leg through advanced treatment.

"We don't want to hear the first option is to chop his leg. That is going to change his life drastically forever," Thomas said, adding that losing the limb could have devastating physical and emotional consequences.

Thomas described Benjamin as a highly respected and dedicated member of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), noting that the outpouring of support from fellow officers reflects the esteem in which he is held.

"Everybody is saying he deserves that opportunity to get his leg saved," he said. "It is hurting every single one of us standing here today."

According to Thomas, many officers have been deeply affected by Benjamin's ordeal, with some admitting they had spent the night in tears.

"That is because of the personality of who Mr. Benjamin is, and he's a very hard worker in the CID department," he said.

The Police Welfare Association is now appealing to the Government, health officials, and anyone capable of assisting to act without delay to ensure Benjamin receives the specialist treatment he needs.






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Sir Wright George Police Academy to Mark 50th Graduation Ceremony



The Sir Wright George Police Academy will mark a major milestone when it graduates its 50th cohort of new police officers next Thursday.

“The ceremony marks a significant milestone in the careers of the graduating recruits as they officially join the ranks of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda after successfully completing their basic police training,” a correspondence from the Office

of the Commissioner of Police to media organisations requesting coverage stated.

Commissioner of Police Mr. Everton Jeffers, KPM, encourages members of the media to be present as the organization celebrates the achievements of its newest officers and welcomes them into the policing profession.

Office of the Commissioner of Police extends a cordial invitation to all

members of the media to attend and provide coverage of the 50th Police Recruit Graduation Ceremony, which will be held on Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Sir Wright F. George Police Academy, Langfords.

The Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda says it is appreciative of the partnerships it continues to build for media organisations across Antigua and Barbuda.

Meanwhile, Government House is announced that three individuals – two police officers and a retired public servant will be presented with insignias next week.

During these ceremonies, the Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, will present insignia on behalf of His Majesty the King on the following distinguished recipients:

- ▶ **Tuesday, 14 July 2026, at 10:00 a.m. – Mr. Cordel Eden Alexander Josiah, OBE**
- ▶ **Tuesday, 14 July 2026, at 2:00 p.m. – Mr. Glenroy Everton Jeffers, KPM**
- ▶ **Wednesday, 15 July 2026, at 10:00 a.m. – Assistant Commissioner of Police Desmond Dinard, KPM**



Cost Pro Closes Abruptly...Union To Meet With Staff Today

Members of staff of Cost Pro supermarket are today seeking answers regarding their future after receiving termination letters last evening (Thursday).

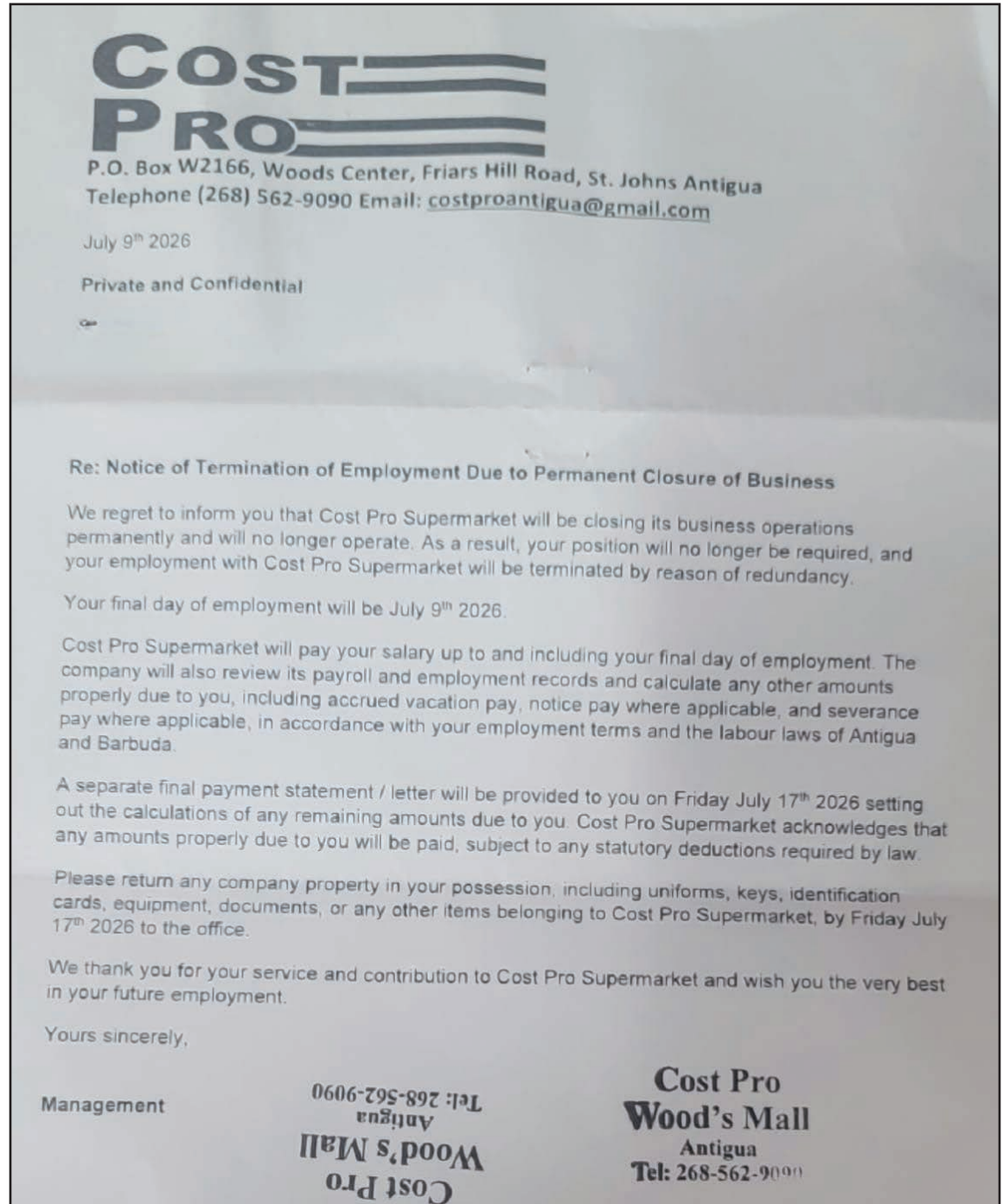
Reports are that at approximately 6:00 pm, the staff were informed of the immediate closure of the supermarket.

The news came as a shock to both staff and customers who were in the supermarket at the time.

An unsigned letter on the company's letterhead was circulated to the staff but except for that there was no other form of communication with the staff.

The staff reached out to their bargaining agent, the Antigua and Barbuda Workers Union which is convening a meeting today (Friday) to discuss matters such as compensation and other legally required payments. Some staff members have been with the company since it commenced operations in the Woods Mall nine years ago.

There are reports that the union was one week away from taking over representation for supervisory staff as well.




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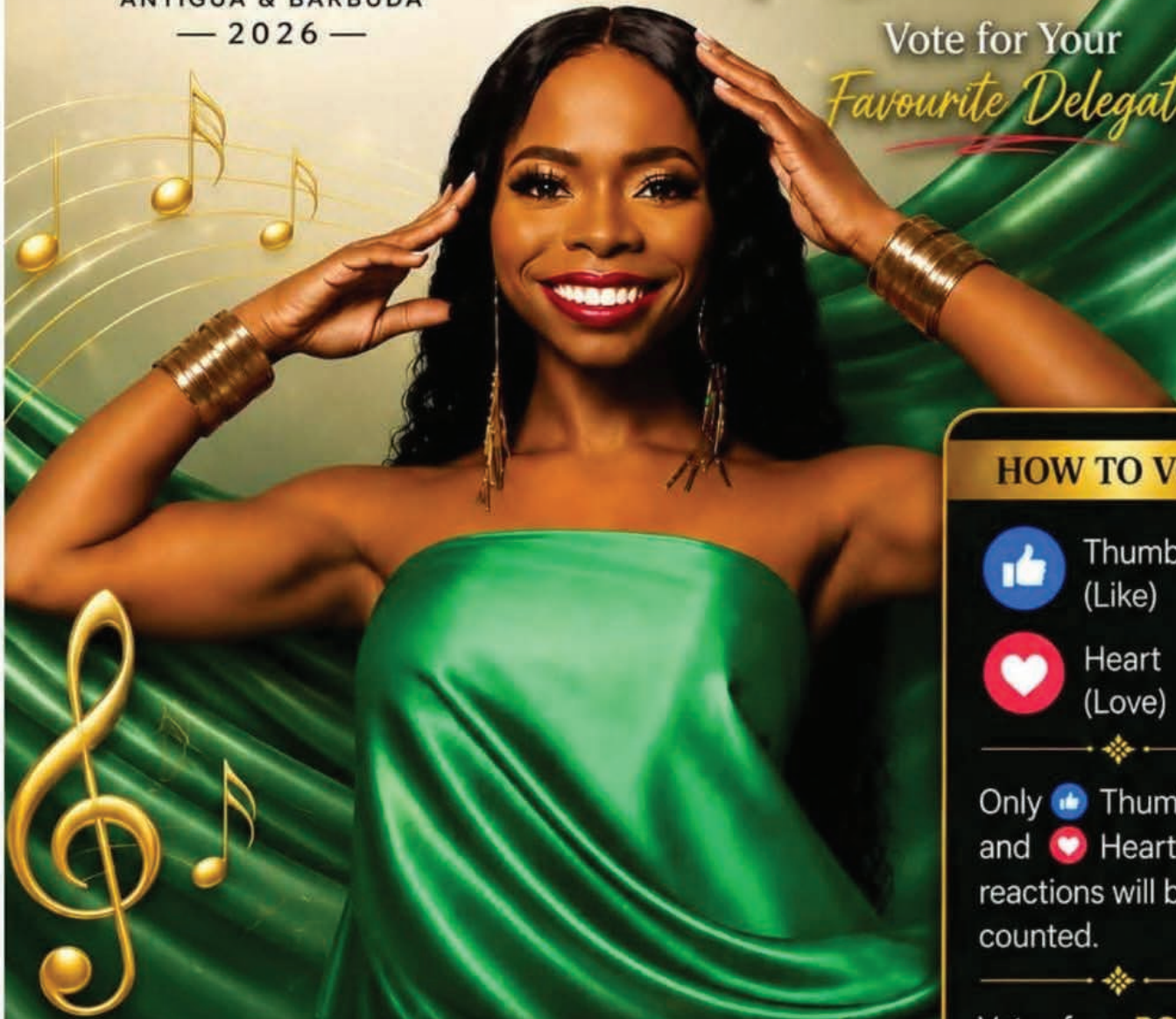
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Chronicles of suffocation: when life turns to gloom

While darkness spreads through the imperial siege imposed upon us, millions remain, without cheap philosophies, relying solely on what they have. That is the light that, against all odds, still burns bright.

Published: Saturday July 4, 2026 | 10:05:07 pm.

Updated : Sunday July 5, 2026 | 11:51:32 am.

Author:



Osviel Castro Medel
digital@juventudrebelde.cu

Despite everything that makes United States the world's greatest power, Cuba resists. **Published:** 04/07/2026 | 10:03 pm

It's difficult to write these lines because I'm living them firsthand. Because they hurt as I relive that November night in 2025 when Viola, groping her way along, fell and fractured her left hip. Since then, the night seeps in through the windows and settles into her 91-year-old body, growing ever thicker and more tormenting.

Her granddaughter Gisela cares for her with unwavering devotion. Every night I see her bustling about with her, carrying her to bed, ready to assist her with her needs, and I can't help but nod my head in a mixture of shock and admiration. I watch her open the windows and the door to let a sliver of light into her grandmother's room, but when the lamp goes out, worn out from overuse, the poor old woman is overcome by a flood of anxieties and fears.

Nyctophobia, they call it scientifically. Fear of the dark. But deep down I know it's not a textbook diagnosis: Viola isn't so much afraid of the night as she is of feeling trapped in it, unable to move, unable to escape the heat and the increasingly noisy, "elephantine

mosquitoes".

"I was born and raised in the mountains in an area without electricity. Later, I got used to having electricity, and now I'm tormented every time it's out. I don't want to be causing people so much trouble, but you see," she says, speaking from the bottom of his heart. Then she utters a tremendous expression: "Since this situation worsened, I can't sleep."

Her words resonate, they sink in, they make me think of other human beings with similar stories or with more dramatic undertones; of people who are bedridden and whose families see them shrinking not only due to lack of light.

Heat in the sun

The phrase "since things got tough" keeps going around in my head, and I understand that it refers to the deterioration of our living conditions, which are linked to well-known external sanctions, although some people do not want to see them.

Listening to her, I also think of one of my aunts who lives alone, 82 years old and suffering from rheumatic fever. She, who still manages to sew the odd piece to stretch her budget, doesn't get much rest either, plagued by pain and discomfort.

"A few months ago we would go 17 or 18 hours without electricity. Now we're already at 52. I've had to put yesterday's food in the sun to heat it up because I haven't found any other way, son," he tells me with moist eyes.

Out in the sun! Good heavens. Every word she utters weighs like a stone. And the suffocation against Cuba isn't just a concept: it's fragments of stories from different parts of the country that are suffering and need to be told without romanticizing them.

When the milk curdles and the phone doesn't ring

At the end of this school year, I saw children in my neighborhood, even in my own home, doing their final projects by moonlight. María Victoria started her Spanish Language project under a rechargeable lamp and finished it illuminated by nature.

I watched her squint to read the blurry letters, and more than once I wondered how long I'd have to watch her struggle against the darkness to complete her homework. Luckily, so far she seems to value this kind of dim studying, but... what did others think? Will they be able to endure it?

My four-year-old son, Victor, won't be able to understand what energy deficit, blackout, or blockage means. Much less will he be able to understand why his milk has often been curdled in the mornings, forcing him to go to his daycare with very little in his stomach.

I know that breaks my heart, as I imagine it does for countless parents across our country.

In this situation, every day I think especially of my mother, who lives in a village called Cautillo Merendero and has had to cook with firewood, coal, cardboard... with the unthinkable.

"A can of charcoal is already 700 pesos and up," she tells me. Then I reflect on how just a few months ago it cost half that. What will happen tomorrow if prices keep rising? Will the day come when charcoal becomes a luxury that even the most needy can't afford, and then my mother will have to find another way to light the fire that warms her food and her life?

What torments me most is that when there's no electricity, I can't hear from her. The landlines go down, the cell phones lose signal, the connection disappears. And I can't rest easy knowing that she, at almost 80 years old, has to light a fire as night closes in around her. That uncertainty of not having any

news is an anguish that can't be measured, described, or told.

And then I think of all those who, like me, have a loved one in a remote place, without electricity and without answers. I think of the mothers who can't call their children, of that web of silence that spreads every time the light goes out and communication breaks down.

Running in the hospital

My eldest daughter, Mónica, is in her fourth year of medical school. She's already witnessed those chaotic scenes at the hospital when the power goes out. It's true there's a generator that kicks in quickly, but the tension grips everyone in the wards with children in incubators or in the intensive care units.

She told me how doctors improvise with flashlights and phones, how mothers squeeze their children's hands when a monitor goes dark. "You feel so small, Dad," she says, "so small and so powerless." And I listen to her, and I know she's not just talking about her own experience, but about that of everyone who works in healthcare, everyone who has seen how darkness also seeps in where there should always be light.

Inevitably, a blackout also represents the absence of certainty, control, and joy. It's the moment when a mother wonders if her child will survive, if the power will return in time, if the doctors' hands will be quick enough to keep him alive while the world seems to crumble around her.

President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez has made it perfectly clear: "The blackout is not just a problem of megawatts or a generation deficit. The blackout is the child who couldn't study for the test; the food that spoiled in the refrigerator; the elderly person who spends the night awake, without rest, and in the heat. It's the hospital working at its limit, the doctor's office that can't store medicine, the worker who loses a day's work, and the business that has to close. That's why ener-

gy isn't a technical issue: it's a human, economic, and national issue."

Epilogue

If I've shared these personal stories now, it's because they reflect so many others, because each of these names could be that of any Cuban, because the suffocation doesn't discriminate between families or neighborhoods. I write so that it's not forgotten that the blackout isn't just a number on a spreadsheet, but an open wound in the heart of a people who refuse to stop beating.

When the night grows long and the electricity fails, each of them lights whatever they can: a candle, a flashlight, a phone with a dying battery, the moon illuminating the children's homework, the anger that sometimes transforms into strength. And as darkness spreads, the vast majority remain, resisting as best they can, uncomfortable yet resolute. Millions remain, without empty philosophies, relying solely on what they have. That is the light that, against all odds, still burns bright.

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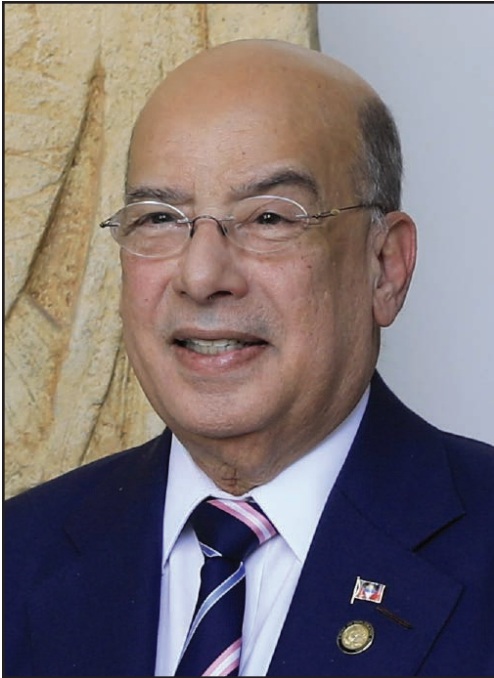
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The Vulgarity of Asking the Enslaved to Pay



By Sir Ronald Sanders

Suella Braverman is a former Conservative Party British government minister who turned coat and is now a vocal member of the farright political party, Reform. She is the child of Indian parents from Mauritius and Kenya, yet, like many other ultraambitious British politicians, she has consistently distinguished herself by remarks that are unhelpful to immigrants and to developing countries.

Her latest claim is that Britain's former colonies should pay reparations to Britain. It is a claim that is historically illiterate, morally offensive and politically revealing.

It takes some nerve, in the year 2026, for a British politician to look at the Caribbean's renewed call for reparations for slavery and conclude that the obligation runs in reverse. Yet Braverman has argued that, if the British government is seriously thinking about reparations, then former colonies should pay Britain back for the "investment, effort and contribution" that laid the foundations for "many flourishing democracies today", and that expecting twentyfirst century Britons to pay for

eighteenthcentury actions has no legal basis. It is a neat inversion that will flatter an audience which prefers imperial nostalgia to historical truth, but it collapses once we look honestly at the legacy of empire in the Caribbean.

As far back as 2013, in a debate with the late Lord Carrington, organised by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, I described that legacy as mixed – some aspects good, many bad, and one in particular ugly. There are indeed "good" legacies. English has become the language of international commerce, and the Englishspeaking Caribbean has benefitted from that in global transactions. The institutional inheritance of legal and judicial systems, and of written constitutions based on the rule of law, has also had value, even though those institutions were originally designed to serve Britain's interests rather than our own.

Education is another positive element. Missionaryled basic education ensured early literacy in English, and in 1948 the University College of the West Indies was established in Jamaica, widening opportunities for Caribbean nationals to take over from British colonial civil servants and preparing them for the challenges of independence. That narrow but solid education has helped a region of some five million people to produce Nobel laureates and to send its citizens into senior roles in international organisations entirely out of proportion to its size. These are genuine gains, even if they arrived late and were not matched by comparable investment in industry and infrastructure.

Yet it is when we turn to the "bad" and "ugly" legacies that Braverman's talk of British "investment" begins to sound like a grim joke. For three hundred years Britain organised Caribbean economies around one crop – sugar – and later bananas, for the benefit of British conglomerates. Production

was based on low wages and poor conditions, and while British companies enjoyed preferences in the United Kingdom and later Europe, Caribbean workers remained trapped in poverty. In all that time, Britain did not bring development to the Caribbean; it brought wealth extraction.

Caribbean efforts after independence to diversify their economies have been hobbled by missing infrastructure and poor transportation links. There are still no direct links between the Caribbean and Africa, and few to neighbouring Latin America, because the colonial model routed everything through Britain, with added costs that made trade difficult and expensive. Today's shortages of productive capital, structural unemployment, trade and balanceofpayments deficits, and high levels of debt across the region are not accidents of geography but products of a historical pattern of exploitation. To rebrand this record as "investment" is to confuse the plantation ledger with a development plan.

The abandonment of the West Indies Federation and the offer of independence to individual territories locked in place a fragmented Caribbean of small, vulnerable states, each struggling without economies of scale and with little bargaining capacity. That, too, is part of the "effort and contribution" which Braverman now wishes us to repay.

The truly ugly legacy lies in slavery and indentured labour. African slavery and East Indian indentured labour provided the cheap production that fed Britain's growth for centuries. When slavery was abolished in the Englishspeaking Caribbean in 1838, British slave owners were compensated lavishly for the emancipation of their "property" – some 655,780 human beings of African descent. In today's terms, that compensation runs into billions of pounds. The freed slaves re-

ceived nothing for their dehumanisation, their cruel treatment, their stolen labour and the plain injustice of their enslavement.

Those payments are woven into the foundations of major banks such as Barclays, Lloyds and the Royal Bank of Scotland, and into the fortunes of prominent British families. This was not “investment” in Caribbean development. It was investment in British power and British wealth.

Most remarkably, the British state decided that slave owners deserved compensation while the enslaved deserved nothing. The government borrowed £20 million – about 40 per cent of national income at the time – to finance those payments, and the debt was only finally paid off in 2015. Generations of British taxpayers, including those of the twentyfirst century, have honoured the obligation to slave owners, yet Braverman insists that there is no legal basis for modern Britons to meet any obligation to the descendants of the enslaved. That is not a serious legal argument. It is a political choice to recognise one kind of historical claim

and to deny another.

The ugliness did not begin or end with African slavery. Indentured servitude in places such as Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago bound Indian labourers to estates, deprived them of normal liberties and subjected them to treatment that Hugh Tinker described as “another kind of slavery”. When slavery ended, Africans received no land grants, no cash reparations, no promissory notes. They were left destitute, deprived and disadvantaged, while former owners drew down their compensation and Britain drew on the fruits of their labour.

If even half of the compensation paid to slave owners had been directed to slavery’s victims and their societies, the Caribbean would today be much further along the road of social and economic development. For a British politician to answer that the victims’ descendants ought instead to compensate the beneficiaries is to mock history and stand it on its head.

It is impossible to separate Braverman’s statement from her political tra-

jectory. She championed a harsh anti-immigration agenda, including a plan to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda. Now, as a member of Reform UK, she aligns herself with a party that has promised to stop issuing visas to nationals of any country that seeks reparations for the transatlantic trafficking and enslavement of Africans.

Her intervention signals a project to recentre Britain as victim and benefactor in the story of empire, and to cast Caribbean demands for justice as impertinence. The Caribbean cannot accept that script. Reparations are not about “punishing” modern Britons; they are about acknowledging that history created structural disadvantages that persist and about designing measures to repair them. Until that truth is faced, talk of “investment, effort and contribution” is not history; it is evasion.

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



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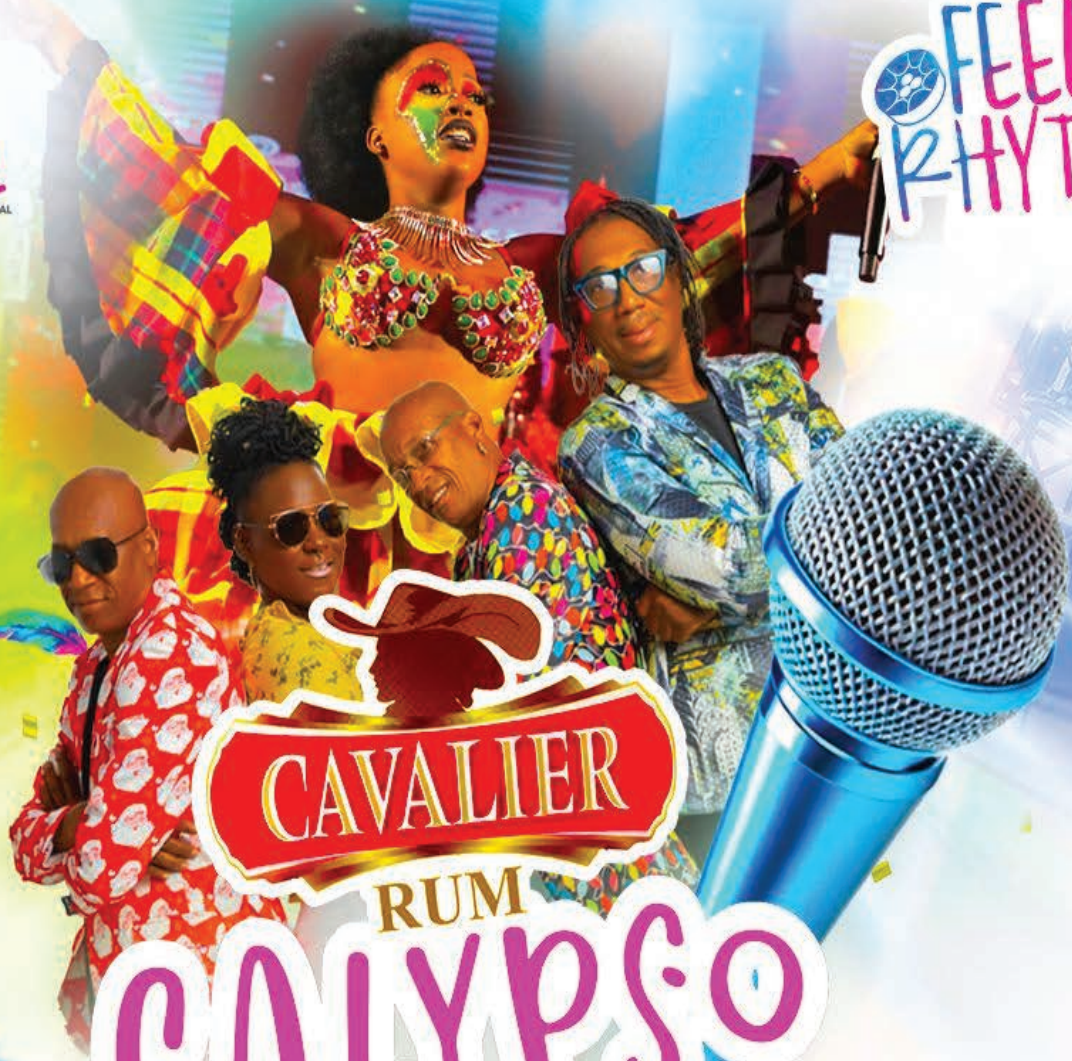


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CARICOM probing for clearer TCNs policy picture

Chairman of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Philip J. Pierre says the regional bloc will conduct an audit of individual member state policies on the United States' Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) arrangement before coming to a definitive position on the matter.

Addressing a press briefing to wrap up the 51st Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in St Lucia yesterday, Pierre said regional heads are concerned about the US's latest deportation policy.

Jamaica is the latest member state to confirm that it has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to accept 25 TCNs every two weeks for an unspecified period.

Pierre told journalists that the matter was on the agenda for CARICOM leaders, even as a landmark US federal court ruling struck down the third-country removal policy as unlawful. The decision is being appealed.

"Yes, we did discuss [it]. It's an issue that is of concern to all of us," said Pierre.

"We discussed it, and we took a position that we would share some more information among ourselves about what, really, is each island doing. Right now, we are not clear," he added.

The commitment to audit individual member state policies underscores deep-seated anxieties across CARICOM countries, with widespread anger among Jamaicans in particular over how the deal has been handled.

Last week, more than 500 protesters converged in Cross Roads to register their disagreement with the Andrew Holness administration's communication on the matter.

The protest, organised by civil society coalitions and backed by the Opposition, highlighted a core grievance that the MOU was quietly signed, without parliamentary debate or public consul-



tation.

Several protesters argued that local oversight had been bypassed to appease Washington.

Despite explicit government assurances that no individual with a serious criminal background will be allowed to transit through Jamaica, citizens remain highly sceptical.

Local fear has been further heightened by a resurfaced social media video of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio describing TCN deportees as "despicable human beings".

UNDECIDED

The MOU, first reported on by The Gleaner, has not been made public.

Yesterday, Pierre confirmed that CARICOM had not reached a position on the matter.

"We decided to share some information among ourselves, so we could possibly come out with a more definitive position in the future. But right now, it's a fact [that] the United States has asked most islands to accept third-country nationals," said Pierre.

Regional heads, including Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts and Nevis, and Dominica, have defended their participation as "pragmatic steps" to protecting vital diplomatic relations and avoid aggressive US travel or econom-

ic sanctions.

Defending its position in a white paper published last week, the Gaston Browne-led government named Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, Guyana, and Belize as CARICOM states that have already entered into or publicly acknowledged MOUs with the US regarding TCNs.

The 13-page document noted that TCNs arriving on the island will enter a "legal limbo" because Antigua has no standalone Refugees Act. This means that a TCN who claims asylum immediately triggers the 1951 Refugee Convention protections, turning them into a "charge upon the State".

If they are stateless or refuse to contact a persecuting home country for a passport, the island is stuck managing them indefinitely with no legal pathway forward.

"If the person expresses fear of return to their country of origin, Antigua and Barbuda's obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention (to which it acceded on 7 September 1995) are immediately triggered. The person must be allowed to apply for protection and cannot be returned, including to the United States, if doing so would expose them to persecution. This means that the person would be in Antigua and Barbuda in limbo and would become a charge upon the State," reads the white paper.

It outlines that after the government signed the non-binding framework in December 2025, the US sought to expand it via "draft operating procedures".

It states that the Donald Trump administration pushed for a standing monthly pipeline, compressed approval timelines, higher numerical caps, and left funding, legal status, and return responsibilities unresolved.

"In response, Antigua and Barbuda identified material concerns and made

Regional News

clear that no operational arrangement could responsibly proceed unless those concerns were addressed in writing and on terms consistent with the country's size, capacity, laws, and national interest," the document indicates.

The country counter-proposed, according to the white paper, that it would take a maximum of 10 individuals for the entire 2026.

Antigua also demanded that the US fully fund all settlement, healthcare and security costs in writing before the departure of TCNs.

The government further argued that full funding, full vetting, clear legal status, and express return responsibility are minimum protective conditions and are not, in themselves, reciprocal benefits.

"If Antigua and Barbuda is to contemplate receiving third-country nationals who are not its nationals, in order to assist the United States with the practical execution of its migration policy, there must also be a clear and commensurate reciprocal benefit to Antigua and Barbuda in the national interest.

"This should include the lifting of any blanket visa restrictions on nationals of Antigua and Barbuda, although Antigua and Barbuda accepts the right of the US to deny visas to any persons who, on an individual basis, it regards as ineligible," the document reads.

It adds, "Goodwill alone is not sufficient. Nor can vague expectations of favourable treatment elsewhere be regarded as an adequate foundation for a decision of this kind."

It states that the Antiguan government will proceed, if at all, only on the basis that the country's national interest is expressly protected in legal, financial, operational, and reciprocal terms, "unless Parliament resolves differently".

National Security and Peace Minister Dr Horace Chang, in responding recently to questions about Jamaica's interest in or benefit from the arrangement, said they were "irrelevant".

"The idea of what we get out of it is not a relevant question. America is one of our strongest bilateral partners. We have [a] multiplicity of arrangements, understandings, exchanges in all areas. It's not something you discuss. We do this today; we do that for you tomorrow. That's not a practice of any healthy bilateral relationship," he said. (Jamaica Gleaner)

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Guyana donates 88 containers of relief supplies to earthquake-hit Venezuela

A humanitarian shipment carrying 88 containers of emergency relief supplies departed Georgetown, Guyana, for earthquake-hit Venezuela, with officials describing the operation as a regional effort supported by seven Caribbean Community (Caricom) member states.

The Motti vessel, provided by the BK Group of Companies, left BK Wharf in Kingston, Georgetown on Tuesday carrying emergency supplies, including 300 water tanks, pharmaceuticals, food, cleaning materials and two pieces of earth-moving equipment.

The shipment forms part of a humanitarian response initiated by Guyana's President Irfaan Ali and supported by seven Caricom countries, the Guyanese private sector and members of the Venezuelan community living in Guyana.

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh, who witnessed the vessel's departure, said the operation reflected both national and regional support for Venezuela.

"What we see today is not only the mobilisation made by the government of Guyana but also contributions made by seven member states of Caricom. I want, on President Ali's behalf, to acknowledge the generosity of all those who supported this initiative," Singh said.

He said the cargo included "earth-moving equipment, pharmaceutical and medicinal supplies, food supplies, including Guyanese rice, cleaning materials and other emergency items typically needed after a disaster of this nature".

"Venezuela is our neighbour, and the Venezuelan people are our neighbours. So, we consider this to be the least that we could do in this moment



of tragedy," he added.

Singh said the vessel is expected to reach Venezuela within four days, with distribution of the supplies to be coordinated through an international humanitarian relief effort.

Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation Deodat Indar said Guyana's response was driven by humanitarian considerations and regional cooperation.

"When your neighbour faces a natural catastrophe, it is only the human thing to do to respond. President Ali committed that Guyana would help, and Guyana has risen to that challenge. The private sector, the Venezuelan community here, and our Caricom brothers and sisters all came together to fill this massive vessel behind us," Indar said.

He said the Motti, which has a cargo capacity of about 1,500 tonnes, would deliver the supplies in collaboration with international partners to ensure they reached affected communities.

"The need is great, and we are Venezuela's closest neighbour. This is a testament to Guyana standing firm as a partner during this crisis," he said.

Director General of the Civil De-

fence Commission (CDC), Colonel Nazrul Hussain, said relief items had been collected from all 10 administrative regions of Guyana following the president's appeal for assistance.

"Over a little more than a week, we were able to amass a considerable amount of relief supplies, amounting to about 88 containers. This became a consolidated Caricom effort with Guyana taking the lead," Hussain said.

He said contributions were also received from Grenada, The Bahamas, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Belize and Jamaica, in addition to donations from the Guyanese private sector and the Venezuelan community in Guyana.

According to Hussain, the shipment consists primarily of food, medical supplies, non-perishable goods, water tanks and two earth-moving machines donated by Ansa McAL.

"It demonstrates how quickly Guyana and our regional partners were able to mobilise and consolidate support for our neighbour in a time of need," he said. (CMC)

Gonsalves warns of economic tailspin as EU issues ultimatum



Former St Vincent Prime Minister and senior advisor Ralph Gonsalves has sounded a stark alarm regarding the future of the Eastern Caribbean, following a directive from the European Union (EU) for five regional nations to terminate their Citizenship by Investment (CBI) programs by June 2028.

Describing the development as the “most important issue” currently facing the region, Gonsalves noted that the directive targets Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Lucia. He emphasized that the international community—including the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States—no longer views these programs as subjects for reform, but as fundamental security risks.

Gonsalves reiterated his long-standing opposition to CBI schemes, noting that his administration in St. Vincent

and the Grenadines (SVG) had always refused to “sell passports” on both practical and principled grounds. He famously described a passport as the “outward sign of the inward grace of citizenship,” arguing that treating it as a commodity is fundamentally unsustainable.

“I made the judgment and I think the events are bearing me out,” Gonsalves stated, adding that the current crisis is a case of “the chickens coming home to roost” for countries that relied on CBI revenue.

The potential fallout from the termination of these programs is, in Gonsalves’ view, “perilous”. He warned that the sudden loss of CBI funding could damage external accounts and negatively impact the real effective exchange rate of the Eastern Caribbean dollar. Without a structured transition, he cautioned that the sub-region’s economy could be sent into a

“tailspin,” destabilizing even those nations like SVG that do not have CBI programs.

To avoid a regional “calamity,” Gonsalves is proposing the immediate formation of a multi-national consortium to facilitate a transition period of at least ten years. This consortium would ideally include:

The European Union, Britain, Canada, and the United States.

The World Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB).

Gonsalves argued that this group must provide a quantified package of grant monies and highly concessional “soft loans”—such as World Bank-type loans at 0.75% interest over 45 to 50 years—to cushion the fiscal shock. He stressed that these funds should be policy-based or programmatic rather than project-based to allow for swift economic adjustment.

Addressing domestic politics, Gonsalves warned the current opposition in SVG (the NDP) that persisting with plans to implement a CBI program would be “reckless” and “ill-advised” given the EU’s firm stance. He suggested that such a move would be metaphorically “poking the Europeans in the eye” and would result only in disaster for the country.

“We are in a period where we have to move swiftly,” Gonsalves concluded, urging regional leaders to begin the quantification of their needs and engage the international community before the 2028 deadline. (St Vincent Times)



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600 dead in DR Congo Ebola outbreak

The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo has now claimed 600 lives, figures published by the World Health Organization showed Thursday — only three days after the figure topped 500.

Updated numbers issued by the UN health agency showed there have been 1,759 confirmed cases in DR Congo since the outbreak was declared in mid-May, including 600 confirmed deaths.

Two other people have died in neighbouring Uganda, where 17 patients have recovered out of 20 total confirmed cases.

“The outbreak continues to expand, and its true scale has not yet been fully established,” Anne Ancia, the WHO’s representative in the DRC, said Tuesday.

The WHO’s figures for the DRC, which come from the health authorities in the vast country, show that the outbreak there has a case fatality rate of 34 per cent.

A total of 285 patients in the DRC have recovered, while 304 suspected cases of the viral haemorrhagic fever are under investigation.

The outbreak in northeastern DRC has hit four provinces but is focused on Ituri province.

The outbreak is being driven by the rare Bundibugyo species of Ebola, for which there are no approved vaccines or treatments.

The trial of two potential treatments for Bundibugyo began in the DRC on July 2.

The trial is evaluating the effectiveness of the monoclonal antibody MBP134 and the antiviral drug remdesivir, alone and in combination.

Ebola spreads through close contact and infected bodily fluids.

The DRC’s 17th Ebola outbreak was declared on May 15 after several



deaths in mineral-rich Ituri province, which is plagued by armed groups.

“It is still in the expansion phase, unfortunately. We would like to say it is stabilising, but frankly we cannot say it yet,” Ancia told a press conference in Geneva on Tuesday.

“Transmission is still ongoing.”

Speaking from Bunia, the capital of Ituri, she said the fight against the outbreak was facing major challenges.

“Population movements, persistent insecurity, and the fragility of the health system continue to complicate efforts to bring the outbreak under control,” she said.

“Humanitarian needs remain substantial, particularly regarding civilian protection, access to food, and essential health services, while other diseases such as malaria and measles continue to spread.”

She said there were now around 700 beds across 22 treatment centres, with efforts under way to add 300 more beds.

The centres are operating at around

90 percent capacity, “placing significant pressure on the response,” said Ancia.

More than 10,000 contacts of infected people are being monitored, at a follow-up rate of 82 percent. The WHO believes a rate of 95 percent is needed to get on top of the outbreak.

Laboratory capacity has increased from 30 tests per day in the capital Kinshasa to more than 2,000 tests daily in decentralised labs in the affected provinces.

The WHO wants \$115 million to strengthen its Ebola response, of which 32 per cent has been received to date.

One of the affected provinces is South Kivu, which has seen clashes between the Congolese armed forces and the Rwanda-backed M23 armed group.

UN rights chief Volker Turk on Thursday called for an immediate end to the fighting, deploring its impact on civilians and saying there were growing fears that the increased clashes could force further displacement, including into other countries. (AFP)

Dutch museum honours late artist by covering floor in enough peanut butter to make 15,000 sandwiches



More than 800 pounds of peanut butter – enough for around 15,000 sandwiches – has been spread across the floor of a museum in the Netherlands in tribute to Dutch artist Wim T. Schippers, who died last month.

The conceptual artist, who died at the age of 83, first created the Pindakaasvloer, or peanut butter floor, in 1969. The work was unveiled on Thursday at the Depot offshoot of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in the Dutch port city of Rotterdam for a two-month show.

Schippers was a beloved non-conformist character in the Netherlands, where he also voiced Ernie and Kermit the Frog in the Dutch version of ‘Sesame Street’, and created absurdist and silly works that challenged conventional ideas about the meaning of art.

“Isn’t it fantastic that we are all standing here looking at peanut butter?” Schippers told journalists gathered at the Central Museum in

Utrecht in 1997 where Pindakaasvloer was on display for the second time.

Schippers created the work as part of a Floor Covering Series, which also included floors covered with glass shards and salt.

The aroma, redolent of breakfasts and lunch boxes, is what lingers with many who experience the work first hand. Museum staff directed visitors for the opening to “follow the smell” which was wafting by the ticket counter, three floors below where the artwork is laid out.

“The thing I remember is the smell,” Mieke Weismann told The Associated Press. The food photographer and writer saw the 1997 exhibition as a teenager.

The art installation may not be for everybody. A sign at the museum’s entrance warns visitors with peanut allergies that they might not want to enter the space.

It took two employees of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen several days to spread 40 buckets of peanut butter across a 25-square-meter (270-square-foot) hexagon last week.

“It was a lot of work,” Leon Duenk, one of the two men who installed the artwork, told AP.

The pair used drywall trowels to smear the peanut butter to a thickness of 2 centimeters (0.8 inch).

Prior to his death the museum and Schippers discussed how to recreate the work in the future, producing a 20-point plan that included the requirement to apply the peanut butter “as smoothly and boringly as possible” and that “no one is supposed to stand in, or lie down on the peanut butter”.

Schippers did not specify the size or shape of the work, but he did say it needed to be smooth peanut butter and that he preferred the Dutch peanut butter brand Calvé. The company donated 40 tubs of peanut butter for the work.

Multiple visitors stepped into the sticky artwork when it was on display in 2011. In 1997, the work was “vandalized” when a group of people placed 12 slices of bread and several bags of hagelslag – chocolate sprinkles commonly eaten on bread at breakfast in the Netherlands – on the floor.

“It doesn’t look bad,” Schippers told Dutch newspaper Volkskrant at the time. “The sprinkles have been applied with a sense of proportion and a skillful hand.” (AP)

Tensions erupt in Indian state after 11-year-old raped and murdered



The Indian state of West Bengal has been on the boil for the past few days over the rape and murder of an 11-year-old girl.

The body of the child was fished out from a pond on Sunday - a day after her family reported her missing.

The incident in Surjyapur village in Baruiপুর, on the outskirts of Kolkata, has triggered days of violent protests, a mob lynching of an innocent man and the police killing of one of the suspects. Three other men who have been arrested remain in custody.

Warning: This story contains details that some readers may find distressing.

The child's rape and murder - and the subsequent killing of the suspect - has snowballed into a huge political row, with the opposition parties accusing the state's newly-elected Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government of failing to protect women.

Family members of the girl said they last saw her on Saturday afternoon when she went out to buy a birthday gift for a friend.

When she didn't return home, they

went to the police station at around 20:30 to seek help in finding her.

The family and villagers alleged that the police did not take their pleas seriously and said they would look into it the next day.

Desperate family members and villagers then themselves looked through the CCTV footage from nearby shops and spotted her walking with Prabhash Mondal - a local man who has since been killed by the police.

Early Sunday morning, a mob went to Mondal's house, caught him and handed him over to the police.

A few hours later, a sack containing the girl's body was pulled out from the pond, with media reports saying Mondal had led the police to the exact spot.

According to the post-mortem report, the cause of death is drowning, leading to claims that she was alive when she was dumped in the pond.

"Had the police acted earlier, she could have been saved," her relatives have said.

The police complaint has since been amended to include charges under the

Pocso, India's stringent law on child sexual abuse. The police have yet to hold a press conference on the case or respond to the allegations.

The government has formed a special investigation team (SIT) to inquire into the case.

The recovery of the body saw anger pour out onto the streets, with a mob vandalising roads, shops and a local railway station. A young man was beaten to death by the crowd - Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari has since said he was innocent.

Several police officers were injured and vehicles damaged as they tried to contain the mob. Police have registered three cases and detained 40 people so far.

The area remains tense, with a ban on public gatherings and heavy police and paramilitary deployment to maintain order.

The unrest poses a huge challenge for the BJP, which swept to power in West Bengal for the first time ever in May, campaigning heavily on the issue of making the state safe for women.

Analysts say one of the main reasons three-term chief minister Mamata Banerjee lost the election was growing concern over women's safety and her government's shoddy handling of the rape and murder of a junior doctor at a government hospital.

This case has also become mired in a political controversy and is threatening to take on religious overtones as the victim was Muslim whereas the arrested men are Hindus.

A local BJP leader, Sushant Mondal's home was attacked and ransacked by a mob that accused him of helping the suspects. He denied the allegations saying they were "false" and that he had in fact "helped catch the perpetrators".

To contain the public anger, Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari visited the village on Tuesday and met the victim's family.

"Our government is committed to curb any such incidents in the state. The police is doing what needs to be done. The family has spoke to me, they have lost their beloved daughter. I believe that they are satisfied talking to me."

Less than 24 hours later, Prabhash Mondal was killed in a "police encounter".

In a statement on Wednesday morning, Baruiপুর police said Mondal had been taken to the pond to recreate the crime scene as part of the investigation, but he attempted to snatch the weapon from a policeman and opened fire at them.

The police retaliated and fired back, striking him. The injured accused was taken to hospital, where he was declared dead, the statement said.

Even though no allegations had been proven against Mondal, his mother appeared to have disowned her son and refused to accept his body.

"Two policemen came to my house. I had just woken up. They told me that my son had died and asked if I wanted to go to the hospital. I told them I couldn't because my husband was ill," she told news agency ANI.

"I said, do whatever you want to do.

I have no objection. My son has been punished for what he did. I will not accept his body. I will not even bring his body home," she added.

Opposition politicians and rights activists, however, have questioned the killing, saying it went against the rule of law.

Ranjit Sur of the Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights called the matter "suspicious".

Sur said the story of police encounters in many states of the country is almost the same - the accused tries to escape by snatching the police weapon and is then killed in the encounter.

In 2019 in a similar incident, four men accused of gang-raping and murdering a young woman in Hyderabad were killed by the police in an encounter. (BBC)



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Dozens killed, snakes on the loose after flooding from days of heavy rain in southern China



Authorities in southern China said Thursday that 39 people died in flooding after a tropical storm dumped heavy rainfall, as Taiwan and China's east coast prepared for a typhoon expected to make landfall in the coming days.

Most of the deaths were in Hengzhou, where the partial collapse of a reservoir dam sent torrents of water into the city and claimed 26 lives, said Ding Wei, the vice mayor of Nanning city, which has jurisdiction over the area, said at a news briefing. Nine people remained missing in the broader Guangxi region.

Tropical Storm Maysak brought record rainfall to Guangxi starting Saturday, breaching reservoirs and stranding people for days in homes and other buildings. The previously announced death toll on Tuesday was six people.

A second storm, Typhoon Bavi, is at sea and forecast to pass just north of

Taiwan, bringing heavy rain to the island of 23 million people, and make landfall in Zhejiang or Fujian province on Saturday.

Heavier-than-expected rain battered southern Guangxi for days, with cumulative rainfall of 4 to 16 inches in some areas and more than 35 inches in hard-hit areas, the national meteorological center said.

Rescue teams were still bringing out more than 10,000 trapped students and teachers from a cluster of schools Thursday in the city of Guigang, northeast of Hengzhou.

Animals were also stranded or swept out by the rising floodwaters.

A zoo in Guigang said that more than 100 animals were missing, including two zebras, four porcupines and dozens of tropical birds. In Hengzhou, snakes reportedly from a farm prompted authorities to stock up on antivenom and advise residents what to do if

they encountered a snake.

An animal shelter operator in Bin yang country, northwest of Hengzhou, struggled in recent days to rescue about 200 cats and dozens of dogs, bringing the dogs two at a time through a strong current. The cats climbed up to the rafters as the waters rose.

Drones and some 5,700 boats have been used in a massive relief and rescue operation to reach people trapped by the waters, with rescuers battling stiff currents and debris to try to reach people. About 130,000 people have been evacuated.

Ding said the floodwaters are receding, but more rain is expected in some areas in the next two days. Crews have been deployed to clear mud and debris and disinfect several towns in Hengzhou.

Road repairs are ongoing and electricity has been restored to more than 60,000 homes, Ding said. (AP)

Another loss for Antigua in Americas Group IV Davis Cup



Antigua and Barbuda suffered their second loss in the Americas Group IV Davis Cup team competition, which is taking place on the outdoor clay court at the Rakiura Resort in Luque, Paraguay, from July 8 to 11.

Antigua and Barbuda lost for the second time in as many Group B matches, crashing to a 3-0 loss to Suriname on Thursday.

Joshio Loor crushed Antiguan Rodain Shaquan Monelle 6-0, 6-0 in the opening singles.

Antigua and Barbuda's Cordell Williams gave a much tougher fight but lost the second singles match 4-6, 3-6 to Yigal Bergen.

Loor combined with Marvin Wjngaarde to wrap up the match by beating the Antiguan pair of Rodain Shaquan Monelle and David Williams 6-0, 4-6, 6-3 in the doubles.

Antigua and Barbuda, which is represented by a four-member team in the seven-team competition, suffered a 3-0 loss against the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) in their first encounter in the four-team Pool B on Wednesday.

The Antiguanians are competing without their top and only professional player, Jody Maginley. Antigua and Barbuda and the USVI are joined in Group B by Suriname and Aruba.

After launching their campaign with a 3-0 drubbing of Suriname in their opening encounter on Wednesday, Aruba consolidated their position at the top of Group B by claiming their second win in a row with a 3-0 victory over the US Virgin Islands on Thurs-

day.

Competing for top honours in Group A are Honduras, Cuba, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinidad and Tobago launched their campaign with a 3-0 victory over Honduras on Thursday. It was the second loss in as many matches for Honduras, who lost 2-1 against Cuba in their opening encounter on Wednesday.

The top two teams in each pool will

advance to contest promotion play-offs. The two top teams at the end of the competition will be promoted to compete in Americas Group III in 2027.

For the second successive year, Antigua and Barbuda finished in sixth place in the Americas Group IV Davis Cup competition, which was held among 10 countries in Trinidad and Tobago last year.

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Wins for Female Flyers and Strictly Business in ABSCA T20 tourney

Alzarri and Sharon Joseph, North Sails Antigua Female Flyers, and Rackaman Construction Strictly Business have continued their winning forms in their campaigns in the Antigua and Barbuda Softball Cricket Association's (ABSCA) WTP 93.5 FM and Chet Greene T20 Championships.

The Female Flyers maintained their unbeaten run by claiming their third win in as many games, pulling off a seven-wicket victory over Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors during their top-of-the-table clash in the women's T20 competition at the Clare Hall playing field on Wednesday night.

The Survivors were restricted to 98 for five from their 20 overs. Grace Persaud hit 27, Joan Samuel struck 20, and Stacey Bright and Kimberly Anthony each made 12.

Gaynel Ogarro claimed two for 22, Makeda Hector took one for 12, Monique Titus captured one for 17, and Manilla James picked up one for 22.

The Female Flyers achieved victory by scoring 99 for three in 17.1 overs. Player of the match Terez Parker smashed an unbeaten 44, and Mauveuhl Simpson made 20.

Desrie Welsh claimed one for 17, Gale Lee took one for 22, and Grace Persaud captured one for 28 for the Survivors, who lost for the first time after winning their previous two matches.

Strictly Business made it four wins in a row in the men's T20 contest by snatching a two-wicket victory over



The Female Flyers softball cricket team

Marcko Inc. Buckley's 3Js in their top-of-the-table clash at the Clare Hall playing field.

The Buckley's 3Js were bundled out for 82 in 18.1 overs, with George Elvin getting 24.

Kadeem Josiah bagged two wickets for nine runs; Shaquan Reifer claimed two for 17; Ashfield Weatherhead took two for 24, while Owen Graham and Melvin Charles each picked up a wicket.

Strictly Business secured victory by scoring 83 for eight in 15.2 overs.

Clinton Benjamin hit 19, and Jevon Howel struck 17.

Charanlall Ramjohn snapped up three for 20, Gregson Merrick claimed two for 13, and Richie Thomas captured one for 14 for Buckley's 3Js, who lost for the first time after winning their previous three matches.

After losing their previous three matches, PMS recorded their first win in the men's T20 competition by beating the Mix-Up Stars. It was the fourth loss in as many games for the Mix-Up Stars.



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West Indies Names Squad for Women's ODI Tour to Ireland



West Indies captain Hayley Matthews, right, and Ireland skipper Gaby Lewis pose with the ODI series trophy. (CWI Media)

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced the 15-member squad for the upcoming Senior Women's One-Day International tour of Ireland which gets underway on Friday, July 10, with all three fixtures being played at Bready Cricket Club, Bready.

There is one change to the group that was selected for the Tri-series against Ireland and Pakistan and the recently concluded ICC Women's T20 World Cup, with Realeanna Grimmond replacing the injured

Chinelle Henry.

The tour marks the team's third assignment of the new ICC Women's Championship cycle, offering another opportunity to bank points and build momentum on the road to World Cup qualification.

Looking ahead to the series, Head Coach Shane Deitz, stated, "Ireland would be a tough opponent in their conditions, and we need to adapt fast and make sure we play some good cricket.

"These are valuable points for the qualification for the next ODI World Cup and this series and the next few series over the next six to eight months are really important for us to get some wins on the board and make sure we're in contention for that next ODI World Cup."

Fresh from an ICC Women's T20 World Cup campaign that saw the West Indies reach the semi-finals, Captain Hayley Matthews is now focused on the challenge ahead.

"We've had a little bit of time to reflect on the World Cup and take the

lessons from it. Our focus is firmly on what's ahead. Everyone is excited to get back out there, and this ODI series against Ireland is a great opportunity to build on our successes in the World Cup," she said.

Women's Squad for the tour of Ireland: Hayley Matthews (captain), Aaliyah Alleyne, Shemaine Campbell, Jahzara Claxton, Deandra Dottin, Afy Fletcher, Jannillea Glasgow, Realeanna Grimmond, Shawnisha Hector, Zaida James, Qiana Joseph, Mandy Mangru, Ashmini Munisar, Karishma Ramharack, and Stafanie Taylor.

Team Management Unit: Head Coach Shane Deitz, Team Manager Sheena Gooding, Assistant Coach Damien Wright, Assistant Coach Ryan Austin, Assistant Coach Shane Dowrich, physiotherapist Ashley Stephens, Strength & Conditioning Coach Hector Martinez, Performance Coach Dr. Nadine Sammy, and Media & Content Officer John Phillips.

NPMT and FC Hollywood win again in Gray's Green Football League

Nat Pan My Team (NPMT) and FC Hollywood continued their winning start to their campaign in the Gray's Green Community Football League on Wednesday.

After securing a 4-0 drubbing of Herberts FC in their opening game, NPMT made it two wins in a row by pulling off a 4-2 victory over WSV FC in their latest outings at the Keithley

Sheppard Recreational Park.

Robert Jeffrey had a double conversion, while the other goals for NPMY were scored by Howayne James and Shemaiah Andrew. Johnathan Forde and Hamilton Joseph were the goal scorers for WSV FC, which lost for the second time in as many matches.

FC Hollywood claimed

their second win in as many games with a 6-2 drubbing of Herberts FC in their latest outing.

Karique Knight scored five times, and Peter Byers scored the other goal for FC Hollywood. An own goal and a conversion by Orane Gore were on target for Herberts FC, which crashed to their second loss in as many matches.

Twelve teams, divided into three groups, are contesting the Gray's Green Community League, which is organized by the Empire Football Club.

The league is sponsored by the parliamentary representative for St. John's Rural West, Honourable Michael Joseph; Top Speed Construction; and I Love Electrics.

Winning start for Wadadli Bulldogs at CBC tournament



The senior national team, the Wadadli Bulldogs, before their opening game in the CBC tournament at Cliff Anderson Sports Hall in Georgetown, Guyana, on Wednesday, July 8, 2026. (Photo courtesy of FIBA Basketball)

Antigua and Barbuda's senior national team, the Wadadli Bulldogs, made a winning start to their campaign in the Caribbean Basketball Confederation (CBC) tournament with a lopsided 82-50 drubbing of Bermuda in their Group A opener at Cliff Anderson Sports Hall in Georgetown, Guyana, on Wednesday.

Antigua and Barbuda erased an early nine-point deficit and stormed past Bermuda for their dominant victory in the 10-team tournament, which is a pre-qualifier for the 2029 FIBA AmeriCup.

Bermuda jumped out to a fast start, leading 20-14 after the opening quarter and building a 27-18 advantage early in the second. But Antigua and Barbuda flipped the script before halftime, tightening the screws de-

fensively and pulling away to record victory by a 32-point margin at the final buzzer.

The decisive moment arrived with 5:39 left in the second quarter. T-Shawn Lewis converted a layup under the basket to put Antigua and Barbuda in front, 27-28, completing a 10-point swing after trailing by nine. That basket not only gave the Wadadli Bulldogs their first lead since the opening minutes but also set the tone for the rest of the night.

From 8:09 to 2:43 in the second quarter, the Wadadli Bulldogs outscored Bermuda 27-34, building a 27-34 lead by halftime. During that stretch, they committed just one turnover while forcing six giveaways from Bermuda, turning defense into offense and seizing control of the

game.

Xavier Spencer anchored the Wadadli Bulldogs' turnaround, finishing with 14 points, 4 rebounds, 5 assists, and 3 steals.

Point guard Jaden Andrew matched him with 14 points, 4 rebounds, 3 assists, and 3 steals.

Forward Alexis Jackson delivered a double-double, tallying 10 points and 10 rebounds, while Cohen Desouza contributed 10 points, 4 rebounds, 2 assists, and 2 steals.

For Bermuda, Malachi Scott stood out with 14 points and 8 rebounds in shooting 6-of-10 from the field.

The Antiguanans are grouped with host Guyana, Dominica, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and Bermuda.

The Turks and Caicos Islands launched their campaign with a 68-55 victory over host Guyana on the opening day.

Contesting Group B are Barbados, Haiti, Grenada, the Cayman Islands, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

There were wins for Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the opening day encounters in Group B.

Barbados crushed the Cayman Islands 89-54, while St. Vincent and the Grenadines prevailed 85-66 against Grenada.

Each team will face every opponent in its group once in a round-robin format. At the conclusion of the competition, the top team from each group will advance to the next round of the 2029 FIBA AmeriCup Pre-Qualifiers, scheduled for November 2026.