

Cabinet Rejects 24-Hour Delay, Orders Live Streaming of Carnival Shows

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Newly minted police officers in formation at Thursday's graduation ceremony at the Sir Wright George Police Training Academy

Cabinet Rejects 24-Hour Delay, Orders Live Streaming of Carnival Shows

Government has rejected a proposal to delay the broadcast of Antigua Carnival events, reaffirming that all official shows will continue to be streamed live during the 2026 festival.

The decision was announced yesterday following Cabinet discussions on reports that a directive was being considered to impose a mandatory 24-hour delay on the rebroadcast and livestreaming of official Carnival events.

Director General of Communications Maurice Merchant said Cabinet unanimously concluded that the benefits of live streaming far outweighed any advantages of a delayed broadcast.

“The discussion on streaming live outweighed everything else, and hence that’s why we are at the position of saying to the general public that, as per usual, streaming will continue of Antigua and Barbuda Carnival events,” Merchant told the weekly Post-Cabinet press briefing.

He clarified that Cabinet’s deliberations focused solely on the merits of live versus delayed broadcasts and not on where the proposal originated.

“The origin of that directive was not the topic of discussion,” Merchant explained. “The main topic was what would the benefits be to have a 24-hour delay in comparison to streaming live.”

According to the Cabinet, the issue arose after a notice and public dis-



Director of Communications in the Office of the Prime Minister, Maurice Merchant

cussions suggested that a delay in broadcasting official Carnival events was under consideration. However, the Minister responsible for Festivals Dwayne George expressed strong opposition, warning that such a restriction would significantly reduce public access to the country’s premier cultural festival and undermine efforts to market Antigua and Barbuda internationally.

Following deliberations, Cabinet reaffirmed its longstanding policy that all official Antigua Carnival events should remain accessible to the widest possible audience through live television and digital streaming.

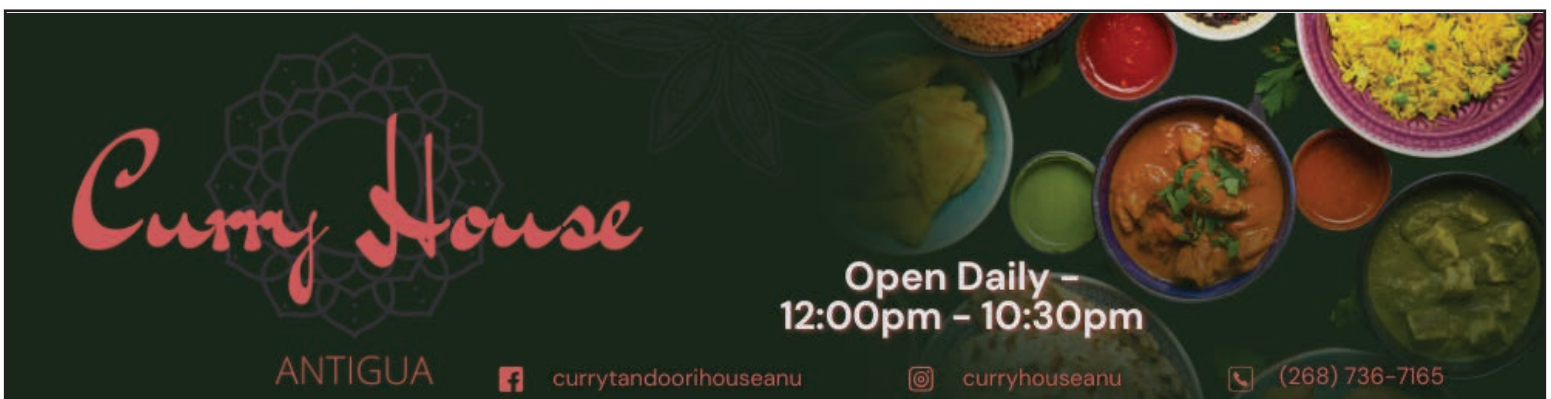
Cabinet noted that Antigua Carnival is not only the nation’s largest cultural celebration but also one of its most valuable tourism and economic prod-

ucts. Ministers agreed that real-time broadcasts allow Antiguan and Barbudans at home and abroad, as well as regional and international audiences, to experience the festival as it unfolds.

The Government also emphasised that live streaming serves as a powerful promotional platform for the destination, showcasing the country’s culture, creative industries, tourism product and local entertainers to viewers worldwide. Cabinet further noted that the expanded audience generated through live broadcasts increases value for sponsors and strengthens the Antigua Carnival brand beyond the physical confines of Carnival City.

While acknowledging concerns about encouraging patrons to attend events in person, Cabinet concluded that live streaming and healthy gate attendance are not mutually exclusive. Instead, ministers agreed the two can complement each other by broadening Carnival’s reach while preserving the unique atmosphere of experiencing the events live.

The Government also reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission, media organisations, broadcast partners, sponsors and promoters to continue building Antigua Carnival into a world-class festival that promotes the nation’s culture, drives tourism and expands economic opportunities.



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Government Pledges New Police Training Academy as 50th Recruit Batch Passes Out



The Government of Antigua and Barbuda will likely begin construction of a new Police Training Academy next year, Attorney General and Minister for Legal Affairs, Public Safety, Immigration and Labour Sir Steadroy Benjamin announced on Thursday as he addressed the passing-out parade for the 50th batch of recruits at the Sir Wright F. George Police Academy.

Speaking to the graduating officers, Sir Steadroy said the long-awaited facility would represent another major investment in the development of the country's security forces.

"As the Minister with responsibility for the police, I pledge that this government will continue to stand with the men and women of the police force, and we shall begin next year sometime by putting the first shovel on this site to bring your dreams to reality," he declared.

The minister also committed the

government to continued investment in police professionalism, improved working conditions and enhanced welfare benefits, including adequate insurance coverage for officers injured in the line of duty and support for their families. Sir Steadroy described the graduation ceremony as more than a routine parade, calling it an historic occasion for the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda.

"Today we gather not simply to witness a parade but to celebrate a defining moment in the history of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda," he said. "The graduation of this 50th batch of police recruits is a milestone of national recognition. It symbolises continuity, renewal and hope."

Congratulating the graduates on behalf of Prime Minister Gaston Browne and the government, Sir Steadroy praised them for completing months of rigorous physical, intellectual and

emotional training.

"You have learned that policing is not merely a profession; it is a calling," he said. "Today you have earned the privilege of wearing the uniform of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda—a uniform that carries the confidence, expectations and aspirations of an entire nation."

The Attorney General reminded the newly sworn officers that the authority they now possess comes not from their badges but from the confidence placed in them by the public. He stressed that every action taken by a police officer has lasting consequences for individuals and the wider society.

"Every traffic stop matters. Every investigation matters. Every decision you make matters. Every act of kindness matters."

Sir Steadroy urged the graduates to reject corruption and remain commit-

Local News



ted to fairness and integrity throughout their careers.

“Never allow private interests to eclipse your public duty. Never allow temptation to erode your character,” he cautioned.

The minister argued that effective policing is fundamental to Antigua and Barbuda’s continued economic and social progress, noting there can be no thriving democracy without the rule of law. He added that tourism, investment, secure communities and national prosperity all depend on citizens feeling safe.

Highlighting the government’s efforts to strengthen national security, Sir Steadroy Benjamin pointed to investments in modern policing technology, specialised training, intelligence sharing and greater collaboration among the Police Force, Defence Force, Immigration Department, Customs Division and the Office of National Drug

and Money Laundering Control Policy (ONDCP).

He also disclosed that the nationwide expansion of surveillance camera systems is expected to significantly improve crime detection.

“Very soon, we will solve crime quite easily in this state because the whole nation shortly will be covered by cameras,” he said.

While emphasising the responsibilities of police officers, Sir Steadroy also appealed to members of the public to play their part in fighting crime.

“Solving crime is not police duty alone. It’s a combination of the police acting in conjunction with you, the people whom they represent,” he said, encouraging citizens to report criminal activity by adopting the principle of “see something, say something.”

The minister challenged the graduates to protect women and children,

combat gun violence and illegal drugs, assist vulnerable citizens and perform their duties with compassion as well as professionalism.

Reflecting on the significance of the 50th passing-out parade, he paid tribute to generations of police officers who served before them, including those who lost their lives in the line of duty.

“Graduates, you are now custodians of a legacy. History has handed you a torch. Don’t merely carry it. Make it burn brighter.”

He urged the officers to build careers defined by service, humility and justice rather than authority alone.

“Wear your badge with humility. Serve your country with honour. Protect our people with courage,” the Public Safety Minister stressed.

Commandant of the SWGPTA Makes The Case For a New Modern Police Academy



The Commandant of the Sir Wright George Police Training Academy (SWGPTA) Superintendent of Police Rodney Ellis, makes a strong case for the construction of a modern police training academy for Antigua and Barbuda.

While giving credit to the government for its investments in improving the healthcare delivery system as well as for the strides being made in education with the establishment of the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS), Commandant Ellis said the security forces are in need of similar attention and investments.

Speaking at the Graduation Ceremony for 43 new police officers on Thursday, Ellis emphasized that his vision goes beyond simply a facility for recruit training, but a centre for continuous professional development throughout an officer's career.

"While I acknowledge and sincerely appreciate the efforts of the Attorney General in helping us to move toward this objective, however, much more remains to be done.

"Criminals continue to become more sophisticated, utilizing advanced technologies and increasingly complex methods. Consequently, law enforce-





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ANTIGUA
Carnival
2026

PAN
CRAWL

**21ST
& 23RD
JULY**
 ⌚ 8:00PM



ROUTE
STARTS AT SICL REDCLIFFE ST.

TUESDAY 21ST JULY	THURSDAY 23RD JULY
ORIGINAL STEEL ORCHESTRA PANDEMONIUM STEEL ORCHESTRA HARMONITES STEEL ORCHESTRA HELLS GATE STEEL ORCHESTRA	PANACHE STEEL ORCHESTRA GEMONITES STEEL ORCHESTRA WESTSIDE SYMPHONY HALCYON STEEL ORCHESTRA

Local News



grammes that will strengthen policing for generations to come. Investment in training is an investment in national security," he declared.

The graduation ceremony at the SWGPTA marked the fiftieth such

ceremony to be held in the life of the academy. The 43 gradates reached this milestone in their careers following an intense six-month training programme.



ment must remain one step ahead through continuous education, specialized training and professional development," he suggested.

Supt. Ellis appealed directly to Attorney General Sir Steadroy Benjamin, who was in the audience, and all other relevant stakeholders to support the construction of a modern, fully equipped police academy on 'this very site'.

"Such a facility would enable us to partner with institutions such as the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus to deliver specialized courses in leadership development, legal studies, forensic science, cyber-crime investigations, intelligence-led policing and other professional pro-



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Minister Michael Joseph Meets with Health Information Division to Strengthen Use of Health Data

Minister of Health, Michael Joseph, recently met with the management and staff of the Ministry's Health Information Division as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the country's health information systems and to improve the use of data in healthcare planning and decision-making.

The meeting provided the Minister with an overview of the Division's operations, including how health statistics are collected, analyzed, and reported. Discussions also focused on opportunities to streamline data collection and reporting processes to ensure that accurate, timely, and comprehensive health information is readily available.

Minister Joseph emphasized the critical role that reliable health data plays in developing evidence-based policies and delivering effective healthcare services.

"Quality health information is the foundation of sound decision-making. By strengthening our systems and improving how data is collected, analyzed, and shared, we can make better policy decisions that directly benefit the people of Antigua and Barbuda. Equally important, we want to ensure that this information is accessible to the public so that citizens are informed about the nation's health status and can make healthier choices," Minister Joseph said.

The discussions also explored ways to improve the aggregation and dissemination of health statistics, enabling the Government to identify emerging health trends, allocate resources more effectively, and develop targeted programmes that address the needs of specific communities.

The Minister noted that making health information more accessible to the public will enhance transparency and encourage greater public engagement in health and wellness initiatives.

The Health Information Division reaffirmed its commitment to modern-



izing its systems and working collaboratively with stakeholders across the health sector to strengthen the country's health information infrastructure. The Ministry remains committed

to building a data-driven healthcare system that supports informed decision-making, improves health outcomes, and enhances the well-being of all residents of Antigua and Barbuda.


 A promotional poster for 'Project Cleanup Jennings Village'. The background is yellow with palm trees on the sides. At the top, logos for State Insurance Company Limited, The Department of Environment, and Apua (The Department of Life) are displayed. The main text reads 'PROJECT CLEANUP JENNINGS VILLAGE' in large, bold letters. Below this, a group of four people wearing green 'PROJECT CLEANUP' t-shirts are standing. A white speech bubble on the left says 'SATURDAY 18 JULY 7:00AM'. In the bottom right corner, the text 'PREPARE & PROTECT' is shown with a circular logo.

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JR. CALYPSO MONARCH

JULY 19TH
CARNIVAL CITY - 4:30PM
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FEEL THE
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OF JR. CALYPSONIANS



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Local News

Over 60 persons attend inaugural Access to Finance and Financial Empowerment Fair



The Directorate of Gender Affairs, held its inaugural 'Access to Finance and Empowerment Fair', a product of the Gender and Private Sector Initiative, with more than 60 individuals taking advantage of the opportunity to connect with financial and insurance institutions.

The event, held under the Directorate's Economic Empowerment Portfolio, brought together 11 stakeholders from various financial and insurance institutions at the Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre on Thursday.

Executive Director of the Directorate of Gender Affairs, Jamie Saunders delivered opening remarks at the fair, stating that economic pressures have varying effects on different groups—women, youth and persons with disabilities) and noted that the fair offered an opportunity for the public to connect with financial institutions and the private sector to receive tailored loans, grants and insurance plans.

"The private sector has a critical and indispensable role to play in ensuring that we can achieve equality," he said.





Minister of State in the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation Kiz Johnson stressed that economic empowerment is central to individual dignity, security and generational wealth.

“It is about building knowledge, creating connections and ensuring that you are better equipped to make informed financial decisions,” the Minister remarked.

Minister Johnson noted that with the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November, this fair offered the one of the first opportunities to break down persistent barriers to women accessing capital and advance the ‘care economy’—financially recognizing the unpaid labour women in domestic/caregiving settings.

“We understand that meaningful development requires a people centred and gender responsive approach... when we are talking about gender, we are not just talking about females, but youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities,” she said.

Meanwhile, Permanent Secretary Sarah Stuart said the Ministry was committed to improving financial literacy, entrepreneurship support and

building public-private partnerships that ensure equitable access to economic empowerment—a key pillar of sustainable development.

The event began with a four-member panel discussion with representatives for each major stakeholder.

Tamalyn Vyphuis-Williams, Credit Manager at the St John’s Cooperative Credit Union along with Sharon Williams-Potter, Manager of Small Business at the Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank, addressed the public on the financial opportunities available for individuals at the relevant companies along with what the institutions assess before issuing loan applications.



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Antigua and Barbuda Participates in Community Resilience Regional Conference

Antigua and Barbuda is being represented at the 2nd annual Community Resilience Regional Conference now taking place in Barbados under the theme “Advancing Sustainable Community Resilience through Shared Responsibility”.

Director of the National Office of Disaster Services (NODS) Sherrod James is leading the local team and was among members of a high-level panel at the meeting.

Also at the conference are District Disaster Coordinator for St. John's City South Marcus Scott and Strategic Operations and Project Implementation Manager in the Social Policy Unit in the Ministry of Social Transformation Kimbalie Constant.

The July 15 -17 conference brings together disaster management officials from CARICOM member states, regional institutions, community leaders, youth representatives and development partners focused on building climate and disaster resilient communities.

It serves as a practical action-oriented platform to strengthen community resilience.

The conference is supported by the European Union, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), through the project Building Resilience of the CARIFORUM States to Disaster Risks and Climate Change Impacts (BRICS), Sagicor and the government of Barbados.



UWI FIC's Official Completes US Leadership Programme



The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus' Student Retention and Success Manager, Adeola Matthew, has returned from participating in a US government-sponsored International Visitor Leadership Programme.

The programme brought together emerging leaders from around the world to exchange ideas, build connections and to strengthen partnerships. Over the three-week duration of the training, participants discussed research collaboration, international academic partnerships and strategies for advancing innovation in higher education.

As Student Retention Manager, Matthew's responsibilities include developing the UWI's Global learners programmes.

"This programme created opportunities to network with US universities to build exchange partnerships. We also connected with other participants creating international exchange partnerships. Establishing partnership is key for allowing our students at the UWI FIC to not only do inter campus

exchanged with other UWI campuses. We are building partnership to allow our students to participate in student exchanges with other universities in the US and beyond," she explained.

She added that student exchanges extend learning from the classroom at FIC to a regional and international stage where students learn more than academics. They foster cultural exposure and development.

"We believe that more experiences and exposure can only improve the quality of our students. We will also be looking for corporate partners interested in supporting students through scholarship funding to the global learners programme," Matthew added.

Matthew described the programme as 'intense' noting that the training was held across four states.



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JULY 24TH
9AM - 4PM

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Ambassador Sanders Interacts with Students of Cornell University



Antigua and Barbuda Ambassador to the United States and the Organisation of American States (OAS), Sir Ronald Sanders on Thursday engaged with students and faculty from the Cornell University Brooks School of Public Policy Summer Institute.

The meeting took place at the Embassy of Antigua and Barbuda in Wash-

ington, D.C.

Sir Ronald reported that as part of the “Democracy Policy in the World” course co-taught by Professors Dr. Marian Vidaurri and Dr. Thomas Garrett within the Cornell Brooks DC Summer Policy Institute, they discussed the practice of diplomacy, Antigua and Barbuda’s bilateral rela-

tionship with the United States, the importance of multilateralism and democratic governance, under the theme of: “Is might right”.

“It was an engaging exchange of ideas with an impressive group of future young leaders,” Sir Ronald stated.




RHYTHM OF A QUEEN

The Beat of Her Journey





Denesha Samuel
Liat Air
Rhythm of Resilience



Queenella Williams
Antigua Port Authority
Rhythm of Leadership



Christine Powell
ACB Caribbean
Rhythm of Strength



Shaveesa Gasper
Exotic Antigua
Rhythm of Culture



Zayne Frederick
Furniture Gallery
Rhythm of Elegance



Aaliyah Taylor
Cool & Smooth
Rhythm of Transformation



21ST
JULY
2026



8:00
PM



ARG

(ANTIGUA
RECREATION
GROUNDS)



TICKETS

RESERVED SEATING – EC\$50
GENERAL ADMISSION – EC\$30

CXC Announces A Major Shake-up In Regional Examinations

The Caribbean Examinations Council has announced major reforms to its School-Based Assessment (SBA) framework starting 2027, including phasing out the traditional SBA for some subjects.

The examinations body says the extensive reforms are aimed at strengthening assessment integrity across Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) and Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations, in response to the rapid rise of Generative AI and other technological innovations.

CXC says, “For subjects that are genuinely practical in nature, where hands-on, project-based assessment captures competencies that a traditional examination room cannot, such as Agricultural Science, Visual Arts, Music, Physical Education, Technical Drawing, and Food Nutrition and Health, the SBA will be retained and its moderation strengthened.”

However, it says the traditional SBA will be phased out for non-practical based subjects, including Mathematics, English, Caribbean History, Social Studies, Principles of Business, and Information Technology.

A release from CXC says, “In its place, candidates will be required to sit Paper 032, the existing alternative assessment, under examination conditions but with three significant adjustments designed to preserve reflective, extended learning:

1. Candidates will receive their examination topics approximately one month in advance;
2. Additional time will be allocated for the completion of the assessment; and,
3. Candidates will be permitted to bring reference notes into the examination room.




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Art Week 2026 announces new public art installation, expanded exhibitions and immersive experiences

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) has announced plans for the fourth edition of Antigua and Barbuda Art Week that will take place across the destination from November 11–18, 2026.

This year's programme, released during the Antigua and Barbuda Art Week media launch at Quay Studio in historic Redcliffe Quay, introduces several new initiatives. They include 'Dual Thresholds', a unique public art installation, a retrospective exhibition celebrating artist Maria Ross Iztueta, expanded exhibition spaces and a growing calendar of experiences designed to encourage residents and visitors to experience Antigua and Barbuda through the eyes of its artists.

Chief Marketing Officer of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, Charmaine Spencer said, "Today's visitors are looking for authentic experiences that allow them to engage and participate rather than simply observe. Antigua and Barbuda Art Week offers those opportunities by connecting visitors directly with our artists, our culture and our communities."

Spencer, along with visual artist Dylan Phillips, unveiled a first look at two vibrantly painted doors that will form part of the public art exhibition, 'Dual Thresholds'. The featured doors were created by Phillips and Heather Doram, MFA, GCM.

Developed by Quay Barracks Art Galleries, 'Dual Thresholds' is a public art exhibition that transforms reclaimed wooden doors



Photo Caption: Chief Marketing Officer of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, Charmaine Spencer, and visual artist Dylan Phillips unveil a preview of the 'Dual Thresholds' Doors Project during the Antigua and Barbuda Art Week media launch, offering a colourful glimpse of the public art installation to come this November. The featured doors were created by prominent visual artists Heather Doram MFA, GCM and Dylan Phillips. (Photo courtesy, The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority)

into original works of art inspired by the people, culture, landscapes and everyday life of Antigua and Barbuda. The exhibition will feature 28 freestanding, double-sided doors created by artists in Antigua and Barbuda.

The installation will debut during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), taking place in Antigua and Barbuda from November 1- 4, before opening for public viewing during Antigua and Barbuda Art Week 2026.

The retrospective exhibition celebrating the life and work of the late Maria Ross Iztueta (1934 – 2024) was also announced at the launch, and will be the featured exhibit at The Barracks Gallery.

Curator Stephen Murphy shared the news alongside the late artist's daughter Amaya Ross. Murphy

noted that, "Maria Ross made an incredible contribution to the art community in Antigua and Barbuda. This exhibition provides an opportunity to introduce her work to new audiences during Art Week."

Additional Antigua and Barbuda Art Week 2026 programme highlights include 'Art in the Quay', the return of the 'Art and Cultural Village', open studios and galleries with 'Meet the Artist' sessions, the 'Art Trail' and the new 'Art Trail Passport', 'Flavours & Canvas' immersive culinary arts and painting experience, the 'Art Battle' live painting artist competition, fashion presentations and additional exhibitions. Further programme details will be announced in the lead-up to Art Week.

Members of the Public Warned Against Unauthorised Construction in Public Cemeteries

The Ministry of Health has identified several instances of unauthorised construction within the St. John's Public Cemetery and other public cemeteries across Antigua and Barbuda.

The public is hereby advised that the construction, alteration or installation of any tomb, headstone, fence, retaining wall, concrete structure or other permanent feature within a public cemetery is strictly prohibited without prior written approval from the Chief Health Inspector.

Any unauthorised work will be immediately halted, dismantled and removed, regardless of its stage of completion, in accordance with the Public Health Act, Cap. 353. Persons who undertake unauthorised construction or interfere with graves, tombs, burial plots or other cemetery structures will also face prosecution.

These requirements are necessary to:

- ▶ protect burial plots and the rights of families;
- ▶ preserve the dignity and sanctity of cemetery grounds;
- ▶ maintain accurate records of burials and approved works;
- ▶ ensure the orderly management of public cemeteries; and
- ▶ safeguard public health and safety



**Ministry of
Health, Wellness, Environment
and Civil Service Affairs**
— Antigua and Barbuda —

PUBLIC NOTICE UNAUTHORISED CONSTRUCTION IN PUBLIC CEMETERIES



The Ministry of Health, Wellness, Environment and Civil Service Affairs has identified several instances of unauthorised construction within the St. John's Public Cemetery and other public cemeteries across Antigua and Barbuda.



The public is hereby advised that the construction, alteration or installation of any tomb, headstone, fence, retaining wall, concrete structure or other permanent feature within a public cemetery is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** without prior written approval from the **Chief Health Inspector**.



.Members of the public must not rely on instructions, assurances or approvals from unauthorised individuals. Before commencing any cemetery-related work, the required approval must be obtained directly from the Cemetery Office or the Central Board of Health.

All enquiries concerning burials, family plots, tombs, headstones, fencing, retaining walls or other cemetery works must be directed to the appropri-

ate authority before any arrangements are made or construction begins.

The Ministry is strengthening the monitoring of public cemeteries and will take appropriate enforcement action against all breaches.

The cooperation of the public is required to protect the integrity, safety and dignity of Antigua and Barbuda's public cemeteries.



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inet PARTY MONARCH

SEMI-FINALS
COOLER FETE

CARNIVAL CITY | 8:00PM

17TH JULY 2026 **ADM: \$20**

GUEST ARTISTE SOCA VILLAN





inet PARTY MONARCH

SEMI-FINALS
COOLER FETE

17TH JULY 2026
CARNIVAL CITY | 8:00PM

ADM: \$20



ORDER OF APPEARANCE JUMPY

ARTISTE	SONG
1. Dior	Dat Bun You
2. Romel	Cruel
3. Dan Knowledge	Shake It Off
4. VICIOUS	Pressure Dem
5. Kid Fresh	Dutty Mas
6. Lyrical Reds	Working Girl
7. Da Wizz	Monster Jam
8. Peetron	Wadadli Superhero
9. Ballo	Bang E Line
10. Island Prince	Gyal Siddung
11. Chapo-Gad	Soca Obsession
12. Menace XL	Jam Hard
13. Zamoni	What We Drinking
14. Young Lyrics	Mine Yah Yiy
15. King Young Vice	In Dey





inet PARTY MONARCH

SEMI-FINALS
COOLER FETE

17TH JULY 2026
CARNIVAL CITY | 8:00PM

ADM: \$20



ORDER OF APPEARANCE GROOVY

ARTISTE

SONG

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Dior | Tired Of De Work |
| 2. Daddy Fergus | One Night |
| 3. Kid Fresh | Break Away |
| 4. Bless Eye | Showtime |
| 5. Menace XL | Teddy Bear |
| 6. Naycha Kid | Jam & Fete |
| 7. Young Lyrics | Wrap Me Up |
| 8. Ezzy Rattigan | Walla Walla |
| 9. Chin | Fruit Basket |
| 10. VICIOUS | No Apology |
| 11. Island Prince | Whine Of The Year |
| 12. Raiine | So Magical |
| 13. Queen Thalia | Winner Circle |
| 14. Zan | Ah Guilty |
| 15. Empress | Til De Last |





ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA REPARATIONS SUPPORT COMMISSION

EMANCIPATION OBSERVANCES



JULY 24TH
AFRICA DRESS DAY



JULY 29TH
UHURU – TV PROGRAMME
Spiritual awakening



JULY 31ST
WATCHNIGHT GATHERING
"A Night of Reflection, Remembrance and Renewal"



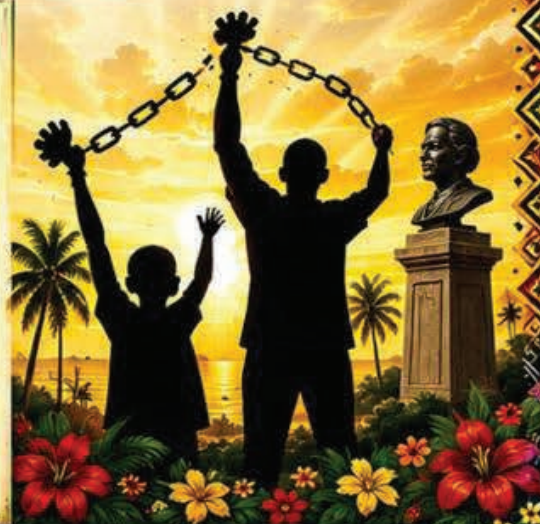
AUGUST 1ST
EMANCIPATION DAY



• EMANCIPATION BREAKFAST SERVICE –
GREENBAY MORAVIAN CHURCH **6:00 AM**

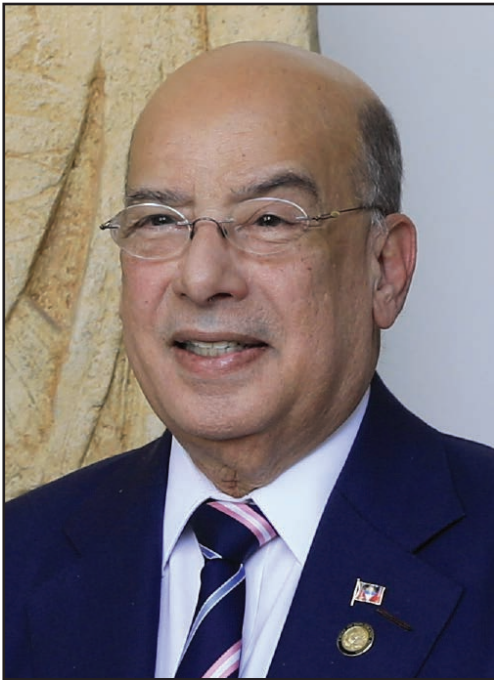


EMANCIPATION VILLAGE –
VC BIRD BUST **10:00 AM – 5:00 PM**



HONOURING OUR PAST • CELEBRATING OUR FREEDOM • BUILDING OUR FUTURE

Transparency, Sovereignty, and the Challenge of Power



By Sir Ronald Sanders

Few issues test the sovereignty of small states more severely than requests made by powerful friends. How should a country respond when cooperation is expected, but the proposed terms exceed its legal, financial and institutional capacity? That question lies at the centre of the discussions between the United States and several Caribbean governments over Third-Country Nationals (TCNs).

These are persons whom the United States wishes to remove but who are not nationals of the country to which they are being sent. Instead, they are transferred to a third, unrelated country under arrangements negotiated for the purposes of U.S. immigration enforcement.

The terms the United States has been seeking are worth understanding clearly. The original U.S. proposals envisaged a standing, programmatic arrangement under which transfers would occur on a monthly basis. Critical information about individuals was to be provided only “where available.” Financial responsibility for the costs of reception, accommodation,

healthcare, and eventual return was left unresolved. And persons subject to expedited removal, meaning they may never have had a proper hearing, were included among those eligible for transfer.

These proposals generated understandable concern among Caribbean governments and their peoples. A small island state that accepts persons in these circumstances assumes potentially significant legal responsibilities under international refugee law, obligations relating to stateless persons, and the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits returning individuals to places where they face persecution or other serious harm. Yet many Caribbean countries simply do not possess the legal infrastructure, administrative systems or financial capacity that larger states can more readily deploy.

Antigua and Barbuda is, in fact, already home to a substantial migrant population. Significant numbers of nationals from the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Cuba, Jamaica, Guyana, Dominica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and elsewhere reside in the country. It is against that reality, not any absence of goodwill, that capacity must be measured. Antigua and Barbuda has always been willing, and remains genuinely open, to reaching an agreement with the United States on Third-Country Nationals. But any such arrangement must be grounded in the practical realities of what a small island state can responsibly absorb, physically and financially, without imposing hardship on its own people.

Against this backdrop, Antigua and Barbuda stands apart from its Caribbean counterparts in one important respect. It is the first Caribbean government and, to my knowledge, remains the only one to have fully disclosed the substance of the U.S. proposals, published its own detailed counter-proposals, and issued a comprehensive White Paper for public consideration. That

White Paper, posted on government websites and made available to every citizen, explains the background, the legal concerns, the operating procedures proposed by the United States, and the principles on which Antigua and Barbuda’s own counter-proposals were constructed.

Any opportunity for the region to engage through a common framework has largely passed, because several member states entered bilateral discussions before any collective position could be developed. The absence of comparable public disclosure also made any meaningful prospect of a coordinated CARICOM approach increasingly difficult. In any event, and this should be acknowledged honestly, a single CARICOM agreement would not have been practical even if the United States had been willing. Caribbean countries differ enormously in size, financial capacity, absorptive capability, constitutional arrangements and the nature of their bilateral relationships with Washington. Each country must make decisions appropriate to its own circumstances. A one-size-fits-all approach to an issue of this sensitivity was never a realistic option.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda had a clear purpose in publishing its White Paper: to inform its Parliament and people fully and honestly about what was being proposed and how the Government intended to respond. Democracy demands that matters touching sovereignty, national security and public finance should be debated openly, not resolved quietly behind closed doors.

The subsequent parliamentary debate, culminating in the adoption of a Resolution by the House of Representatives on 15 July 2026, reflected the same principles. Parliament did not simply endorse the Government’s approach. It established the framework within which negotiations may continue: no standing programme; complete sov-

foreign discretion in every individual case; full prior funding; strict eligibility criteria; and the preserved right to suspend or terminate any arrangement at any time.

This episode, however, is about more than Third-Country Nationals. It illustrates a much older and more enduring reality that small states have always had to navigate. Throughout history, and no less today, powerful countries, regional groupings and the institutions they influence have exercised disproportionate authority in shaping international rules to which smaller states are expected to conform. The OECD and related bodies, for example, have imposed standards affecting Caribbean financial services and tax systems, backed by the threat of blacklists and other penalties, while often applying more accommodating standards within their own membership.

The pattern is familiar. Large states possess greater capacity to shape international norms and stronger means of enforcing compliance. Small states must therefore balance the legitimate defence of their sovereignty against the practical consequences that powerful countries can impose. Tourism advisories, tariffs, visa restrictions and financial sanctions are not theoretical possibilities. They are instruments that have been used before and remain available.

The lesson Antigua and Barbuda has chosen to draw is neither one of defiance for its own sake nor of submission for the sake of convenience. It is the lesson of principled and transparent engagement. States are equal in law, but not in power. That disparity cannot simply be wished away.

What small states can do, and what Antigua and Barbuda has sought to do, is negotiate with a full understanding of its rights, define clearly the limits beyond which it will not go, place its decisions before its own people and legislature, and insist upon reciprocity as a condition of cooperation.

The true measure of friendship between sovereign states is not wheth-

er one country always says “yes” to another. It is whether each respects the legitimate interests and genuine constraints of the other. Cooperation should never require a small state to assume another country’s burden without appropriate safeguards, adequate financial support and clear accountability. Where those conditions exist, cooperation is not only possible; it is desirable.

For small states, transparency strengthens sovereignty. For larger states, respect strengthens partnership. Only where both are present can genuine cooperation endure.

(The writer is the Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the United States of America and the Organization of American States. He is also the Chancellor of the University of Guyana. The views expressed are his own.)

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Why We All Need a Personal Reset in a World That Never Slows Down



By Garfield Joseph, MBA

Have you ever reached a point where everything in your life appears to be working, yet something inside feels stuck?

Your career may be progressing. Your business may be growing. Your family responsibilities may be under control. Yet despite outward signs of success, you feel less energized, less motivated, and less inspired than you once did.

Life unfolds in seasons.

There are seasons of growth and discovery, when every new experience feels exciting and full of possibility. There are seasons of achievement when our hard work produces tangible results and opens new doors. Then there are seasons when life becomes routine, not because anything is necessarily wrong, but because familiarity gradually replaces curiosity and obligation overshadows inspiration.

Most of us can relate to this experience. We become absorbed in meeting deadlines, paying bills, raising families, serving our communities, and fulfilling countless responsibilities. Days become weeks, weeks become months, and before long we find ourselves moving through life on autopilot. We are busy but not necessarily energized. Productive, but not always fulfilled.

In Antigua and Barbuda, many professionals, entrepreneurs, public servants, educators, healthcare workers,

and community leaders wear multiple hats every day. Balancing work, family, church, volunteerism, and civic responsibilities can leave little time for personal renewal. Over time, even the most dedicated individuals can begin to feel emotionally and mentally depleted.

This reality affects people from all walks of life. Employees who have spent years in the same profession, entrepreneurs navigating the challenges of business ownership, teachers shaping future generations, healthcare workers caring for others, managers leading teams, and retirees adjusting to a new chapter of life can all experience periods of fatigue, stagnation, or a loss of purpose.

That is why rejuvenation is not a luxury. It is a necessity.

Just as a smartphone needs recharging, a vehicle requires maintenance, and a garden needs nurturing to remain productive, human beings need periodic renewal. Without it, we risk becoming physically exhausted, emotionally drained, mentally stagnant, and spiritually disconnected.

Many employees spend years building successful careers. Their experience is invaluable, but experience alone cannot sustain enthusiasm. Business owners often carry the constant burden of making decisions, managing uncertainty, and solving problems. Professionals face increasing demands for performance while balancing commitments to family and community. Over time, the pressure accumulates.

The danger is that burnout rarely arrives suddenly. It creeps in quietly.

It may appear as a loss of motivation, declining productivity, increased irritability, or a feeling that each day is simply a repetition of the one before. People who were once innovative begin resisting change. Individuals who once inspired others become disengaged. Teams that once thrived start operating on autopilot.

I was reminded of this recently during a conversation with a business owner. By every outward measure, his compa-

ny was doing well. Revenue was growing, customers were satisfied, and his team was performing. Yet he admitted something surprising.

"I don't think I'm burned out," he said. "I'm just not excited anymore."

His challenge was not failure. It was fatigue. The passion that had once motivated him had gradually been replaced by routine. What he needed was not another business plan or strategy meeting. He needed a personal reset.

His experience is more common than many people realize.

Rejuvenation interrupts this cycle. It provides the opportunity to step back, reassess, and reconnect with what matters most.

One of the most effective forms of rejuvenation is learning something new.

The human mind was designed for growth. Acquiring a new skill, reading a thought-provoking book, attending a workshop, pursuing a certification, or exploring a subject outside one's field can reignite curiosity and confidence. Continuous learning reminds us that our best days are not necessarily behind us.

Another important source of renewal is changing our environment, even temporarily. While a vacation can be beneficial, rejuvenation does not always require extensive travel or significant expense. Sometimes it means taking a day to reflect, spending time in nature, pursuing a hobby, reconnecting with family, or simply disconnecting from technology long enough to think clearly. Fresh perspectives often emerge when we step away from familiar surroundings.

Relationships also play a critical role in renewal. Conversations with trusted friends, mentors, colleagues, and family members can provide encouragement and insights that we cannot gain on our own. Too often, high-performing individuals feel they must carry every burden themselves. Yet genuine rejuvenation frequently begins when we allow others to support us.

For those of faith, spiritual renewal is equally important. Throughout Scrip-

Feature

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ture, we see examples of individuals who withdrew from the demands of daily life to pray, reflect, and reconnect with God. These moments were not signs of weakness. They were preparations for greater effectiveness. A renewed spirit often produces renewed vision.

Business leaders also have an important role to play. Organizations perform best when their people are energized, engaged, and growing. Companies that encourage professional development, mentorship, creativity, and work-life balance often benefit from higher levels of innovation, productivity, and employee satisfaction. Investing in people is not merely a goodwill gesture. It is a sound business strategy.

The lesson is clear: stagnation is the enemy of growth.

Whether we are employees seeking renewed purpose, entrepreneurs pursuing new opportunities, or leaders striving to inspire our teams, we cannot expect different outcomes while carrying the same mindset year after year. Growth requires renewal. Success demands reinvention. Relevance depends on continuous improvement.

This message is especially important today. We live in an era of constant connectivity, rapid technological change, endless notifications, and increasing workplace demands. Information reaches us every minute of every day, yet many people struggle to find time for reflection. In such an environment, the ability to pause, recharge, and reset is no longer optional. It is essential.

Perhaps the most important question each of us should ask is this:

What needs renewal in my life right now?

Maybe it is your physical health. Perhaps it is your career. Maybe it is a business idea that has been sitting dormant for years. It could be a neglected relationship, an unrealized ambition, or a spiritual discipline that once brought you peace.

Whatever the answer, the first step is acknowledging the need for rejuvenation.

The good news is that rejuvenation does not require a dramatic life change. Often, it begins with a small decision: enrolling in a course, reading a new

book, taking a daily walk, seeking advice from a mentor, setting fresh goals, or simply taking time to reflect.

Small acts of renewal, practiced consistently, can produce remarkable transformations over time.

As we navigate an increasingly demanding world, let us remember that rest is not idleness, learning is not optional, and renewal is not selfish. Rejuvenation is an investment in our future effectiveness.

The strongest leaders understand it. The most successful professionals embrace it. The most resilient entrepreneurs practice it.

And perhaps now, more than ever, we need it.

As the prophet Isaiah reminds us: "But those who hope in the Lord will renew

their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary.

About the Author

Garfield Joseph is the Executive Director of a public sector organization in Antigua and Barbuda, where he is responsible for translating government policy and national objectives into operational action. His work spans strategic execution, financial oversight, and stakeholder engagement. He has also served as an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, teaching Business Strategy and Policy and Business, Government and Society. He writes regularly on investment, entrepreneurship, personal development and long-term decision-making.



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Carnival's Last Parade

The iron band begins to play,
The streets come brightly dressed.
The Greatest Summer Festival
Brings out our island's best.

The music fills the morning air,
The flags begin to fly.
The masqueraders dance with pride
Beneath our Caribbean sky.



The vendors serve refreshing drinks,
The food stalls never rest.
The laughter echoes through the night—
Carnival at its best.

But when the final song has played,
When morning starts anew,
There's one more story left to tell,
And one more job to do.

For bottles line the roadside now,
And cups are on the ground.
The wrappers ride upon the breeze,
While waste is all around.

The cans once raised in celebration,
The plates that held our meal,
The plastic forks and takeaway boxes
Show us something real.

The costumes shimmer one last time,
Then quietly disappear.
Some packed away for future days,
Some thrown out year by year.

The hotels welcome countless guests,
The restaurants stay full.
The bars work late, the airport buzzes,
Their impact isn't small.

Each Airbnb, each vendor's stand,
Each party, stage and show,
Creates a trail of waste behind
Much larger than we know.

But what if we could change the tale,
 Rewrite the final scene?
 And make our Carnival as bright
 As all the sights we've seen?



Imagine bottles gathered first,
 Instead of thrown aside.
 Imagine every aluminium can
 Collected with great pride.

Imagine glass recycled well,
 Not buried underground.
 Imagine food scraps turned to compost,
 Helping crops abound.

Imagine every masquerader
 Leaving nothing but a smile.
 Imagine cleaner streets and beaches
 Stretching mile by mile.

Imagine bands competing too
 For being clean and green.
 Showing that responsibility
 Can still be proudly seen.

For culture and sustainability
 Can dance the same sweet tune.

The future doesn't have to wait—
 It doesn't start "soon."

It starts the moment music fades,
 When celebrations cease.
 It starts with every hand that helps
 Restore our island's peace.



So dance with joy and celebrate,
 Let Carnival shine bright.
 But love the land that hosts the fête
 Long after every night.

For when the final band rolls home,
 And every song is through,
 The greatest Carnival of all
 Is one that's cleaner too.

So let us sing a brand-new song,
 A promise strong and true: **Leave only
 footprints on the street,
 Take every bottle home with you.**

Because the greatest festival
 Should also proudly be, A celebration of our
 culture...

And our responsibility.

#9



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Jamaica welcomes inaugural LIAT Air flight from Guadeloupe

Jamaica welcomed the inaugural Liat Air flight from Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, to Montego Bay, St James, on Tuesday.

The new route is touted as a milestone in strengthening ties between Caribbean islands, economies and people.

The flight, which touched down at the Sangster International Airport carrying 33 passengers, marks the start of a twice-weekly, year-round service operating on Tuesdays and Saturdays. There are plans to gradually grow to daily flights as demand increases.

Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism, Tova Hamilton, said the new connection was about far more than moving people between two destinations, as it opens Jamaica to the French Caribbean and builds a stronger bridge into the wider European market, while also creating fresh opportunities.

“Every seat on this aircraft represents opportunity for a taxi operator waiting on the outside of this airport, opportunity for a farmer supplying fresh produce to our hotels, opportunity for an artisan whose craftsmanship tells Jamaica’s story, and opportunity for a young entrepreneur building a business,” Hamilton explained.

“Also, there is opportunity for more of the tourism dollar to stay where it belongs – in the hands of the people whose talent, hard work, and hospitality bring Jamaica to life every single day.”

According to her, the connection aligns with what the ministry describes as Tourism 3.0, a strategy focused not just on growing visitor numbers but on ensuring more Jamaicans benefit directly from tourism revenue



She noted that the Caribbean cannot reach its full potential as a collection of isolated islands and that the region’s strength lies in moving people, goods and culture more freely across its borders.

“To the captain, crew, and passengers of this inaugural flight, welcome home to Jamaica. You are among the first to travel the route that we believe will carry many more in the years ahead,” Hamilton said.

Chief Operating Officer of Liat Air, Obiukwu Mbanuzuo, thanked the partners who helped bring the new air link to fruition. He explained that the service represented more than a simple route between Guadeloupe and Montego Bay, pointing out that it is a connection between two nations, their peoples and their economies.

Mbanuzuo indicated that the flight

will cut travel time between the islands to just a few hours instead of requiring multiple connections, making it easier for families to stay close and for new business ties to form.

Mayor of Montego Bay and Chairman of the St James Municipal Corporation, Councillor Richard Vernon, commended Liat Air’s growth since its launch and its contribution to linking Montego Bay with the rest of the world.

He stated that the connection supports Jamaica’s push to diversify its tourism markets.

“We will continue to connect to the world as we make this airport a real hub in the Caribbean to connect anywhere across the Caribbean,” Vernon underscored. (JIS)

Regional News

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FBI lists Jamaican woman as 'Most Wanted', posts US\$150,000 reward



The United States (US) Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is offering a US\$150,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of a Jamaican woman said to have been involved in a US\$32 million COVID funds fraud scheme.

Wanted by US authorities for conspiracy to commit

wire fraud and money laundering in connection with the scheme is Elaine Angene Escoe.

The FBI says Escoe and her five co-defendants, all of whom have either been found guilty at trial or have pleaded guilty, allegedly submitted more than 90 fraudulent applications for funds from the Paycheck

Protection Program (PPP), Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF), and Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) between May of 2020, and November of 2021.

The applications contained false information regarding employee counts, payroll expenses, and business revenues. The scheme resulted in the wrongful disbursement of approximately US\$29.1 million in PPP funds, US\$1.2 million in RRF funds, and US\$3.8 million in SVOG funds.

After the funds were disbursed, Escoe and others allegedly directed payments to each other and to businesses they controlled, withdrew large sums in cash, and used blank, signed checks to con-

ceal the origin and nature of the proceeds.

A federal arrest warrant was issued for the woman on May 22, 2025 in Florida, after she was charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud; conspiracy to commit money laundering; wire fraud; concealment money laundering, and transactional money laundering.

At the time the arrest warrant was issued, the FBI says, Escoe was notified of her scheduled court appearance on June 5, 2025, but failed to appear.

Escoe was last seen on June 3, 2025, in Palm Beach County, Florida and is considered a flight risk by the agency. (Jamaica Observer)






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Regional News

Tensions rise as SVG authorities seize Grenadian vessel



The detention of a Grenadian-registered vessel by the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Coast Guard has sparked a legal and diplomatic firestorm, with prominent criminal defense attorney Anslem Clouden alleging a serious violation of international maritime law.

The vessel, the MV Pathfinder, was intercepted on Saturday, July 12th, while navigating through the territorial waters of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. According to Clouden, the ship was lawfully exercising its right of innocent passage under Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Despite this, the vessel was interdicted and escorted to Union Island, where it remains detained.

The MV Pathfinder was en route to Tyrrel Bay, Carriacou, from Martinique, where it had recently delivered a shipment of fish. At the time of its seizure, the vessel was carrying a manifested cargo that included Kronen-

bourg 1664 beers and various household merchandise.

Attorney Clouden emphasized that the ship's captain contacted him directly regarding the incident. He asserts that no illegal substances or unlawful goods were discovered on board during the search by authorities. Furthermore, Clouden argues there was no evidence that the vessel posed any threat to the "peace, good order, or security" of the coastal state, which is the standard required to abrogate the right of innocent passage.

"You cannot without reasonable and probable grounds interdict a boat because you don't like its color or you don't like its flag," Clouden stated, noting that international law dictates specific protections for ships traversing territorial seas.

Expressing concern that this is not an isolated incident for Grenadian vessels, Clouden has officially reached out to Grenada's Minister for Foreign

Affairs, Joseph Andall. He is requesting that a formal diplomatic note of protest be lodged against the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines regarding the conduct of its Coast Guard.

The attorney highlighted the potential for the situation to escalate if not resolved through diplomatic channels. He suggested that Grenada could take retaliatory action against Vincentian ships that trade between Trinidad and St. Vincent—particularly those transporting agricultural goods like Tanya, Dasheen, and other vegetables—when they traverse Grenadian territorial waters. Such measures, he warned, would create "great inconvenience" for regional trade.

As of the latest reports, the MV Pathfinder remains in the custody of St. Vincent and the Grenadines authorities, who have not yet provided an official comment on the legal basis for the detention. (St Vincent Times)

Ebola spreading in DRC 'faster than any previous outbreak



The World Health Organization warned Thursday that Ebola was spreading in the Democratic Republic of Congo at a faster pace than during any previous outbreak of the deadly

virus.

More than 2,000 cases including 796 deaths have been confirmed in the DR Congo since the outbreak was declared on May 15, making it “now

the third-largest Ebola outbreak on record”, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters, warning that “in the past month, it had expanded faster than any previous outbreak”. (AFP)



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Regional News

New monkey species with orange lips found 'hiding' in DR Congo forest

A monkey that has striking pinkish-orange lips and a black face - and lives in the forests of the Democratic Republic of Congo - has been confirmed as a new species to science.

The black-furred primate was spotted and photographed hidden away in the high tree canopy of dense tropical forests in Lomami National Park, in the central east of the country.

Conservationists working there first reported seeing this unusual-looking animal back in 2008. But they captured just one blurry photograph.

After another sighting 10 years later, an international team set out to find and study the monkey and revealed that it was a previously unknown species.

This is only the fifth African monkey species to be discovered in the last 75 years.

Junior Amboko, a PhD student at Florida Atlantic University, played a leading role in the search, which involved audio recordings, photography and detailed genetic studies.

The findings were published in the journal PLoS One.

Amboko told BBC News it was an "amazing feeling" to look into the face of an animal that so few people knew existed.

Junior Amboko Two researchers, one holding a microphone on a long pole, and one carrying a recording device, work in the dense rainforest to capture the call of the *Colobus congoensis* monkey. Junior Amboko

Junior Amboko (left) and Marché B. Koko recorded the dis-



tinctive, resonant roar of the newly discovered *Colobus congoensis* monkey in the Lomami National Park, DRC

"Discovering" a species, in this context, means officially recording and confirming it has evolved to be genetically distinct. Some local people already knew of the monkey's existence and refer to it by a common name - Likweli.

But Amboko said the monkeys were "kind of shy" - and tended to hide high in the trees.

"As part of our search, we interviewed people in 52 villages close to where the animals live. And only people in eight villages [had ever seen] them," he recalled.

The research team - from DRC, the US and Germany - gave the animal the Latin name *Colobus congoensis* in recognition of the natural diversity in the country.

It belongs to the larger group of colobus monkeys. "These are really important African monkeys that don't have thumbs," explained Prof Kate Detwiler from Florida Atlantic University.

"They're these herbivores of the canopy that are a critical part of the ecosystem. We think they have a lot to do with processing seeds and germination in the forest."

Prof Detwiler speculates that their unusual, bright facial markings could be a visual signal to other animals, potentially attractive to a mate or that it could allow the animals to identify each other.

The monkeys also have a distinctive "roaring" call. "You often hear them, but don't see them," said Amboko.

They think the animals are rare and restricted to a part of the forest where they can find the food and habitat they need.

The animals are hunted for meat, so the researchers hope that now that *Colobus congoensis* is classified as a distinct species it can be officially protected.

The researchers say they still have a lot of questions about this newly described, secretive species. They plan to carry out a more detailed survey to estimate their population and study their behaviour. (BBC)

More than 800 Canadian wildfires burning as air quality alerts extend to US



More than 800 wildfires are burning across Canada, with air quality alerts now extending south into multiple US states.

The air quality in large parts of the northern states of Michigan, Minneapolis and Minnesota is deemed "hazardous" by the US Air Quality Index program, with people recommended to stay indoors.

Alerts span the Upper Midwest, the Great Lakes region and into the US's Northeast, the US's national weather service (NOAA) said in an update on Thursday.

There are currently 857 fires actively

burning in Canada, including 23 new fires on Thursday, according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre.

According to the Canadian Wildland Fire Information System, the vast majority of wildfires are burning out of control.

The large cluster of fires affecting western areas of Ontario are responsible for sending thick plumes of smoke and poor air quality across Thunder Bay and Toronto, with lower concentrations of smoke high in the atmosphere drifting over the Great Lakes and above New York with hazy skies and redder sunrise and sunsets likely.

There will be quite widespread thunderstorms in Ontario over the next few days, but the rain may not be enough to make much of a difference.

Northwesterly winds will continue to blow the smoke into northern US states for the rest of this week and into the weekend, leading to concerns smoke will drift into New Jersey where Sunday's World Cup final is due to take place.

A change in the wind direction by Monday means that the smoke will tend to be steered across Quebec with an improvement in air quality further south in the US.

Air quality in the Midwestern city of Detroit is currently the worst in the world, Swiss air quality tracker IQAir said, followed by Minneapolis and Toronto.

A dramatic video on Wednesday showed a freight train in Ontario, Canada surrounded by wildfire flames, as workers requested an emergency rescue.

Canadian National Rail said in a statement that the workers who were trapped outside Armstrong were all safely rescued, and that operations have been temporarily suspended in the region. (BBC)

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Italian officials handed jail terms for Genoa bridge disaster that killed 43



The former head of Italy's motorway operator has been given a 12-year prison sentence over the collapse of Genoa's Morandi bridge in August 2018.

Prosecutors had asked for a far longer jail term for Giovanni Castellucci, ex-chief executive of Autostrade per l'Italia (Aspi).

Forty-three people died when the motorway bridge running through the city came down in a rain storm at the height of the holiday season, sending cars and lorries plummeting to the ground.

Castellucci, who is already serving a six-year jail term for a 2013 road disaster, was one of 57 defendants on trial in Genoa. Another top motorway official, Michele Donferri Mitelli, has been given 11 years in jail.

Emmanuel Diaz, whose brother

Henry died in the bridge collapse told Italian TV he was "very satisfied" with the verdict, while Egle Possetti, whose sister and her family were all killed, said she thought the 12-year term handed to Castellucci was "acceptable".

Castellucci was not in court to hear the verdicts, read out by Judge Paolo Lepri. The former number two at the motorway operator, Paolo Berti, was handed a five-and-a-half-year jail term, seven years less than prosecutors had sought.

In total, prosecutors had asked for the 57 defendants to be given 400 years in jail for failing to maintain the viaduct, which was built by Riccardo Morandi in 1967.

All the defendants had denied doing anything wrong.

While prosecutors had argued that maintenance of the ageing structure

had been repeatedly delayed and that warning signs had been ignored, defence lawyers blamed the disaster on a design flaw, and the fact that a specific cable was encased in concrete.

Among the defendants on trial were engineers from the maintenance firm Spea and former officials from both the transport ministry and the Aspi motorway operator's parent company Atlantia.

Spea's former chief executive, Antonino Galatà, was given a five-and-a-half-year prison term, while Mauro Coletta, the former top official in charge of the ministry's motorway directorate, received five years.

On the eve of the trial, the current head of Aspi, Arrigo Giana, made his company's first public apology for the bridge collapse, saying that "the actions and decisions of some people left indelible scars". (BBC)



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THURSDAY JULY 23RD  CONCERT/ TESTIMONY NIGHT	FRIDAY JULY 24TH  BANQUET	SATURDAY JULY 25TH <i>Willikies Day</i> 9:30AM – 2:30PM  FOOD PACKAGE DISTRIBUTION  HEALTH FAIR	SUNDAY JULY 26TH  CLOSING SERVICE CHURCH GROUNDS

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Sports News

NPMT and Xclusive Ballaz advance to semis in Gray's Green League



Nat Pan My Team

Nat Pan My Team (NPMT) Upsetters and Xclusive Ballaz have advanced to the semi-finals in the Gray's Green Community Football League.

Both teams secured their spots in the semi-finals by recording wins in the quarter-finals at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park on Wednesday evening.

The NPMT Upsetters coasted to a 3-1 victory over West Bank Hatton. Ho-
wayne James had a double conversion,

and Robert Jeffrey scored the other goal for NPMT Upsetters.

Juan Melenchiano scored a consolation goal for West Bank Hatton.

Xclusive Ballaz prevailed 4-2 against El Guapo in the other quarter-final affair.

The goals for Xclusive Ballaz were scored by Raheem Deterville, Qwami Byers, Andre Nicholas, and Akeem Isaac. Troy Jules and Kimani Richards

each converted once for El Guapo.

Twelve teams 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, Michael Joseph; Top Speed Construction; I Love Electrics; Justin Car Wash; and Smith's Trucking.



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Bridge named MVP as Junior Spanish Lava win opening MDBA exhibition

The road to the Mahijah Davis Basketball Academy (MDBA) 3rd Annual Youth Summer Basketball Invitational Splash Tournament officially got underway with an exciting practice exhibition game at the Lower Ottos Basketball Court ahead of the tournament from August 11 to 15.

Junior Spanish Lava held off a determined Dadli Ballers squad to secure a thrilling 47-45 victory in the opening exhibition contest.

Leading the charge was Justin Bridge, who earned Most Valuable Player (MVP) honours after an outstanding all-around performance.

Bridge's leadership, composure, and timely plays on both offense and defense proved to be the difference as Junior Spanish Lava closed out the narrow victory.

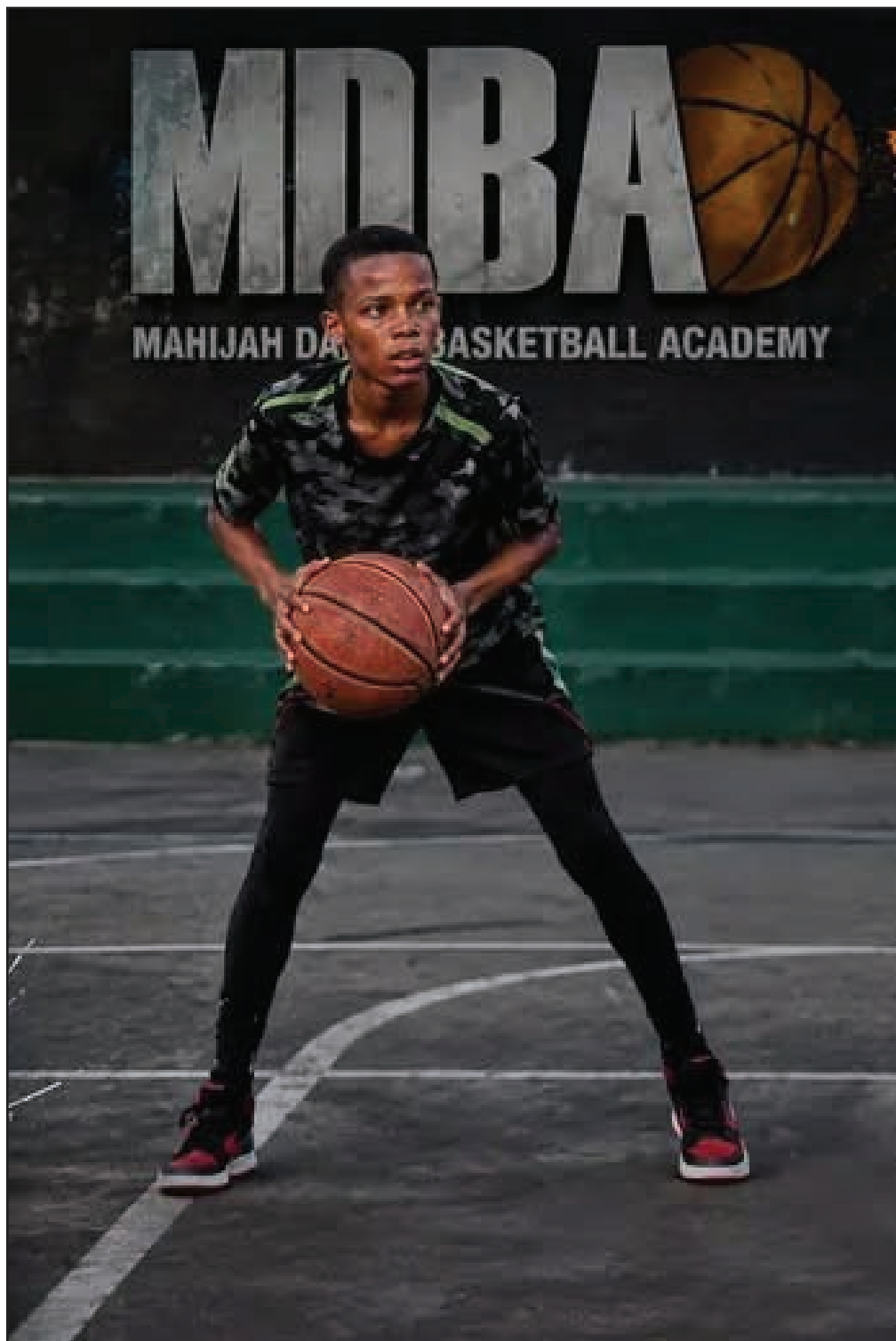
Despite the loss, Elliot Samuel Jr. turned in a spectacular performance, pouring in a game-high 33 points.

Samuel showcased his scoring ability throughout the contest, keeping Dadli Ballers within striking distance until the final buzzer, but his offensive outburst was not enough to overcome the balanced effort from Junior Spanish Lava.

The exhibition provided fans and parents with an early glimpse of the exciting talent that will be on display when the MDBA 3rd Annual Youth Summer Basketball Invitational Splash Tournament officially tips off in August.

The competitive matchup highlighted the growth and development of Antigua and Barbuda's young basketball players and set an exciting tone for the weeks ahead.

With Justin Bridge claiming the first exhibition MVP award and Elliot Samuel Jr. establishing himself



Justin Bridge

as one of the tournament's top offensive threats, anticipation continues to build for what promises to be another outstanding edition of the MDBA Summer Splash.

Potential teams are Junior Spanish Lava, Dadli Ballers, Antiguan Ballers, Grenada KCBA Knights, and the Wadadli Elites.

Leewards get second win in CWI Under-19 tournament



Players of the Leeward Islands Tropical Wave under-19 team. (LICB)

The Leeward Islands Tropical Wave returned to winning form in the Cricket West Indies (CWI) Rising Stars Men's Under-19 50-over Championship in Antigua on Wednesday.

After crashing to a humiliating 258-run loss to defending champions Barbados on Monday, the Leeward Islands rebounded to record their second win in three matches with a commanding 144-run victory over the Windward Islands in Bethesda.

Antiguan opener Tanez Francis continued his prolific form in the tournament, hitting his third consecutive half century to lead the Leeward Islands

to 269 for nine off their 50 overs after winning the toss and electing to bat.

Francis hit a top score of 79, fellow Antiguan J'Quan Athanaze struck 55, Lawshorn Bergan got 47, and Lyhte Browne chipped in with 38. Earshino Fontaine captured three for 32, and Tyler Venner picked up two for 54.

In reply, the Windward Islands were bundled out for 125 in 29 overs. Cody Fontinelle hit 22, Theo Edward struck 18, Tyler Venner got 17, and Kevin Joseph made 15.

Three Antiguan reaps success with the ball for the Leeward Islands. Captain Matthew Miller bagged two for

17, pacer Tayari Tonge took two for 25, and Kerique Mentore claimed two for 26.

Defending back-to-back champions Barbados kept up their unbeaten run, claiming their third consecutive win with a 63-run victory over Guyana at Coolidge Cricket Ground (CCG).

Summarized scores: BARBADOS 258 in 49.5 overs (Jordan Graham 78, Justin Parris 67, Seth Smith 39, Kelani Clarke 19, Raphael Lovell 13; Romario Ramdehol 3-27, Gilbert Griffith 3-37, Parmeshwar Ram 2-39).

GUYANA 195 in 44.1 overs (Adrian Hetmyer 61, Dhanesh Persaud 35, Romario Ramdehol 21, Khush Seegobin 20, Jonathan Mentore 12, Darwin Joseph 10 not out; Justin Parris 4-19, Rajeev Parsooram 2-49).

After winning their previous two matches, Trinidad and Tobago suffered their first defeat in a crushing 106-run loss to Jamaica in their third-round match at Ball Beef in Liberta.

Summarized scores: JAMAICA 225-8 in 50 overs (Adrian Silvera 52 not out, Ryan Lyttleton 41, Pajay Nelson 25, Perico Henry 24 not out, Geovanni Grey 19, Odane Binns 18, Tyson Gordon Jr. 17; Daniel Holder 3-52, Daron Dhanraj 2-37, Brendan Boodoo 2-43).

T&T 119 in 35.3 overs (Brendan Boodoo 54, Daniel Holder 12, Christian Lall 12, Levi Ghanny 11, Tariq Richards 10; Jahdae Moore 3-10, Perico Henry 3-27, Nicoli McKenzie 2-29).



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International Cricket Council revamps formats for men's World Cups

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The International Cricket Council has changed the competition formats of two major men's tournaments, adding a preliminary round before the group stage of the 2027 World Cup and revamping the playoffs for the Twenty20 (T20) World Cup in 2028.

"The changes were introduced to create more meaningful contests, elevate competitive standards, strengthen the competitive structure of both events, and enhance the tournament experience for athletes and fans," cricket's international governing body said in the wake of weekend board meetings.

The traditional World Cup — which features one-day international (ODI) games — is usually staged once every four years. Australia is the defending champion after beating India in the final at Ahmedabad in a 10-team tournament in 2023.

Next year's edition will involve 14 teams and be co-hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia.

The T20 World Cup is usually staged once every two years, and India is the defending champion after winning on home soil in March.

Round 1: The teams in the 12th, 13th and 14th qualifying places will contest a so-called "Super Series" round, with the winner advancing to join 11 other teams in the group stage at the 2027



International Cricket Council

one-day World Cup.

Round 2: Twelve teams will be divided into two groups of six. The top three teams from each group in the league stage will advance — along with the best fourth-place team — to the Super 7 stage.

Round 3: The Super 7 round includes a round-robin format with each team playing six other rivals and the top four advancing to the knockout stage. The semifinals will feature No. 1 vs. No. 4 and No. 2 vs. No. 3.

"The structure has been designed to strengthen the competitive narrative across every stage of the event," the ICC said.

The 2028 T20 tournament in Australia and New Zealand will feature 20 teams and will have 30 matches in the initial group stage.

Group stage: The participating teams will be divided into five groups of four. In the previous T20 World Cup, there was four groups of five teams. The top two teams from each group will advance.

Super 10: This round will have two groups of five, playing a round-robin format. The winners of each will qualify directly for the semifinals.

The remaining two semifinal spots will be decided through a new eliminators round, with the second-place teams from each Super 10 group facing the third-place teams from the opposite group. The winners of those eliminators will complete the semifinal lineup.

Twelve teams — Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the West Indies, and Zimbabwe — have already made it to the 2028 event, based on performances in the 2026 T20 World Cup and team rankings.

The remaining eight spots at the 2028 edition will be filled through a 16-team global qualifier competition.

The USA, Canada, Italy, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates got automatic places at the global qualifier. Scotland has direct entry into Europe regional final.



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Strictly Business advances to final of ABSCA men's T20 tourney

Rackaman Construction Strictly Business has advanced to the finals of the Antigua and Barbuda Softball Cricket Association's (ABSCA) WTP 93.5 FM and Chet Greene T20 Championships.

The Strictly Business booked their spot in the championship decider by surging to a commanding 49-run victory over the Dredgers in the first semi-final at the Clare Hall playing field on Wednesday evening.

Strictly Business made 132 for five off their allotted 20 overs. Player of the match Clinton Benjamin slammed 42, Kim George hit 21, Owen Graham got 18, and Jevon Howell scored 17. Tyrone Williams Jr. picked up two wickets for nine runs.

In reply, the Dredgers were dismissed for 83 in 19.4 overs. Javaughn James scored 27. Kerry Mentore snapped up three for 10, and Kadeem Josiah captured two for 25.

Meanwhile, Alzarri and Sharon Joseph, North Sails Antigua Female Flyers have continued their perfect run in the women's T20 competition.

The Female Flyers maintained their unbeaten run by claiming their fourth win in as many games, pulling off a seven-wicket victory over Bravos Wholesale and Distributors Jennings Rockets at the Clare Hall playing field in their latest outing.

The Jennings Rockets could only muster 71 for four in their 20 overs. Ann Marie Parker hit an unbeaten 20, and Kushana David scored 17 not out. Player of the match Monique Titus grabbed three for 13.

The Female Flyers soared to victory



The Rackaman Construction Strictly Business softball cricket team

by scoring 73 for three in 8.2 overs. Terez Parker smashed an unbeaten 28, and Sevley Ireland scored 16 not out.

Patara Francis, Chemique Benjamin, and Pauline Shaw each picked up a wicket for the Jennings Rockets, who remain winless after crashing to their fourth defeat in as many games.

After suffering a seven-wicket loss to the Female Flyers in their previous outing, Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors returned to winning form in devastating fashion.

Player of the match Grace Persaud hammered an unbeaten century as the Survivors notched up their third

win in four matches by pulling off a crushing 117-run victory over the Potters Uprising Cricket Team in their latest outing.

Persaud smashed 109 not out, which included 15 fours and two sixes, to propel the Survivors to 200 for two off their 20 overs. Sacha Michael struck 49 not out.

In reply, the Potters Uprising Team was restricted to 83 for three from their 20 overs. They got 28 extras, Jemma Joseph hit an unbeaten 21, and Nolia Elvin also scored 21 for Potters, who slumped to their third loss in four matches. Sacha Michael captured two for 10.