

THURSDAY 30TH JULY 2026 | VOLUME 10 ISSUE 05 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

PWD Workers to Begin Receiving Outstanding Payments

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Antigua and Barbuda-Jersey Art Exchange In Official Unveiling of Mural

PWD Workers To Begin Receiving Outstanding Payments On Friday



Temporary staff of the Ministry of Works who took protest action on Tuesday to bring attention to their issue, are to begin receiving payments from tomorrow, Friday.

This has been confirmed by President of the Antigua Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU), Bernard de Nully following a meeting on Wednesday with a team from the ministry lead by Minister Maria Browne, Minister of State, Sen. Shenella Govia and Permanent Secretary, Sandra Joseph.

De Nully, noted that AT&LU General Secretary Alrick Daniel is currently dealing with a family matter, and such he represented the union at the meeting where a number of commitments regarding payments were made.

“We agreed that the first payment will be made on Friday. This will be followed up next week with a schedule of payments for the more than 300 persons who were recently hired by the ministry. The schedule of payments will also include overtime payments for all staff of the ministry,” he disclosed.

Further, he said the new staff are requesting to be made permanent, but that this requires a process that may involve having them go through a period of probation following which they will be evaluated to determine their suitability to be made permanent.

The union boss was also not in favour of the spontaneous protest action on Tuesday where the workers picketed the Office of the Prime Minister. He

said while the union encourages protests, his preference is for these actions to be driven by the union.

Daniel had reported that there were multiple issues that were at the heart of Tuesday’s protests. These run from some workers not receiving any payments at all, others receiving some payments and discrepancies in the amounts that others received. He said the problems were administrative in nature and that the union and the ministry had been engaged in discussions to resolve these issues.

At Tuesday’s picket, Prime Minister Gaston Browne intervened to help bring a resolution to the issue after promising that he would make arrangements for payments to begin this week.



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Antigua and Barbuda-Jersey Art Exchange In Official Unveiling of Mural



The exchange forms part of the growing partnership between Antigua and Barbuda and Jersey, which has expanded in recent years through cooperation in education, leadership development, hospitality, sport, music and the creative industries. Later this year, the collaboration will continue when artists from Jersey travel to Antigua and Barbuda to create a second public mural ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2026.

Participating in the Antigua and Barbuda phase will be Jersey painter Max Corbett, artist and illustrator Aimée Cast, and filmmaker Toby Norman, who will document the creative process. They will work alongside artists from Antigua and Barbuda under the guidance of curator and project facil-

The first phase of the Antigua and Barbuda-Jersey Art Exchange has concluded with the official unveiling of a collaborative public mural at Elizabeth Marina in Jersey.

This marks the successful completion of an initiative that brought together young artists from both islands to celebrate culture, creativity and friendship through the visual arts.

Representing Antigua and Barbuda were Joyce Murray-Watkins, Trinity Hughes and Tse Pigott, all of whom are students of the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS), who worked alongside artists from Jersey under the guidance of Mark Brown, Head of the Department of Fine Arts and Creative Studies at ABCAS.

Inspired by the theme “Safe Haven Across the Sea”, the mural reflects the shared histories, identities and cultures of Antigua and Barbuda and Jersey through imagery depicting iconic landmarks, native flora, cultural traditions and the sea that connects both island communities.



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Local News

itator Jacqueline Rutter and Antiguan artist and art and design lecturer at the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies, Mark Brown, who jointly developed the creative brief for the exchange.

High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom, Karen-Mae Hill welcomed the successful completion of the first phase of the project.

“The unveiling of this mural is a wonderful celebration of what can be achieved when young people are brought together through creativity and cultural exchange. Beyond the artwork itself, this project has fostered friendships, encouraged mutual understanding and further strengthened the relationship between Antigua and Barbuda and Jersey.”

Reflecting on the experience, Mark Brown said: “This exchange has been a truly transformative experience for



our students, providing them with the opportunity to immerse themselves in another culture, collaborate with fel-

low artists and see firsthand how art can build bridges between communities.”



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Lifeguard Who Died at Fort James Beach Identified as Kevon Warner



Kevon Warner

The lifeguard who tragically lost his life Wednesday after suffering a medical emergency while on duty at Fort James Beach has been identified as Kevon Warner, better known as “Dragon”

According to reports, Warner collapsed while carrying out his duties on Tuesday, July 28, triggering a frantic response from fellow lifeguards. Colleagues quickly pulled him from the water and immediately began CPR while awaiting the arrival of emergency medical personnel.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) officers continued life-saving efforts at the scene before transporting Warner to the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre. Despite the extensive efforts of first responders and medical staff, he was later pronounced dead at the hospital.

Authorities have not yet disclosed what caused the medical emergency, and no further details have been released.

Warner’s death has sent shockwaves through the community, with an outpouring of tributes from friends, relatives and members of the public. Many remembered him as a dedicated lifeguard who faithfully served

at one of Antigua’s busiest beaches, describing him as a kind-hearted individual who was always willing to help others.

His passing has left a deep void among his colleagues and the wider

Fort James Beach community, where he was a familiar and respected presence. Condolences have continued to pour in for his family and loved ones as they mourn his sudden loss.



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Local News



Khalid Shabazz Calls for Independent Inquiry Into Son's Death

Khalid Shabazz, the father of Rashawn Shabazz, who died in the custody of the Presiding Officers at His Majesty's Prison on Thursday, July 23, is calling for an independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding his son's death.

Shabazz outlined what he described as a number of inconsistencies and injustices that, he says, are not reflected in the official police account. He argued that the police cannot be trusted to investigate the police, citing what he believes to be a pattern of similar cases.

"Certainly when you have a situation like this when they are asked to investigate themselves, we don't think that it's right. We think that an independent investigation should be conducted by an independent body, not affiliated with the police," Shabazz said.

He stressed that his son should never



have been remanded to prison, arguing that the environment is unsuitable for someone living with mental health disorders. He further expressed his suspicion that his son died while in police custody, detailing his understanding

that Rashawn arrived at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre unresponsive.

"I spoke to the doctor. Understood from the doctor that when he came in he was not alive. His heart had stopped. So we can only conclude that that had either transpired on the way to the Hospital, or at the Prison," he added.

Shabazz maintains that he will relentlessly pursue the matter, saying it represents more than a quest for justice for his son. He believes an independent investigation is necessary to ensure accountability from those entrusted with authority, adding that while it is his family today, it could just as easily be another family's tragedy tomorrow.

The father and community activist says he will continue his campaign to ensure justice is served, insisting that the process must begin with a thorough and independent investigation.

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ABAPD Announces Raffle Winners



The Antigua and Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities (ABAPD) has announced the names of the winners of the recently-held fund-raising raffle.

1st prize – a four burner stove - **Dora Mansoor**

2nd prize - \$500 dollars - **Andre Knight Fitches Creek**

3rd prize – an air fryer - **Cerie Richards**

4th prize - Bluetooth speaker- **Gizelle Derrick**

The ABAPD is expressing thanks to its many supporters who contributed prizes or who purchased tickets to support the event. Special thanks to Townhouse Mega Store, Cool and Smooth, Epicurean Fine Foods and Pharmacy, Billy's Food Mart, ABS Radio and Television and Point Express newspaper.



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PANORAMA COMPETITION ORDER OF APPEARANCE

BAND	ORDER OF APPEARANCE	TUNE OF CHOICE	SUNG BY	ARRANGER	TUNER / BUILDER	CAPTAIN
Harmonites Steel Orchestra	1	Fire in De Back Seat	King Swallow	Aubrey "Lacu" Samuel	Eustace Harris	Alston Davis
West Side Symphony	2	Stand Up for Antigua 2016	King Onyan	Oren Peters	Veron Henry	Eugene Davis
Original Steel Orchestra	3	Pan Man Play	Claudette CP Peters	Derel Jarvis	Veron Henry	
Panache Steel Orchestra	4	Pan Man Play	Claudette CP Peters	Malik Smith	Veron Henry	Maurissa Potter
Gemonites Steel Orchestra	5	Bet 2016	Ricardo Drue	Johnny Gonsalves	B. Kelman D. Richardson	Joseph Henry
Pandemonium Steel Orchestra	6	Mad Mad Mad 2010	Claudette CP Peters	Dr Zahra Lake	Veron Henry	Dr Zahra Lake
Hells Gate Steel Orchestra	7	Bet 2016	Ricardo Drue	Khan Cordice	Veron Henry	Keith Athill
Halcyon Steel Orchestra	8	Bet 2016	Ricardo Drue	Lorenzo Hodge	Dudley Dickson	Dwayne Mussington

FEEL THE
RHYTHM
OF Pan



ONDCP Director Pushes National Cyber Defence Strategy Amid Rising Fraud Threat

Director of the Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy (ONDCP), Lieutenant Colonel Edward Croft is making a case for Antigua and Barbuda to build its own defences against the growing threat of cybercrime.

Addressing the National Cybersecurity and Fraud Prevention Forum held recently, he said it is necessary especially since international law enforcement agencies are unlikely to prioritise the country's cases.

According to him, Antigua and Barbuda can no longer rely solely on investigating crimes after they occur but must instead develop systems capable of preventing attacks before money is stolen, adding, "Our strategy cannot be post-mortem. It must be predictive infrastructure built before the theft occurs".

The Director of the ONDCP explained that many of the fraud schemes affecting Antigua and Barbuda are orchestrated by organised criminal syndicates operating thousands of miles away, placing them beyond the immediate reach of lo-



cal investigators. Because many of the operations are based in jurisdictions that offer criminals a degree of protection, recovering stolen funds and bringing offenders to justice is often an extremely difficult process.

"When we ask international partners to trace these

actors, our requests are rarely prioritised," he said. "However devastating these losses feel to us, against the scale of global cartels, our cases don't rise to the top of the pile."

The reality, he added, is that Antigua and Barbuda must strengthen its own re-

silience.

"No one is coming to save us. We must save ourselves."

To confront the growing threat, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Croft revealed that authorities have already established a dedicated investigative task force comprising the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda and the ONDCP. The multidisciplinary team is intended to improve investigations into cyber-enabled financial crimes while enhancing intelligence gathering and case preparation.

While plans are being set in motion to combat cyber-crimes and online fraud, Mr. Croft stressed that law enforcement alone cannot solve the problem, highlighting the need for a united front.

One of the strongest recommendations coming from the ONDCP director was directed at telecommunications providers.

Colonel Croft argued that mobile service providers should be subjected to the


 An advertisement for Curry House restaurant. The background is a collage of various Indian dishes in bowls. The text "Curry House" is written in a large, stylized red font. Below it, in white text, is "ANTIGUA". At the bottom, it says "Open Daily - 12:00pm - 10:30pm". Social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are shown with their respective handles: "currytandoorihouseanu", "curryhouseanu", and a phone number "(268) 736-7165".

Local News

same rigorous “Know Your Customer” standards that banks are legally required to follow.

He also urged providers to eliminate anonymous SIM registrations and strengthen safeguards against SIM-swapping, a tactic frequently used by cybercriminals to intercept banking authentication codes and gain unauthorised access to customer accounts.

Commercial banks also have a critical role to play, Croft said, calling for more sophisticated fraud detection systems capable of identifying suspicious transactions before they are completed.

He proposed introducing what he described as “dynamic circuit breakers” that would temporarily delay unusual or out-of-pattern transfers until customers can verify the transactions. Such systems, he maintained, could prevent significant financial losses before they occur rather than relying on attempts to recover stolen funds after the money has already left the country.

Croft also challenged financial regulators to take a more proactive approach to oversight.

He said the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) should not simply establish standards for financial institutions but should actively monitor how effectively those standards are being implemented.

“The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank does not simply set the rules banks operate under. It must actively supervise their execution,

holding institutions accountable for the speed and integrity of their response,” he said.

He further pointed to emerging consumer protection mechanisms, including the Office of Financial Conduct, as important tools to ensure citizens have meaningful avenues for complaints and redress when financial institutions fail to respond appropriately.

Public education was identified as one of the most effective weapons against cybercrime.

Colonel Croft urged citizens to remain vigilant and learn how to recognize fraudulent calls, phishing attempts and online scams before they become victims.

“We must keep arming you with clear, aggressive awareness to recognise these traps before the gate is opened,” he said.

He pointed out that preventing a victim from engaging with a scammer is often far more effective than trying to recover stolen funds afterward.

The head of the ONDCP is advocating for an “air-tight mechanism” linking banks, telecommunications providers, regulators, law enforcement agencies and the public through constant communication and intelligence sharing.

“Neither the banks, telecommunication service providers, law enforcement, regulators, nor citizens can succeed alone,” he said. “This is the beginning of a standing, coordinated partnership.”

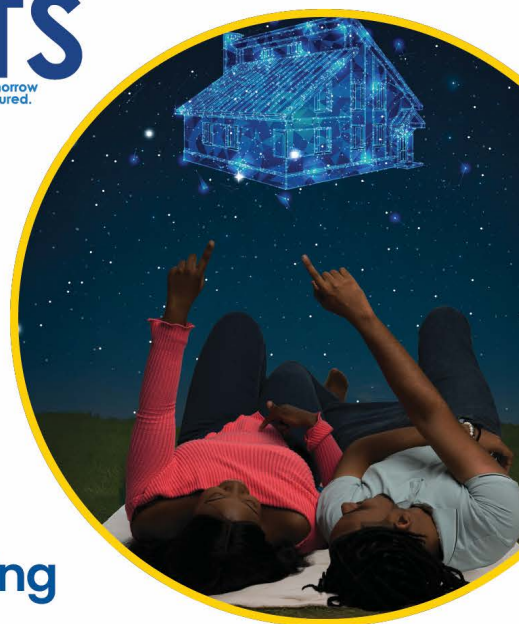


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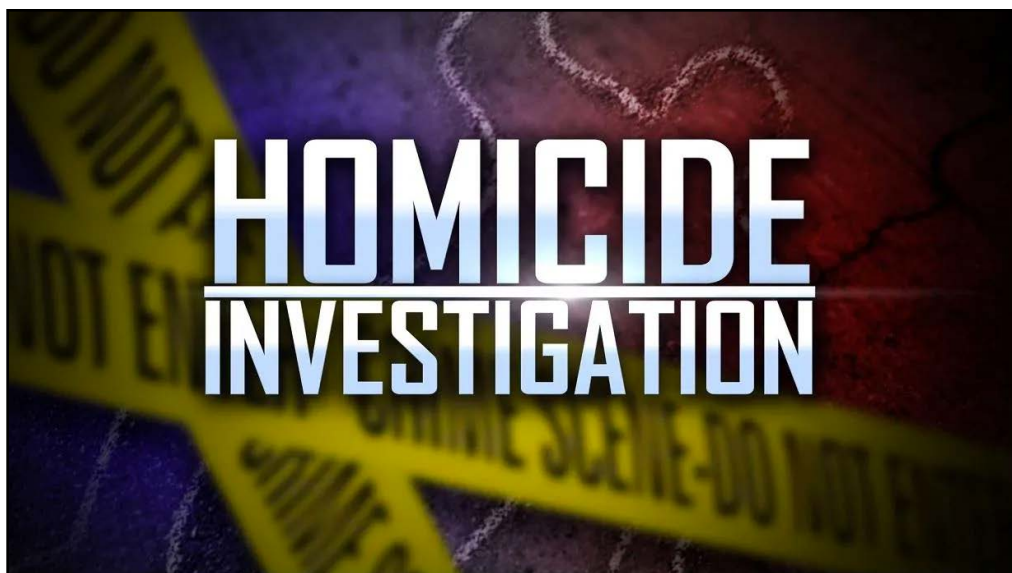
Two in Police Custody as Homicide Investigations Intensify



Two people are in police custody as investigators continue probing a number of ongoing homicide cases, following a series of coordinated operations carried out across Antigua earlier this week.

In a media release issued on Tuesday, the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda said a man and a woman were arrested on suspicion of murder and are currently being questioned as part of the investigations.

According to police, officers conducted coordinated operations across sev-



eral communities on Monday, July 27, during which they seized a number of items believed to be of investigative value. The items recovered included jewellery, clothing, six mobile phones, an electronic tablet, a notebook and two surveillance cameras.

Police have not disclosed which homicide investigations the arrests are linked to or identified the individuals being questioned, citing the ongoing nature of the investigations.

The Police Administration said investigators remain actively engaged in pursuing all available leads and reaffirmed their commitment to bringing those responsible for violent crimes before the courts.

Authorities are also appealing to members of the public who may have information that could assist with the investigations to contact the Criminal Investigations Department or submit information anonymously through Crime Stoppers.



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JULY 30TH

8:00PM @ CARNIVAL CITY

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GENERAL

\$100

RHYTHM
ROOM

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Good Humans
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Count the Waste, Before It's Too Late

The music plays from day to night,
Our Carnival shines bold and bright.
The hotels fill, the crowds arrive,
The nation's spirit comes alive.



The vendors smile, the drinks are sold,
The stories new, the memories told.
The ARG is packed with joyful cheer,
Another Carnival is here.

We count the flights that touch the sky,
The tourists coming far and nigh.
We count the rooms, the revenue made,
The colourful costumes on parade.

But here's a question, loud and clear—
One we seldom choose to hear.

Who counts the bottles thrown away?
Who counts the waste at end of day?

Who counts the cans left on the ground,
Or glass that's scattered all around?



While Carnival keeps breaking records,
Our landfill quietly keeps growing larger.

Each plastic bottle tells a tale,
Of systems that continue to fail.
Each aluminum can that's tossed aside,
Hides economic value we cannot hide.

Each glass bottle beneath the earth,
Still carries recycling worth.

Feature

Waste is not just trash we see;
 It's resources lost unnecessarily.
 Today's rubbish, if sorted right,
 Could power tomorrow's cleaner sight.

Imagine bins both near and far,
 At every booth and every bar.
 One for plastic, one for glass,
 One for cans as people pass.

Imagine volunteers on site,
 Helping people do what's right.
 Teaching that a simple choice,
 Can give our environment a voice.

Imagine vendors leading too,
 Showing patrons what to do.
 Small actions taken hand in hand,
 Can help protect our island land.

Imagine every hotel guest,
 Helping Antigua be its best.
 Leaving not just memories behind,
 But cleaner beaches they can find.

Imagine every Carnival,
 Producing less waste overall.
 Imagine publishing every year,
 Diversion numbers loud and clear.



How many bottles did we save?
 How much glass escaped the grave?
 How many cans found life once more,
 Instead of landfill evermore?

The answers matter more than ever,
 Because our resources won't last forever.

Climate change is at our door,
 Demanding that we all do more.
 Not next year.
 Not someday.
 But starting with each choice today.

The music fades.
 The stages close.
 Away the final masquerader goes.
 But long after the bands have gone,
 The waste remains and lingers on.

So while we celebrate with pride,
 Let's keep the environment by our side.
 Let's count not only every guest,
 But every effort at our best.

For Carnival's success should always be
 Measured by responsibility.
 Not just by crowds beneath the sun,
 But by the waste we leave as none.

The future isn't built by chance.
 It's built each time we get the chance
 To sort, To recycle, To reduce, To choose.

Because every bottle has another story.
 Every can deserves another chance.
 Every piece of glass holds another purpose.

Let's make the next Carnival remembered
 not only for the music, the culture, and the
 celebration—

But because it became the Carnival where
 Antigua and Barbuda finally started
 counting its waste.



ANTIGUA
Carnival
2026

TIAN WINTER & ICONIC



JULY 30TH

8:00PM @ CARNIVAL CITY

EARLY BIRD
GENERAL

\$100

RHYTHM
ROOM

\$350



THURSDAY 30TH JULY 2026



Caribbean Melting Pot

LONG BAY LAGER

SOCA VILLAN - YOUNG VICE - KID FRESH - EMPRESS - MENACE - ZAMONI
ISLAND PRINCE - YOUNG LYRICS - VICIOUS - ARLEN SEATON - NIKKI NOOKS - DMITRIB
DJ QUEST - DJ ALTITUDE
HOST : IBIS AND SUPA DYMOND

JULY 30TH
⌚ 8:00PM 📍 CARNIVAL CITY

EARLY BIRD GENERAL \$100 RHYTHM ROOM \$350

ticketing
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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"



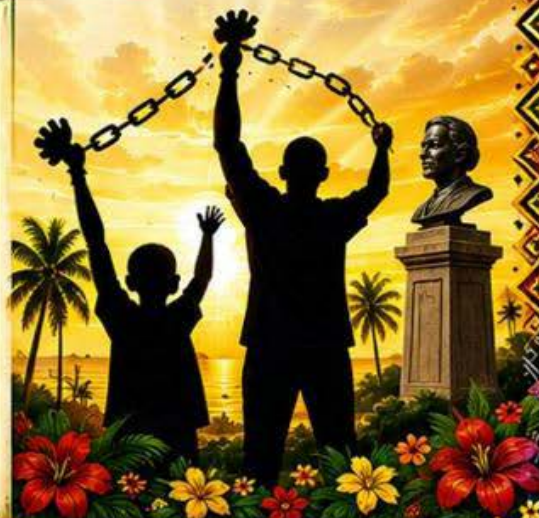
AUGUST 1ST
EMANCIPATION DAY



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



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



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ANTIGUA
Carnival
2026

TIZZY



JULY 30TH

8:00PM @ CARNIVAL CITY

EARLY BIRD
GENERAL

\$100

RHYTHM
ROOM

\$350

ticketing
TICKETS AVAILABLE





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EMANCIPATION WATCHNIGHT 2026



PERFORMANCES:

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- Wadadli Vybez Band
- Calypso Renditions
- Antigua Dance Academy
- Da Vibz Steel Band
- Point Iron Band
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Historian Professor Hilary
Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of
The University of the
West Indies and Chair of
the CARICOM Reparations



EMANCIPATION WATCHNIGHT 2026

FRIDAY, JULY 31 | 8:00 P.M. | BOTANICAL GARDENS

FREE ADMISSION

UHWI dialing into better patient-centred care through WhatsApp line



The University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) has introduced a dedicated WhatsApp Customer Care Line as part of efforts to strengthen its customer service operations and improve communication with patients, visitors and the wider public.

The new platform complements the hospital's existing customer care email service and provides an additional, convenient channel for individuals to submit enquiries, share feedback, lodge complaints, offer suggestions and recognise members of staff for exceptional service.

According to UHWI, the initiative forms part of its ongoing transformation agenda and underscores the institution's commitment to patient-centred care, greater responsiveness and continuous improvements in service delivery.

The hospital said the enhanced customer care system, which is managed by its Customer Care Branch, is designed to ensure that all communications received through the WhatsApp

line and email platform are acknowledged, tracked and assigned to the relevant departments. Cases will also be monitored through to resolution within established turnaround times.

UHWI noted that the system will play a key role in helping the hospital better understand patient experiences by identifying recurring concerns, highlighting areas of excellence and informing targeted service improvements.

Acting Chief Executive Officer Dr Sydney Powell said the expansion of customer care channels reflects the hospital's commitment to listening to patients and using their feedback to improve healthcare services.

"Listening to our patients is central to delivering high quality healthcare. By expanding our customer care channels through the introduction of a dedicated WhatsApp Customer Care Line, we are making it easier for patients and their families to communicate directly with us," Powell said.

He added that whether patients are raising concerns, making enquiries, recognising outstanding service or offering suggestions for improvement, their feedback is critical to strengthening accountability and enhancing service delivery.

"Every message helps us strengthen accountability, improve service delivery and ensure that our transformation is guided by the experiences of those we serve," Powell said.

The hospital is encouraging patients and members of the public to utilise the Customer Care Branch to submit complaints, enquiries, suggestions and

commendations regarding services received at the institution.

Feedback can be submitted through the newly established WhatsApp Customer Care Line at 658-220-2907 or via email at wecare@uhwi.gov.jm.

In a statement, UHWI said the introduction of the WhatsApp service builds on its broader efforts to enhance patient-centred care and create a more responsive healthcare environment.

"The introduction of the dedicated WhatsApp Customer Care Line builds on UHWI's ongoing efforts to strengthen patient-centred care and enhance the overall patient experience," the hospital said.

"By expanding the ways patients and members of the public can connect with the hospital, UHWI is strengthening communication, enhancing accountability and ensuring that every voice contributes to the continuous improvement of healthcare delivery." (Jamaica Gleaner)

Regional News

Captain and two others on murder charges arising from MV Barima tragedy

The captain and one crew member of the ill-fated vessel MV Barima that sank on July 18, leaving at least 73 people dead and more than 30 others missing and feared dead, appeared in court on Tuesday charged with murder.

Police slapped 40-year-old captain Kevin Price, 42-year-old chief mate Rondell Dwayne Roberts and 33-year-old Delon Granderson, the loading superintendent from the Transport and Harbours Department, with a total of 72 murder charges.

The men appeared before Chief Magistrate Judy Latchman at the Georgetown Magistrates' Court, where the charges were read to them. They were not required to plead and were remanded in prison until August 3, 2026.

When he appeared in court, the captain of the 87-year-old vessel broke down in tears saying there were several issues with the vessel and he doesn't understand why he is facing murder charges.

"I don't deserve this Father God. Father God you answer my prayers this morning, answer my prayers Father God, I don't deserve this please. Everybody know that's an 87 year old vessel, the vessel got a lot of issues, the vessel don't have a radar, the vessel don't have a search and rescue transponder," Price said, adding that many of the problems with the vessel were known since 2022.

Attorney Dexter Todd, who appeared on behalf of the accused, told reporters that the defence team will be pushing for early disclosures in the matter.

"We know so far that the disclosure is that 72 bodies were recovered and so they were charged for all 72 of those deaths. We listened to the prosecution narrate the facts in relation to



why they were charged and who has what responsibility and that the boat was overloaded," Todd said.

"Now you had the minister who is responsible for transport and harbours, came out and say on public television that the boat was not overloaded and that was so pronounced. And in every single press conference held by the prime minister, there was absolutely no indication that they found in addition to the loading manifest that they were able to establish the load of that

boat.

"Now you could imagine there was a clear pronouncement yesterday and the fears of the Guyanese people that we may not even see the boat back on water, so my thing is how do they hope to establish the weight of that boat," Todd said.

The attorney said that it is now clear that the upcoming Commission of Inquiry into the tragedy could turn out to be a farce. (CMC)

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Auditor general awaits proof of \$34m in supplies delivered to JDF



The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) is still yet to submit signed documents to the auditor general confirming that the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) received \$34 million in donated roofing materials.

The revelation was made on Tuesday during a meeting of the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC), where members continued for a second week a review of the auditor general's Hurricane Melissa Relief Initiative Audit report.

In the report, which was tabled in May, Auditor General Pamela Monroe Ellis stated that of the \$122.5 million in Hurricane Melissa building supplies delivered to JDF locations, only \$88.6 million was formally acknowledged as being received by the army, representing 72.2 per cent of total deliveries.

According to the auditor general, the remaining \$34 million in roofing materials was not supported by delivery slips or goods received notes countersigned by either the ODPEM or JDF representative, leaving these deliveries unverified by the receiving party.

PAC member Peter Bunting asked whether it was usual for the JDF to not sign for supplies received.

ODPEM Director General Commander Alvin Gayle indicated that the JDF had signed a document after receiving the supplies. He said the ODPEM representative was not at the location at the "material time" to sign for the materials.

Marlon McAdam, acting auditor general, told the committee approximately \$88.6 million worth of supplies were acknowledged by the JDF and ODPEM. However, he stressed that in relation to the remaining \$34 million "we didn't see where those were acknowledged by either JDF or

ODPEM".

Gayle said based on his internal checks, the items worth \$34 million were received by the JDF.

"There were physical checks subsequent to the matter at hand and we are confident that even if the document didn't exist, that the delivery was made to the Jamaica Defence Force," he said.

Committee Chairman Julian Robinson urged the ODPEM to provide the signed documents to the auditor general for verification. (Jamaica Gleaner)

VACANCY

Caribbean Premium Motors Ltd.

Caribbean Premium Motors Ltd., one of Antigua & Barbuda's leading automotive dealerships, is seeking an experienced and dynamic **Heavy-Duty Superintendent** to provide strategic and operational leadership for its Heavy-Duty Service Division.

This senior leadership position is responsible for overseeing the maintenance and repair of commercial trucks, buses, heavy equipment and government fleets while ensuring the highest standards of customer service, workshop productivity, technical excellence and profitability.

The successful candidate will play a key role in strengthening one of the Company's fastest-growing business units and will work closely with senior management to ensure the division consistently delivers exceptional service to both public and private sector clients.

Key Responsibilities

- Provide leadership and direction for the Heavy-Duty Service Division.
- Manage workshop operations to maximize productivity, efficiency and profitability.
- Supervise and develop technicians and support personnel.
- Ensure the timely diagnosis, repair and maintenance of heavy-duty vehicles and equipment.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with government and commercial fleet customers.
- Monitor key performance indicators, work-in-progress and workshop quality standards.
- Promote a culture of safety, accountability and continuous improvement.

Qualifications & Experience

Applicants should possess:

- A Bachelor's Degree in Engineering, Automotive Technology, Management or a related discipline (or equivalent experience).
- Minimum of 5 years' experience managing a heavy-duty workshop or commercial fleet maintenance operation.
- Strong leadership, planning and people management skills.
- Excellent technical knowledge of heavy-duty trucks, buses and commercial equipment.
- Proven ability to improve productivity, customer satisfaction and financial performance.

Interested applicants should submit a cover letter, detailed résumé and the names and contact information of **two professional referees**.

Deadline for the receipt of applications is August 7, 2026.

Email applications to: Accting.officer@gmail.com

Bounty Killer gets key to Kingston

FROM the inner-city community of Seaview Gardens in western St Andrew that raised him to conquering the global dancehall stage, Rodney “Bounty Killer” Price returned home Tuesday to receive the Key to the City of Kingston and the renaming of a road in his honour.

“It’s official, the king of Kingston with the keys to Kingston,” a jubilant Price declared as he accepted the city’s highest civic honour during a ceremony at Seaview Gardens Primary School.

In a further tribute to the dancehall icon, Wenchman Road — where Price spent much of his youth — was officially renamed Rodney Price Drive, following a petition from Seaview Gardens’ residents and approval by the Kingston and St Andrew Municipal Corporation (KSAMC).

Visibly moved by the recognition Price, who has also received the Order of Distinction for his invaluable contribution to Jamaica’s music scene, described the occasion as another meaningful milestone in his career, admitting that words could not fully express his gratitude.

“Today is really the unfolding of another historical chapter in my career. And this milestone is a very unusual and an uncommon accomplishment — the Keys to the City of Kingston,” he said, thanking the KSAMC, mayor of Kingston Andrew Swaby, and other officials for the honour.

Pointing to the road which now bears his name, Price recalled how his life was defined by it, noting that it had witnessed both the beginnings of his journey and some of his darkest moments. “This is more than just a ceremony. This is a celebration of troubles and trial and triumph and greatness. It’s just right round the road, that’s where I got shot when I was 16, right around there,” he said.

He thanked the KSAMC for immortalising the name, the battles, and the triumphs he carried long before he became known to the world as Bounty Killer.

“Our community is a golden garden. Hard work and dedication leads to these



accomplishments and accolades in life. And then they say a king has never been crowned in his town, so what is this then?” questioned an evidently elated Price.

The entertainer who has won a Grammy award for his feature on No Doubt’s multi-platinum hit song Hey Baby and received a solo Grammy nomination, told the ceremony that the significance of the occasion far surpassed international acclamation.

Bounty Killer in full flight on stage during a past show. Bounty Killer in full flight on stage during a past show.

“This is more than a Grammy to me. These are people who watched me emerge as a young artiste. These people are people who are personally involved in my upbringing, and for them to decide that I deserve the key to Kingston, this is something phenomenal,” he said.

For his part, Kingston Mayor Andrew Swaby congratulated Price and noted that the recognition is more than celebrating the successful musician, describing it as a statement about the values of the city and the potential that exists within communities such as Seaview Gardens.

“Too often communities like Seaview Gardens are viewed through the lens

of their challenges rather than their possibilities. People sometimes make assumptions about what someone can achieve based on where they come from, but as we all should know by now an address does not determine one’s personal potential. What Bounty Killer’s life demonstrates is the clearest possible term that potential exists in every community; talent discipline and determination can emerge from anywhere for our young people,” said Swaby.

Announcing the renaming of Wenchman Road to Rodney Price Drive, Swaby said the tribute would ensure that the artiste’s legacy remains permanently etched in the community that shaped him.

“His name will remain fixed to this day, in this very community that raised him, so that anyone who passes through Seaview Gardens will know that greatness comes from these streets. So Bounty Killer, on behalf of the citizens of Kingston and St Andrew, thank you. Thank you for your music, for your mentorship, and for the contribution that you have made to Jamaica’s culture. This city is proud to recognise you as a son of Kingston, and it is an honour today to place this key in your hands,” said the mayor. (Jamaica Observer)



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Rescuers search for survivors after a 7.1 quake kills 18 in southwestern Japan



Soldiers and emergency workers combed through a badly damaged shopping mall and collapsed houses looking for trapped survivors Wednesday after a powerful earthquake that killed at least 18 people, including a foreigner, in southwestern Japan.

The magnitude 7.1 earthquake that hit a day earlier in the Kumamoto area on the southern main island of Kyushu also left at least 62 people injured, six of them seriously, the prefectural government said. The tally has been steadily growing, fanning fears it may continue to rise.

Some of the most serious damage was at the Aeon Mall shopping center in Kashima city, which was bustling with thousands of people when the quake happened. The company said some 3,000 customers were evacuated to a parking lot before a gas explosion happened in another part of the mall, where some people were still working.

Fumika Ono was shopping at a mall with her older sister when the ground

shook so fiercely she lost her balance and ducked. Children began screaming and goods scattered on the floor.

The 19-year-old was among the crowd of shoppers who managed to escape safely.

The sweltering weather heightened worries about the survivors as rescuers braved the heat. It remained unclear how many people might still be missing.

In the Nuyamazu district, a pair of temple gates at a 16th-century Buddhist temple collapsed. They had just been repaired five years ago.

Yuki Kiyozumi, deputy chief priest at the temple, recalled how she had to crawl on the floor because the shaking was so violent. She had just returned home from a meeting and was about to feed her cat.

"I don't even know if or how we can rebuild them again," she said, while cleaning up damaged ornaments and furniture.

Nearly 34,900 homes were still without electricity and some 15,000 homes without running water, Kumamoto officials said. More than 8,800 people left their homes to stay in over 400 shelters, where power sources were being added to provide air conditioning.

Aerial police footage showed some homes in residential areas were completely flattened, including a few that crumbled into a nearby river.

Japan's Self Defense Forces joined rescue workers in the search and rescue operations. Hundreds of professionals were helping with the

effort, including firefighters from Taiwan.

"There are people who are still waiting to be rescued, and it's a race against time," Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said. "We will go all out to find and rescue as many people as we can."

Takaichi said the federal government was preparing to deliver food and other necessities to hard-hit areas. She also offered her condolences to the victims and sympathy to their relatives, while urging those affected by the quake to take care of themselves under the hot weather.

Bullet train services remained suspended. Although operations at Aso Kumamoto Airport resumed Wednesday, some airlines canceled flights as a precautionary measure.

Kumamoto was hit with a deadly quake in 2016 that killed at least 50 people. Japan is one of the most quake-prone nations in the world. (AP)

Thousands in Spain return home but new heatwave raises wildfire fears

Spanish authorities have allowed thousands of people evacuated because of wildfires to return to their homes after restrictions were lifted in the areas of Toledo, Madrid, Ávila, and Castellón.

In the Madrid region alone, 24,000 people have been told they can return and lockdowns on another 20,000 have been lifted.

Spain and France are both braced for the start of the fourth heatwave so far this summer and some fires have continued to burn, including one at Burgohondo 150km (93 miles) west of Madrid.

In south-west France, the largest fires in the Gironde region are described as “still stabilised” despite several flare-ups, however officials warn of dry winds and temperatures of up to 41C (106F).

The mayor of Le Barp, south-west of Bordeaux, Blandine Sarrazin, warned that the situation was “getting harder”, after two fires had broken out the day before, and said everyone had to be “hyper-vigilant”.

Flare-ups were also reported not far from Lanton on the eastern shore of the Bay of Arcachon.

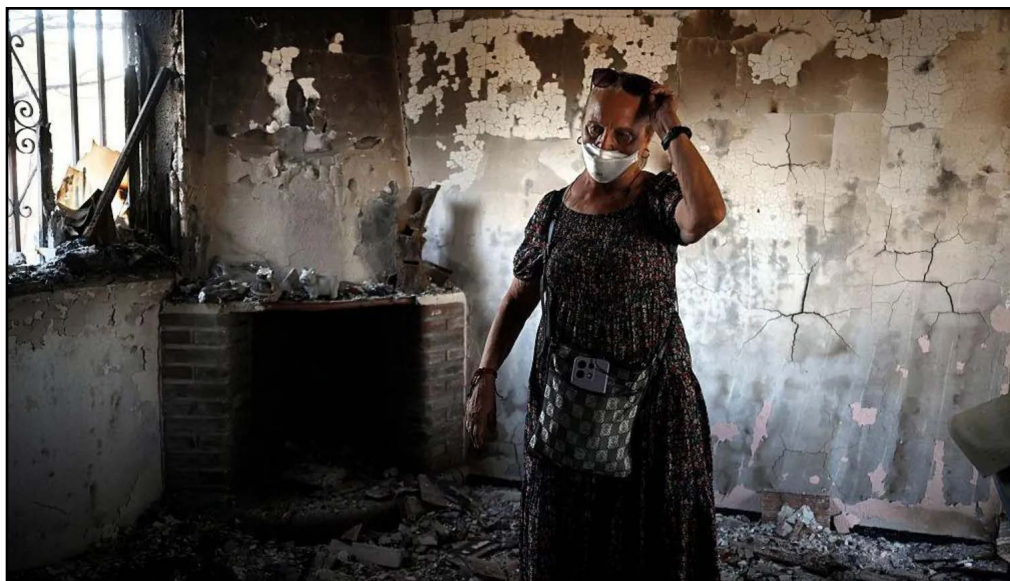
Gironde and the Landes are among 16 departments or districts are under orange heatwave alert.

The fire service has had to deploy special measures in Gironde to protect a number of sites linked to France’s defence and aerospace industries. The so-called “Seveso” sites include plants that manufacture hazardous materials for missiles and rockets.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has warned the next 12 hours will be “decisive” in putting out the wildfire near the capital. “Things are progressing favourably, with maximum caution,” he told reporters, because of higher temperatures, lower humidity and the risk of gusts of wind.

One fire remains out of control, at Vall d’Uixó north-west of Valencia.

Meanwhile, the fire at Burgohondo in Ávila province has already ravaged more than 43,000 hectares (108,000 acres) - and is now considered the largest recorded wildfire in Spanish history. In total this year more than 207,000



hectares of land have been burned by wildfires in Spain.

The Burgohondo fire has forced 40,000 people from their homes, and one of the team directing firefighting operations, Francisco Bolaños, said that while the fire “has not moved a centimetre during the night”, there were concerns it could re-ignite because of the higher temperatures, and the focus was on stabilising a perimeter of 180km (112 miles).

Among those returning to their homes were about 1,000 residents of the towns of Navas del Rey and Chapinería to the west of Madrid who had been staying in Leganés, a town on the south-west fringe of the capital.

The mayor of Chapinería, Lucía Moya, told Telemadrid that the consequences for the town were very severe and that “many residents have lost their homes and jobs. Getting back on track is going to be an arduous task”.

Many of the 2,000 people forced to flee the fires in the nearby Tiétar Valley were looked after by volunteers in the town of Talavera de la Reina, some distance south of the fire.

However, some 300 of the evacuees remained on Wednesday morning and Mayor José Julián Gregorio told Europa Press that they would receive “the same level of care as on the first day”.

Although no fatalities have been reported in the fires surrounding Madrid and in Castellón on the east coast, au-

thorities in the southern city of Seville say a woman, who was badly burned in the Los Gallardos fire in Almería earlier this month, has died of her injuries in hospital.

Fourteen people died in the Almería fires, including UK and Belgian nationals as well as US, French and Spanish citizens.

Fires are also burning in neighbouring Portugal, in the north-eastern district of Vila Real.

Civil protection officials have told public broadcaster RTP there is an active front of a kilometre and they are keeping a close watch on a local water treatment plant and a gas depot near the town of Valpaços.

Wildfires have also broken out in Greece, on the island of Paros in the Aegean Sea and the southern town of Triphyly on the Greek mainland.

Climate change is driving up temperatures around the world, and Europe is the fastest warming continent, heating up twice as fast as the global average, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service.

This is causing increased summer heatwaves, greater pressure on Europe’s water supply, and more intense wildfires. (BBC)

France battles wildfire four times size of Paris as tinderbox heat threatens new surge

Firefighters in southwest France battled an uncontained wildfire four times the size of Paris on Wednesday as temperatures were forecast to hit 40C (104F), threatening to turn a calm night into only a brief reprieve.

Authorities in the Gironde region said the blaze had not spread overnight, but rising heat and afternoon winds could revive smoldering hot spots, carry embers across firebreaks and open new fronts beyond crews' reach.

At the command center in Lège, firefighters bent over maps spread across a car hood, tracking three danger zones: northern Cap-Ferret; the wooded corridor around Marcheprime, Cestas and Saint-Jean-d'Illac; and a military site near Martignas, where a major outbreak forced a large deployment.

More than 2,200 firefighters and over 20 aircraft remained mobilized, backed by crews from across France and European partners.

"We strike quickly and strike hard at any new smoke emissions," Gironde fire commander Matthieu Jomain said.

Beyond the command center, civilians were trying to hold the line themselves. At Souge, volunteers flooded the edges of dirt tracks while a local digger driver plowed through still-burning soil, trying to keep flames from crossing back when the expected west wind arrived. In Lacanau, residents pumped water from a lake into tanks headed for hot spots and firefighters' cisterns.

"If one day the fire starts



in our neck of the woods, I know very well that all the people here would do the same for us," said Flavien Dubuch, 33, who drove from Saint-Émilion with his father to help.

The advance of major fires in the Landes and Var regions have been halted. That left Gironde as France's biggest remaining wildfire battle, Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez said.

The Gironde fire forced 220,000 people to flee at the peak of the crisis. Tens of thousands have since been allowed home, but authorities warned that the danger had not passed.

Extreme heat strips moisture from vegetation and drives down humidity, turning grasses, brush and forest litter into faster-burning fuel.

Météo-France said Wednesday would be the hottest and driest day of the week, with elevated wildfire danger across every region of France. Drought now covers mainland France and Corsica, with soils nearing the record dryness reached in August 2022.

Smoke from the Gironde

and Landes fires also pushed particulate pollution higher across both departments, regional air-quality monitors said.

Gironde authorities ordered 4,000 more people out of tourist sites along the Atlantic coast on Tuesday, widening what may be France's largest peacetime evacuation.

"The situation remains complicated. That's clear. We're not out of the woods," said Gironde prefect Sophie Brocas, who also authorized 60,000 evacuees to return to three Bordeaux suburbs untouched by fire.

The opposing movements – thousands ordered out of coastal resorts as others returned with mobile phones on and emergency bags packed – captured how precarious the situation remains.

The disruption was spreading beyond the burn zone into Bordeaux's peak tourism season.

Edouard le Grix de la Salle, who runs Château du Grand Verdus with his brother, said official appeals to avoid the region threatened its wine-tourism trade. "How did they not think about pro-

tecting that sector?" he told The Associated Press.

At one point the Gironde blaze created a black thundercloud, electrified and lit from within, that generated lightning, violent winds and new fires beyond the original front. The pyrocumulonimbus was the first recorded in France.

At the height of the crisis, roughly 330,000 people were driven from homes and vacation sites across France and Spain.

Tens of thousands of people began returning home in central Spain after firefighters made progress around Madrid and Avila. Evacuation orders were lifted for about 20,000 people in the Madrid region, while stay-at-home restrictions ended for another 14,000.

But 10,000 people remain under evacuation orders in Castellón, where a fire was still out of control as Spain braced for its fourth heat wave of the summer.

More than 1,160 square kilometers (448 square miles) have burned across France this year, according to the Interior Ministry.

Europe is the world's fastest-warming continent, warming at more than twice the global average, according to the European Union's Copernicus climate service.

Western Europe recorded its hottest June on record, with extreme heat and widespread dryness contributing to the spread and intensification of fires in France and Spain, Copernicus said. (AP)

BTS withdraw from Grammys, a month after Asian pop prize introduced



Korean pop group BTS have announced they will not submit their music for consideration at the 2027 Grammy Awards.

The news came in a co-ordinated Instagram post, with all seven members of the band uploading an identical statement.

“We have decided not to enter the Grammys this year,” a translation of the message read. “I hope that music can be heard and loved for what it is, rather than being divided by region or language.”

The band were widely expected to be in competition for some of the Grammys’ major categories, including album of the year, after their comeback record, *Arirang*, became one of the year’s biggest-sellers.

The lead single *Swim*, a US number one, was also predicted to be in contention for song of the year.

But the English-language lyrics would have excluded it from the new best Asian pop music performance prize, which was announced last month.

Under Grammy rules, songs nominated for the category must contain “meaningful use” of an Asian language. More than 80% of the lyrics on *Arirang* are sung in English.

The introduction of the new award met with mixed reception in K-Pop spaces online. Many fans complained that, instead of celebrating Asian artists, the Grammys had pigeonholed them.

By choosing to mention both re-

gion and language in their statement, the members of BTS - RM, Jimin, V, Suga, Jungkook, Jin and J-Hope - appeared to reflect that concern.

They ended their statement with a message to their fans, known as the BTS Army.

“Thank you to Army and everyone who is always with us,” the group said.

The Recording Academy, which organises the ceremony, has yet to respond. BBC News has contacted them for a statement.

Formed in 2013, BTS have become one of pop’s biggest-selling acts, and their current world tour is expected to rival Taylor Swift’s Eras concerts at the box office.

They were the first K-Pop band to re-

International

AROUND THE WORLD

PAGE 33

ceive a nomination at the Grammys in 2021, for Dynamite - their first song performed completely in English.

All seven members have been voting members of the Recording Academy since 2019.

They have performed on the Grammys stage several times, and picked up four additional nominations, including in the the best pop duo/group performance and best music video categories, but have never won.

The band join a list of performers who have boycotted the awards for a number of different reasons, including The Weeknd, Morgan Wallen, Frank Ocean and Will Smith.

In 2020, Drake called for the ceremony to be replaced, arguing that the awards habitually overlooked black artistry, and rap music in particular.

Writing on Instagram, he said: "I think we should stop allowing ourselves to be shocked every year by the disconnect between impactful music and these awards and just accept that what once was the highest form of recognition may no longer matter to the artists that exist now and the ones who come after."

Fans had hoped that BTS might perform at this year's Grammys, where their US number one single Swim was expected to be among the nominees

The Grammys has been grappling with how to reflect the growing popularity of K-Pop for a number of years.

In 2025, it expanded its voting academy to include several prominent artists and producers from Korea, including Enhypen's Jungwon, Seventeen's Woozi and Vernon, Le Sserafim's Huh Yunjin and all six members of Kats-eye.

The numbers were boosted again this year, when the members of Twice and Stray Kids were granted voting privileges.

The most recent ceremony saw prominent nominations for Blackpink star Rosé, who opened the show with her smash Bruno Mars collaboration APT,

and the song Golden from KPop Demon Hunters.

The latter became the first ever K-Pop song to win a Grammy, when it was named best song written for visual media.

However, it would also have been excluded from the new Asian Pop category, as its lyrics were written almost entirely in English.

BBC Radio 1's Newsbeat has been hearing from some of the BTS army on their disappointment that the group won't be heading to the awards.

"It's such a shame," says fan Ashia

Davies, 27, who attended the group's recent comeback tour in London.

"I know BTS love the Grammys," she says.

While BTS wouldn't qualify for the new best Asian pop music performance prize, Davies feels the category in general is "disrespectful" and "keeps Western artist in a separate category so they can stay on top".

Fellow BTS superfan Lauryn Adene says was "happy" to hear the group wouldn't be entering the awards.

"They don't have a point to prove," says the 22-year-old. (BBC)



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Antiguan athletes to compete at World Athletics U-20 Championships

The Antigua and Barbuda Athletic Association (ABAA) has named a three-member team to represent the twin-island state at the 2026 World Athletics Under-20 Championships in Eugene, Oregon, USA, next month.

The team to compete at the event, which will be held at Hayward Field at the University of Oregon from August 5 to 9, comprised female sprinters Kettia Ambrose and Tyra Fenton and male sprinter Kasiya Daley.

Ambrose, who is currently enrolled at St. John's University in New York, will compete in the women's 200 and 400-meter races.

Sixteen-year-old Tyra Fenton, who completed the sprint double by winning the Under-17 Girls' 100 and 200-meter finals at the 53rd CARIFTA (Track and Field) Games in Grenada in April, will contest the women's 200-meter race in Oregon.

Daley will seek success by contesting the men's 100 and 200-meter races at this year's World Athletics Under-20 Championships.

The team will be accompanied by Coach Teddy Daley and Team Leader Jo-Ann Small.

This year's world championship event, also known as "Oregon 26," will welcome the best junior athletes from around the world to meet, greet, and compete on the global stage.

For future Olympians, their path often goes through the World Athletics Under-20 Championships.

Before winning his Olympic gold medal in the men's 200 meters at the Paris Games, Botswana's Letsile Tebogo won two World Under-20 Championships (2021 in Kenya and 2022 in Colombia).

The last iteration of the World Athletics Under-20 Championships was held in Lima, Peru, where more than 50 athletes from the Paris 2024 Olympic Games were eligible to compete.

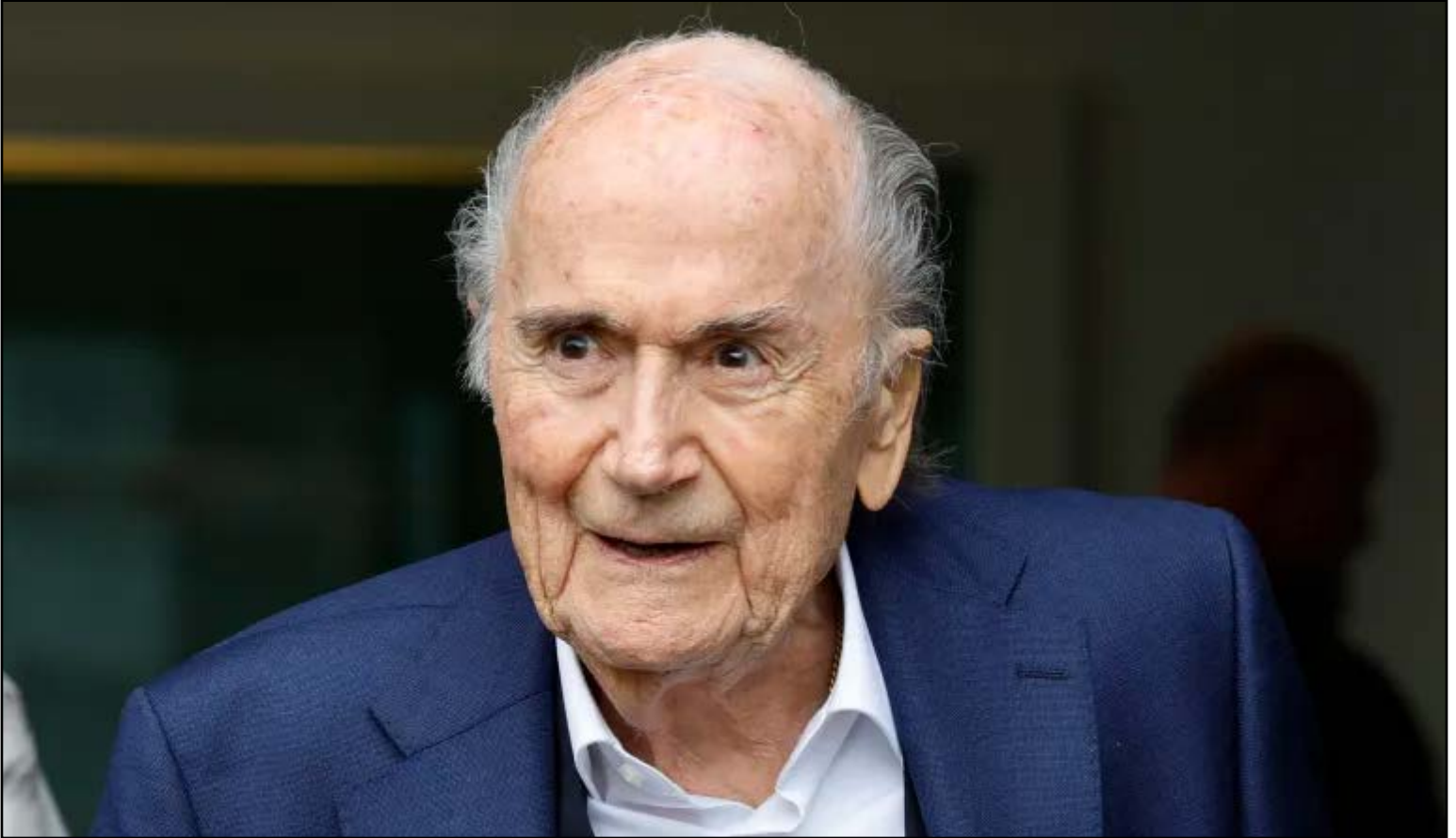


Tyra Fenton

Hayward Field in Oregon previously hosted this global event in 2014 when it was then known as the IAAF World Junior Championships. The eyes of

the world were also set on Eugene in 2022 for the World Athletics Championships, also known as Oregon 22.

Blatter blasts plan to sell stake in World Cup to investors



Sepp Blatter

ZURICH (Reuters) - Former FIFA President Sepp Blatter on Wednesday slammed the world football governing body's plans to create a US\$20 billion subsidiary to run the World Cup, saying the tournament was not a commercial asset that belonged to a few executives.

Blatter, who was FIFA president for 17 years until 2015, said the idea put forward by his successor Gianni Infantino would take commercialisation of the sport too far.

"Football belongs to no individual and to no institution. It belongs to the people," Blatter, 90, told Reuters.

"If FIFA were transferred into a profit-oriented corporate structure, it would lose its soul," he added, noting he would never have considered such a move when he was in charge.

FIFA said on Tuesday it plans to cre-

ate the subsidiary to run the World Cup and its other events, and will offer stakes of up to 20% in it to external investors.

The proposal has provoked a furious response from football authorities, including European ruling body UEFA, which said FIFA was putting the game up for sale.

Blatter has frequently clashed with Infantino, a fellow Swiss who took charge of FIFA in 2016 after a corruption scandal ended his own tenure. Blatter was later cleared of corruption charges.

He has railed against the decision to award the 2034 World Cup to Saudi Arabia, and criticised the expansion of this year's tournament to 48 teams.

"The FIFA World Cup is not a commercial asset that belongs to a handful of executives," Blatter said.

"It is part of the cultural heritage of world football. FIFA is the guardian of the World Cup, not its owner. There is a fundamental difference."

Investors pursuing influence and profits ran contrary to associations that follow the interests of their members, he said, noting that the game's connection to the public had sustained it for more than a century.

"That principle should never change," Blatter said. Football's true foundations were the clubs, players, coaches, referees, and fans, Blatter said, and FIFA's role is to administer the sport, organise competitions, and redistribute income.

"The beneficiaries should be the game itself — from grassroots football to the highest international level — not outside investors seeking returns," Blatter said.

Neymar doubles down on Brazil retirement



Neymar

SAO PAULO (Reuters) - Neymar appeared to confirm his retirement from international soccer, saying he no longer wanted to play for Brazil, weeks after suggesting his international career had ended following their World Cup last-16 loss to Norway.

The 34-year-old forward, Brazil's all-time leading scorer, made the comments after Santos beat Venezuela's Universidad Central 4-2 in a Copa Sudamericana match on Tuesday night.

"I think my time with the national team has already passed. I made history there, and I'm very happy about

it. I experienced a lot there, gave my blood and my life, and always fought and battled for the yellow jersey. But I don't think I want it anymore," he told reporters.

The remarks reinforced comments he made in the immediate aftermath of Brazil's 2-1 World Cup defeat by Norway on July 5.

After coming on as a substitute and scoring a stoppage-time penalty, Neymar suggested his international career was over during an interview with Brazilian broadcaster ge. "I tried, I tried. Now it's over," he said.

Neymar was visibly emotional after the defeat, which marked Brazil's earliest World Cup exit since 1990 and extended the five-times champions' wait for a record-extending sixth title.

The forward, who played in four World Cups, enjoyed a glittering club career with Santos, Barcelona and Paris St Germain, but won only one senior title with the national team, the Confederations Cup in 2013.

His international career yielded 80 goals and 58 assists in 130 appearances.

IPL's business value soars above US\$20 billion, says report

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - The business value of the Indian Premier League (IPL), the world's richest Twenty20 series, has soared more than 11% to US\$20.6 billion this year, according to US-based investment bank Houlihan Lokey.

Since its launch in 2008, the 10-team competition has consistently attracted cricket's leading players, while building a commercial model that combines broadcast revenues, sponsorship, merchandising, and franchise investment.

Ownership changes at its Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Rajasthan Royals franchises earlier this year further demonstrated the IPL's appeal to major investors and the premium attached to established teams within the league.

A consortium comprising Blackstone, Bolt Ventures, Aditya Birla Group, and Times of India Group said in March it would acquire the Bengaluru franchise for a league-record US\$1.78 billion.

Separately, in May, the Mittal family and Adar Poonawalla said they would buy Rajasthan for US\$1.65 billion.

The increase reflected a second consecutive year of double-digit growth in the IPL's business value, Houlihan Lokey said in its '2026 IPL Brand Valuation Study' on Wednesday.

"Franchise valuations have reached new highs, private capital participation has accelerated, and the league's commercial ecosystem continues to diversify," said Harsh Talikoti, a direc-

tor in Houlihan Lokey's Financial and Valuation Advisory business.

"The IPL represents a unique convergence of sport, media, and consumer opportunity, underpinned by strong revenue visibility, disciplined cost structures, and an expanding global audience.

"These latest transactions further demonstrate the confidence investors continue to place in the long-term value creation opportunity."

The IPL's stand-alone brand value rose 10.3% over the past year to US\$4.3 billion. Reigning champions Bengaluru remain the league's most valuable franchise, with a brand value of US\$312 million.



Antiguans shot putter fails to advance at Commonwealth Games

Antigua and Barbuda's Christopher Johnson failed to advance in the men's shot put competition at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, on Wednesday.

Johnson was eliminated in Group B, one of two qualifying rounds to secure a spot in the finals, on the third day of track and field competitions at the Scotstoun Stadium in Glasgow.

Johnson was eliminated from the contest after producing his best effort of 14.79 meters to finish sixth among a field of eight competitors in Group B.

Antiguan sprinters Cejhae Greene and Geolyna Dowdye did not participate in the qualifying rounds of their respective 200-meter competitions.

Green did not contest any of the 10 qualifying heats of the men's 200-meter competition. Dowdye was listed to contest in lane 4 in the third of six qualifying heats in the women's 200-meter contest, but the young Antiguan female sprinters failed to take up her position on the starting blocks.

The two Antiguan sprinters failed in their bids to qualify for their respective 100-meter finals on Tuesday.

Both Antiguan sprinters bowed out of the competitions after failing to qualify in the semi-finals.

Greene finished sixth among a field of eight competitors in the third and final men's 100-meter semi-finals in a time of 10.19 seconds.

Dowdye finished seventh among a field of eight contenders in the first of three women's 100-meter semi-finals in 11.45 seconds.



Antiguan shot putter Christopher Johnson

The other two Antiguan sprinters at the Commonwealth Games, Dwayne Fleming and Soniya Jones, did not contest their respective 200-meter competitions on Wednesday.

Fleming, who contested the men's 100-meter competition, clocked 10.83 seconds to finish fourth in Heat 8 of the qualifying rounds.

Like Fleming, Jones bowed out of the competition during the qualifying rounds after finishing third in Heat 6 of the women's 100-meter event in a time of 11.56 seconds.

With the exception of Jones, the

other four Antiguan athletes at the Commonwealth Games will travel to Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic to compete at the Central American and Caribbean (CAC) Games, which is taking place from July 24 to August 8.

Meanwhile, the Antiguan beach volleyball men's team of Raenor Sharpe and Miguel Pena-Lugo completed a winless campaign at the current CAC Games in Santo Domingo on Tuesday.

Sharpe and Lugo wrapped up their campaign in Pool D of the men's beach volleyball competition by suffering their fourth defeat in as many matches in a 2-0 (4-21, 6-21) loss the Cuban team of Damian Gomez and Eblis Veranes in their final match on Tuesday.

Sharpe and Lugo suffered their third loss in a 2-0 (8-21, 11-21) defeat to the Belizean team of Edward Broaster and Hauze Francis on Monday.

The Antiguan beach volleyballers were beaten 2-1 by Miguel Jahreef and Jerome Morrison of Trinidad and Tobago and lost 2-0 to Rafael Vargas and Gabriel Vargas of El Salvador in their opening encounter.