

FRIDAY 31ST JULY 2026 | VOLUME 10 ISSUE 06 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

New Chapter in Vision Care Begins In Antigua and Barbuda

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Top officials of the Antigua and Barbuda government including Prime Minister Gaston Browne, Foreign Minister E.P. Chet Greene and Health Minister Michael Joseph show their support for the new vision care initiative launched jointly by the government and Restoring Vision on Thursday

Prime Minister's Vision Initiative Ushers in the Renaissance of Vision Care in Antigua and Barbuda



The Antigua and Barbuda Government has officially launched the Prime Minister's Vision Initiative, a landmark programme that is set to transform eye health services across the nation by providing free reading glasses to thousands of adults while laying the foundation for expanded vision care for generations to come.

The initiative, conceived by Prime Minister Gaston Browne and implemented by the Ministry of Health, in partnership with RestoringVision, was officially launched on Thursday at the Villa Community Center.

Addressing the ceremony, Prime Minister Browne described the initiative as

another demonstration of his Government's commitment to ensuring that quality healthcare remains accessible to every citizen, declaring that "vision is a human right." He announced that 25,000 reading glasses will be distributed free of charge to persons aged 40 years and older, while revealing that the programme's second phase will see the distribution of 8,000 prescription eyeglasses for individuals requiring more advanced vision correction.

Minister of Health, Michael Joseph, described the initiative as "the renaissance of vision care in Antigua and Barbuda," noting that it marks the beginning of a new chapter in eye health-

care and reflects the Government's commitment to ensuring that every citizen has access to the care they need to live healthy, productive and independent lives.

Minister Joseph credited Prime Minister Browne for championing the initiative from its inception, noting that it was his vision that brought together the partnerships, resources and commitment needed to make the programme a reality.

The Minister also expressed heartfelt appreciation to RestoringVision for partnering with the Government, stating that the collaboration demonstrates the power of governments and



international organizations working together to improve lives in meaningful and practical ways.

Remarks were also delivered by Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations Dr. Walton Webson, and Ambassador Keisha McGuire, Chief Global Affairs Officer at RestoringVision, both of whom underscored the importance of international partnerships in advancing global eye

health and commended Antigua and Barbuda for its leadership in expanding access to vision care.

Also in attendance were Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P. Chet Greene; Permanent Secretaries Stacey Gregg-Paige; Permanent Secretary Edson Joseph; as well as senior technical officials from the Ministry of Health, the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, and the Medical Benefits Scheme.

The Ministry also recognized the dedicated healthcare professionals, nurses, clinic teams and volunteers whose hard work has made the nationwide rollout of the initiative possible.

The Ministry of Health is encouraging all eligible persons aged 40 years and older to take advantage of this free opportunity by visiting one of the designated screening centres over the next two weeks.

Local News

V.C. Bird International Airport introduces new Self-Service Kiosks with option for Wheelchair-Accessibility



The departure experience at the V.C. Bird International Airport is now significantly enhanced with the introduc-

tion of a new generation of self-service kiosks. Passengers at airports across the globe use these kiosks to complete

many of the tasks traditionally handled at a check-in counter.

The new TS6 Flagship Kiosks at the VC Bird International is an improvement over the previous ones which printed boarding passes only. The new and modern versions are now able to produce baggage tags as well, enabling travelers to get through their check-in process as smoothly and swiftly as possible. The upgrades form part of a major thrust by the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority to introduce cutting edge aviation conveniences to the V.C. Bird International.

The driver of the initiatives is the airport's Information Technology Department, which has undertaken a strategic approach in creating a smarter and more connected passenger journey for all travelers. According to IT



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Manager Jasen Lewis, the services available through the new kiosks extend beyond the printing of boarding passes and baggage tags.

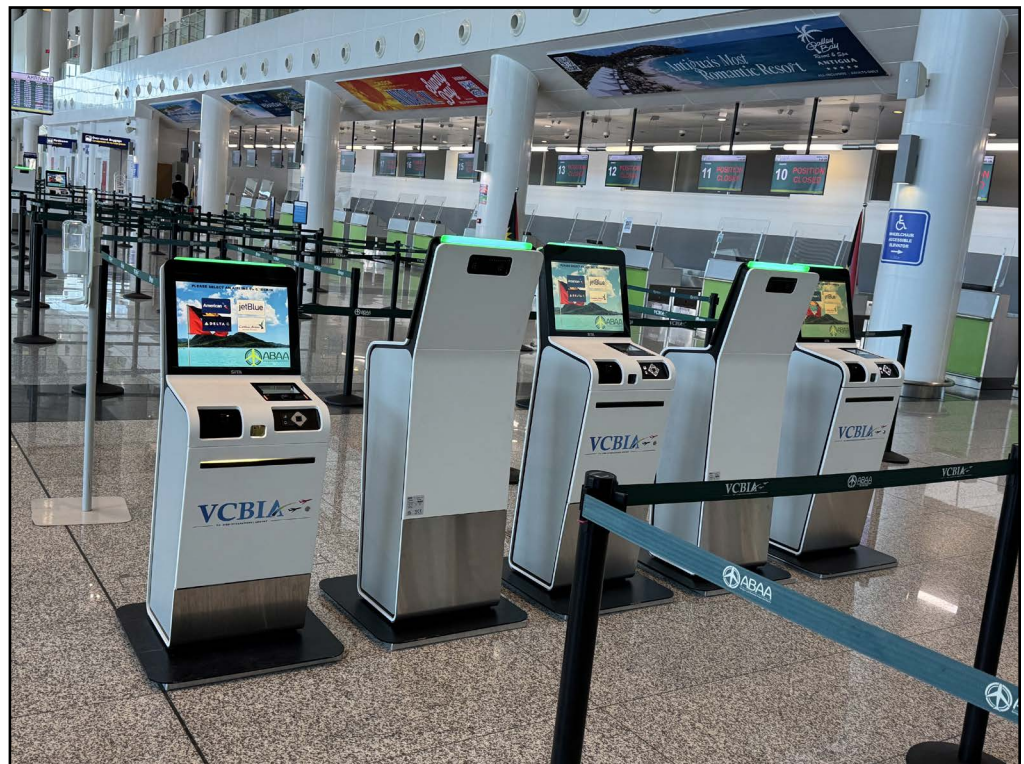
Lewis noted that the world is going through significant digital transformation, where self-service technology and connected systems are reshaping how airports operate and enhancing the passenger experience. He noted that the 15 new kiosks are upgradable and future-ready, with the capability to support additional self-service functions as aviation trends and passenger expectations continue to evolve.

“This gives V.C. Bird International Airport the flexibility to expand services over time. For example, in the near future, we will be able to introduce self-service baggage drops, allowing passengers to check in, tag their bags, and proceed to a designated baggage drop point, as is common in larger international airports,”

But beyond improving speed and convenience, the kiosk upgrade represents another significant achievement. Now at the airport is an ADA-compliant, wheelchair-accessible kiosk, ensuring that the VC Bird International delivers a passenger experience that is both efficient and inclusive.

“Travelers with mobility challenges can independently access the same self-service check-in technology as all other passengers,” explained Customer Experience Manager, Jan Walker Brown.

Feedback has already been positive from the airport’s airline partners who have shared that their travelers and clients have welcomed the improved speed of the devices and their expanded options.





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



Halo donates \$30,000 to CIAB cultural initiative

The Halo Foundation donated \$30,000 to the Confucius Institute of Antigua and Barbuda's (CIAB) Chinese Bridge Summer School to assist in the facilitation of a cultural visit to China by Antiguans and Barbudans.

The two-week expedition was structured around three main learning components: Chinese language classes (which concluded with an international standard beginners' examination), performance training and site visits.

Principal of CIAB, Han Wen explained, "Participants engaged in a diverse range of traditional Chinese cultural activities, including lion dancing, vocal music and dance classes, tea ceremonies, kite painting, lacquer fan making, sachet sewing, woodblock printing, rubbing, facial painting, shuttlecock kicking, and Hanfu try-on. "

He said, "They also toured West Lake and visited Zhejiang Provincial Museum, Liangzhu Museum, the Chi-

na National Archives of Publications and Culture and Hefang Street, gaining exposure to both ancient Chinese civilization and contemporary urban culture. The participants transformed from 'Hearing about China' to 'Seeing China.' Through site visits in Hangzhou, they witnessed a real, modern, and vibrant China with their own eyes — correcting previously vague or inaccurate perceptions and building a more objective and three-dimensional understanding of the country."

At the end of the program, participants shared their reflections on the China Bridge experience. One participant wrote: "It was really nice meeting all of you and getting this opportunity—it has helped me a lot with my social skills and interacting with new people. This was an amazing journey that I do hope we can take again next year!"

Another shared: "This has been a truly eye-opening and rewarding trip.

We have certainly learned a great deal, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of this journey."

President of the Halo Foundation, Lady Williams, who is also President of the Antigua and Barbuda China Friendship Association, commented that gaining a first-hand understanding of the world in which we live, including China and the rest of the Far East, are crucial elements of cultural, political, economic, diplomatic, linguistic and geographic education. "One is in a position to make more accurate and realistic assessments, rather than mere assumptions, once one has experienced international exposure. Primary knowledge is a much sounder educational tool than vicarious information," she added.

Photo (l-r) Ms. Gayle Green Phillip, UWI Five Islands; H.E. Lady Sandra Williams, Halo Foundation; Mr. Han Wen, CIAB and Ms. Rozanne Emanuel, Halo Foundation.

THE GREATEST SUMMER FESTIVAL

Welcome to Carnival

Whether you're coming home to celebrate or visiting our shores for the very first time, I extend a heartfelt welcome to Antigua and Barbuda. Carnival is a celebration of our history, our culture, our resilience and our joy. It's a time to reconnect with family and friends, enjoy our music and cuisine, and create unforgettable memories together. Have fun, celebrate responsibly, look out for one another, and help us make this a safe, memorable and joyous Carnival for all. Let the true spirit of Antigua and Barbuda shine.

Welcome Home.

Welcome to Paradise.

Happy Carnival.

G. Browne

HONOURABLE GASTON BROWNE
PRIME MINISTER



UWI Vice Chancellor, Kim Poole Headline Watchnight Festivities



Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Professor Hilary Beckles

The Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Professor Hilary Beckles and American activist/artist, Kim Poole will feature prominently in the 18th annual Watchnight Gathering at the Botanical Gardens tonight (Friday July 31).

The organisers of the celebration marking the end of chattel slavery in the British Caribbean, the Antigua and Barbuda Reparation Support Commission (ABRSC) say the Watchnight Gathering is a sacred, deeply moving tradition rooted in the historical moment when enslaved Africans waited for the stroke of midnight, symbolizing their freedom.

“Today, we honour that moment with drumming, libation ceremonies, iron band rhythms, spoken word, and cultural expression.

“This year, it takes on even greater significance with internationally acclaimed performer and educator Kim Poole, and hear a powerful message from renowned Caribbean historian, Professor Sir Hillary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies and Chair of the CARICOM Reparations Commission, who is currently leading a CRC delegation to meet with British Parliamentarians, the church, civil society organization in effort to continue



Kim Poole

our advocacy for reparatory justice,” ABRSC noted.

Regarding the American artist Kim Poole, ABRSC said she is a renowned singer-songwriter, speaker and Executive Director of the Teaching Artist Institute (TAI), who has earned international recognition for using music, storytelling and artistic expression to advance social transformation, healing and reparatory justice.

“Through her work across Africa, the Caribbean and the United States, she has championed cultural restoration, Pan-African solidarity and the use of the arts as a catalyst for community empowerment and sustainable development,” ABRSC noted.

The organization, which is led by Ambassador Dorbrene O’Marde as chairman, also released details of the activities planned for August 1st – **Emancipation Day.**

1. Emancipation Day Church Service

- Held at 7:00 a.m. at Green Bay Moravian Church, this sacred morning service is a time of thanksgiving, remembrance, and spiritual renewal.
- It honours the legacy of those who fought and died for our free-

dom, grounding the day’s celebrations in reverence and gratitude.

2. Emancipation Village – A Celebration of Culture and Community

- Following the service, Lower Market Street by the V.C. Bird Bust transforms into the Emancipation Village, a lively cultural hub.
- Expect:
 - Traditional food, music, and dance
 - Local artisans and craftspeople
 - Storytelling, performances, and cultural education
- It’s a space where the past meets the present, inviting **families, youth, elders, and visitors** to experience the vibrancy of our heritage firsthand

Closing Message: Why This Matters

- Emancipation 192 is more than an anniversary—it’s a national moment of reflection, pride, and purpose.
- These events are designed to **rekindle awareness, deepen understanding, and inspire action.**
- Whether through dress, worship, drumming, or dancing—we honour our past and claim our future, rooted in resilience and driven by unity.



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



CAVALIER

RUM

CALYPSO MONARCH

JULY 31ST

📍 CARNIVAL CITY 🕒 8PM

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FEEL THE
RHYTHM
of Calypso

CALYPSO MONARCH FINALISTS ORDER OF APPEARANCE

1. KING YOUNG DESTROYER SNAP ELECTION
2. FAITHFUL MY COUNTRY A PARADISE
3. KING ZACARI CULTURAL ASSASSINS
4. QUEEN GE'EVE BLESSED ARE THE MEEK
5. QUEEN GEE BEE LIFE'S A MISSION, NOT COMPETITION
6. WILLIE WAWA OH ME, OH MY, I CRY
7. QUEEN THALIA A SONG OF HOPE
8. LADY MELODY UPGRADE DE CURRICULUM
9. DI DACTA LETTER TO DE PUPPET MASTER
10. LYRICAL REDS ANALYSIS
11. DR. SOLO FRIENDS OF ALL, ENEMIES OF NONE
12. PEETRON EMANCIPATE YOUR MIND
13. KING FIAH A WA U WANT

The Ministry of Tourism Meets With Family of Deceased Life-Guard

The Ministry of Tourism says it is deeply saddened by the tragic passing of one of its Beach Safety and Security Officers while on duty early this week.

This heartbreaking loss has profoundly affected the Ministry and the entire Beach Safety and Security Unit. Kevon Warner who joined the unit in 2010 has served with dedication, professionalism and an unwavering commitment to protecting the lives of residents and visitors who enjoy Antigua and Barbuda's beaches. His service to the nation will be remembered with gratitude, respect and appreciation.

The Ministry extends condolences to the officer's family, loved ones, friends and colleagues during this period of immense grief, noting that its thoughts and prayers remain with them as they come to terms with this devastating loss.

Following the incident, Permanent Secretary within the Ministry Sean Cenac, met with members of the officer's family, accompanied by the management team of the Beach Safety and Security Unit, to formally brief them on the circumstances surrounding the tragic event. During the meeting, the family was provided with a detailed account of the incident, including the actions taken by fellow officers and the emergency response efforts.

The Ministry appreciates the family's willingness to engage during this extraordinarily difficult time and acknowledges their satisfaction that



Kevon Warner

established operational protocols, emergency response measures and safety procedures were implemented throughout the incident. The Ministry remains committed to transparency and will continue to provide the family with any additional information as it becomes available while offering ev-

ery possible measure of support.

Minister of Tourism, Charles Fernandez, who is currently overseas on official government business, also conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the family and colleagues of the deceased officer.



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JUNIOR CARNIVAL

SPIRIT OF CARNIVAL

2nd Runner Up
Freetown Primary School

1st Runner Up
Villa Primary School

WINNER
SEAVIEW FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL

JUNIOR ROAD MARCH

2nd Runner Up
Jamario – Mash up (5)

1st Runner Up
Xsura – Small Package (9)

WINNER
SOCA J – PAPER FIGHT (12)



JUNIOR CARNIVAL

PRIVATE BAND SECTION

1st Runner Up – Royal Legacy

WINNER
DYNAMICS KIDS

MARCHING BAND SECTION

2ND RUNNER UP
X-plosion Cheer Leaders

1ST RUNNER UP
Let's Dance Cheerleaders

WINNER
Sparkles's Cheerleaders

ANTIGUA BARBUDA
FESTIVALS
COMMISSION

ANTIGUA
and
BARBUDA
The beach is just the beginning.

CIU
CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT UNIT
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

FEEL THE
RHYTHM
of SOCA

PARTY MONARCH FINALISTS JUMPY

KING YOUNG VICE IN DEY

LYRICAL REDS

WORKING GIRL

VICIOUS

PRESSURE DEM

KID FRESH

DUTTY MAS

BALLO

BANG E LINE

TIAN WINTER

COMING ALIVE

MENACE XL

JAM HARD

DAN KNOWLEDGE SHAKE IT OFF

DIOR

DAT BUN YOU

inet PARTY MONARCH

AUGUST 2ND
CARNIVAL CITY 9PM

Ticket \$40

ticketing
TICKETS AVAILABLE





ANTIGUA & BARBUDA FESTIVALS COMMISSION

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
The beach is just the beginning.

CIU
CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT UNIT
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

FEEL THE RHYTHM OF SOCA

PARTY MONARCH FINALISTS GROOVY

EMPRESS	TIL DE LAST
MENACE XL	TEDDY BEAR
DIOR	TIRED OF DE WORK
TIAN WINTER	NO WEAPON
RAINE	SO MAGICAL
BLESS EYE	SHOWTIME
YOUNG LYRICS	WRAP ME UP
QUEEN THALIA	WINNER CIRCLE
VICIOUS	NO APOLOGY

inet

PARTY MONARCH

AUGUST 2ND

CARNIVAL CITY 9PM

Ticket \$40

ticketing
TICKETS AVAILABLE

ANTIGUA Carnival
THE CARIBBEAN'S GREATEST SUMMER FESTIVAL

Nicaragua's Abandoned Ballot: What the OAS Can and Cannot Do



By Sir Ronald Sanders

Daniel Ortega has now said openly what his regime has demonstrated for years: the people of Nicaragua are not to be permitted to remove their rulers through elections.

During celebrations marking the 47th anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution, Ortega declared that there would be “no more elections” through which opposition parties could attempt to take power. He also promised a legislative “wall” against persons his government labels coup plotters and traitors.

The irony is stark. A revolution that overthrew the Somoza family dictatorship has produced another dynastic system, led by Ortega and his wife and co-president, Rosario Murillo.

I responded immediately on X, tweeting: “I unequivocally condemn Ortega’s outrageous announcement that Nicaragua will end elections. This is an assault on democracy and human rights. All responsible governments should condemn this unacceptable act. The people of Nicaragua have suffered long enough.”

However, Ortega’s declaration

changed the official rhetoric more than the reality. Elections had already become a gimmick preserving the appearance, but not the substance, of popular choice. Before the 2021 election, opposition parties were outlawed and prospective presidential candidates arrested. Media and civil society organisations were closed or forced into exile. The latest declaration removes the remaining pretence of electoral competition.

Several member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) have condemned Ortega’s announcement. Secretary General Albert Ramdin has rightly described the elimination of elections as a denial of the Nicaraguan people’s sovereign right to choose their government. Neither the Secretary General nor individual governments can, by themselves, express the collective position of the OAS. And, while a month ago, the OAS General Assembly issued a declaration on the deterioration in Nicaragua, the OAS has not responded collectively to Ortega’s subsequent edict.

The delegations of Canada and Chile sought to remedy this silence by preparing a statement for member states. As Dean of the OAS Corps of Ambassadors, I contributed language to that statement, firmly condemning Ortega’s actions and calling for genuine multi-party elections.

At the time of writing, that text has not been considered by the Permanent Council, and the United States has since proposed a separate resolution that is also awaiting consideration. The central issue now before the OAS is how Ortega’s actions should be characterised.

What is happening in Nicaragua is a crisis of representative democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Ortega-Murillo government continues to deprive Nicaraguans of their rights,

deepen instability and fear, and drive people to escape repression through irregular migration, creating pressures for receiving states. But this does not transform an internal human rights crisis into a threat to hemispheric peace and security. Nicaraguans fleeing persecution are victims, not security threats to the countries in which they seek safety.

This distinction also matters legally.

Nicaragua withdrew from the OAS in November 2023. I was President of the Permanent Council when the withdrawal took effect. We made clear that the withdrawal did not erase the international human rights obligations applicable to Nicaragua, including those arising from the American Convention on Human Rights.

The government chose withdrawal after a majority of member states resisted its violations of democracy and the rule of law and while suspension under the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter remained possible. Those suspension provisions apply only to member states and therefore no longer provide a course of action.

This does not mean that the OAS must remain silent or inactive. It means that the organisation must distinguish between political and human rights measures within its competence and any coercive measures which would require a different legal basis that is outside its authority.

Within the inter-American system, binding collective sanctions would have to be pursued, if at all, by states parties to the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, or the Rio Treaty. This separate procedure is available only to parties to that Treaty and requires a credible determination that the peace of the Americas is endangered. Not all OAS members are parties, and Nicaragua is no longer

Feature

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one.

More importantly, Ortega's oppression of the Nicaraguan people, while reprehensible, does not constitute an armed attack upon another state or justify claiming that Nicaragua presently threatens hemispheric peace and security. The law cannot be stretched merely because the political conduct being condemned is offensive. Doing so would weaken the rules-based order that defenders of democracy seek to uphold.

There are, nevertheless, meaningful actions that the OAS can and should take.

The Permanent Council can adopt a clear resolution condemning the elimination of meaningful electoral competition and rejecting the exclusion of candidates or organisations solely because they peacefully oppose the government. It can demand the release of political prisoners, the restoration of civil and political rights, and the re-opening of space for independent me-

dia and civil society.

It can keep Nicaragua under sustained consideration pursuant to the June General Assembly declaration. It can receive regular briefings from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and support the Commission's monitoring, hearings and precautionary measures.

The OAS can call upon Nicaragua to comply with decisions and provisional measures of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The Secretary General can offer good offices, even if the government refuses to engage. Member states can also support civil society in exile, cooperate with United Nations mechanisms to preserve evidence, and protect those forced to flee.

Individual governments may consider their own lawful diplomatic measures. But these should be identified honestly as national decisions, not represented as collective OAS action unless authorised by the organisation's competent organs.

The message to Ortega and Murillo must therefore be unmistakable. Nicaragua's withdrawal from the OAS has not placed their regime beyond scrutiny or accountability. The OAS must maintain constant vigilance, document continuing abuses through its human rights institutions, and keep Nicaragua under sustained consideration by its political organs. It must insist that those responsible for violations are held accountable under applicable international law.

Ortega may have abandoned the ballot because he fears the verdict of his own people, but the Inter-American community must neither normalise his conduct nor allow it to disappear from hemispheric attention. Its response should be united, persistent and unambiguous, while remaining firmly grounded in the rule of law.

(The author is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United States and the OAS. He is also Chancellor of the University of Guyana. The views expressed are his own)



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The Business of Slavery From Africa to the New World

Part 4: The Counter-Ledger

By Professor C. Justin Robinson

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal, The UWI Five Islands Campus



For three parts, we have read the business of slavery through its own records, the African merchant's diary, the auctioneer's price circular and the plantation manager's thirty-seven volumes. In those books, our ancestors appear as entries, cargo, chattel and compensation claims. This final part begins with a different document, it begins with a deed and on the first of August, the story changes hands.

In 1835, three years before full freedom reached most of the British Caribbean, the Baptist missionary James Phillippo bought land in St Catherine, Jamaica. He divided it into small lots and sold them, on credit where necessary, to apprentices who had saved penny by penny from provision grounds and Sunday markets. People not yet fully free were buying land against the day freedom would be complete. They called the settlement Sligoville, remembered as the Caribbean's first free village.

Hold that image as it is the hinge on which this series turns.

We should be clear-eyed about what the first of August 1834 delivered. The Slavery Abolition Act freed roughly 800,000 people in the

British colonies but bound most of them to their former owners as "apprentices" for up to four more years, obliged to provide forty and a half hours of unpaid labour each week. The owners received £20 million in compensation, financed by a British loan whose final remnants were not retired until 2015. The formerly enslaved received no cheque! Apprenticeship became, in effect, a second compensation to their former owners, paid in sweat.

Only Bermuda and Antigua rejected apprenticeship. Antigua moved directly to full legal freedom in 1834, but the ledger speaks plainly. The planters had done the arithmetic. On a small island where nearly all usable land was controlled and labourers had few places to go; a free worker could be cheaper than an apprentice. An apprentice had to be fed, housed and clothed by the estate while a free labourer could be made responsible for himself. Immediate emancipation was therefore not only a moral act it was also a labour-cost decision.

The one apparent act of generosity in this story turns out, on audit, to be one of its shrewdest entries.

When full freedom came in Antigua in 1834 and across most of the British Caribbean in 1838, the freed received, precisely itemised, nothing, no land, tools, capital or compensation, and little schooling. The owners kept the estates, received the money and retained the social power. Hundreds of thousands entered the market economy with a balance of zero, and the books were declared settled.

What followed was shaped by a basic economic fact, the ratio of land to labour. Where purchasable land

existed, as in parts of Jamaica, Trinidad and British Guiana, the freed could walk away, establish villages and force estates to compete for their labour. Where almost every acre was already owned, as in Barbados, Antigua and St Kitts, there was nowhere to walk. Housing and provision grounds remained tied to estate labour and contract and tenancy arrangements kept people on the plantation in fact long after they had left it in law.

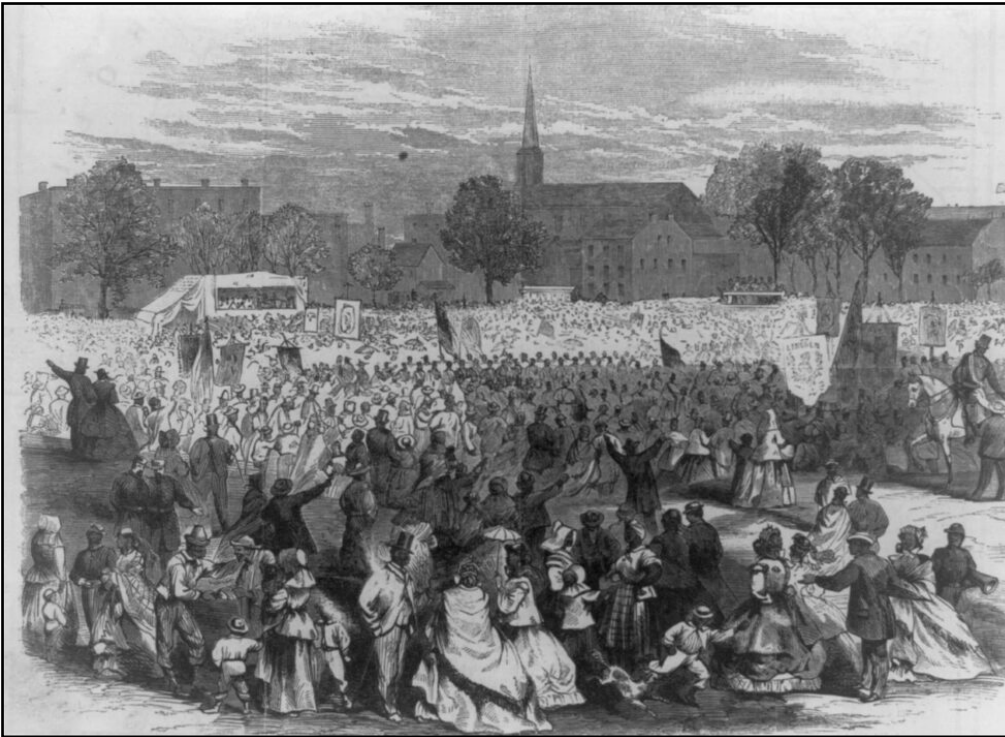
The law said they were free but the land said they were not.

Our islands' post-emancipation paths were determined less by character than by geography, ownership and bargaining power. Bargaining power is an exit option, where the exit was blocked, even freedom could be priced down.

The plantation enterprise responded as enterprises do, it re-sourced its labour. John Gladstone, among the largest beneficiaries of slave-owner compensation, imported indentured workers from India to his estates in Demerara in 1838. Over the next eight decades came hundreds of thousands of Indians, along with Madeirans, Chinese and liberated Africans, under contracts that often reproduced old disciplines under a new legal name. The supply chain was rebuilt with different ports and different peoples.

The business did not repent it re-procured.

Yet here is what the ledgers of the powerful never expected to record. The freed, handed nothing, capitalized themselves. In Jamaica, families pooled wages, bought indebted estates through churches and cut them



into free villages. Across the Caribbean, friendly societies, burial clubs and lodges gathered pennies against sickness, death and disaster, early indigenous insurance institutions, administered from exercise books by people whom the banks often would not receive.

The provision ground became the freehold, the Sunday market became the town market and the higgler's tray became the shop. In St Vincent, the freed and their children turned to arrowroot and helped make the island the world's principal supplier. Somewhere among those arrowroot smallholders walked the children of Grand Sable's seven hundred and four, descendants of people whose names had once appeared only in estate inventories.

None of this was given! It was built from a standing start by people who had learned, inside the cruellest enterprise in history, how production, markets, risk and survival worked.

Elsewhere, the opening balance was worse than zero. Haiti, born from a successful revolution of enslaved people, was forced in 1825, under threat from a returning French fleet,

to pay an indemnity to the former slaveholders whose rule it had overthrown. The formerly enslaved and their descendants were made to compensate their former owners, borrowing from French banks to do so. In the British Caribbean, the freed received nothing. In Haiti, freedom arrived with an invoice.

But we must be careful with the lesson of the counter-ledger. To celebrate what our ancestors built from nothing is not to say that nothing was owed to them. Their resilience must never become an alibi for the theft. Their ingenuity does not cancel the claim for repair, it proves the scale of what was denied. The fact that they capitalized themselves does not absolve those who stripped them of wages, land, liberty and inheritance.

Our ancestors did not wait for a saviour but that does not mean the debtor is released.

Emancipation Day must therefore be more than a commemoration of endurance. It is also an annual audit. Who owns the land? Who inherits capital? Who receives credit on reasonable terms? Who is asked, generation after generation, to begin again

from zero? The plantation ledger survives wherever wealth accumulated through exclusion is treated as natural, while the poverty produced by exclusion is blamed on its victims.

The owners' ledgers may have closed in 1834 or 1838, but the account did not. Our counter-ledger opened in a deed on a Jamaican hillside, where people not yet fully free bought land for the lives they intended to live. It opened in a friendly society's exercise book, an arrowroot field, a market stall, a schoolroom, a chapel and every small plot on which a family declared, this is ours.

On the first of August, we do not commemorate a gift. Freedom was not freely given, and the account was never settled. We commemorate the people who received nothing and made something, who were denied capital and created institutions, who were denied inheritance and became ancestors worth inheriting.

The counter-ledger has two columns. One records the outstanding debt, land taken, labour stolen, compensation denied and futures narrowed. The other records what our people built nonetheless, villages, farms, businesses, churches, schools, unions and nations.

We inherit both the claim and the capital.

The ledgers of the powerful could price a person, a cargo and a compensation claim. They could not calculate what followed, because they had never learned to count what they could not own. The deed signed before full freedom, the pennies collected against burial, the crop grown beyond the estate's command and the determination of a people who refused to remain an entry in someone else's book.

That is the ledger we honour on Emancipation Day. It was opened with nothing, it remains unfinished and we their heirs, are still writing it, line by line.

Free costume. Free tickets. Free phone. We live for this.



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Free Samsung A07



Free local CPL tickets.

Plus enter the draw to win all summer.

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EMANCIPATION WATCHNIGHT → 2026 ←



PERFORMANCES:

- Nyabinghi Drummers
- Wadadli Vybez Band
- Calypso Renditions
- Antigua Dance Academy
- Da Vibz Steel Band
- Point Iron Band
- spoken word and Anastis storytelling, the Point Iron Band so much more

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of music... culture... history...
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Be inspired by internationally
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EMANCIPATION WATCHNIGHT 2026

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

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Willikies Child Development Centre

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Beehive Learning Centre

WINNER
LEARNING LADDER

PRIMARY SCHOOL SECTION

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Villa Primary School

1st Runner Up

Pares Primary School

WINNER
POTTER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Regional News

Canadian firm pockets US\$2.2B on Guyana gold field, country gets nothing



Canadian firms G Mining Ventures Corp. (GMIN) and G2 Goldfields Inc. have finalised the US\$2.2 billion acquisition that was first announced in April, to create a tier-1 gold mining project in one of Guyana's hottest mining districts.

The announcement of the successful completion of the arrangement under the Canada Business Corporations Act was made on Wednesday by both companies.

GMIN and G2 are both Canadian firms that own gold projects in Region Seven (Cuyuni-Mazaruni). The deal allows the companies to consolidate the two adjacent gold properties, G2's Oko-Ghanie project with GMIN's fully permitted and fully financed Oko West project.

The arrangement allows GMIN to acquire all of the issued and outstanding common shares of G2 and for G2 to complete the spin-out of a new company, G3 Goldfields Inc. – which will hold G2's remaining properties not included in the acquisition.

GMIN's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and President, Louis-Pierre Gignac commenting on the completion of the arrangement noted that the acquisition of G2 further strength-

ens GMIN's position into a leading multi-asset intermediate gold producer in the Americas.

“By bringing together two adjacent deposits that form part of the same mineralized system under a single operation, we have created a large-scale, low-cost, fully permitted and fully financed tier-one gold mining complex in one of the world's most prospective gold districts. The combination is expected to generate substantial near- and long-term value for our shareholders through significant operational and capital synergies, including shared infrastructure, optimized mine planning, enhanced operational flexibility, and

increased processing capacity,” he added.

The acquisition enables planned production at Oko West Gold Project to increase the mine's annual production from 350,000 to reach approximately 500,000 ounces of gold per year over a minimum mine life of 15 years.

By itself, the Oko West project is expected to produce about 350,000 ounces of gold annually over a 12.3-year mine life. GMIN's exploration to date has outlined 5.4 million ounces of indicated gold resources and 0.4 million ounces of inferred material. In relation to proven and probable reserves, the Oko West is estimated to hold 4.64 million ounces of gold at an average grade of 1.89 grams of gold per tonne.

Meanwhile, according to G2, its Oko-Ghanie gold project average annual output is expected to reach 281,000 ounces annually during the mine's peak years-with a total production of approximately 3.2 million ounces of gold over the life of mine. In relation to the Oko-Ghanie project, GMIN clarified that the project's mineral resource included in the initial joint press release do not represent, from GMIN's perspective, a “current” mineral resource estimate of the Oko-Ghanie Project. Rather, it was stated that it was provided by GMIN as a “histor-

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150KVA single phase 3wire.120/240v.
50KVA single phase 3wire 120/240v.

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Regional News

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ical estimate” within the meaning of National Instrument 43-101 Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects (NI 43-101).

Consolidating the projects will bring the Combined Measured & Indicated Mineral Resources of 7.0 million ounces and Inferred Mineral Resources of 2.3 million ounces. The deal will also expand GMIN’s footprint in Guyana by 293 square kilometers (km²), creating a combined contiguous land package of over 362 km².

GMIN’s entry into Guyana was secured in 2024 through a business combination with another Canadian company, Reunion Gold Corp., valued at US\$638 million. GMIN’s deal with Reunion added the Oko West Gold Project to its portfolio.

During a May press conference, President Irfaan Ali was asked whether the growing trend of foreign firms ‘flipping’ large-scale mining assets in Guyana is a concern to his administration, and whether government believes stronger policies are needed to ensure the country benefits directly from when those transactions occur. Ali has defended the transfer and sale of Guyana’s mineral properties among foreign mining companies, arguing that such transactions are part of the global mining industry and not unique to Guyana.

Kaieteur News reported that the Oko West Gold project moved from environmental permit approval to mining licence approval and the commencement of construction within approximately 12 months.

Early 2025, GMIN received an interim permit which allowed the company to begin early works at Oko West project which included the development of a wharf on the Cuyuni River, access roads, and construction of the permanent camp. By September 2025, GMIN announced that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the environmental permit for the project.

The five-year permit is valid through July 2030. It authorises the construc-

tion and operation of Oko West. By the end of 2025, the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GMMC) in 2025 granted GMIN a 20-year mining licence for the project. The licence, which took effect on 5th December, 2025, authorises full development, operation and commercial production at the site.

First gold pour at the Oko West Gold Project is targeted for the second half of 2027 and commercial production is expected by January 2028. Notably, GMIN has already revealed that it anticipates three to four flights weekly from the Oko West gold project site to transport gold from the interior, as

well as facilitate other business and emergencies.

Moreover, now that the arrangement is completed, it is expected that the G2 shares will be delisted from the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) and withdrawn from quotation on the OTCQX Best Market of the OTC Markets Group (OTCQX) and that G2 will cease to be a reporting issuer (or equivalent) under applicable Canadian securities laws. Further, G3 has applied to list its common shares for trading on the Canadian Securities Exchange (CSE), with listing subject to G3 meeting the listing requirements of the CSE. (Kaieteur News)

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

Regional News

UNICEF, CCCCC strengthen partnership to advance child centered climate action across the Caribbean

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that will strengthen collaboration to protect children's rights and well-being in the face of the growing impacts of climate change across the Caribbean.

The five-year partnership establishes a framework for joint action to integrate child-sensitive climate policies, build resilient social services, strengthen climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction efforts, and empower young people to participate meaningfully in climate action and decision-making.

Climate-related hazards, such as hurricanes, flooding, droughts, extreme heat, and environmental degradation, increasingly affect children in the Caribbean. These impacts threaten access to education, healthcare, safe water and sanitation, nutrition and protection services.

Through this partnership, UNICEF and CCCCC will work together to ensure that climate responses better reflect and address the unique vulnerabilities and needs of children and young people.

"Climate change is not only an environmental challenge; it is a child rights challenge," said UNICEF Representative Sajid Ali, noting that "children are among those least responsible for the climate crisis, yet they bear some of its greatest consequences".

"This partnership with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre will help ensure that climate policies, investments and programmes across the region put children at the centre and strengthen the services and systems they rely on every day."

Under the agreement, the two organ-



isations will collaborate to strengthen child-sensitive climate governance, support climate-resilient education, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems, and promote child-responsive social protection and disaster preparedness measures.

They will also work together to generate evidence, mobilise resources and expand knowledge on effective approaches to climate resilience that benefit children and

CCCCC executive director, Dr Colin Young, welcomed the partnership, noting that regional climate action must consider the needs and perspectives of future generations.

"It is a well-known fact that children and youth have not been a central focus of climate resilience programming, either regionally or globally. UNICEF brings a tremendous track record of advocating the rights of children and ensuring they are at the heart of climate resilience efforts," Young said.

"This aligns with the CCCCC's

strategy, and it is an area where we recognise the need for greater strategic focus and stronger partnerships for action," Young said, noting that the MOU sets out the framework for the work "we will do together and allows us to combine our expertise to ensure that children are at the heart of climate action".

"We are absolutely delighted to be partnering with UNICEF and to draw on its extensive experience working with children and youth across the Caribbean and in Belize," Young added.

The two organisations say a key area of collaboration will focus on strengthening climate-resilient, safely managed sanitation services throughout the Caribbean.

They said that by using UNICEF's knowledge and experience in sanitation, the partnership will help promote informed advocacy, build skills, share knowledge, and secure funding to improve sanitation systems and resilience, especially in communities that are vulnerable to climate change.

The partnership will also place a strong emphasis on youth engagement, supporting children and young people, including adolescent girls and marginalised groups, to develop the knowledge, skills and leadership needed to contribute to climate solutions, policy dialogue and advocacy at national and regional levels.

"By combining UNICEF's mandate to advance and protect children's rights with CCCCC's leadership in coordinating regional climate action, the two organisations aim to accelerate progress toward a more resilient, sustainable and equitable Caribbean where every child can survive, thrive and realise their full potential despite the challenges posed by climate change," the two organisations added. (CMC)

Public sex offenders website back online

THE Trinidad and Tobago's official public sex offender website returned to functionality on Monday after being offline for months.

The website, which currently hosts the names, aliases and locations of at least 37 offenders, appeared offline from as far back as April, at one point displaying a 404 error and an expired SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) certificate.

Its updated SSL certificate, according to the Google Chrome web browser, was issued on Monday, July 27. It will expire on October 25.

The website was established by Section 9 of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and allows for the publication of the photos, name, aliases, dates of birth, address and convictions of offenders.

The act allowed the Commissioner of Police to establish the public sex offender website. It also prescribes that the Commissioner 'maintain' the website, ensuring that information published is in accordance with the law and accurate.

According to a release from the Office of the Attorney General in the aftermath of the act's passing, the public website, distinguished from a private National Sex Offenders Register available to law enforcement, would contain limited information for the public's use in safeguarding themselves.

Since coming online in 2023, the website has faced a number of issues, including expired certification.

Last month, concern over its dormancy was raised by advocates, including Chairman of the Caribbean Committee against Sex Crimes, attorney Jonathan Bhagan. He then

called on the government to use modern software or to implement a programme that links to US databases.

'This will track deportees, tourists and help locate persons who use the internet to groom children,' he had said.

Bhagan told the Express yesterday

that he was happy to see that data on the site appeared intact, but noted that his previous recommendations remained. He suggested that the law be amended to allow foreign data sharing with the US and other partner governments in real time.

He noted that US systems are far ahead of Trinidad and Tobago's. (Trinidad Express)

NOTICE

PROBATE FORM P7

Rule 15

THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA (Probat)

CLAIM NO: ANUHPB 2026/0132

In the Matter of an Application for a Grant of Probate
in the Estate of Magdalena Spillmann aka Madeleine Spillmann late
of Miisseedorf, Switzerland, Deceased

ADVERTISEMENT OF APPLICATION FOR GRANT SECOND PUBLICATION

TAKE NOTICE that an application has been filed by Rika A. Bird of 27 Jasmine Court, Friar's Hill Road, St. John's, Antigua for a Grant of Probate of the Will of the above-named deceased who died on the 19th day of September, 2025 without revoking a Will bearing the date of 3rd December 2015 wherein the applicant is named sole Executor.

Any person having an objection to the Grant of Probate to the Applicant shall file an objection within fourteen (14) days of the publication of this Notice dated this 23rd day of July, 2026.

**Rika Bird & Associates
Attorneys-at-Law for the Applicant**

Filed by Rika Bird & Associates, Chambers, 27 Jasmine Court, Friar's Hill Road, St. John's, Antigua. Telephone number: (268) 562-1880/1881; Fax number: (268) 562-1882; Email: legal@rikabird.com Attorneys-at-Law for the Applicant whose address for service is the same.

Regional News

Jamaican embassy in Dom Rep to be shuttered



Jamaica will temporarily close its embassy in the capital of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, effective August 1, after a lack of revenue from visa fees left the office without the funding necessary to continue operations.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Senator Kamina Johnson Smith made the announcement on Wednesday during a post-Cabinet media briefing at Jamaica House.

Johnson Smith explained that after both countries waived the visa requirement for residents who travelled to and from them in March 2025, revenue contracted which directly impacted the funding of the embassy's procedures.

"We will temporarily close Jamaica's embassy in Santo Domingo with effect from the 1st of August," said Johnson Smith.

"The embassy had been historically financed not from the ministry's budget but from earnings from visa fees, and you might recall that we entered into reciprocal...visa-free waiver arrangements, and with the inability to collect visa fees, there is no a longer budget that is pre-programmed to support the embassy," added Johnson Smith.

She underscored that the pause of service by the Jamaican consulate in the Dominican Republic was not as a result of soured ties but strictly due to a lack of funding.

"You may wish to note that this is not a reflection of our diplomatic, or political, or trade relations, with the Dominican Republic. So we have determined to implement a temporary closure while we revisit the matter of financing, of location, of the broader administrative arrangements, and we

are engaged with the Government of the Dominican Republic on that," said the foreign affairs minister.

Johnson Smith insisted that this was not the end of diplomatic ties between the two nations and pointed out that Jamaica's honorary consul Enrique De Marchena Kaluche, who is based in Puerto Plata in that country, will continue to receive Jamaica's support as the matter is worked through.

"This was a matter of pure administrative prudence, and we will, of course, continue to support Jamaica's consular needs through our honorary consul in Puerto Plata and he has agreed to continue to provide services to others residing in or travelling through Dom Rep, and the ministry will update you as soon as we have anything further to say on developments in this matter," said Johnson Smith. (Jamaica Observer)



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

Congo says the death toll in fastest-growing Ebola outbreak has passed 1,500

The fastest-growing Ebola outbreak has killed more than 1,500 people in eastern Congo, official data released on Thursday showed, marking a 50% increase in around a week that shows the emergency continuing to outpace response efforts.

As of Tuesday, 3,442 cases had been recorded, with 1,521 deaths, according to the latest government update.

The outbreak, which was declared on May 15, has been linked to the Bundibugyo virus, for which there are no approved vaccines or treatments.

There are currently 797 patients in isolation or hospitalized, while a further 615 patients have recovered, the data showed. Contact tracing continues to lag, with only around 78% of known contacts monitored nationwide, well below the 95% target health officials say is needed to interrupt transmission.

Displacement from armed conflict and illegal mining in the region have made it difficult to trace thousands who have come in contact with infected individuals.

The outbreak is mostly concentrated in eastern Congo's remote Ituri province, which accounts for nearly 90% of cases, but there have been others confirmed in five provinces, including one of the country's largest cities, Kisangani.

Neighboring Uganda declared itself free of Ebola on Tuesday following the discharge of the country's last patient in mid-June.

Ebola is rare, but highly contagious and can be contracted via bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or semen. The disease it causes is severe and often fatal.

The latest outbreak has killed more people at a quicker rate than any previous outbreak, including in 2014-2016 when 28,000 cases were reported, of



which over 11,000 people died. That outbreak took about eight months to reach 1,000 deaths.

The World Health Organization says the global risk of spread remains low because Ebola spreads through direct contact with bodily fluids, not through the air, making it much harder to spread than respiratory viruses. Cases detected outside the affected region have so far been quickly identified and contained without leading to sustained transmission, the agency said.

In Congo, however, the risk of the spread remains "very high," according to the WHO.

The speed of transmission in the current outbreak comes amid public concern that many communities in the affected provinces are either unreachable or have been abandoned by responders in recent days over safety concerns amid attacks from angry residents and rebels.

Misinformation asserting that the deadly virus isn't real and the restriction of traditional funerals to limit the outbreak's spread have angered some residents and led to attacks on health facilities.

International partners supporting the

Ebola response in Ituri's Nyakunde health zone temporarily relocated after a July 15 attack on a hospital and a treatment center, sparked by a patient's death.

Officials say the relocation of aid groups, including Africa CDC and Mercy Corps, has disrupted surveillance, contact tracing and supplies.

Dr. Désiré Duabo, chief medical officer for the health zone, said partners had provided much of the supplies, equipment and operational support, warning that the small stocks left are "almost depleted."

Attacks such as the one in Nyakunde are causing anxiety among health workers and making it difficult for them to carry out their duties, said Pierre Akilimali, the Ebola response incident manager at the National Public Health Institute of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

"They are working amidst risks of infection as well as risks to their personal safety," he said.

Local health officials say security has since stabilized and are urging partners to return, with Africa CDC saying teams could redeploy as soon as next week. (AP)

Rescuers search for survivors after a 7.1 quake kills 18



Soldiers and emergency workers combed through a badly damaged shopping mall and collapsed houses looking for trapped survivors yesterday 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 centre in the town of Kashima, which was bustling with thousands of people when the quake happened. The com-

pany 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.

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 profes-

sionals 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 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 yesterday, some airlines cancelled flights as a precautionary measure. (AP)

Thousands evacuated in Crete as Europe battles wildfires

Thousands of people have been evacuated on the Greek island of Crete as wildfires fanned by strong winds menace tourist resorts and villages.

Two firefighters died on the island on Wednesday when they became trapped while tackling a fire near Krya Vrysi in the Rethymno region. A third firefighter died on the Greek mainland, near the port town of Gytheio in the Peloponnese.

As gusts reached 125km/h (77mph) on the island, around 8,000 people were evacuated from their homes overnight but were later allowed to return.

Greece is among many European countries facing devastating fires and drought.

Several fires have continued to burn in Spain and Portugal, although Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez declared an end to the national emergency for wildfires in the Ávila and

Madrid regions.

In south-west France some residents have been able to return to their homes after a major wildfire in the Gironde region.

The fire raging in Crete broke out in the Rethymno region on Wednesday and has since spread rapidly, destroying homes and agricultural land. It remains one of the biggest fires currently active on the island and is still burning out of control.

There was no clear picture of the destruction so far, Rethymno's deputy regional governor Maria Lioni said, adding that containing the fire was the main priority.

Lioni described Wednesday as a "dark day" for the region and said gusts overnight reached up to 11 on the Beaufort scale - a wind force categorised as "violent" - fanning the flames and hampering containment efforts.

Some of those evacuated in Rethymno were moved into a temporary shelter.

"It was frightening," British tourist Peter Wood told news agency Reuters the shelter. "We could see the flames in the hills above the village, and the police and firefighters were just telling everyone to leave straight away."

The large fire occurs during one of Crete's busiest months for tourism. Hundreds of firefighters have been deployed to the region to battle the blaze.

Hellenic Fire Service chief Theodoros Vagias expressed his condolences for the two firefighters who died on Wednesday, naming them as 58-year-old Emmanouil Stratidakis and Panteelis Diamantakis, 25.

Both will be buried on Thursday, the statement added.

Meanwhile, wildfires have erupted in



the north-western Spanish provinces of Zamora and León, not far from the border with Portugal, with more than 1,000 people evacuated.

Five people were injured in a fire in the eastern town of Valpaços in Portugal, according to local reports.

A major fire that consumed an area in excess of 66,000 hectares to the west of the Spanish capital, Madrid, and caused tens of thousands of people to be evacuated has stopped spreading, allowing some residents to return home.

As he ended the national emergency in the area, Pedro Sánchez urged “extreme caution” during the fourth heat-wave of the summer in Spain.

The fire in Ávila, which has burned more than 43,000 hectares over the past week, is now considered the largest recorded wildfire in Spanish history.

A small amount of rain fell near Bordeaux in France on Thursday, raising hopes that the Gironde wildfire that has burned an area larger than the US city of Detroit and destroyed 240 homes might soon be over.

The region’s fire service said it was “reasonably optimistic” given that the fire had not grown in size since the weekend.

Around 84,000 of the 220,000 displaced residents were allowed to return home on Thursday, according to French reports.

It is estimated that more than 90,000 hectares of land across France have burnt this year - higher than any other year on record, according to data from the European Forest Fire Information Service.

In Spain, more than 200,000 hectares have burnt in 2026 – roughly five times above the average for the time of year. The area of land ravaged in Portugal is also higher than usual for this point in July.

The European fire season typically extends into August and September – and with more hot weather on the way

in the coming days, these figures are likely to keep rising.

Most wildfires are started by humans, whether deliberately or accidentally, but climate change is strengthening weather conditions conducive to fires spreading.

Last winter was mild and wet, encouraging vegetation growth, which has then dried out in successive heat-waves, generating tinder-dry fuel for wildfires.

Some researchers have also warned

that the Mediterranean’s forests and scrublands are not being properly managed – leaving plenty of vegetation as fuel for fires.

Forecasters say fire-prone conditions are expected to spread towards central Europe, with Greece and Turkey among the countries worst affected.

In Turkey, hundreds of homes have also been evacuated but the majority of fires that have broken out mainly in the south have been brought under control, authorities say. (BBC)



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TOGETHER.*

UEFA to boycott World Cup and FIFA tournaments over stake sale plans

LONDON (Reuters) - European soccer's governing body UEFA and its 55 member nations on Thursday voted to boycott all FIFA tournaments in what could be a knockout blow to the global soccer organisation's proposal to sell a stake in the World Cup to external investors.

In a statement that pulled no punches, Europe presented a united front to FIFA boss Gianni Infantino, whose proposal has caused uproar only weeks after the World Cup was held in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Six of the top 10 ranked teams in both men's and women's soccer are from Europe, including world champions Spain.

The Asian Football Confederation also issued a scathing letter to the continent's 47 member associations and warned the proposal would never succeed without the support of all six regional blocs.

UEFA's stance raised the stakes dramatically, with immediate implications for the 2027 women's World Cup due to be hosted in Brazil next year.

"We unanimously and unequivocally reject FIFA's proposal to transfer ownership interests in the World Cup and other FIFA competitions to private investors," said UEFA.

"No UEFA national teams will participate in any FIFA competition for so long as these proposals remain alive, unless this proposal has been abandoned in its entirety and binding assurances have been given that FIFA will never again open its governance or competitions to private ownership."

UEFA said the World Cup was not for sale and could not be treated as an investment product or surrendered to private investors.

Infantino's plan would create a US\$20 billion subsidiary to run the World Cup and its other events, while offering minority stakes to private in-



vestors.

He has offered FIFA's 211 member associations US\$40 million each if they agree to the proposal by September 19 as part of a US\$10 billion package to become available from January 1, 2027.

If rejected, the package would revert to US\$2.7 billion previously offered, around US\$10 million per member association.

"This is not merely a profound failure of leadership, but an abdication of FIFA's duty as the custodian of world football," UEFA said of a proposal which has triggered a major governance crisis.

"The moment external investors acquire ownership interests in FIFA competitions, football changes forever. Commercial return becomes a permanent obligation. Investor expectations become a daily pressure."

UEFA, whose elite club competitions generated €4.4 billion (US\$5 billion) in the 2024/25 season alone, and FIFA have long waged a battle for power and control in a sport that has become a mighty money machine.

Infantino, who is up for reelection as

head of FIFA next year, has cast the move as pushing global "democratisation" by broadening access to its financial largesse.

Others have taken a different view. AFC President Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al-Khalifa said his body was not consulted by FIFA at any level before the public announcement. That, and the lack of any detailed governance, financial or legal analysis of the proposal, was "totally unacceptable," he added.

CONCACAF, the regional bloc for North America, Central America and the Caribbean, also criticised FIFA for a lack of consultation.

The African confederation's executive committee will meet next week to evaluate the proposal, while the Oceania confederation, the smallest regional bloc with 11 full member nations, said it would discuss the proposal at a meeting next month.

South American governing body CONMEBOL has yet to comment publicly. Players' bodies have also expressed opposition to FIFA's plan, with FIFPRO, the global players' union, warning the proposal would irreversibly reshape the incentives underpinning the tournaments in which players work and build careers.

Australia's players union joined the criticism on Thursday, saying the world governing body was putting pressure on member associations to wave the proposal through while sidelining the athletes and fans who generate the value of the tournaments.



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2nd Runner Up

X-Plosion Cheer Leaders

1st Runner Up

Let's Dance Cheerleaders

WINNER

SPARKLES'S CHEERLEADERS

Sports News

High Court discharges injunction against LICB to allow AGM and elections to proceed

The Leeward Islands Cricket Board (LICB) has welcomed the decision of the High Court of Antigua and Barbuda to discharge the interim injunction that had restrained the Board from convening its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and conducting elections.

The injunction was brought by the Anguilla Cricket Association (ACA) and Mr. Carlisle Powell, in his capacity as President of the Nevis Cricket Association following an attempt by the LICB to disqualify former West Indies opener Kieron Powell and President of the Anguilla Cricket Association (ACA), Dr. Timothy Hodge, from contesting the body's election originally due on July 11.

On July 10, the High Court of Antigua and Barbuda issued an interim injunction stopping the LICB from moving forward with the planned AGM and elections pending the hearing of a legal challenge brought by the ACA and Nevis Cricket Association (NCA) President, Carlisle Powell.

According to a media release from the LICB, following a full hearing on July 22, the Honourable Justice Jan Drysdale delivered a reasoned judgment on July 27, setting aside the injunction with immediate effect.

In its ruling, the court found that the applicants

had failed to satisfy their duty of full and frank disclosure when seeking the injunction without notice.

The court concluded that there were material non-disclosures and factual inaccuracies which went to the very foundation of the application and held that, had the relevant information been disclosed, the injunction would not have been granted.

The court has ordered that the interim injunction is discharged with immediate effect; the Leeward Islands Cricket Board is at liberty to convene and conduct its Annual General Meeting and elections in accordance with its Constitution; and an inquiry will be conducted into damages allegedly sustained by the LICB as a consequence of the injunction.

The court will also consider whether a wasted costs order should be made against the applicants' attorneys-at-law. The applicants have been ordered to pay the LICB costs in the sum of EC\$6,000.

Commenting on the judgment, LICB President Enoch Lewis of Antigua said, "The ruling is a significant affirmation of the principles of fairness, due process and good governance. While the injunction temporarily delayed our Annual General Meeting, we have always maintained confidence in the



judicial process and respected the authority of the court.

"We are pleased that the court has now determined that the injunction should be discharged, allowing the board to continue its constitutional business."

Lewis continued, "Our focus now is not on division, but on unity and the future of cricket across the Leeward Islands. We invite all our territorial boards, players, officials, volunteers, and stakeholders to work together in the best interests of the game.

"The LICB remains committed to transparent governance, accountability, and creating opportunities for our cricketers to succeed both regionally and internationally."

The release states that

the LICB wishes to thank its member associations, sponsors, partners, players, officials, and supporters for their patience, understanding, and continued confidence throughout the legal proceedings.

It adds that the LICB will shortly announce a new date for its Annual General Meeting and elections and looks forward to conducting the business of the board in a manner that reflects the values and constitution of the organisation.

The release concluded that as aspects of the proceedings remain before the court, including the inquiry into damages, the LICB will not be making any further comment on matters that remain before the court.

Brown rescues point for young Reggae Boyz

Jamaica's young Reggae Boyz rebounded from a two-goal deficit to dramatically earn a 2-2 draw with Panama in their Group C encounter at the CONCACAF Under-20 Championship at the Estadio Universitario BUAP in Puebla, Mexico, on Wednesday night.

Moisés Richards opened the scoring in the 13th minute to hand Panama the lead, striking with a left-footed effort from the top of the box.

A great passing sequence resulted in Panama doubling that lead in the 22nd through Gerson Gordón.

The Jamaicans were down but not out, and they turned to a familiar name to keep them in the game, Jahmarie Nolan. Nolan shortened the deficit for Jamaica in the 62nd minute.

Just when it seemed all was lost, the Reggae Boyz showed a similar fight to the way they did in their opener against Honduras. In that game, Brandon Bent scored in the fifth minute of added time to hand the Reggae Boyz a 2-1 win.

The fifth minute of time added had passed. It was now the sixth minute of time added, but Jamaica had a free kick just inside Panama's defensive third.

The whipped cross fell to the head of Jaquan Brown, who made no mistake in nodding home Jamaica's equalizer.

Jamaica will face Canada in their third and final group-stage match on Saturday. Panama take on Honduras for their final Group C encounter.

The result leaves Jamaica second in Group C with four points, the



Jamaica under-20 player, Jaquan Brown, celebrates after scoring the equalizing goal against Panama during their CONCACAF Under-20 Championship football game at the Estadio Universitario BUAP in Puebla, Mexico, Wednesday, July 29, 2026.

same as leaders Canada, while Panama and Honduras are third and fourth, respectively, with a point each.

Canada and Honduras played to a 0-0 draw on Wednesday, leaving the group interestingly poised. With one round of games left to be played, no team has been eliminated yet.

The top two teams from three groups qualify for the next round, while the two best third-placed teams will advance to the quarter-finals.

The winners of the quarter-finals will secure automatic qualification to the 2027 Under-20 World Cup in Azerbaijan.

Hundreds pay final respects to Sir Garfield Sobers



The casket of Sir Garfield Sobers is being carried at Kensington Oval during his state funeral on Wednesday, July 29, 2026.

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados -Three of Antigua and Barbuda's four cricket knights, Sir Vivian Richards, Sir Andy Roberts, and Sir Curtly Ambrose were among hundreds of Barbadians, members of the cricket fraternity and well-wishers who flocked to Kensington Oval on Wednesday to pay their final respects to one of the greatest cricketers the world has ever seen, Sir Garfield St. Aubrun Sobers.

From as early as 7:30 a.m., persons made their way to the historic venue, where Sir Garry, as he was affectionately known, mesmerised the world back in 1958 with a then world record Test score of 365 not out against Pakistan.

The three Antiguan cricket legends

were among the dignitaries in attendance at the state funeral, including Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley; President The Most Honourable Jeffrey Bostic; National Hero Robyn "Rihanna" Fenty; Chairman of CARICOM and Prime Minister of St. Lucia Philip J Pierre; Cricket West Indies President Dr. Kishore Shallow, along with scores of other high-ranking officials from across the region.

In the many tributes to Sir Garry, he was remembered as a gentleman, an outstanding human being, and a world-class cricketer who touched the lives of everyone he met.

His oldest son, Matthew Sobers, said his father's gifts and talents stretched outside the cricket field.

"Whether it was cricket, table tennis, golf or just shooting hoops with the kids. He was blessed with rare talents few people had, but as I grew older, I realised his greatest gifts had very little to do with sports, but everything to do with the way he lived.

"Dad was born in a Barbados still emerging from the long shadow of plantocracy and colonial rule. At a time when opportunity was limited for so many, he became living proof that excellence could come from these shores. He didn't simply win cricket matches; he changed what people believed was possible. A boy from the Bayland became respected by kings, prime ministers, world leaders across every conti-



Antiguan cricket legends, from left, Sir Andy Roberts, Sir Vivian Richards, and Sir Curtly Ambrose and Barbadian Sir Wesley Hall, seated, reminisce prior to the start of the funeral service in honour of Sir Garfield Sobers at the Kensington Oval in Barbados on Wednesday, July 29, 2026.

nent,” Matthew said.

“He gave generations of Barbadians something priceless: belief. Belief that excellence had no post code. Belief that character mattered as much as talent. Belief that humility can stand beside greatness and inspired children to dream bigger and adults to stand a little taller and assured the world that Barbados could produce. That may have been his greatest lesson.”

Mottley said Sir Garry had inspired countless Barbadians by his greatness on the cricket field.

“Sir Garry gave us the gift of understanding that even though others may have ruled us for over 300 years, that they could not define our greatness and could not shape or

bludgeon our aspirations. It is a gift to the nation that could not have been greater.

“I say today, as we say farewell to you, Sir Garry, this is your final walk from Kensington Oval. This will be our country’s last opportunity to give you that which you became so accustomed to – a standing ovation,” Mottley said.

“We thank you for teaching us that greatness could wear humility, that excellence could still belong to ordinary people. That the dreams of a little boy from the Bayland could become the inheritance of an entire nation.”

Legendary West Indies cricketer Brian Lara, who broke Sir Garry’s record in 1994 by scoring 375, re-

vealed that the all-rounder had played a pivotal role in his career.

“Sir Garfield Sobers personally coached and inspired generations long after he was gone. Over the last few days, I struggled with what I would say today, but now I’m here, I realised that this is not a sad moment, this is a moment for us to celebrate.

“Today we celebrate a remarkable life. The life of the greatest all-round cricketer, and looking at this beautiful Oval, I believe we truly have a life to celebrate. Today, we pay tribute to a man that could have done it all,” Lara said.

Sir Garry was later laid to rest at Coral Ridge Memorial Gardens.

Tough goings for Antiguan swimmers at CAC Games in Santo Domingo

Antiguan swimmers have been going through tough times at the Central American and Caribbean (CAC) Games, which is taking place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from July 24 to August 8.

The Antiguan four-member team comprising female swimmers Alandra Dublin and Ellie Shaw and their male colleagues Ti-von Benjamin and Stefano Mitchell have achieved little success during three days of competitions in the pools, all failing in their bids to win a medal in Santo Domingo.

However, Shaw and Dublin finished in the top three positions in the B final of the women's 50-meter breaststroke event, which was won by Shaw in 34.65 seconds.

Dublin took third place in 35.34 seconds, while Cyrielle Manin of Martinique came second in 35.14 seconds.

Both Antiguan female swimmers were relegated to the B finals after failing to advance to the A finals of the 50-meter breaststroke event.

Contesting the second of three first-round heats, Shaw finished fourth in a time of 35.03 seconds,



Antigua swimmers with president of the Antigua and Barbuda Swimming Federation Edith Clashing, third left, at the 2026 CAC Games in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on Sunday, July 26. (Photo courtesy of the ABCF)

while Dublin came fifth in 35.43 seconds.

Shaw and Dublin also failed to advance to the A finals but recorded times that were sufficient to secure berths in the B finals of the women's 100-meter breaststroke race.

Shaw recorded a fourth-place finish in the third and final first-round heat in a time of one minute and 17.21 seconds. Dublin failed to qualify for the A finals after securing a fifth-place finish in the first heat in one minute and 22.02 seconds.

Shaw took second place in the B final with a time of one minute and 16.71 seconds, but Dublin finished fifth in one minute and 21.13 seconds.

Shaw missed out on reaching the finals of the women's 200-meter individual medley after finishing last in the first of three qualifying heats. Shaw clocked a time of two minutes and 47.39 seconds.

Shaw qualified for the B finals but finished ninth among 10 competitors in a time of two minutes and 40.46 seconds.

Dublin failed to qualify for the finals of the women's 50-meter freestyle event after finishing third in the second of five opening-round heats in the 50-meter freestyle event. Dublin clocked 28.32 seconds in the race.

Dublin also missed out on reaching the finals of the

women's 100-meter freestyle event despite winning the first of four qualifying heats in a time of one minute and 01.54 seconds. Although winning Heat 1, Dublin's time was not fast enough to secure her a spot in the finals.

Stefano Mitchell and Ti-von Benjamin also missed out on reaching the A finals of the men's 100-meter freestyle event.

Mitchell clocked 51.98 seconds to finish sixth in the fifth qualifying heat. Mitchell's time was sufficient to secure a spot in the B finals, when he finished fifth with a time of 51.65 seconds.

Benjamin finished seventh in the third of five qualifying heats with a time of 53.48 seconds.

Mitchell also missed out on qualifying for the finals of the men's 50-meter freestyle event by finishing fifth in the fourth of five first-round heats. Mitchell bowed out with a time of 23.45 seconds.

Benjamin failed to qualify for the finals of the men's 100-meter butterfly event. Benjamin clocked 56.81 seconds to finish seventh in the second of four first-round heats.