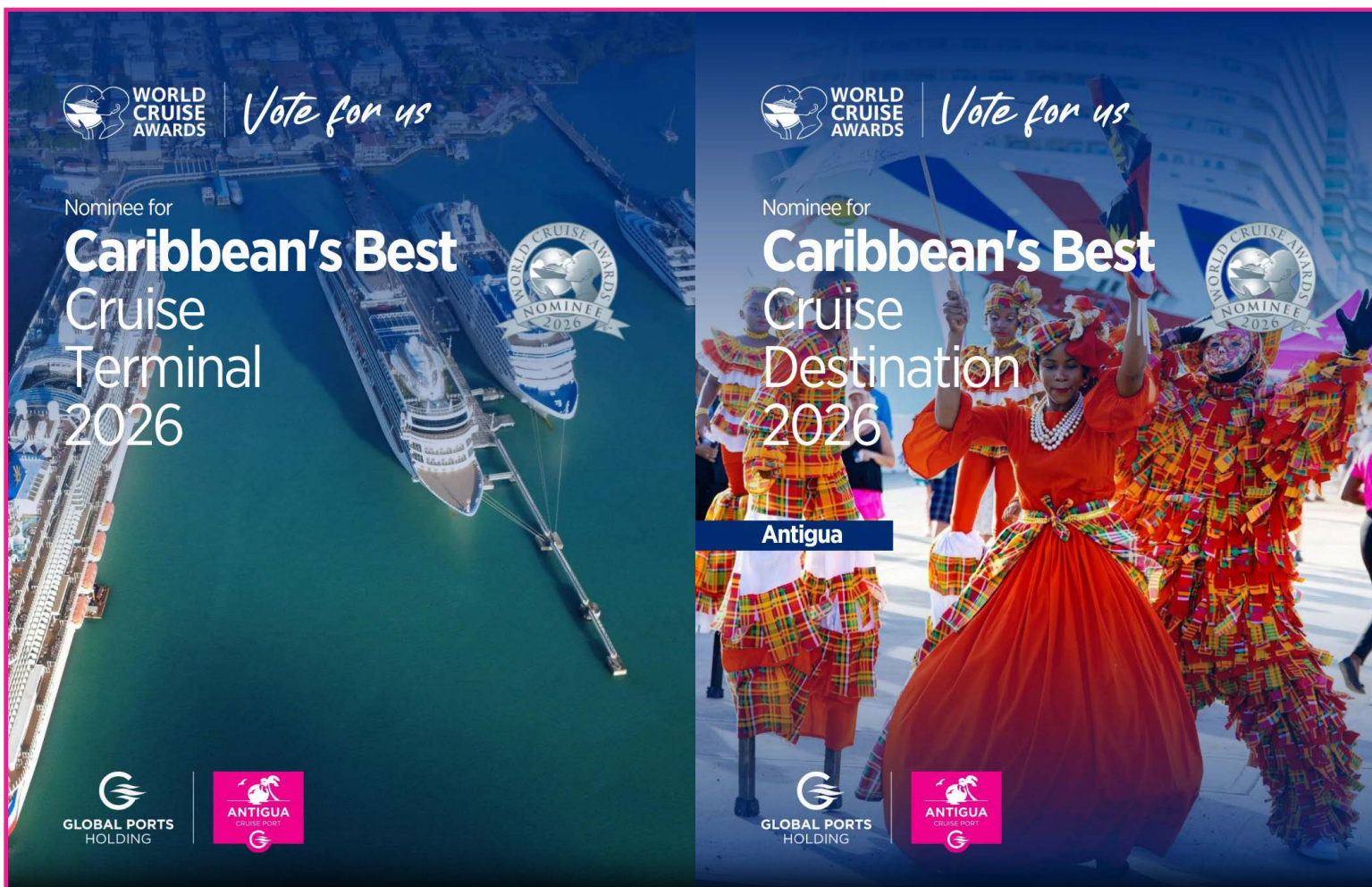


Antigua and Barbuda Awaits US Response on Visa Bond Review Request

Story on page 2



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Antigua Cruise Port Nominated for Caribbean's Best Cruise Terminal 2026

Antigua and Barbuda Awaits US Response on Visa Bond Review Request

The Antigua and Barbuda Government is awaiting a response from the United States Administration following a formal request for a review of the country's inclusion on the US visa bond programme.

The issue was raised during last week's Post-Cabinet Press Briefing, where Director General of Communication Maurice Merchant confirmed that Antigua and Barbuda has been actively engaging US officials on the matter.

The Prime Minister, through Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador in Washington, has written to the US President seeking a review of the country's inclusion on the list of nations subject to the visa bond requirement, which can require certain travellers to post bonds of up to US\$20,000.

Merchant said Antigua and Barbuda's Washington office has maintained close contact with officials in both the White House and the US State Department regarding the matter.

He confirmed that US authorities have acknowledged receipt of communications from Prime Minister Gaston Browne as well as correspondence addressed to the US Secretary of State.

However, no substantive response has yet been received from the US Administration.

Merchant said Antigua and Barbuda intends to keep the issue at the forefront and will continue following up with US officials.

"If we do not receive a response at a particular time, we will continue to do follow-up communications to



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

keep the matter at the forefront of not only Antiguan and Barbudans but the United States Administra-

tion," Merchant said.

Antigua and Barbuda is not alone in seeking a review of its inclusion on the visa bond list. Grenada Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell has also written to US authorities seeking a review of Grenada's inclusion, while Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit is lobbying for the US authorities to review its decision.

The visa bond policy has generated concern in affected Caribbean countries, particularly over its potential implications for travel, tourism, business and people-to-people exchanges.



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CXC Urges Deep Dive into Male-Female Education Gap



The Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) is calling for a deeper examination of the growing gender disparity in student participation as young people progress through the region's education system.

Director of Operations at CXC, Dr. Nicole Manning, highlighted the issue while examining the gender balance among students sitting CXC administered examinations, pointing to a significant decline in male participation at the post-secondary level.

Manning said the figures show that while boys and girls begin their educational journey in relatively equal numbers, the balance changes considerably as they advance through secondary and post-secondary education.

At the CAPE level this year, females accounted for 62 per cent of candidates, compared with just 38 per cent males.

The disparity was less pronounced at CSEC, where females represented 59 per cent of candidates and males 41 per cent.

However, at the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC) level, the pattern was reversed, with males accounting for 52 per cent of candidates and females 48 per cent.



Director of Operations at CXC, Dr. Nicole Manning

Manning noted that CCSLC candidates are predominantly students in their first three years of secondary school, making the figures particularly significant when compared with the gender distribution at the higher levels.

She argued that the figures raise important questions about what happens to male students as they move through the education system.

“At the primary level, where they are pretty much dead on equal, then moving to secondary and post-secondary and somehow the disparity appears,” Manning said.

Manning stated that educators must examine the underlying factors contributing to the widening gap and develop strategies to ensure more boys remain engaged and progress through secondary and post-secondary education.

“It’s important for us to do that deep dive and understand,” she said, stressing that the issue requires a collective response from educators.

She also offered a strong view on the importance of supporting boys and young men in developing their

leadership potential.

“For me, men are born leaders and we have to respect that and help them to stay in that place,” Manning said.

While her comments focused attention on male participation, Dr. Nicole Manning stressed the need for educators to work together to address the disparity rather than allow the gap to widen as students progress.

Manning said the objective should be to understand why students who begin their education at approximately a 50-50 gender balance eventually reach a point where CAPE participation stands at 62 per cent female and 38 per cent male.

“This disparity has come about for whatever reason, and together as educators, we are going to try and see what we can do,” she said.

She encouraged educators to work collectively to identify the barriers affecting boys’ continued participation and academic progression.

The CXC official said the challenge begins well before students reach CAPE, making early intervention and sustained support critical.

Local News



How Much is Our Culture Worth?: Ambassador Elizabeth Makhoul Responds to Cynical Carnival Criticism



Festivals Commission Chairperson Ambassador Elizabeth Makhoul is pushing back against criticism of this year's Carnival, questioning the value placed on local culture and the artists who help bring the season to life. Makhoul says many who criticise the cultural product must also be willing to invest in and support the people responsible for creating it. Her position;

what value do we place on our culture?

Makhoul rendered direct criticism of "keyboard warriors" who, she suggests, do not contribute meaningfully to the success of the country's premier summer festival.

Her comments come with particular emphasis on the need for greater support for local artists, arts initiatives and cultural events, maintaining that those complaining about the stagnation of the country's culture have, in many cases, done little to uplift the primary contributors to the cultural sector and, in some instances, have actively contributed to its decline.

The Festivals Chair revisited the recent controversy in the media in mid-July, ahead of the commencement of Carnival, after the Festivals Commission privately expressed interest to national broadcaster ABS, in introducing a pay-per-view model for Carnival

Broadcasts.

The pay-per-view model, she affirms, is a practice used throughout the Caribbean and has proven lucrative for other territories. Given the marketability of Antigua Carnival, Makhoul and her team still believe that the model would be a welcome and financially beneficial addition to the carnival product

"Grenada takes in \$200,000 US yearly," Makhoul noted, "It costs \$100-\$120 to enter the grounds. It's \$100 US for their pay per view; we intended to charge \$5 US... So again it boils down to 'what is the culture worth to you? What price do you put onto your culture?'"

In the aftermath of the public backlash surrounding the proposal, Makhoul explained that the funds generated were intended to support music artists in Antigua and Barbuda. She

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-Medium Drink
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further stated that the initiative was part of a broader effort to raise the standard of Antiguan and Barbudan culture by directing resources toward the stakeholders who contribute most to the Carnival season.

Makhoul also leveled harsh criticism at detractors of the initiative, claiming that their opposition ultimately cheapens the culture.

In many ways, she argued, the Antiguan public has contributed to the devaluation of cultural through an unwillingness to participate in cultural exhibitions when a fee is attached.

According to Makhoul, this demonstrates a lack of value placed on the country's artists and disregards the time, effort and expense involved in executing a production.

"We can't be talking about 'we love the culture,' 'we support the culture,' but only on facebook, or only if we don't have to pay. We are devaluing [and] degrading the culture. We so

love the culture but it has to be for free."

Makhoul further challenges public and corporate support for local culture, illustrating how both the general public and the corporate sector have fallen short in their efforts to uplift the standard of the culture.

She gave several examples of general disregard for government efforts to improve the festival, citing a number of initiatives undertaken by the government, including thousands of dollars spent to renovate the bathrooms at the Antigua Recreation Grounds, where she says the public has shown blatant disregard, demonstrating how little appreciation is shown for the very culture many claim to advocate for.

To this end, she also highlighted a supposed hypocrisy of "keyboard warriors" who criticise her and suggest that she does not appreciate Antiguan culture. She further went on to

imply that public opinion has a natural propensity to skew towards negativity, and urges spectators to celebrate the good.

Makhoul argued that many detractors have made little effort to engage with the local cultural product, instead choosing to patronise outside events and promotions. She contends that this indirectly contributes to the degradation of the very culture they claim to support.

"Did they bring their kids into Junior Soca, Junior Calypso? I doubt it. Did they even watch it on TV? Probably not... Culture is an action word. Culture is community. Culture is what you put into it. Without the people there is no culture. What is stopping you from participating?"

The Festivals Commission Chair also levelled criticism at the corporate sector, accusing businesses of not doing enough to support Carnival despite being among the greatest beneficiaries of the festival.

"They're not doing anything but they get the bulk of it during the carnival. The hotels don't give anything, the airlines don't give anything, restaurants don't give anything, supermarkets don't give anything."

Makhoul specified that "The people that walk into the prime minister's office for concessions" should be obligated to provide a fixed amount to be put toward cultural upliftment.

She says the country cannot afford to continue relying solely on government subsidies to sustain Carnival and the wider cultural sector. Likening the practice to "stealing from our parent's pension plan."

She left the public with a question; How much is our culture worth



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Commonwealth Lawyers Association calls for Prime Minister Gaston Browne to Withdraw Remarks

The Commonwealth Lawyers Association is calling on Prime Minister Gaston Browne to withdraw remarks he made about the judiciary during a National Security Meeting earlier this month. The Association says the comments, made amid concerns over gun crime and sentencing, threaten judicial independence and could undermine public confidence in the justice system. The call has been backed by several regional legal and judicial bodies.

The Association is calling on Prime Minister Gaston Browne to withdraw remarks he made about the judiciary during a National Security Meeting on August 10, where the Prime Minister referred to a “particular judge who has a propensity to give criminals a break.”

The comments have drawn strong criticism from legal organizations across the region.

The Antigua and Barbuda Bar Association described the statement as a direct threat against an identifiable judge and an attempt to influence judicial power. The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Bar Association also warned that such remarks could undermine judicial independence and make Antigua and Barbuda an unsafe place for judges to work.

The Caribbean Heads of Judiciary and the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association have similarly condemned the comments.

The CLA now acknowledges that governments have a legitimate responsibility to address crime and reform sentencing. Irregardless, those efforts, the statement states must respect judicial independence and constitutional processes; suggesting that the Prime Minister’s statements seemingly attempted to upend that value

The Association is urging the Prime Minister to formally withdraw his remarks, reaffirm the independence of the judiciary and ensure that concerns over sentencing and public safety are



Commonwealth Lawyers Association

Statement of Concern regarding remarks made by the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, the Hon. Gaston Browne, affecting judicial independence in Antigua and Barbuda

Pursuant to its constitutional objects of maintaining and promoting the rule of law throughout the Commonwealth and promoting the administration of justice in accordance with the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles, the CLA issues this Statement of Concern.

The Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA) is perturbed by remarks made by the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, the Hon. Gaston Browne, on 10 August 2026 at a National Security Meeting. The CLA calls for those remarks to be withdrawn and for the independence of the judiciary in Antigua and Barbuda to be publicly reaffirmed.

The Prime Minister, whilst addressing the increase in gun crimes and violence in Antigua and Barbuda, criticised the Judiciary for what he considered to be unduly lenient and short prison sentences. He referred to a “*particular judge who has a propensity to give criminals a break*”. The Prime Minister went on to say, “*if you cannot follow the lead of parliament to give longer sentences, leave our country voluntarily otherwise we are going to deport you and make you persona non grata. You know who you are. This is the Prime Minister of the country saying this.*”

These remarks have rightly attracted criticism and condemnation from legal and other organisations in the region and elsewhere.

The Antigua and Barbuda Bar Association (ABBA) immediately responded: “*The Prime Minister’s statement is a direct and public threat against an identifiable judge, made for the express purpose of influencing the exercise of judicial power. The violation of constitutional principle is manifest*”. The ABBA also said that the Prime Minister’s statement, in directing a judge to “follow the lead of parliament” on sentencing, is “*precisely the kind of executive encroachment upon judicial power that the separation of powers is designed to prohibit*”.

The Prime Minister’s response to the ABBA was to dismiss the Association as “*defunct*” and to state publicly: “*Piss off.*” This derisory response to the organised legal profession compounds the original threat and demonstrates a disregard for legitimate institutional criticism of executive overreach.

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Bar Association (OECS) has also expressed concern that such remarks may undermine judicial independence and that “*the government may be creating a situation where Antigua and Barbuda becomes an unsafe place of work for judges*” and that the Court may be unable to find judges willing to sit in Antigua and Barbuda under threat of deportation and the risk of being declared persona non grata.

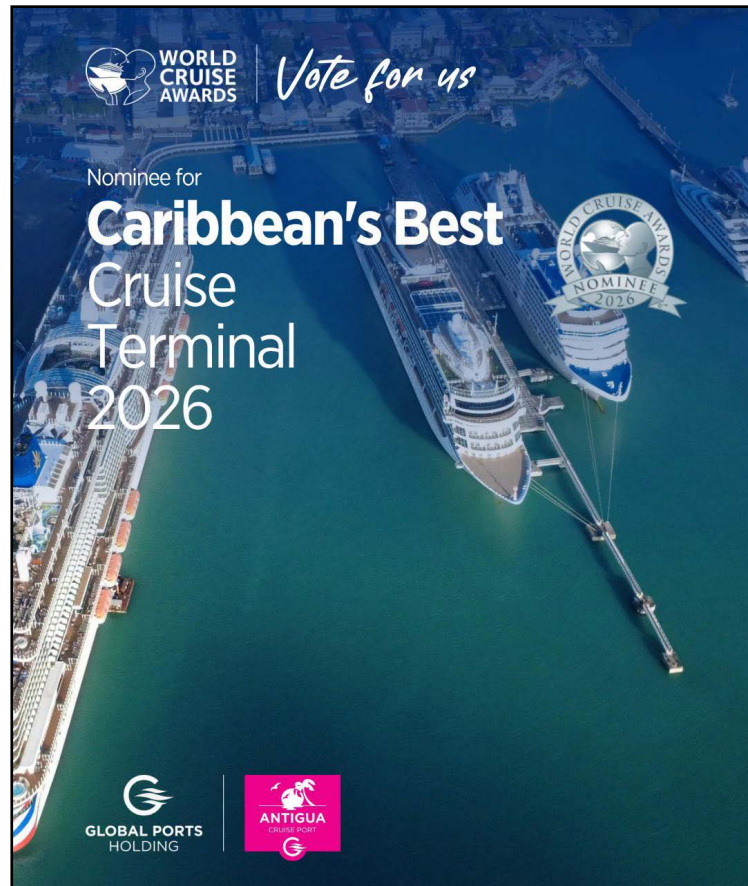
addressed through lawful institutional and appellate processes. All of this ahead of Antigua and Barbuda hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting later this year.

The Government, however, responding to a previous statement, by the CMJA urged understanding, defending that as head of the Elected Government, the prime minister has a responsibility to respond to concerns of

public safety and justice. The government further reaffirmed its adherence to and advocacy for an independent judiciary.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne in a series of social media posts on the matter has stood by his remarks, underscoring his commitment first to the people of Antigua and Barbuda, as he continues toward his quest of creating a lifestyle superpower.

Antigua Cruise Port Nominated for Caribbean's Best Cruise Terminal 2026



Antigua Cruise Port (ACP) has been nominated for Caribbean's Best Cruise Terminal at the 2026 World Cruise Awards. This recognition comes at an exciting time in the continued transformation of Antigua and Barbuda's cruise tourism product.

The nomination follows several years of strategic investments in the country's cruise infrastructure and visitor experience, driven by the public-private partnership between the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and Global Ports Holding (GPH).

Since assuming operations in 2019, Antigua Cruise Port has continued to strengthen the destination's capacity and competitiveness within the Caribbean cruise industry. Key investments include the development of the fifth berth, enabling the port to accommodate some of the world's largest cruise vessels, as well as enhancements to the landside experience through the

ongoing Upland Development Project, scheduled for completion in the fall of 2026.

A major milestone came in January 2026 with the unveiling of Antigua Cruise Port's new purpose-built cruise terminal. The more than 10,000 square-foot facility provides dedicated space for increased passenger processing and turnaround operations, supporting the destination's ambitions to grow Antigua and Barbuda as a Caribbean homeporting gateway.

Gasper George, General Manager of Antigua Cruise Port shared:

"This nomination for Caribbean's Best Cruise Terminal represents more than the physical infrastructure at the port. It recognizes an evolving cruise experience supported by the people who bring it to life every day – from the Antigua Cruise Port team to taxi drivers, tour guides, vendors, merchants, restaurants, attractions and other tourism partners across the country."

Antigua Cruise Port's recognition is complemented by a second nomination for the twin-island state, with Antigua and Barbuda also being nominated for Caribbean's Best Cruise Destination 2026.

Together, the two World Cruise Awards nominations recognize both the gateway through which hundreds of thousands of cruise guests are welcomed each year and the experiences that await beyond the port – from Antigua and Barbuda's sandy beaches, rich culture, history and cuisine to, most importantly, the warm hospitality of its people, who ensure that visitors feel welcomed from the moment they come ashore.

Voting closes on Friday, August 21, 2026, and we encourage all who have experienced Antigua Cruise Port to show their support in our commitment to growth and service, as we continue to elevate the destination and cruise tourism product.



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Gate 19 — Staff, vendors and police

Gates open at 5:00 p.m. nightly.

Car passes are available for EC\$15.00 and permit parking inside the stadium.

Patrons are encouraged to arrive early and follow the directions of security and event personnel to ensure smooth entry.

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GATES 5 & 6 SOUTH STAND

GATE 16 – GRASS & NORTH STAND

GATE 12 -PARTY STAND

GATE 19 – STAFF, VENDOR AND POLICE

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The House Was Built. The Dream Wasn't: The Challenges Most First-Time Homeowners Face with Building Contractors



By Garfield Joseph
The Dream Begins

For many Antiguans and Barbudans, building a home represents far more than pouring concrete and erecting walls. It is the fulfillment of years of sacrifice, discipline, and hope.

It may begin with long hours at work, savings accumulated over decades, assistance from family abroad, or a hard-earned mortgage approval. For many families, building a home is the largest financial investment they will ever make. It is also one of the most emotional.

The vision is clear: a place where children will grow up, where family gatherings will be held, and where retirement years can be enjoyed in comfort and security.

The excitement often peaks when construction begins. The foundation is laid, walls rise, and the dream starts to take physical form. At that stage, homeowners can already imagine receiving the keys and walking through the finished house.

Unfortunately, this is often where the journey becomes more complicated.

When the Dream Meets Reality

Across Antigua and Barbuda, many homeowners encounter challenges that transform what should be an exciting experience into a stressful one.

One of the most common problems is

project completion delays.

A contractor may estimate that a project will take twelve months, but eighteen months later the home remains unfinished. Delays can occur for legitimate reasons, including weather conditions, supply chain disruptions, labour shortages, or unexpected site conditions. However, poor planning, inadequate supervision, and unrealistic timelines can also contribute significantly.

For homeowners, delays are more than an inconvenience. They can mean continuing to pay rent while servicing a mortgage, delaying family plans, and experiencing mounting financial pressure.

Another challenge is cost overruns.

Many homeowners carefully develop construction budgets only to discover that the final cost is substantially higher than anticipated. Changes in material prices, project modifications, and unforeseen expenses are sometimes unavoidable. Yet inadequate estimating, poor project management, and weak communication can also lead to escalating costs that create significant strain on families.

The emotional toll can be considerable. A project that was intended to create stability can instead become a source of anxiety.

The Frustration of Poor Workmanship

Perhaps even more damaging than delays and rising costs is poor workmanship.

A homeowner may finally move into a new home only to discover leaking roofs, uneven floors, improperly installed doors, electrical issues, plumbing defects, or poor finishing work.

These problems are especially frustrating because they often become apparent only after occupancy. Correcting defects can require additional expense, further inconvenience, and disputes between homeowners and contractors.

What makes the situation particularly painful is the expectation gap. Homeowners are not simply purchasing a

structure. They are purchasing confidence, safety, comfort, and quality.

When workmanship falls short, trust is eroded.

When the Contractor Never Returns

One of the most troubling experiences some homeowners face is the incomplete job.

The major construction may be finished, but numerous details remain unresolved. Cabinet doors may require adjustment. Electrical fixtures may not function properly. Paint touch-ups may be outstanding. Exterior grading may be incomplete. Promised corrections remain unfinished.

The contractor, having received final payment or having moved on to another project, becomes difficult to reach.

The homeowner is left feeling abandoned at the very moment they expected the project to be complete.

Unfortunately, these unresolved issues can overshadow months or even years of hard work and investment.

A Better Way Forward

The good news is that many of these challenges can be reduced through better processes, stronger communication, and a greater focus on customer satisfaction.

Successful contractors understand that their reputation is built not only on the homes they construct but also on the experiences they create for their clients.

Several practical strategies can help.

1. Set Realistic Expectations

Contractors should provide realistic timelines and budgets from the outset.

It is far better to under-promise and over-deliver than to create expectations that cannot be met. Homeowners appreciate honesty, even when the news is not ideal.

Regular project updates can also reduce anxiety and strengthen trust throughout the construction process.

2. Improve Quality Control

Quality should not be inspected only at the end of construction.



Instead, contractors should implement quality checks throughout the project. Issues identified early are usually less expensive and easier to correct than problems discovered after completion.

A commitment to craftsmanship benefits both the homeowner and the contractor's long-term reputation.

3. Communicate Frequently

Many disputes arise not from the problem itself but from poor communication surrounding the problem.

When delays occur, homeowners should be informed immediately. When costs change, explanations should be provided. When challenges arise, solutions should be discussed.

Regular communication builds confidence and minimizes misunderstandings.

4. Conduct a Comprehensive Final Inspection

Before handing over the keys, contractors should conduct a detailed walk-through with the homeowner.

Every room, fixture, switch, appliance, door, window, and finishing detail should be reviewed together.

This process creates an opportunity to identify concerns before occupancy and ensures that both parties share the same understanding of project completion.

5. Ask the Most Important Question

Perhaps the most powerful step a contractor can take is also the simplest:

“Are you completely satisfied with your home?”

Before handing over the keys, contractors should ask homeowners this question and genuinely listen to the answer.

If concerns exist, they should be addressed promptly.

Whether the issue relates to safety, quality, functionality, appearance, or comfort, every reasonable effort should be made to resolve it before project hand-over.

This simple conversation demonstrates professionalism, accountability, and respect for the homeowner's investment.

6. Create a Customer Satisfaction Mindset

The best contractors recognize that construction is ultimately a service business.

Clients may forget the exact completion date. They may eventually forget minor inconveniences encountered during construction.

What they rarely forget is how they were treated.

A contractor who consistently delivers quality work, responds to concerns, and ensures customer satisfaction will generate referrals, repeat business, and a strong reputation within the community.

The Final Measure of Success

A house may be judged by its design, square footage, or architectural features. However, the true measure of success is much simpler.

1. Did the homeowner receive the home they were promised?
2. Did they feel respected throughout

the process?

3. Did the contractor remain committed to quality until the very last detail was

completed?

In Antigua and Barbuda, where homeownership represents a lifetime dream for many families, construction should be about more than completing a building. It should be about fulfilling a promise.

When contractors focus on delivering safety, quality, comfort, and complete customer satisfaction, everyone benefits. Homeowners gain peace of mind, contractors strengthen their reputation, and the construction industry moves closer to the standard of excellence that our nation deserves.

After all, when someone invests their life savings into building a home, they are not simply buying concrete and steel. They are investing in a dream. Ensuring complete satisfaction before handing over the keys is not only the right thing to do for the homeowner, it is also good business for the contractor. Satisfied homeowners become powerful ambassadors, generating referrals, positive word-of-mouth, repeat business, and a stronger reputation in the marketplace. In an industry built on trust, a contractor's next project often comes from the success of the last one. When homeowners feel safe, comfortable, and proud of their new home, everyone wins.

About the Author

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

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SEPTEMBER 2026



SUNDAY

06

SEPTEMBER

CHURCH SERVICE



Spring Garden Moravian
St. John's Street



8am



WEDNESDAY

09

SEPTEMBER

SICK AND SHUT IN



Police Head Quarters



10am



FRIDAY

11

SEPTEMBER

CULTURAL FOOD FAIR



Rising Sun



10 am Until



SATURDAY

12

SEPTEMBER

COMMUNITY DAY



Most Villages



10am



*One Force. One Community.
Stronger Together.*

Regional News

Guyanese Gov't says it's working closely with relatives of ferry tragedy victims

The Guyana government Tuesday said it is working closely with the families of the victims of the MV Barima tragedy and that efforts are continuing to refloat the vessel that sank on July 18, killing 73 people and leaving at least 30 others missing and feared dead.

"The priority for the government is to ensure that we work closely with the families in relation to the MV Barima. And when I say families here, I'm not only speaking of families who would have lost loved ones, families here where persons are still missing," President Irfaan Ali told a news conference.

"So the priority is to ensure, especially where children, women, parents are involved, to ensure that we have a close connection from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Human Services with those families, and we have established the Heart Initiative to be a long-term, multi-stakeholder, I don't want to use the word agency, but long-term, multi-stakeholder forum that would look at immediate, short, immediate, medium and long-term needs of families."

Ali said in that initiative, the authorities have also set up a legal mechanism to support families in terms of some of the legal challenges that they will face and they are facing in terms of documentation, classification, the mental health support, the medical support, the counselling support, the spiritual support, support for children.

He said that the authorities are also working, for example, to see if there is a need to establish a special home for children who might have been affected.

"So when I say long-term support, it is long-term support, looking at not the challenges for today and tomorrow, but the long-term challenges, and also, of course, other issues of material and other financial considerations and needs."

He said under the Heart Initiative, they are building out the regional network to create a regional support system and regional hub to support these families also.



On July 18, 2026, the state-owned passenger ferry MV Barima capsized and sank off the Atlantic coast of Guyana near the Pomeroon River during a voyage from Georgetown to Port Kaituma. It is the worst maritime incident in Guyana's history.

The Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the incident is being finalised ahead of public hearings, with details expected to be announced once the necessary legal and administrative arrangements are completed.

The MV Barima was carrying an estimated 179 passengers and crew when it sank. In the aftermath of the tragedy, the vessel's captain, chief mate and the Transport and Harbours Department's Goods Superintendent were charged with murder.

The authorities are also pursuing the recovery of the sunken vessel and Ali told reporters "in terms of the salvaging of the vessel, I think on Friday, the expression of interest would have closed.

"They have received a number of expressions of interest. Those interests are being shortlisted now by the agency, and then those shortlisted entities will

be invited to supply prices to have the vessel salvaged. So that is where we are with that," Ali said, adding that he is unaware of the number of proposals received.

"I don't have the exact number. I think it's 10 or more. Don't hold me to that and I don't know that there is a distinction between local. I know there was a criteria and companies would have proposed, made proposals in relation to that criteria," he said, adding "that is why there is a shortlisting process".

Ali said in relation to the COI "the team is in place, they have started looking at their procedures, settling their procedures and working out their work plan and from what I'm told, in early September, the actual work would commence here on the ground".

"The work of the COI is the work that I will base my action on when their recommendation comes to me. I think having established the COI independently, we have to have respect for the work of the COI," Ali said, as he dismissed calls for the removal of several of his cabinet ministers as a result of the tragedy. (CMC)

Regional CSEC Mathematics pass rate rises to 42 per cent, English holds at 80 per cent



More students across the Caribbean passed Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Mathematics this year, with the regional pass rate increasing to 42 per cent, up four percentage points from last year.

English maintained a strong 80 per cent pass rate.

Meanwhile, Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) recorded high pass rates in Caribbean Studies and Communication Studies, at 98 per cent and 93 per cent, respectively.

The data was released on Tuesday by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) on the performance of students in the May/June 2026 exams.

Some 42 per cent of students received a passing grade for CSEC mathematics. This represents an increase of four per cent when compared with last year.

Meanwhile, 80 per cent of students received a passing grade in CSEC En-

glish; ten territories performed above the regional average, while 11 performed below average.

While noting the slight improvement in mathematics, CXC director of operations, Dr Nicole Manning, who presented the results in a ceremony hosted in Anguilla today, said it is still progress.

“Any improvement in math is a good improvement, so it’s important for us to be happy about that...improvement is improvement,” she said.

Pass rates for other CSEC subjects:

- Information Technology – 83 per cent
- Principles of Business – 81 per cent
- Electronic Document Preparation Management – 79 per cent
- Human and Social Biology – 78 per cent
- Principles of Accounts – 72 per cent
- Chemistry – 68 per cent

- Physics – 69 per cent
- Social Studies – 66 per cent

More than 118,000 students sat CSEC exams across the region this year.

CAPE PERFORMANCE

In CAPE, there were high pass rates in the core subjects of Caribbean Studies and Communication Studies.

Some 98 per cent of students who sat the Caribbean Studies examination received passing grades, with 10 territories pass rates being above average. While 93 per cent of students who sat Communication Studies earned grades one to five.

Over 26,000 students sat the May/June 2026 CAPE.

Here’s how students performed in other CAPE subjects:

- Information Technology Unit 1 – 95 per cent
 - Information Technology Unit 2 – 99 per cent
 - Environmental science- Unit 1 – 97 per cent
 - Environmental Science Unit 2 – 96 per cent
 - Physics Unit 1 – 97 per cent
 - Physics Unit 2 – 98 per cent
 - Biology Unit 1 – 93 per cent
 - Biology Unit 2 – 95 per cent
 - Chemistry Unit 1 – 93 per cent
 - Chemistry Unit 2 – 93 per cent
 - Pure Mathematics Unit 1 – 90 per cent
 - Pure Mathematics Unit 2 – 95 per cent
 - Entrepreneurship Unit 1 – 95 per cent
 - Entrepreneurship Unit 2 – 95 per cent
- The CXC results will be released to students on Tuesday. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Regional News

CXC FINDS MATHS FORMULA - Exam body to roll out more subjects as modular learning yields impressive results in pilot

Students preparing for next year's Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) examinations will be able to take up to four subjects under the newest qualification, the Caribbean Targeted Education Certificate (CTEC).

Following a successful pilot of the CTEC mathematics in this year's May-June examinations, three additional core subjects –English language, English literature, and integrated science – will be offered next year. The programme is expected to expand to nine subjects during the 2027-2028 academic year.

Describing the CTEC as a “game changer”, CXC Registrar and Chief Executive Officer Dr Wayne Wesley said the initiative reflects the regional examination body's effort to adapt to changing learning environments and student needs.

“Our children are not less capable than those who came before them. They are differently wired, digital first, and hungry for credentials that keep pace with their lives,” he said.

The CTEC is a flexible, modular qualification that allows students to complete subjects in independent modules, earning micro-credentials as they progress. While it is set at the same academic standard as the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC), students have up to four years to complete the three required modules for full certification.

“The Caribbean Examinations Council is declaring to our students this simple truth. What you know counts. We hear you. We see you. Your learning has been seen, measured, and certified. You are not at the end of the road,” he said.

Wesley noted that several candidates have benefited from this new examination option, and it is being embraced by all school stakeholders.

“ ... I am proud to announce that of



these 2,535 candidates who wrote CTEC module one in the mathematics pilot examination, 88 per cent achieved acceptable grades. And across the entire Caribbean, only one candidate received the lowest grade. Only one,” he said.

He contended that this achievement is a “remarkable turnaround”, especially measured against a “generation in which barely one in three candidates succeed in a typical sitting.

“When learning is assessed in focused, achievable stages, our students

do more than cope. They excel, they engage, persist, and succeed,” he said, stressing that the pilot is proof that the modular approach works.

Wesley stressed, however, that completing a module does not amount to completing an entire subject, noting that students must successfully complete all modules to earn the full qualification.

He also announced that CTEC Mathematics Module One has already been embedded into this year's CSEC Mathematics examination, meaning that approximately 35,000 candidates will automatically receive the Module

Regional News

PAGE 17

One credential.

Highlighting that the CTEC certification is of value to students, he stated that the content of each module is “relatable, relevant, and provides for job readiness”.

“The modules are so grouped that the cluster itself provides for you to have access to employment in various sectors,” he said, adding that these would be entry-level jobs.

Meanwhile, CXC reported improved performance in this year’s CSEC Mathematics examination, with 42 per cent of candidates earning passing grades – up four percentage points from last year. English language maintained a strong performance, with 80 per cent of candidates achieving passing grades.

CXC Director of Operations Dr Nicole Manning welcomed the improvement in mathematics while acknowledging that further progress is needed.

“Any improvement in math is a good improvement, so it’s important for us to be happy about that. Improvement is improvement,” she said while presenting the results in a ceremony hosted in Anguilla yesterday.

In the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE), there were high pass rates in the core subjects of Caribbean studies (98 per cent) and communication studies (93 per cent).

Approximately 26,000 students did CAPE, while more than 118,000 candidates sat CSEC exams this year.

Manning also expressed concern about absenteeism, revealing that more than 35,000 registered candidates did not sit their examinations.

“An absent candidate has no opportunity to be graded because they have missed a component. So that candidate would have lost out on that opportunity,” she said.

She urged parents, guardians, and educators to help ensure that students attend the examinations for which they register.

Manning further reported 128 examination irregularities this year, up from 80 last year. These included the use of unauthorised devices, collusion, unauthorised materials, and misuse of artificial intelligence.

At the same time, she said 359 candidates received compassionate consideration.

“That means that these candidates were not disadvantaged in any way even though they would have experi-

enced some sort of issue in their lives. We are helping them to continue,” Manning said.

She said CXC also activated its disaster-recovery protocol to assist Jamaican students whose education was disrupted by Hurricane Melissa last year. The CXC offered a modified assessment approach for high schools in seven parishes that were severely impacted by the Category 5 storm. (Jamaica Gleaner)



Regional News

Iberia extends suspension of flights to Cuba until June 2027

Spanish airline Iberia said it will extend the suspension of its flights to Cuba, where tourism has plummeted during a de facto US fuel blockade, until June 2027.

Iberia announced in April that it would halt its flights to the communist-run Caribbean island from June to late October “due to the situation” in the country.

“The temporary suspension of the route to and from Havana has been extended until 30 June 2027,” the airline wrote on its website on Tuesday.

Customers with tickets could get a refund or rebook to another destination, it added.

US President Donald Trump’s administration has ramped up pressure on Cuba with a fuel blockade from January that has deepened the island’s energy crisis and hit its already fragile economy.

Cubans have endured regular blackouts, fuel rationing, soaring gasoline prices, dwindling public transport and a fall in the crucial tourism sector.

Nearly three-quarters of Cuba’s hotels have been shuttered and the island’s tourism sector has been brought to “almost total paralysis” by US sanctions and fuel shortages, Cuban Prime Minister Manuel Marrero said last month.

Canadian, Russian and other European airlines have also suspended flights to Cuba.

The US capture of Venezuela’s socialist strongman Nicolas Maduro on January 3, a long-time ally of the Cuban government, cut off a key supply of oil to the island. (AFP)





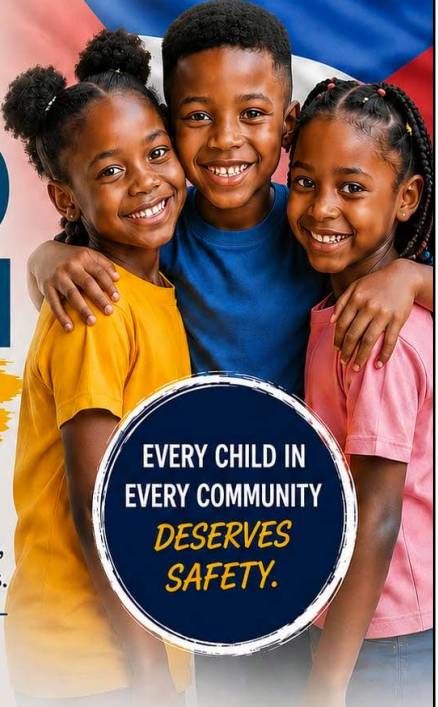
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Dozens killed after gold mine collapse in Central African Republic

At least 30 people have been killed after an artisanal gold mine collapsed in western Central African Republic near the border with Cameroon, officials said.

Cameroon media said the incident happened on Tuesday in the village of Zamboye, a few kilometres from Garoua-Boulai, a town in eastern Cameroon.

Souleymane Bi, the deputy mayor of Nana-Mambere prefecture in the Central African Republic, said on Wednesday that rescuers and residents pulled 30 bodies from the collapsed mine over several hours, and that injured miners were receiving treatment.

"It is horrible and we are calling for help from organisations and all people of goodwill to help," Bi said.

A local civil servant told the AFP news agency that about 40 people died at the site.

"At this stage it's difficult for us to establish a formal toll," Baboua local official Laurent Ngon Baba told AFP.

Cedric Mbango, a miner at the site, described the incident as "catastrophic".

"The ground completely collapsed



and buried people. As I speak to you, other people are still buried. Rescue attempts are under way," he told AFP.

Government spokesman Evariste Ngamana expressed sympathy for the families of the victims and said authorities are "working hard to provide relief and assistance" to those affected.

Artisanal mine collapses are common in the Central African Republic, where several thousand people work in small-scale extraction mining outside government control. The work is

risky because miners typically do not have enough protection and accidents are often deadly.

In June, a collapse killed dozens of people at the Be-Mbari gold mining site, also on the Cameroon border.

In mid-March, a landslide killed seven people at a mine in the village of Ngourroum, in the west of the Central African Republic.

Another 20 were killed in February in Gordi, in the northeast. (AFP)

Brazilian police say at least 23 killed in minibus and truck crash

A minibus and a truck collided head-on in the southern Brazilian state of Parana, killing at least 23 people and injuring five others early Wednesday, police said.

Preliminary evidence suggests that the truck, which wasn't carrying cargo, crossed into incoming traffic and collided with the minibus at around 3:30 a.m., Brazil's traffic police said.

The crash happened on a highway near Ipiranga, a city of 14,000 residents in central Parana state and 560 kilometers (350 miles) south of Sao Paulo. The minibus came from Im-

bituva city in the same region. The truck's plate is from Erechim city further south in Rio Grande do Sul state.

It was the deadliest crash in the region since 2021, when 19 people died after a bus crashed outside Curitiba.

Local media said three of the five people injured were in serious condition. They were en route to hospitals, police said.

The minibus passengers included healthcare workers, patients and a few family members, authorities said. The company that runs the highway's toll

booths said 13 women, eight men and two children had died.

Emergency teams and local police were still working at the site hours later. The road was blocked for seven hours.

Footage from TV Globo showed the truck on the side of the road and the crushed minibus, with shattered glass and passengers' belongings strewn on the ground.

Parana state Gov. Ratinho Júnior issued a decree for three days of mourning there. (AP)

Apparent human remains found in US reservoir as water levels hit record low



Potential human remains, including a jaw with teeth still attached, have been recovered from the largest reservoir in the US, officials said, as an ongoing drought causes water levels to drop across western states.

The US National Park Service said it received reports of apparent skeletal remains at Boulder Beach on Lake Mead, Nevada, on 16 August.

“National Park Service rangers and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department responded to the scene,” the service said in a statement seen by the BBC’s US partner CBS.

The service added that the incident “remains under investigation, and no additional information is available at this time”.

A woman and her friend spotted the bones while visiting the Nevada side of the reservoir, which is located on the border with Arizona.

Dianelis Molina Cruz told CBS affiliate KLAS: “My friend was playing with the rocks in the lake, and then he grabbed the jaw. And when he looked, he saw the teeth and ev-

everything.”

Her friend Noel De Leon suggested the low water levels at Lake Mead contributed to the recovery of the potential human remains.

“The water looks very low compared to where it should be,” he said. “As the water goes down, the skeletons come up.”

Water levels at Lake Mead, which is the largest reservoir in the US, have been declining since 2000.

The US Bureau of Reclamation said that water levels at the reservoir dropped to 1,040ft (316m) above sea level last week - considerably

below the previous record low set in July 2022.

The reservoir is in Clark County, most of which is in moderate drought, according to the US Drought Monitor.

Droughts have been worsening in recent years, something scientists say is being driven by climate change.

Persistent hot summer weather has been causing water levels to drop in rivers and lakes in several countries – leading to unexpected discoveries.

In Hungary, the bodies of two World War Two German soldiers were recovered from the Danube River in Budapest earlier this month. Alongside the remains was a largely intact German army Wehrmacht motorcycle.

Other remnants of World War Two have appeared in the Danube recently, including a broken-up hull near Prahovo in Serbia.

And in the UK, low water levels at a reservoir in Rutland have uncovered the remains of the village of Nether Hambleton, which was demolished and flooded to create the reservoir. (BBC)

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Pakistan challenges top court order to move Imran Khan to private hospital

The Pakistani government has challenged a Supreme Court order to move jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan to a private hospital for medical treatment.

The office of the chief commissioner in capital Islamabad filed a review petition on Wednesday, a day after the top court ordered prison authorities to move Khan from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail to Islamabad's Shifa International Hospital within two days.

The Supreme Court directed the authorities to form a medical board of five specialists and allow Khan's sister, Uzma Khan, and his personal physician, Faisal Sultan, to take part in his treatment.

The court also allowed Khan weekly family meetings and phone calls twice a week with his two sons who live in London, as it barred Khan's family, political party and lawyers from discussing his health publicly until the case is heard again on September 16.

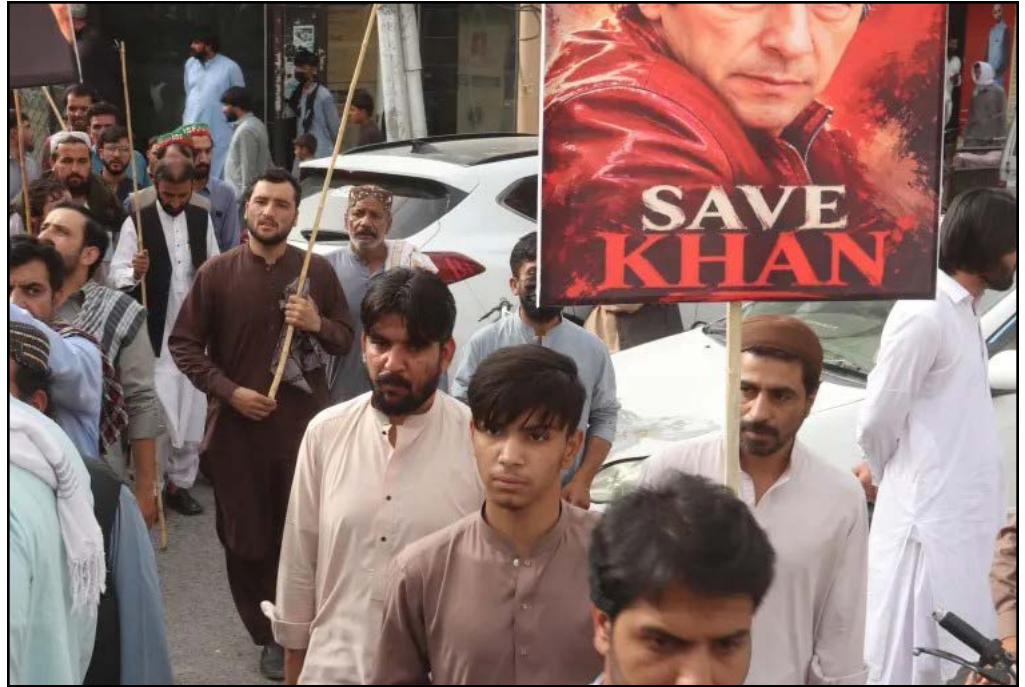
But the government's petition argued that the court skipped legal procedures by ordering Khan's transfer without first hearing from the prison authorities, and warned that other prisoners could demand similar treatment.

Khan, 73, has been in jail since August 2023 after his conviction in several cases he and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party say were politically motivated. Over the past year, concerns over his health, particularly the vision in his right eye, have driven repeated appeals to the courts by his family and the party.

After the court's order, Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, met him with their two children at Adiala jail. Khan's other sister, Noreen Niazi, also briefly met him in her first visit in nine months.

The government's review petition followed a video statement on Tuesday night by federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, who said the government wanted Khan examined at a public hospital.

"This order does not fall within the legal parameters governing the facilities



that can be provided to a convicted person in jail," he said in a post on X, arguing that prison rules require a medical board, not a court, to decide between jail and hospital treatment.

Meanwhile, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday accused Khan's PTI of having politicised the health of its rivals in the past. "History is witness that PTI people politicised the health of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's leadership," he said during a televised news conference.

"Our leadership never said a word about the [PTI] founder's health," he said. "This is a legal matter. There should be no politics over it."

But Parliamentary Affairs Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhary told the Senate the government would implement the court order, saying Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had "no authority to go against judicial decisions" — a position at odds with the government's review petition announced only hours later.

Senior PTI leader Sheikh Waqas Akram said the contradiction in the government's stand revealed its "hypocrisy".

"On one hand, they say they will respect the court's verdict, so why are they

now objecting to it?" he told Al Jazeera.

"Days before the verdict, government officials were messaging our leaders that [PM] Shehbaz Sharif wants to talk," Akram added. "And now, after the court decision, they want to file a review petition? Why are they doing this?"

Zulfi Bukhari, another senior PTI leader, said the government's own ranks appeared divided over the Supreme Court order.

"There is certainly confusion among their camp," he told Al Jazeera. "Some are trying to take it with grace and enforce the Supreme Court decision in letter and spirit, while others see it as a huge threat."

Bukhari said if the government's review petition was rejected, Khan would have to be shifted to a private hospital immediately. In case it was accepted, he added, the PTI would "take up the matter legally".

But Akram said a review petition does not suspend Tuesday's court order.

"Until the court explicitly stays its own decision, Imran Khan must be moved to the hospital as directed," he said, warning that failing to implement it "only deepens hatred and makes reconciliation harder". (Al Jazeera)

Antigua Pitbulls claim first win at youth tourney in St. Lucia



The Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls

The junior national basketball team, the Antigua Barbuda Pitbulls, claimed their first win in the fifth annual Aloysius Daniel Youth Classic competition in St. Lucia on Tuesday.

The Pitbulls produced a dominant performance to record an emphatic 140-23 victory over the ECA Tigers of St. Lucia in the youth basketball competition, which is taking place at the Beausejour Indoor Stadium in Gros Islet from August 17 to 21.

In the other matches on Tuesday, the NCA Warriors of Trinidad and Tobago crushed D-UP Academy of Guyana 119-31, and the ECA Lions pulled off a 115-28 victory over fellow St. Lucian team BFTF Pitbulls.

It was a significant change in fortunes for the Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls after suffering a 55-89 loss to the NCA

Warriors of Trinidad and Tobago in their opening encounter.

Jaden Lewis and Erije Joseph each produced 10 points, Raheem Sawyer and Yohhan Nicholas had eight points each, and captain Nathan Matthew chipped in with six points for the Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls in their defeat to the Trinidadians.

In other opening day results, BFTF Pitbulls prevailed 28-13 against the ECA Tigers, and the ECA Lions crushed D-UP Academy 75-37.

The Antiguanians are competing against opponents from Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and St. Lucia in the five-team round-robin tournament.

The Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls were slated to face the ECA Lions of St. Lucia on Wednesday, will meet D-UP Academy of Guyana on Thurs-

day at 4 pm, and will play the BFTF Pitbulls of St. Lucia in their final encounter on Friday at 2 pm.

The 15-member Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls squad, which began preparations in May for the tournament in St. Lucia, comprised players who represented secondary schools across the islands as well as the Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS), formerly Antigua State College.

The coaches are Cedric "Supa" David, Bradbury Browne, and Edward Shaw. The managers are Oleno Knight and School Basketball Coordinator Carl "Bowlie" Knight.

The Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls' trip to St. Lucia is being facilitated with the support of the Ministry of Sports and Cool and Smooth.

Greaves and Matthews claim ICC Player of the Month honours



Justin Greaves, left, and Hayley Matthews.

Justin Greaves and Hayley Matthews have emerged as the latest standard-bearers for the West Indies, with both earning ICC Player of the Month honours for July following outstanding performances that captured the attention of the global cricketing community.

This was the first time two players from the region were recognised in the same month and only the fifth such instance since the inception of the awards in January 2021.

For Greaves, the award caps a remarkable rise in the Test arena. The Barbadian all-rounder has established himself as an increasingly valuable member of the West Indies middle order while continuing to make telling contributions with the ball.

His defining performance came against Sri Lanka at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua, where he produced a magnificent 180 in an innings lasting more than eight-and-a-half hours from 325 deliveries

with 14 fours and two sixes.

The marathon effort helped West Indies secure a draw in the second test and a historic 1-0 series victory, their first Test series win over Sri Lanka in 26 years. Greaves was subsequently named Player of the Match and Player of the Series.

He then carried that impact into the Test series against Pakistan. In the opening Test at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy, he delivered a career-best match haul of seven wickets for 39 runs, including 5-27 in the first innings featuring five consecutive wicket-maidens, a feat achieved for the first time in the game's longest format, as West Indies secured a commanding 90-run victory.

"I have had a memorable month playing at home, and to have contributed with both bat and ball against Sri Lanka and Pakistan has been particularly special for me," said Greaves after being made aware of the award.

"Having impactful performances

in Test cricket is always something I will cherish, especially when they come in front of our home fans."

Greaves finished the summer with 294 runs at an average of 49 and 11 wickets as the fourth pace bowling option in the team.

For Matthews, July provided another chapter in an already extraordinary international career.

The West Indies Women's captain produced a spectacular performance during the team's 3-0 ODI series sweep of Ireland, scoring 265 runs at an average of 132.50 and earning Player of the Series honours.

Her brilliance was evident from the opening match, when she struck a century and shared a record-breaking opening partnership with Re-alanna Grimmond as West Indies chased down Ireland's 269 with ease. Matthews followed that with another century in the second ODI, becoming the first West Indies player to score centuries in consecutive women's ODIs.

The performances further underlined Matthews' standing among the leading players in the women's game. Already one of the most decorated players in the history of the ICC Player of the Month awards, she continues to combine prolific run-scoring with her effectiveness as an all-rounder and leadership at the top level.

"I am thrilled to win the ICC Player of the Month award once again," said the five-time winner of the award.

"It is just as special as the previous ones, and I hope it inspires me to keep raising my standards, contributing to the West Indies, and winning more such awards in the future."

Paul leads Kingsmen to victory over Patriots in CPL

Keemo Paul delivered a superb all-round performance to inspire the Jamaica Kingsmen to their second consecutive win in the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL), as they defeated the St. Kitts & Nevis Patriots by 51 runs in front of a deafening crowd at Sabina Park on Tuesday night.

Paul starred with both bat and ball, first producing a career-best 65 from 36 balls to help the Kingsmen recover from a disastrous start to post 181 for six off their 20 overs after being sent in to bat.

Paul then returned with the ball to claim three for 30, while Andre Russell chipped in with two for 19 as the Kingsmen dismissed the Patriots for 130 with two overs to spare.

The Kingsmen started poorly, losing their first two wickets without scoring a run in the opening over from left-arm seamer Saurabh Netravalkar, who captured two for 43.

The Kingsmen were immediately under pressure when Kirk McKenzie (0), fresh from a half-century in his previous outing, was given out first ball.

The decision was overturned, but McKenzie was bowled off the very next delivery, chopping the ball back onto his stumps.

Wanindu Hasaranga, who took two for 36, then turned the screws with an impressive spell, taking wickets in successive overs.

With the Kingsmen in trouble, captain Rovman Powell and Paul set about rebuilding the innings.

But Paul's explosive acceleration, alongside captain Powell, powered a 99-run partnership that rescued the Kingsmen in their final home game of the tournament. Powell hammered 49 off 39 balls, including four fours and three sixes.



Keemo Paul

Their game-changing partnership steadied the hosts before a blistering finish produced 38 runs from the final two overs, with Paul smashing five sixes and five fours to push the Kingsmen to an imposing total.

The Patriots needed to attack from the outset, but their chase got off to a shaky start. Andre Fletcher struck a six before being dismissed for seven in the opening over, setting the tone for what was to follow.

Paul thought he had Johnson Charles (11) caught off the first ball of his spell, only for the delivery to be called a no-ball for overstepping. He did not have to wait long for his first wicket, however, producing a perfect delivery to remove Kyle Mayers for eight.

The wickets continued to fall at regu-

lar intervals, with all of the Kingsmen bowlers playing their part. Only Kevin Wickham with 37 off 34 balls and Navin Bidaisee (19) offered meaningful resistance.

But with the required rate climbing beyond 12 an over, the Patriots were facing an increasingly impossible task.

Bidaisee became the first batter to retire out in this year's CPL as he attempted to keep the unlikely chase alive, but there was to be no miracle comeback.

Russell and Paul fittingly returned to finish the job, sparking jubilant celebrations among the Sabina Park crowd. The victory moved the Kingsmen to second place with two valuable points, while the Patriots slipped to the bottom of the seven-team table.

Nick Kyrgios suspended after positive test for cocaine



Nick Kyrgios of Australia reacts during his match against Mackenzie McDonald at the Miami Open tennis tournament in Miami Gardens, Florida, USA, Wednesday, March 19, 2025. (AP)

GENEVA (AP) — Former Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios revealed on Wednesday he tested positive for cocaine, and cited the doping case as a wake up call after feeling “helpless and alone” as injuries derailed his career.

The 31-year-old Australian with a checkered disciplinary record was provisionally suspended after playing just 10 singles matches on the ATP tour, winning only two, since his peak season of 2022. Then, he reached the final at the grass-court Grand Slam and lost to Novak Djokovic.

Kyrgios is now ranked 919th. He tested positive in June for the party drug during a lower-tier grass court event in Spain.

“I recently failed a drug test in Mallorca after testing positive for cocaine,” he wrote on his Instagram account. “I made a huge mistake and take full responsibility for it.”

It is the latest negative headline in the career of a talented though fiery personality, whose highest profile action on court in recent years was a curious “Battle of the Sexes” win over Aryna Sabalenka in Dubai last December.

Kyrgios faces a ban of up to four years, though a lighter sanction can be expected. Cocaine is banned as a doping substance during competitions, with lower sanctions applied when used away from events.

In a similar case in 2017, British player Dan Evans served a one-year ban imposed by the International Tennis Federation for testing positive for cocaine at the Barcelona Open.

Kyrgios said he had difficulties coming to terms with being near the end of his career after two years of injuries.

“At times I’ve felt helpless and alone. None of that excuses what I did,” he said. He added the injuries “have taken a huge toll on me, both physically

and mentally. My body hasn’t been able to do what my mind expects it to do.”

Kyrgios has a 1-3 record in singles this year and got a wild card to play doubles at Wimbledon last month. He lost in the first round with partner Alexander Bublik.

The International Tennis Integrity Agency will prosecute the case and said the player’s sample was taken on June 22 and the positive test was confirmed on July 17, after Kyrgios played at Wimbledon.

A mandatory provisional suspension was applied on Aug. 4 and has not been appealed

by Kyrgios, the ITIA added.

“However, the good news is that this has given me a wake up call,” Kyrgios wrote, signaling his career is not over.

“For the next 28 days I’ll be stepping away from social media and public life while I focus on getting myself right.”

The most recent of Kyrgios’ seven career singles titles was won in his first tournament after the Wimbledon final. He beat Yoshihito Nishioka in the final of the hard-court event in Washington, D.C., in August 2022.

Weeks later he reached the US Open quarterfinals, losing to Karen Khachanov. After a knee injury in Tokyo in October 2022, Kyrgios played just once in the next two years, citing a wrist injury to miss Wimbledon in 2023.

Kyrgios had a meager 1-4 record in the 2025 season, losing a first-round match in the Australian Open then skipping the next three Grand Slams.

Antigua advance to knockout stage at CFU Boys U-14 Challenge Series



The starting XI of the Antigua and Barbuda national team for their Tier II Group B match against the Turks and Caicos Islands in the CFU Under-14 Boys Challenge Series in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on Wednesday, August 19, 2026. (Photo courtesy CFU)

Antigua and Barbuda's young Benna Boys maintained their unbeaten run to advance to the knockout stage of the 2026 Caribbean Football Union (CFU) Under-14 Boys Challenge Series in the Dominican Republic on Wednesday.

The young Antiguan boys won their four-team Tier II Group B by claiming their third win with a 3-1 victory over the Turks and Caicos Islands in their final outing in the preliminary stage of the tournament, which is being staged in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, from August 16 to 23.

But Antigua and Barbuda had to come from behind after the Turks and Caicos Islands took a surprising lead with a conversion in the second minute.

Leyland Powell snatched the equal-

izer for Antigua and Barbuda when his shot from outside the 18-yard box beat the Turks and Caicos goalkeeper and crashed into the back of the net.

Kalique Martin gave Antigua and Barbuda a 2-1 lead by converting a penalty kick, and Tevon Henderson sealed the win for the young Benna Boys by scoring the team's third and final goal.

Antigua and Barbuda topped Tier II Group B after securing a 3-1 victory over the Cayman Islands and prevailing 2-1 against Dominica in their other two round-robin matches.

The Cayman Islands hammered Dominica 5-1 in the other Tier II Group encounter on Wednesday.

Tier I features 12 teams split into

three groups, while Tier II features 16 teams split into four groups in the under-14 challenge series tournament, which is organized by the Caribbean Football Union and features young talent from across the region competing in a week-long developmental showcase.

Following the three round-robin group matches, the top teams from each group will advance to the playoff and crossover knockout rounds, which are scheduled to take place from August 20 to 23.

In other results on Wednesday, Guyana qualified for the knockout stage by snatching a 1-0 victory against the Bahamas to win Tier II Group C. Anguilla prevailed 4-3 against Montserrat in the other Tier II Group C encounter.