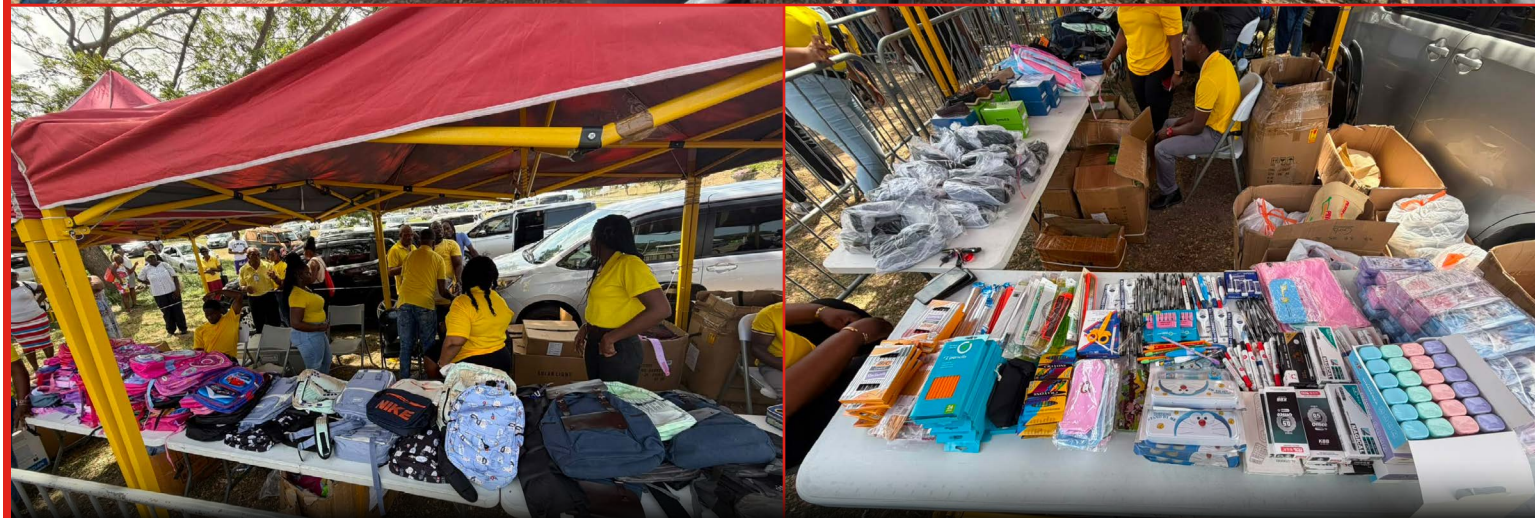


New Prison Rules Transfer Remission Powers to Governor General

Story on page 2



The Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation Supports 1,025 Students Through Back-to-School Initiative

New Prison Rules Transfer Remission Powers to Governor General

The Prison Amendment Rules 2026, Statutory Instrument 2026 approved by the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda has been introduced to guide remission of inmates at His Majesty's Prison.

Prison remission is the process undertaken to reduce prisoners' incarceration.

Until Tuesday of this week, such powers were vested in the Superintendent of Prisons under the Prison Act, Cap. 341, specifically Rule 211. But that ended on Wednesday and now, Governor General Sir Rodney Williams has the sole responsibility of reducing a prison inmate's incarceration at 1735 based on recommendation from the Superintendent of Prisons.

The issue of leniency considered by the Courts during sentencing, coupled with the Prison Superintendent's power to deduct as much as one third of a convict's stay in prison is not sitting well with Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who is adamant that criminals should be given lengthy sentences once convicted.

"The Government recognises that it could and has become a problem. No fault of the superintendent. The courts have that ability to reduce whatever the sentence is by one third. The superintendent also has the ability to reduce it by another one third. And so, a prisoner can end up serving only a third of any prescribed sentence within the prison. Government believes that can become a problem. In a lot of cases, it is seen as a problem," Director General of Communications Maurice Merchant told yesterday's Post Cabinet Press Briefing.

"And it decides that it's not just a prerogative of the superintendent, but it must now go to the Governor General and his team, and whomever



Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin

he decides to join him in making the final determination," Merchant said.

Following robust discussion during Wednesday's meeting of the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda led by Attorney General Sir Steadroy Benjamin, it was decided Rule 211 of the Prison Rules as it relates to remission, will be strengthened.

"The Attorney General advised Cabinet that remission remains an important component of the rehabilitation process and is provided for under the **Prison Act, Cap. 341**. Cabinet therefore determined that the principle of remission should be retained, but that the existing rules governing its application should be strengthened," the Cabinet Notes outlined.

"Under the amendment approved by Cabinet, a prisoner who satisfies the prescribed requirements after completing two-thirds of his or her sentence may become **eligible for consideration for remission**, rather than becoming automatically eligible for unconditional release."

The amendment is viewed by the Cabinet as an "additional level of

consideration and oversight into the process, while preserving remission as an incentive for industry, good conduct and rehabilitation within the prison system".

During yesterday's Post-Cabinet Press Briefing, Maurice Merchant said the amendment takes immediate effect and is not retroactive, meaning it will apply to inmates who entered the penal institution from Wednesday onwards. Further, reduction of incarceration will not be considered for inmates who, on review, will serve less than 31 days in prison if approved.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda also addressed its right to make such an amendment, saying it did not require parliamentary approval.

"Cabinet was advised that the Prison Rules constitute subsidiary legislation made under the authority of **Section 26 of the Prison Act** and that the amendment to Rule 211 does not require the convening of a sitting of Parliament," the Cabinet Notes detailed.

The Gaston Browne-led administration has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening public safety, promoting accountability within the criminal justice system and ensuring that the administration of prison sentences appropriately balances **punishment, deterrence, rehabilitation and the protection of the public**.

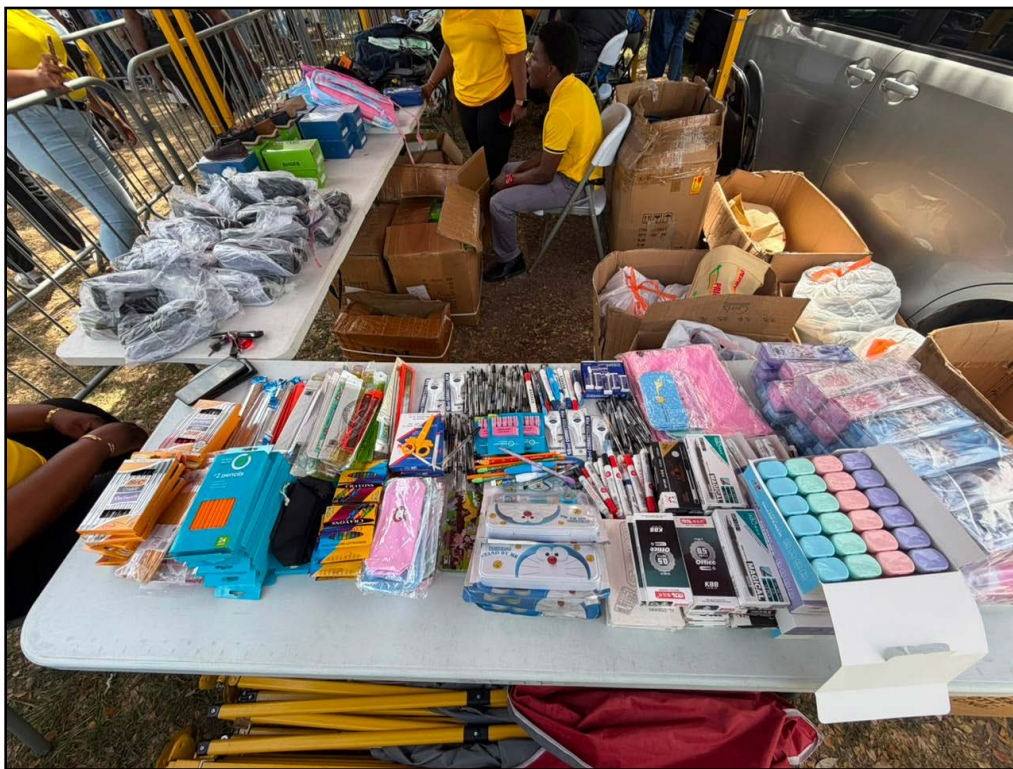
Cabinet, it was noted, has been examining sentencing policy, prosecution capacity, repeat offending, prison administration and other components of the criminal justice system to ensure that the consequences imposed for serious criminal conduct provide an effective deterrent while maintaining appropriate opportunities for rehabilitation.

The Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation Supports 1,025 Students Through Back-to-School Initiative

The Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation through the Social Protection Board distributed a number of back to school essential items at the Rising Sun Grounds on Thursday. The Back-to-School Initiative supported more than 1000 students with school bags, shoes, books and other essential supplies for the coming academic term.

Approximately 1,025 school bags were distributed during the event, with every available bag collected. The Board also provided a significant quantity of school shoes, books and other supplies to help students prepare for the new academic year.

Operations Manager of the Social Protection Board, Mary Baltimore, described the initiative as a tremendous success and said the organisation was pleased to assist families with the cost of preparing their children for school.



“We were able to distribute approximately 125 school bags between our

Midweek Deals

TUESDAYS / WEDNESDAYS

-Burger
-Medium Drink
\$19.99

-Leg and Thigh
-Biscuit
-Medium Drink
\$17.99



Local News



beneficiaries and members of the wider public. We also had a great supply of shoes and books available, and I am especially pleased to say that every single school bag was distributed," Baltimore said.

"It was truly a successful and rewarding initiative."

The assistance, according to Baltimore, went beyond the distribution of material items, noting that proper school supplies can strengthen a child's confidence and enthusiasm about returning to the classroom.

"Sometimes, something as simple as a school bag, a pair of shoes or a set of books can make a tremendous difference in a child's life," she said.

"As the Operations Manager, I am extremely grateful and proud that the Social Protection Board was able to

play a part in making a child happy and giving them a little more confidence and excitement as they prepare to return to school."

The Operations Manager also commended the Board's employees, beneficiaries, members of the public, its chairman and everyone who contributed to the successful execution of the initiative.

"Today was a beautiful reminder that it truly takes a community to raise a child. Together, we are helping to ensure that our children have the tools they need to start the new school year with dignity, hope and a smile," Baltimore said.

The giveaway forms part of the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation's continued efforts, through the Social Protection Board, to support vulnerable households, reduce the financial pressure on parents and ensure that children are properly equipped for the classroom.

The Ministry and the Social Protection Board expressed gratitude to everyone who supported the initiative and helped make it a rewarding experience for the children and families who attended.



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MBS Issues Recall Alert for Two Atorvastatin Lots

The Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS) is urging beneficiaries to review their Atorvastatin medication following a pharmaceutical recall issued by the Department of Pharmaceutical Services in the Ministry of Health on 17th August, 2026.

Following a review of its pharmacy records, MBS, in a statement yesterday, confirmed that two of the recalled lots of Atorvastatin may have been dispensed to beneficiaries during June 2026.

The affected medications are:

Atorvastatin 10 mg tablets — Lot No. 129702, expiry 04/2028

Atorvastatin 20 mg tablets — Lot No. 128946, expiry 12/2027

MBS is advising that only the two Atorvastatin lots are affected. Other lots of Atorvastatin dispensed by MBS pharmacies are not included in the recall.

In its statement, MBS outlined that anyone who received Atorvastatin from an MBS pharmacy is asked to check the lot number printed on the packaging.

Beneficiaries who identify either of the affected lot numbers should return the medication to the MBS Nevis Street Pharmacy on or before Saturday, 22nd August, where it will be replaced.

On Saturday, beneficiaries may visit the pharmacy between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to return affected medication.

MBS also confirmed that the affected lots of Diovan 160 mg tablets and Cetirizine Hydrochloride 5 mg tablets were not dispensed by MBS pharmacies.

Beneficiaries who received any of the recalled medicines from another

pharmacy are being advised to return the medication to the pharmacy where it was purchased.

MBS is also stressing that beneficiaries should not discontinue any prescribed medication without first consulting a medical doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

The Scheme said it continues to take the necessary measures to safe-

guard the quality and safety of medicines provided through its pharmacies and thanked beneficiaries for their cooperation in responding to the recall.

Beneficiaries are encouraged to check their medication packaging promptly and take appropriate action if they have one of the affected Atorvastatin lots.



Medical Benefits Scheme

IMPORTANT NOTICE

MBS Beneficiary Advisory on the Ministry of Health Pharmaceutical Recall

As part of the response to the pharmaceutical recall notice issued by the Department of Pharmaceutical Services, Ministry of Health, on August 17, 2026, the Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS) reviewed its pharmacy records and confirmed that two of the recalled lots of Atorvastatin may have been dispensed to beneficiaries during June 2026:

- Atorvastatin 10 mg tablets, Lot number 129702, Expiry date 04/2028;
- Atorvastatin 20 mg tablets, Lot number 128946, Expiry date 12/2027.

What Beneficiaries Need to Know and Do

If you received Atorvastatin from an MBS pharmacy, please check the lot number on the medication packaging. Only the two Atorvastatin lots listed above are affected; other lots of Atorvastatin dispensed by MBS pharmacies are not included in the recall.

If the lot number matches either of those listed above, please **return the medication** to the **MBS Nevis Street Pharmacy on or before Saturday 22 August 2026**, where it will be replaced. Beneficiaries returning the affected medication(s) on Saturday 22 August may visit the pharmacy between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm.

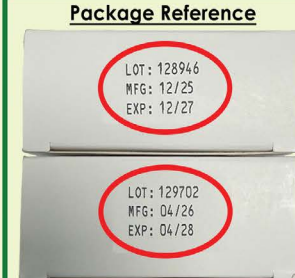
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If you received any of the recalled medicines from another pharmacy, please return the medication to the pharmacy where it was purchased.

Beneficiaries should not discontinue any prescribed medication without first consulting a medical doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

MBS continues to take the necessary steps to safeguard the quality and safety of medicines provided through its pharmacies and thanks beneficiaries for their cooperation.

Package Reference



-Management-

Forbes Spotlight Puts Antigua Carnival on Global Stage



Antigua Carnival is receiving increased international attention after being featured by Forbes, a development Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission Chairperson Ambassador Elizabeth Makhoul says is a major endorsement of the festival's quality and authenticity.

Makhoul says the recognition introduces Antigua Carnival to a wider international audience. She further reinforces the importance of preserving cultural identity within the festival.

"When an international publication such as Forbes highlights Antigua Carnival for its authenticity, local music, and overall experience, it validates the quality and uniqueness of what we have been building," Makhoul said.

The exposure also notably presents an opportunity to attract travellers specifically interested in cultural experiences and unique destinations.

For Carnival 70 in 2027, the Commission plans to strengthen international marketing and public relations

while working more closely with tourism stakeholders, airlines, hotels and other partners.

"The goal is to convert awareness into interest, and ultimately into people choosing Antigua as their Carnival destination," Makhoul said.

She believes the festival's distinctive character is rooted in its music, people and culture, combined with a diverse programme of artistic expression featuring Calypso, Steelpan, Pageantry, Soca, J'ouvert, T-Shirt Mas and the Parade of Bands.

Planning is already underway for the festival's 70th anniversary under the theme "Legendary 70." Makhoul says the celebration will honour the people and history that shaped Carnival while helping establish its future direction.

The Government has also taken notice of the growing interest in the country's premier summer festival. Recent notes from Wednesday's Cabinet meeting dictates that cabinet ministers have urged the Festival's Commission to begin planning for Antigua Carnival 70, in 2027; Recognizing the monumental milestone that season represents.





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MRS. JELLETTE RALPH
(JELLY BEANS)

Antigua and Barbuda Hamptons Challenge Celebrates 16 Years of Sailing and Partnership

The Antigua and Barbuda Hamptons Challenge Regatta marks its 16th anniversary, bringing Caribbean sailing and the spirit of Antigua and Barbuda to Sag Harbor, New York.

The annual event, held in partnership with the Peconic Bay Sailing Association and local nonprofit i-tri, brought 23 yachts to Noyack Bay for an afternoon of competitive racing under near-perfect conditions.

The regatta celebrates the long-standing maritime and cultural ties between Sag Harbor and Antigua's historic English Harbour, while also supporting youth development through sport.

Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation and Investment, H. Charles "Max" Fernandez, who led the Antiguan delegation, said the event goes beyond sailing, highlighting the shared seafaring heritage of the two communities and creating opportunities for meaningful connections.

The top prize was an all-expenses-paid trip to Antigua to compete in Antigua Sailing Week 2027. Glory Days, skippered by Peter Beardsley, claimed first overall, followed by Zorro, helmed by Rich Prieto, in second, and Mind Goblin, led by Vidar Minkovsky, in third.

The celebration continued with a "Taste of the Caribbean" awards event at The Bell & Anchor, where guests enjoyed Caribbean cuisine, rum cocktails and music.

The Antigua and Barbuda Tour-



ism Authority also presented a 5,000-dollar donation to i-tri, while Blue Waters Resort & Spa contributed a two-night, all-expenses-paid stay for auction, raising an additional 3,000 dollars for the nonprofit.

Tourism officials say the 16-year partnership remains an important platform for promoting Antigua and Barbuda as a premier sailing destination while strengthening ties with travellers and tourism professionals in the U.S. market.

Protesters Demand Police Accountability and Justice

A protest outside His Majesty's Prison this morning intensified calls for greater accountability within Antigua and Barbuda's law enforcement system.

The demonstration was led by Khalid Shabazz, who is demanding answers and justice following the death of his son, Rashawn Shabazz, affectionately known as "Turtle," after he allegedly sustained injuries while in custody of the officers of His Majesty's Prison.

Shabazz maintains that he will not allow the case to be swept under the rug or drowned out by another wave of "ongoing investigations," from the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda. His plight has sparked renewed outrage, with



families and members of the public joining the call for justice.

Many are also advocating for justice in numerous cases of unsolved killings and disappearances recorded over the years. This,

Shabazz explains, demonstrates the general lack of accountability shown by law enforcement and the justice system.

"We want to get proper closure and proper answers from the pow-



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Local News

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ers that be. There are far too many issues in Antigua as it relates to justice; police killings, [violence] in the prison, unexplained and suspicious activity surrounding people meeting their demise. We have to be able to get proper accountability in this country.”

Shabbaz was evidently not alone in this sentiment as the protest uncovered the latent frustrations and anxiety of many families who say they have been left without answers amid what they see as a lack of progress in bringing forth adequate justice.

“They saw it necessary to come out, not just for my son but for all of the [injustices] we’re facing in Antigua and Barbuda.”

Pickers carried signs bearing the names of thirteen victims, highlighting a supposed broader pattern of unresolved cases.

A statement from the Minister in Charge of Legal Affairs, The Hon. Steadroy Benjamin, on August 19th, a day ahead of the planned protest, announced that a coroner’s inquest will be held into the death of Rahsawn in the hopes of bringing further transparency and answers to his death while in cus-

tody.

Regardless, Shabazz confirms that he is still pursuing an independent investigation in the events leading to his son’s death, affirming his belief that an internal investigation of police misconduct connotes a conflict of interest, and cannot in good faith yield honest results.

Shabazz is determined to continue in a number of planned pickets to advocate for justice for all affected, stressing that accountability is a necessity, and that justice is demanded.



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Facts, Due Process and Fairness: The CCJ's Test



By Sir Ronald Sanders

I have been an advocate of the Caribbean Court of Justice from its conception. In 2015, on the Court's tenth anniversary, I described its creation as arguably the most significant institutional achievement of the English-speaking Caribbean since the Treaty of Chaguaramas. I have not changed that view.

I have also argued repeatedly that the CCJ is a people's court. An appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council costs at least US\$65,000 and is, therefore, beyond the reach of most Caribbean people. By contrast, the CCJ, with its travelling Bench, video links and electronic filing, provides access to justice for persons of little means as well as for governments and wealthy companies.

The Court was also deliberately protected from political control. Its judges, other than the President, are appointed by an independent regional commission. The President is appointed by a three-quarters majority of the Contracting Parties, but only on the recommendation of that Commission. The Court's operations are financed through an independently managed

Trust Fund.

These are strong reasons for supporting the CCJ. But support for a regional institution cannot mean silence when serious questions arise about its administration. On the contrary, those who value the Court should be among the first to insist that such questions are answered properly.

The allegations now surrounding the President of the Court, Justice Winston Anderson, are grave. Internal correspondence reported by the Trinidad Express newspaper shows that five of his six judicial colleagues raised concerns about his leadership. The reported allegations include "dictatorial" administration, the manipulation of judicial panels and attempts to influence colleagues during deliberations.

But allegations are not findings. They do not become true because private correspondence has been disclosed and published. No independent body has found any of these allegations proved. Nor has anything published established that the outcome of any case was improperly determined.

I have known Justice Anderson for many years as a dedicated Caribbean public servant, a distinguished legal scholar and a committed worker in the cause of Caribbean jurisprudence. That acquaintance does not put me in a position to decide disputed facts. But it does allow me to say that his record of service should not be swept aside, and his character should not be determined, by allegations that have not been independently examined.

Justice Anderson has now answered the allegations. He rejects unequivocally the claim that panels were constituted to influence the outcome of cases. He maintains that the selection of panels has always been an administrative responsibility of the President and that he exercised it only for the orderly and impartial conduct of the Court's work.

He has not claimed that every decision he made was beyond criticism. He accepts that he may have dealt too strongly with the question of judicial attire. He also acknowledges that his intervention in Guyana's long-standing failure to appoint substantively a Chancellor and Chief Justice would have been better confined to public commentary, as his predecessors had done. His account deserves the same consideration as the allegations against him.

On 19 August, the Court announced that all judges will now sit on all panels unless a judge is formally excused for a legitimate reason. This change greatly reduces the scope for any President to choose which judges will hear a case.

That was a sensible decision. It was not an admission that panels had previously been manipulated. Equally, it does not establish that the previous authority was never misused. That question remains unanswered.

The difficulty is that no one appears able to say with confidence who has the lawful authority to answer it.

The Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission has said that the concerns should be addressed through the established internal processes of the Court and the Commission and through a "transparent and independent review". It later clarified that it had not said that it had ordered such a review.

Senior Counsel Ralph Ramkarran of Guyana has argued that the Commission has no authority to investigate the President. The Commission's disciplinary power expressly applies to judges other than the President.

Article IX of the Agreement establishing the Court provides a process where removal of a President may be under consideration. If at least three Heads of Government jointly represent that the question of removal ought

to be investigated, a tribunal must be established to inquire into the matter and advise whether the President ought to be removed.

But that is a process directed towards possible removal from office. The Agreement does not set out, with equal clarity, who may conduct an independent examination of serious allegations against the President where removal is not yet being considered.

That is not a small procedural point. An investigation by a body without authority would resolve nothing. Its findings would themselves be challenged. Yet the absence of any credible inquiry would leave the allegations hanging over Justice Anderson and the Court indefinitely. Neither result would be fair to him, to the judges who raised the concerns, or to the Caribbean public.

In this respect, the constitution of the Court is unfinished. It provides a mechanism for removing a President, but not a clear and undisputed procedure for examining complaints against the holder of that office before the question of removal arises.

There is also the separate question of how the correspondence reached the press. The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Bar Association and the Organisation of Commonwealth Caribbean Bar Associations were right to call for both the allegations and the disclosure to be investigated, and for the Court's information systems to be examined urgently.

Confidentiality in judicial deliberations is essential. Judges must be able to exchange views, test arguments and reconsider positions without fearing that unfinished opinions will appear in a newspaper. The disclosure of such

material has harmed the Court. But an investigation of the disclosure cannot be used to avoid an examination of the allegations. Both matters require attention.

Judicial independence does not mean that the administration of justice is beyond question. Independence protects judges and their decisions from political pressure and other improper influence. It does not excuse misconduct, if misconduct is proved, and it does not remove the need for accountability.

The Heads of Caribbean Judiciaries put the matter plainly when they said that the Court's authority "rests upon public confidence in the independence, impartiality, integrity and competence of its judges". That confidence cannot simply be demanded. It has to be maintained.

The Dialogue between CARICOM Heads of Government and Heads of Judiciary in Montego Bay in July 2025 showed that the executive and judicial branches can engage each other while respecting judicial independence, the separation of powers and the constitutional role of each branch. That Dialogue was not concerned with judicial discipline. But it demonstrated that properly structured engagement between the branches is not an attack on judicial independence.

Some of the eight CARICOM states that still retain the Privy Council may regard the present controversy as proof that they were right not to embrace the CCJ fully. That would be the wrong conclusion.

No court, whether in London, Washington, Strasbourg or Port of Spain, is free from internal disagreement. The question is how an institution responds when disagreement becomes serious

and public.

Within days of the allegations being published, Justice Anderson issued a detailed reply. Within ten days, the Court changed the way judicial panels are constituted. These were necessary steps, but they were first steps only. They do not replace the need for an independent and lawful process to establish the facts.

The answer to a weakness in the governance of the CCJ is not continued dependence on the Privy Council. It is to correct the weakness. A distant court is not more accountable to Caribbean people simply because it is distant.

What is now required is a process whose authority cannot reasonably be disputed, which treats Justice Anderson and his judicial colleagues fairly and which establishes what occurred. The Contracting Parties must also close the gap in the Agreement so that, if a similar situation arises again, there will be no argument about who is authorised to act.

The Caribbean did not create the CCJ because we believed that its judges would never disagree or that its administration would never falter. We created it because we believed that Caribbean people were capable of administering justice at the highest level.

That belief now requires us to deal with this controversy honestly, lawfully and fairly. The Court will not be weakened by doing so. It will be strengthened.

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





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NOTICE OF RECORD DATE 70th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**TO: SHAREHOLDERS OF ANTIGUA COMMERCIAL BANK LTD.
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Pursuant to section 110 of the Companies Act, 1995 of the laws of Antigua and Barbuda, **NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Board of Directors of **ANTIGUA COMMERCIAL BANK LTD. TRADING AS ACB CARIBBEAN** has fixed **Friday August 28, 2026**, as the **RECORD DATE** for determining the Shareholders entitled to receive:

- **Notice of the 70th Annual General Meeting (AGM)** of the Company to be held via hybrid format (both online and in-person) on **Thursday October 8, 2026, at 2:00 pm in the Lord Admiral Nelson Ballroom at the Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa** located at Dickenson Bay, St. John's, Antigua and on the Zoom Webinar Platform, and
- **Payment of a Dividend**, if declared, for the financial year ended September 30, 2025.

Be advised that only the Shareholders of the Company on record at the close of business on **Friday August 28, 2026**, will be entitled to receive Notice of the Meeting and payment of a Dividend.

Notice of the 70th AGM will be subsequently issued in accordance with Articles 12.3 and 12.4 of the Company's Bylaws by publication in the newspaper and on the Company's website, <http://www.acbonline.com> and by email distribution for the attention of the Shareholders of the Company.

Shareholders are encouraged to submit any queries and / or concerns in advance of the upcoming AGM via email: ACBSecretariat@acbcaribbean.com.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

**RHODETTE PAIGE
LEGAL COUNSEL / CORPORATE SECRETARY**

August 21, 2026





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SUNDAY

06

SEPTEMBER

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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



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Regional News

OAS chief urges Haiti to speed up election preparations

The head of the Organization of American States (OAS) urged Haitian authorities on Wednesday to speed up voter registration ahead of upcoming elections, the first in a decade.

The first round of voting is scheduled for mid-December in the impoverished Caribbean nation, which has been ravaged by gang violence that has displaced over a million people.

“The registration of voters needs to be accelerated, needs to be intensified,” OAS Secretary General Albert Ramdin told a news conference in Port-au-Prince at the end of a three-day visit, noting that more than 1 million people have been displaced.

“We need to make sure that their right is not disenfranchised as well,” he said.

Ramdin said that in discussions with Haiti’s government, electoral council, and international and local security agencies, “we did express our concern with regard to where we are today, three months before the elections.”

Several municipalities under the control of criminal gangs lack voter registration centers, and as of Monday, nearly a month after opening, only about 260,000 people have registered to vote.

Ramdin called member states of the OAS — an organisation that promotes cooperation in the Americas — and other partners that have pledged support for an international gang suppression force to fulfil their commitments.

The first round of voting for the



election was initially scheduled for August but has been pushed back because of security concerns.

Haiti has not held elections since 2016, and its last president, assassinated in 2021, has not been replaced.

It is the poorest country in the Americas and has for years suffered from instability as powerful gangs have carried out rampant killings, rapes, looting and kid-

nappings.

The security crisis worsened in early 2024, when gangs launched a wave of violence that forced the country’s unelected prime minister to resign.

Nearly 1.5 million of the 11 million population are internally displaced due to violence, according to a June estimate by the International Organization for Migration. (AFP)

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Disparity in exam results by territories sparks CXC concern

DIRECTOR of operations at the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) Dr Nicole Manning is urging education leaders across the region to work together in an effort to improve performance in external examinations.

According to Manning, the regional performance of students in the May-June 2026 sitting of the assessments trended above last year with some territories doing far better than others.

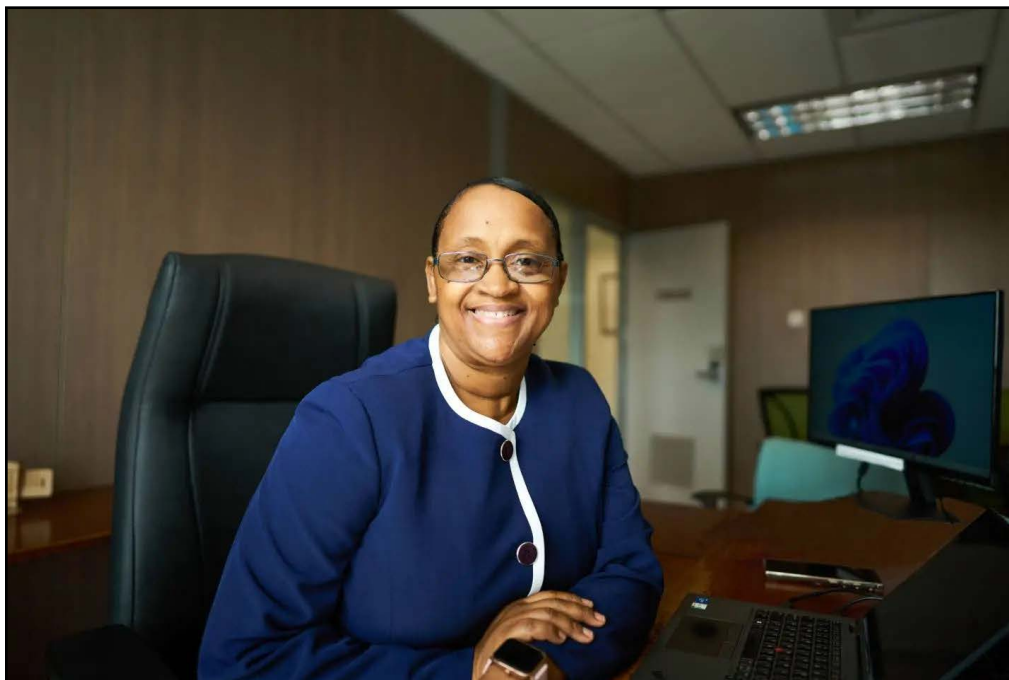
Unveiling the figures during a results ceremony from Anguilla on Tuesday morning, Manning said, “regional percentage of acceptable grades have gone up a notch again” for the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) which shows 93.52 per cent of overall candidates receiving acceptable grades.

At the same time she said the regional standing for the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) painted a slightly different picture but was still a good story with the overall performance standing at 72.18 per cent — a slight increase over 2025-2026.

Manning, who spoke only to the five top performing subjects in the largest cohorts for CAPE, said Caribbean studies emerged on top with students from 10 territories receiving acceptable grades between 98 per cent and 100 per cent.

She pointed out that there were territories where all candidates received acceptable grades, five territories fell below the regional level, scoring 91 per cent to 97 per cent which she said was “still very, very, very good”.

Manning added that the regional performance for information technology, units one and two, environmental science units one and two, physics, entrepreneurship, and communication studies were also impressive as she urged “territories to compare your results with regional percentage and... work together to see how we can pull each other up together”.



For CSEC, Manning said the top performing subjects were information technology, principles of business, English A, and human and social biology.

She said CSEC subjects performing at or below the overall regional performance were principles of accounts — 72 per cent with six territories scoring between 41 to 70 per cent — and chemistry, which she said stood at 68 per cent regionally with 15 territories above the acceptable grade level and six below.

Manning noted that social studies “has taken a hit this year generally” with territories doing as low as 44 per cent but as high as 100 per cent.

She said performance in mathematics showed slight improvement with the regional percentage being 42 per cent — a four per cent increase over the previous year.

“This is a good story. I don’t want anybody to be crying because any improvement in maths is a good improvement. It’s important for us to be happy about that. Any improvement is improvement and so 14 territories had 43 per cent to 77 per cent and seven territories had between 30 per cent and

38 per cent,” she disclosed.

In the meantime, Manning said a big concern of the council remains absenteeism. She said while CAPE saw an increase in both the subject and candidate entries, CSEC saw a reduction in the number of candidate entries but an increase in the subject entries. However, 3,534 candidates did not show up for CAPE, while 32,403 were missing for CSEC.

“Now what does this mean for candidates? A candidate who is absent has no opportunity to be graded because they have missed a component and cannot be graded,” Manning said.

“It is something that the Caribbean Examinations Council is concerned about and we are working very hard to encourage our candidates to turn up. Parents, guardians, turn up. We are encouraging our educators to encourage these students to turn up. We have done many surveys and the surveys tell us that sometimes candidates just feel that they’re unprepared and decide not to turn up. This is not a reason to be absent. Just try. As we say, nothing beats a trial but a failure,” Manning implored.

Regional News

She also noted that absenteeism for the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence exams, a foundational secondary-school qualification offered by the council, “is a worrying concern too”.

The CXC director of operations, said the entity has been trying to decipher the causes behind students not showing up and pointed out that the non-submission of internal coursework component (school-based assessments or SBAs) by both the centres and the candidates is a factor.

“We are seeing an increase in the non-submission by candidates while somewhat a little steady on the non-submission by centres. But both are worrying for us... because non-submission of SBAs, or not doing a third paper, or any other component for that matter, is going to make the candidate ungraded,” Manning pointed out.

“Similarly for CSEC the same thing happens and this is even more worrying because this is actually increasing, for whatever reason,” Manning added as she appealed to regional ministries of education to impress upon “candidates, parents, community” the importance of sitting every single component.

Meanwhile Manning, who last year lamented an “an all-time high of 80 irregularities” among students who sat the 2025 May-June external examinations, on Tuesday said the 2026 May-June sitting had seen “a whopping 128” irregularities. In those cases, grades are either cancelled or candidates disqualified.

“The top three issues we had this year were: the use of unauthorised devices – this represented the largest instance reported; collusion where candidates are trying to work with each other in an exam to complete the exam; and thirdly, use of unauthorised material; and the new one on the block, AI misuse. We have never had this before.

This is new,” Manning told the gathering while encouraging ministries to

utilise the artificial intelligence standards and guidelines produced by the council to educate students about re-

sponsible use of the technology. (Jamaica Observer)



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Morris Dixon lauds students' CAPE, CSEC performances despite Melissa



The Ministry of Education, Skills, Youth and Information says it is pleased with the country's outstanding preliminary results for the 2026 Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) and Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) exams.

Describing 2026 as a strong year for Jamaica's education system despite the impact of Hurricane Melissa, the ministry said students across the island have demonstrated progress, with significant gains in core subjects and an uptick in mathematics performance.

A total of 6,696 candidates passed five or more subjects, including both mathematics and English A.

This reflects an additional 496 candidates compared to 2025.

Minister of Education, Skills, Youth and Information, Senator Dr Dana Morris expressed her delight at the results and paid tribute to the hard work of students, educators, and parents across Jamaica.

"These results tell a powerful story of resilience, hard work, and the unwavering commitment of our students and educators. The gains in mathematics, moving from 34.5 per cent to 48.7 per cent in just three years, show that when we invest in and support our children, they deliver. Every single child who sat these exams has made us proud. It was not easy, but they showed up, and they did well. We are seeing the fruits of our collective efforts, and this is just the beginning," Morris Dixon said.

In a release on Wednesday following the release of preliminary exam results, the ministry said the most compelling story of this year's results is the improvement in CSEC mathematics.

The CSEC mathematics pass rate increased from 34.5 per cent in 2024 to 43.1 per cent in 2025 and has now reached 48.7 per cent in 2026.

This represents an overall increase of 14.2 percentage points over the

three-year period and a 5.6 percentage point increase from 2025 alone.

It described the turnaround as particularly significant for Jamaica, where mathematics has historically presented challenges for students.

The sustained improvement reflects the early success of a targeted tactical approach led by the ministry as well as interventions including the EM2 (Empowerment through Mathematics and Mentorship) initiative, a partnership between The University of the West Indies, Mona, and UNICEF that provided intensive training for mathematics teachers islandwide.

While acknowledging that there have been consecutive years of gains in mathematics and local students are still above the regional average, the ministry said the results are not where it wants them to be, committing to continued work to improve performance.

The ministry noted with pleasure that Jamaica's performance in CSEC English A also remains above the regional average with an 83.6 per cent pass rate.

The overall CAPE pass rate reached 91.7 per cent, with unit 2 achieving a 93.9 per cent pass rate, an increase of 1.6 percentage points over 2025.

The CAPE Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subject pass rate increased to 92.6 per cent, with all 14 listed STEM subjects recording pass rates above 84 per cent.

The preliminary results, released by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), are subject to further review and confirmation. (Jamaica Observer)

Australia races to shield little penguins from H5N1 bird flu

Australian wildlife workers have launched an unprecedented effort to vaccinate wild populations of little penguins against the highly contagious H5N1 avian influenza.

Hundreds of thousands of tourists a year flock to viewing areas and boardwalks to watch the diminutive sea birds waddle ashore and along the beach in the evenings on the eastern coast's Phillip Island. The stars of this "penguin parade" are from a wild colony on the island, numbering up to 40,000 seabirds at the height of the breeding season in the southern hemisphere's spring and summer.

It is the world's biggest single colony of little penguins, which have a life span of about six years with habitats in southern Australia — mostly Tasmania — and New Zealand.

Also known as fairy penguins, they are the tiniest species of the semi-aquatic sea birds, barely reaching knee height and weighing about the same as a standard bag of sugar.

Now, like the rest of Australia's wild bird population, they face the threat of H5N1, which breached the continental landmass for the first time in June and has since started to spread in local wildlife.

The virus was detected this month in a Phillip Island penguin that had died, the first infection in the colony by a pathogen that has caused severe disease and death in birds worldwide.

In response, wildlife teams started to vaccinate birds in the colony this week, said James Todd, chief biodiversity officer for the state of Victoria in which the island lies.



"This is unprecedented. There has been no vaccination of this scale in a wild population anywhere in the world," Todd said.

The H5N1 vaccination program, which also covers a popular little penguin population at a breakwater in the Melbourne beach suburb of St Kilda, is a challenge, he said.

"Trying to vaccinate wild populations is almost impossible, partly because you need two doses of the vaccine," Todd told AFP.

But wildlife experts are very familiar with the little penguins' burrows at Phillip Island and St Kilda, he said.

The birds, in turn, are accustomed to floodlights for the "penguin parade" tourist attraction, as well as being periodically handled by veterinarian scientists for monitoring of their health.

Vaccination teams aim to inoculate about 5,000 little penguins closest to the visitor areas, the state official

said, in a program that is likely to last weeks and months, not days.

Ideally, the H5N1 vaccine should be administered in two doses with a gap of three-to-four weeks, Todd said.

"Given that we're in a bit of a state of urgency here, experts have said that it's okay to even think about you know one to two weeks," he said, though a final decision had yet to be taken.

Vaccination teams can pick up the penguins from their burrows and may try to corral some as they come ashore on the beach, using microchips to track those that have been given a shot, Todd said.

"They're wild animals — they'll squawk and try to, you know, peck you, and do all that sort of stuff — but as I said, the team down there are very used to handling these animals," he explained.

"If you and I were doing it, we'd probably drop the thing straight away." (AFP)

Belgian car salesman becomes prince after royal parentage confirmed



Belgium's Prince Laurent has legally recognised 26-year-old former car salesman Clément Vandenkerckhove as his son and heir.

Vandenkerckhove, the result of a relationship between the royal and Belgian singer Wendy Van Wanten, was quietly brought into Prince Laurent's family at a town hall ceremony six months ago, although details have only just emerged.

While he formally becomes a prince, he will not receive a royal allowance.

The new prince has had several years to get used to the idea of having a royal father, and he said recently he was not yet sure he would begin using his father's name Saxe-Coburg.

"I might want to do that, but I am proud of the name Vandenkerckhove,"

he told Het Nieuwsblad.

"If I were to sacrifice that family name, it would be a betrayal of everything my mother has done for me."

He will not be part of Belgium's royal line of succession, unlike his half-sister Princess Louise and half-brothers Prince Aymeric and Prince Nicolas. Nor will he take part in public royal activities.

Vandenkerckhove is already well known to Belgians, having been the focus of a Flemish TV documentary last September, in which he described how he got to know his father.

His father had been in a relationship with Wendy Van Wanten, whose real name is Iris Vandenkerckhove, before he went on to marry Princess Claire in 2003.

During the VTM documentary, Clément described meeting the prince unexpectedly in a shopping centre in 2013, without realising who he was. It was only when he was 16 that his mother revealed his father's identity.

Four years later he plucked up the courage to ring him up, and after several more calls they met in person and eventually Prince Laurent suggested they take a DNA test.

"We went to the hospital together and I remember him saying 'I'll go first so you're feeling at ease'," he told VTM. Then he received an email from the laboratory which told him of a 99.5% DNA match.

Prince Laurent's DNA test is reminiscent of his father, former King Albert II, who had a test after a lengthy paternity battle. Albert admitted in 2020 that he had fathered a daughter during an affair and eventually recognised her as his own.

Albert II abdicated as king of the Belgians in 2013 as the paternity issue became a royal scandal.

Delphine Boël, a well-known artist, eventually won her court battle and gained the right to the title of princess, and now calls herself Delphine de Saxe-Coburg.

Under changes to Belgian law in 2013, only a few members of the royal family are entitled to public allowances - King Philippe, his father King Albert II, Prince Laurent and Princess Astrid. (BBC)



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US national debt passes \$40tn after doubling in a decade

US national debt has more than doubled in a decade to reach a milestone \$40tn (£29.4tn), Treasury figures show.

The rise reflects years of heavy spending under both the Trump and Biden administrations, along with higher interest payments that have steadily added to the total. In 2016, the national debt stood at just under \$20tn.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) had projected overall borrowing would reach \$39.6tn by the end of fiscal year 2026.

The faster-than-expected rise has sharpened concerns about how quickly the government's borrowing needs are growing and what that means for future interest costs.

The CBO said the US was nearing its \$41.1tn debt ceiling, with debt projected to climb to about \$64tn by 2036.

As the federal government spends more to cover its budget deficits, consumers have faced higher interest rates and inflation.

The \$40.05tn, as of 18 August, covers all outstanding Treasury bonds, bills and notes, and underscores the scale of US borrowing under two presidents.

The interest rate on 30-year bonds, which are a type of debt used to raise funds from investors, hit 5.34% on Tuesday - the highest level in almost 20 years.

Those rates, known as yields, influence how much the US government, companies and consumers pay to borrow - affecting mortgages, car loans and credit cards.

The recent surge in bond yields has been driven by rising oil prices linked to the US-Iran war, with investors worried about inflation.

There are also concerns over government debt and the huge amounts of cash being borrowed by tech firms to develop artificial intelligence (AI), with the timeline and level of returns on investment uncertain.

While ordinary people are unlikely to be affected immediately, difficulties



in managing the debt could eventually trigger disruptions on a scale similar to the 2008 financial crisis, according to economics professor David Jacks.

The pace of America's growing debt was accelerating "and at some point, the bills will come due", said Jacks from the National University of Singapore.

The Treasury Department announced on Wednesday that it would increase

its buyback operations by "at least double" from \$2bn to \$4bn from 9 September to 4 November.

It said the intervention reflected its "desire to provide greater liquidity support" for longer-term bonds.

The rate on borrowing costs over 30 years eased off the back of the move to 5.18%.

John Canavan, lead analyst at Oxford Economics, said the decision to increase purchases appeared to be an



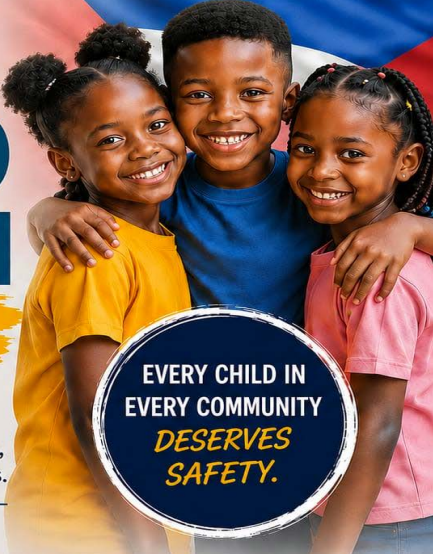
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“attempt to provide relief” on long-term borrowing costs, which had been under “significant pressure from rising oil prices, inflation risks and heavy supply due to global sovereign and corporate borrowing needs”.

But he said given the size of outstanding Treasury debt, the increase in buybacks from the government was “unlikely to provide meaningful long-term relief”.

Rene Albrecht, senior analyst at DZ Bank in Germany, said the US government feared the “pain of 5% or higher yields” over the long term, not just because it raised borrowing costs for the government but also the private sector.

“It’s only three months until the mid-term elections,” Albrecht said. “They [the Treasury] have had to grab into the toolkit in order to get a hand on the recent rise in yields.”

But economist Mohamed A El-Erian said that, beyond the bond market reaction to push down longer-term borrowing costs, the move by the Trump administration was about the possibility of a broader strategy to keep control of interest rates - known as “yield

curve control”.

While the move can help bring down longer-end yields in the immediate and short term, and thereby help lower mortgage and other borrowing costs, “it risks collateral damage and unintended consequences”, he added in a social media post.

The amount the US owes compared to its annual economic output - known as its debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio - is 125.8%, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

It is one of the highest among the world’s largest economies.

In comparison, IMF figures show the UK and China’s debt-to-GDP ratios are 103.6% and 106.9%, respectively.

Japan has the highest debt burden among the world’s major economies with a debt-to-GDP ratio of more than 200%.

The US has longer-term fixed mortgage deals than other countries, such as the UK.

Currently, the average interest rate on 30-year fixed mortgages is 6.67%, ac-

cording to finance firm Freddie Mac. While borrowing costs for homeowners have been rising, they remain lower than in 2023 when such deals averaged 7.7%.

Minutes released on Wednesday by the Federal Reserve, which sets US interest rates, revealed that concerns over inflation deepened among policymakers at its last meeting.

It said there were “several participants” in favour of increased rates last month. The central bank ended up holding its benchmark interest rate in the current 3.50%-3.75% range for the fifth time in a row.

Many participants also said rate hikes would “likely be necessary if inflation did not decline”, with some suggesting interest rates were not high enough to see price rises fall back to the Fed’s 2% target for inflation.

The Fed is expected to hold its policy rate steady again at its September meeting after recent data showed inflation eased slightly and firms unexpectedly shed jobs in July. (BBC)

Thirteen dead in landslide at illegal Colombia mine



A landslide at an illegal gold mine in southwestern Colombia has killed 13 people and injured seven, a govern-

ment official said Thursday.

“Due to the activity taking place in the

mine, a slope collapsed onto the people,” Narino department government secretary Fredy Gamez told Caracol Radio about the incident, which took place Wednesday night.

Accidents at mines in Colombia, particularly in unregulated work sites like the one in Narino, are frequent. Explosions caused by built-up gases are common.

Images of the Narino mine posted on social media showed heavy equipment working on steep terrain.

A government source told AFP that Wednesday’s landslide was triggered by an explosion inside the mine.

Rescue efforts were being hampered by the dangerous instability of the earth at the site. (AFP)

Sports News



Another win for Garden Stars in defense of Parham Super League title

Reigning champion Garden Stars have claimed their second successive win in the fourth edition of the Parham Super League, which is organized by Eastboy Promotions.

Garden Stars claimed their second win in three matches by pulling off a 2-0 victory over the Freemans Village Scorpions in their Group 1 encounter at the Parham playing field on Wednesday evening.

N'gozie Harvey scored the opening goal with a strike in the 40th minute, and teammate Kenja Benjamin converted the second in the 65th minute to seal the win for Garden Stars.

It was the first defeat for the Freemans Village Scorpions after winning

their previous two matches.

Meanwhile, the Potters Tigers maintained their position at the top of Group 2 after maintaining their unbeaten run by securing their third consecutive win.

The Potters Tigers snatched a one-nil victory over former champions the Pigotts Bullets in their top-of-the-table clash. Keon Greene secured the winner by scoring the lone goal of the match in the 35th minute.

It was the first loss for the Pigotts Bullets, who won the PSL in the first two years of the competition in 2023 and 2024. The Pigotts Bullets had won their previous two matches in this year's competition.

The Parham Super League will resume with another double header at the Parham playing field on Saturday evening.

Parham will take on Point West Ham in a Group 2 affair at 5:30 pm, and East Furlong will clash with Blackburn Palace in a Group 1 encounter at 7 pm.

In Sunday's double-header, the Potters Tigers will face Glanvilles FC in a Group 2 encounter at 5:30 pm, and the Freemans Village Scorpions will meet Swetes FC in a Group 1 affair at 7 pm.

Similar to the third edition of the PSL in 2025, this year's winning team will take home a grand prize of EC\$3,000, with EC\$1,000 going to the runners-up.

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Warriors beat the Kings to stay unbeaten in Caribbean Premier League



Shimron Hetmyer of Guyana Amazon Warriors

The Guyana Amazon Warriors maintained their perfect start to the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) with a comfortable seven-wicket win against the St. Lucia Kings at the Darren Sammy Cricket Ground on Wednesday night.

After restricting the St. Lucia Kings to 151 for seven off their 20 overs, the Guyana Amazon Warriors achieved victory by scoring 157 for three with 11 balls to spare.

The foundation for the Warriors' win was laid by Mavendra Dindyal, who struck 50 off 51 balls and Glenn Phillips with 36 off 26 balls in a 79-run opening stand.

Shimron Hetmyer, who hit an unbeaten 25 off 11 balls, and Quentin Sampson with 13 not out off four balls finished the game in style as the pair blasted 35 runs off 10 deliveries to seal the Amazon Warriors' victory.

Off-spinner Maheesh Theekshana captured two for 33 for the Kings.

Both sides were left frustrated by the weather, with the rain causing four

stoppages to play, three of which came in the Kings' innings.

The Kings, put into bat by Amazon Warriors' captain Imran Tahir, made a decent start. Andries Gous hit 20 off 21 in his last game of the tournament, and Kamil Pooran, returning from injury, scored 19 off nine balls in a 30-run opening stand.

Their efforts helped the Kings get over the 50 mark inside the first six overs before Tahir, bowling leg breaks, and off-spinner Mohammad Nabi stemmed the flow of runs in the home side's innings.

Medium pacer Dwaine Pretorius grabbed three for 29, and fast bowler Shamar Joseph claimed two for 25 as the Warriors' bowlers put the squeeze on the Kings, whose batters largely struggled to get out of the teens.

Charith Asalanka was the exception, managing to stick around and work the ball around for an important 35 off 28 balls as the rain continued to frustrate the home side and their supporters in the ground as the delays seemed to kill

any momentum they were able to muster and gave the edge to the visiting Amazon Warriors.

Matthew Forde again looked dangerous at the back end of the innings, hitting 14 before he was dismissed by Shamar Joseph.

Darron Need struck 17, captain Roston Chase also fell for 14, and Ackeem Auguste made 13 as a lack of big overs handcuffed the Kings, with 13 being the most they took off an over.

Guyana's fielding and bowling were mightily impressive, with all seven wickets falling to good catching.

With a modest total to chase, Phillips and Dindyal knew they didn't have to hit fifth and sixth gear straight away as the pair took their time to build their innings and work out the conditions.

The Kings bowlers struggled to create any potency as the openers gave them few chances to put some dents in the Warriors order.

The first wicket took ten and a half overs to come as Phillips was caught by Matthew Forde, having been dropped by Amari Goodridge with the previous ball.

By contrast, the Kings didn't claim their chances in the field, and that was a glaring difference between the two sides.

Off-spinner Roston Chase and left-arm spinner Joshua Bishop managed to give the Kings a little bit of hope going into the final five overs.

But that hope was soon extinguished as Hetmyer and Sampson went about their assault to wrap up victory for the Guyana Amazon Warriors.

US Open singles champions to earn a record US\$5.5 million



Aryna Sabalenka reacts during a match against Ekaterina Alexandrova at the round of 16 National Bank Open Tennis tournament in Toronto, on Saturday, Aug. 8, 2026. (AP)

NEW YORK (AP) — The US Open singles champions will earn US\$5.5 million, the highest winnings in Grand Slam tennis history.

Overall compensation for the final major of the year is rising to a record US\$108 million, a 20% increase from last year and a 44% jump since 2024. The financial details were announced Thursday by the US Tennis Association, with play set to begin next week.

Players will earn US\$140,000, largest in tennis history, just for making it into the 128-player singles main draw. A quarterfinalist earns US\$780,000, a semifinalist US\$1.45 million and the runner-up US\$2.8 million.

The champions' check is up from the US\$5 million that Aryna Sabalenka and Carlos Alcaraz won last year, when the total player compensation was US\$90 million.

The winning teams in men's, women's and mixed doubles will split US\$1 million, with the runner-up team to earn US\$500,000. The wheelchair singles champions will earn US\$104,000.

The USTA also announced it would establish a player support program, with an initial commitment of US\$2 million to be split equally between men's and women's players, which will be used to provide benefits and complement existing pension funds.

USTA CEO Craig Tiley called the financial commitment to players at all levels a "significant first step in a multi-year investment in athletes as the US Open continues to be the best economic opportunity for players and the most valuable platform in tennis for players, fans and partners."

The programme will be designed with guidance from the Grand Slam Player Council, whose creation was announced Thursday in response to players seeking greater input and revenue from the four major tournaments.

Soccer fans launch global petition urging FIFA boss Infantino to resign over World Cup ‘betrayal’

GENEVA (AP) — A collection of soccer fan groups from around the world launched a petition Thursday calling for Gianni Infantino to resign as FIFA president after he tried to sell future World Cup profits to private investors.

The petition with the hashtag InfantinOut also calls for FIFA “to be rebuilt so that the current debacle can never happen again.”

“The shameful attempt by one individual — the FIFA President himself — to sell off the World Cup to private investors exposed a betrayal football will never forget,” the petition said about Infantino’s plan for a commercial spinoff, which he dropped amid a furious backlash.

The fan groups include Football Supporters Europe, Football Supporters Africa and, in North America, the Independent Supporters Council, plus about 40 national fan groups worldwide.

Infantino has resisted calls to leave

office despite European soccer body UEFA saying it has no confidence in him. He has also been criticized by the leadership of North America’s CONCACAF and the Asian Football Confederation.

Some of FIFA’s 211 member federations are supporting Infantino, including 2030 World Cup co-host Morocco as well as Qatar, where he lived before the emirate hosted the 2022 World Cup, and Lebanon, which gave him citizenship this year.

Saudi Arabia, the 2034 host, has not publicly backed Infantino despite his close political ties to the kingdom.

“Gianni Infantino has demonstrated a profound failure of leadership, incompatible with democratic governance,” the fan petition states.

“The concentration of power around the FIFA Presidency, combined with opaque decision-making, personality cult clientelism, and zero accountability has destroyed any remaining trust in the world governing body.

“For the credibility of FIFA — and for the future of the game — he must resign,” the petition adds.

FIFA was approached for comment about the petition. The petition also cites Infantino’s past support for projects that outraged fans, including the failed European Super League project, pushing to hold World Cups every two years that was resisted and the “extortionate ticketing policy at the 2026 FIFA World Cup.”

FIFA and Infantino did not consult with fan groups before setting record ticket prices for the 104-game tournament in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, that provoked anger and led to some tickets being sold for US\$60 to the most loyal fans of each of the 48 teams.

Football Supporters Europe is the official liaison for fans with UEFA and advises on ticket prices for European Championships and club cup finals like the Champions League.



FIFA president Gianni Infantino, center, speaks to FIFA secretary general Mattias Grafstrom, left, sitting beside president of Moroccan Royal Football Federation Fouzi Lekjaa as they attend a Women’s AFCON 2026 soccer match between Malawi and Zambia, in Rabat, Morocco, Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2026. (AP)

Antigua Pitbulls record second win at youth tourney in St. Lucia



The Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls

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

The Pitbulls followed up their emphatic 140-23 victory over the ECA Tigers of St. Lucia by snatching a narrow 68-65 victory over St. Lucia's ECA Lions 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 Wednesday, defending champions NCA Warriors of Trinidad and Tobago maintained their unbeaten run with a crushing 124-31 triumph over St. Lucia's ECA Tigers, and Guyana's D-UP Academy recorded a dominant 71-30 victory over the BFTF Pitbulls of St. Lucia.

Instead of another runaway victory, the Pitbulls found themselves locked in a physical, back-and-forth battle with the ECA Lions before emerging with their three-point victory.

Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls built an early 23-12 first-quarter advantage, but the ECA Lions responded with a 21-10 second quarter to level the contest at halftime.

The Pitbulls regained momentum with a 19-point third quarter, then relied on timely defensive stops in the closing minutes to preserve the win.

Gabriel DeSouza sank 25 points and claimed four steals; Yohhan Nichols produced 13 points, six rebounds, and five steals; Raheem Sawyer converted nine points; captain Nathan Mathew provided six points, six rebounds, and five steals; and Marcus Murphy controlled the boards with nine rebounds for the Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls.

The Pitbulls finished with 26 rebounds, 19 steals, and seven blocks, proving that even when their shooting cooled to 38.4 percent, their defensive intensity remained the difference-maker.

The Pitbulls have two wins in three matches after suffering a 55-89 loss to defending champions NCA Warriors

of Trinidad and Tobago in their opening encounter.

The Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls were slated to face the D-UP Academy of Guyana on Thursday 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.