

Public Servants to Receive Their Pay Ahead of ABST-Free Weekend

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ADOMS Expands Maritime Presence into Asia with Busan Partnership

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Public Servants to Receive their Pay Ahead of ABST-Free Weekend to Benefit from the Break



Public servants are expected to receive their salaries by Wednesday, ahead of the upcoming ABST-free shopping weekend. Prime Minister Gaston Browne said instructions have been issued to ensure government workers are paid no later than Wednesday, allowing families to access funds before the back-to-school shopping initiative.

“We’ll have public servants paid no later than Wednesday / Thursday, so that by Friday they will have money to go shopping,” Browne confirmed.

The temporary zero-rated Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax measure is intended to reduce the cost of school supplies and other eligible items. Browne also addressed complaints from public servants who have not received back pay,

attributing some omissions to administrative gaps within individual ministries.

“Well, there are some gaps there,” the prime minister stated, “all they have to do is get on to the treasury and we will pay. We apologize, but again there has been some tardiness from the respective ministries.”

The initiative to provide this ease of the financial pressure for parents, bolster, once more, the government’s efforts to empower Antiguan and Barbudans through economic and educational opportunities

In kind the prime minister responded to recent acts of vandalism on government property, implying that such behaviours seek to undermine the progress at hand.

The Prime Minister denounced the narrative that the actions were solely out of rage. He credits it to a broader lack of appreciation and woeful negligence.

“They have this benign mindset where they believe that public assets are meant to be abused. I don’t think it’s necessarily a function of poverty, because when we [as a society] were poorer the place was cleaner.”

Prime Minister Browne maintains that there is a need to reentrench traditional values of national pride and class into the populace, which he maintains must begin in the schools. To this end he affirms continued educational empowerment to improve access, adding to his continued push to create a Lifestyle Superpower.

ADOMS Expands Maritime Presence into Asia with Busan Partnership



Thomas Blenk, President and CEO of SolarisTech Inc. (left) and Prime Minister Gaston Browne (right)

The Antigua and Barbuda Department of Marine Services and Merchant Shipping (ADOMS) is expanding its international footprint into Asia with the establishment of a presence in Busan, Republic of Korea, one of the world's leading maritime centres.

The initiative will effectively strengthen the department's engagement with major international shipping markets. It follows the successful establishment of regional operations in Piraeus, Greece, and Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The new Busan partnership was formalised on Friday, August 21, during a signing ceremony involving the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, ADOMS and Thomas Blenk, President and CEO of SolarisTech Inc. The agreement was signed in the presence of Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Gaston Browne.

Under the partnership, the Antigua and Barbuda Ship and Yacht Registry will be promoted across the Korean and Japanese maritime markets, bringing ADOMS' services closer to ship-owners, ship managers, shipyards and other maritime stakeholders through-

out the region.

Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Browne described the development as an important step in strengthening Antigua and Barbuda's position in the global maritime industry.

The Prime minister stated "The expansion of ADOMS into Busan is an important development for Antigua and Barbuda and demonstrates our commitment to positioning our maritime services competitively in the global market."

He noted also that Korea's status as a major maritime nation provides the department with an important platform from which to engage the wider Asian maritime community.



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Thomas Blenk, President and CEO of SolarisTech Inc. (left) and Prime Minister Gaston Browne (right)

ADOMS Director and Registrar, General Ambassador Dwight C.R. Gardiner, affirms that the move builds on the administration's experience in other major maritime centres.

"Our experience in Piraeus and Dubai has demonstrated the value of having a professional presence in major maritime centres," Gardiner explained, "[therefore] Busan is a natural extension of that strategy,"

Despite its expanding international presence, ADOMS will retain regulatory oversight and Flag State responsibility from its headquarters in Antigua and Barbuda.

A statement from the department said the Busan partnership is expected to deepen engagement with Korean and Asian maritime interests while creating new opportunities for the Antigua and Barbuda Ship and Yacht Registry.

ADOMS also reaffirmed that its international expansion will continue to be guided by its commitment to safety, security, environmental protection, seafarer welfare and high standards of Flag State administration.



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Government Efforts to Improve Police Capacity Receiving Renewed Push

Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Gaston Browne is reaffirming the numerous measures being pursued by the Government and security agencies in Antigua and Barbuda to enhance public safety and tackle crime across the country.

The initiatives range from the use of advanced intelligence and technology, and record keeping, to tougher sentencing, community policing and changes to the judicial framework.

The Prime Minister once again defended his advocacy for tougher sentences for gun-related crimes, arguing that Antigua and Barbuda has been comparatively lenient in its treatment of such offences.

Over the past week, however, his comments have drawn criticism from judicial associations, which have suggested that his statements could be interpreted as an attempt to undermine judicial independence.

Prime Minister Browne maintained that even if his actions within the legislative sphere are viewed by some as encroaching on the judiciary, his objective remains the protection and betterment of the country.

“A resident in Dominica was charged for possession. She must pay a fine of \$37,000 by November 30th or face up to nine years in prison. Compared to some of the criminals here who are shooting people and getting two years. So if I appear to be trampling on the judiciary; sometimes the means justify the end.”

To this end, the Government has committed to introducing legislation establishing minimum sentences of 15 years for gun-related crimes and cases involving child sexual abuse.

The Prime Minister also outlined measures aimed at strengthening the operational capacity of the Royal Police Force, with a major initiative being the introduction of high-intelligence security drones to boost surveillance.

“The drones will have a scope of approximately 25 kilometres. Plus, these drones have night vision as well.”

Cabinet has also approved funding to equip the force with tint meters, breathalysers and handheld speed radars for



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

traffic infringements.

Most extensively, on the matter of national security the nation's leader spoke to the importance of information sharing and record-keeping. In addition to urging greater community policing and

calling on the Police Force to rebuild public confidence, the Cabinet has approved provisions to accelerate the long-overdue digitisation of police records.

Prime Minister Browne acknowledged the limitations of manual record-keeping and said modernising the system is essential to improving police operations.

“Sometimes you have gaps in information, and in order to get around police oversight, we need to digitize the records. In fact, it started years ago and so we are going to complete it.”

Overall, the Government and security agencies are pursuing what Prime Minister Browne describes as a concerted and comprehensive effort to confront and tackle serious crime in Antigua and Barbuda.



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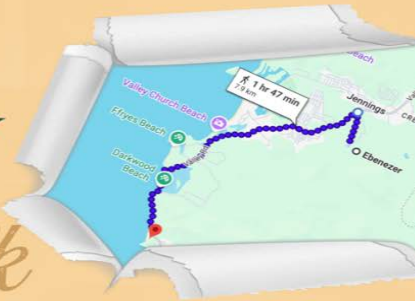
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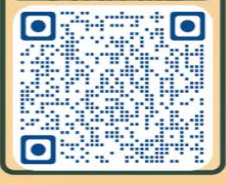


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Three Antigua and Barbuda Media Representatives Attend Familiarisation Trip To India



The photo with Ercil Charles Jnr., Terry Andrew and Everton Barnes is at the Taj Mahal in Acra, India, perhaps the country's most popular tourist attraction

Three media practitioners from Antigua and Barbuda are attending a familiarization trip to India as the South Asian nation seeks to expand its footprint in Latin America and the Caribbean.

They are among thirty-nine journalists, writers and producers attending the 8-day familiarization trip organized by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. Representatives are drawn from several Latin American States as well as from two Eastern Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis.

The Antigua and Barbuda representatives are Deputy Director of News and Current Affairs at the Antigua and



Barbuda Broadcasting Service (ABS), Ercil Charles Jnr., Deputy Director of Sports, Terry Andrew and Communications Officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Editor of Point Ex-

press, Everton Barnes.

The first half of the trip was spent in New Delhi, the capital of India where they met with the Chamber of Commerce, senior officials of the Ministry



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of Mining, Invest India, the government agency which promotes investments in India and the Ministry of External Affairs.

During these interactive sessions, there was one overarching theme; India was currently the fourth largest economy in the world with the expectation that it would move into the number three spot shortly.

In order to achieve this, India had to expand into new markets for its goods and services and it sees the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean as fertile ground for which it could develop as part of its outward expansion. It also noted that India was a major beneficiary of Foreign Direct Investment and that it would welcome these investments in the form of partnerships and other arrangements by companies from the region.

For the countries of the Eastern Caribbean with their much smaller economies, India's focus was helping with capacity building through programmes aimed at upskilling their technicians.

For example, India is on record for providing material and human resources development assistance for Antigua and Barbuda as it prepares to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November. Recently, two officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended protocol training in In-



dia and a contingent of police officials are training in security operations in India in preparation for CHOGM. India is also providing other very tangible assistance to the government as it prepares to host CHOGM 2026.

Charles, Andrew and Barnes all say the programme has been quite beneficial as it reaches the halfway mark noting that it has provided a better understanding of the India's role in regional development as well as the founding principles of India's relief programme which has benefited many Caribbean

territories facing natural disasters. For example, an Indian team of army specialists traveled to Venezuela in June to assist with disaster relief following the double earthquakes.

Other countries attending the trip include; Brazil, Colombia, Bolivar, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela and Guyana.

On Sunday, the media practitioners traveled to Chennai on the South Eastern coast of India where among other things they will visit the Ganga River and other places of interest.

H.O.W. with Halo Gives a Cool Start to TechByte STEM Academy



St John's Catholic School Principal and DadliBots all-girls Robotics STEM team

The Halo Foundation is supporting the development of the TechByte STEM Academy with the handover of air-conditioning units to St. John's Catholic School ahead of the academy's planned launch in September.

The units were presented to the school's principal, Verlyn Richards, by Her Excellency Lady Sandra Williams, President of the Halo Foundation. The support is intended to create a more comfortable environment for students to learn, build and explore science, technology, engineering and mathematics beyond the traditional classroom setting.

The handover comes as the foundation prepares for the launch of *Hope, Opportunity and Well-being through STEM (H.O.W) with the Halo initiative*. It is being developed in partnership with Elijah James, founder of The Local App, under Lady Williams' Fostering the Future Initiative, which builds on the Global Coalition Summit of First Spouses, hosted by First Lady Melania Trump in Washington, D.C., in March 2026.

"Creating the right environment for young people to learn is an important part of creating meaningful pathways," Lady Williams said. "We want young people, especially girls, to have spaces where they can explore, experiment, build confidence and discover what



Her Excellency Lady Sandra Williams with DadliBots all-girls robotics STEM team

they are capable of."

DadliBots, towards that end, is also preparing to send its first-ever all-girls team to represent Antigua and Barbuda at the FIRST Global Challenge 2026 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, later this year.

The five young STEM ambassadors, Hannah, Gyanna, Audella-Mae, Sidea and Neola, are part of a growing group of students using robotics and technology to develop skills and innovative solutions for the future.

The TechByte STEM Academy, intends to build on community youth programmes powered by The Local App which since 2018 have exposed students to robotics, esports, engineering, virtual reality, artificial intelligence and

other emerging technologies.

James welcomed the partnership, saying, "DadliBots and BRIGHT Hacks have always been about giving young people the opportunity to learn by doing."

He added that the support from the Halo Foundation would help create more interactive spaces where that learning can continue beyond the summer and develop into a year-round after-school model.

The *H.O.W. with Halo Initiative* aims to reach 3,000 students annually and is expected to expand its network by inviting other organisations to participate as partners. Details on student registration and scholarships are expected to be announced ahead of the official launch.



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The poster features a vibrant background image of three Antigua Carnival dancers in elaborate costumes with large, colorful feathered headdresses. The dancers are smiling and holding maces. The background is a mix of bright colors and abstract geometric shapes.

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Spice and Sugar: From Empire to Investment — History's Two Lessons

Economic history offers instruction, not nostalgia.



By Ambassador Dr. Clarence E Pilgrim

The institutions that built modern commerce demonstrate humanity's ability to mobilize capital, distribute risk and generate prosperity. They also warn that economic sophistication, when separated from justice and accountability, can become an instrument of exploitation.

The Dutch East India Company, 1602–1799, and the British West Indian trading system, particularly from the mid-seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries, offer two enduring lessons.

The first should be repeated: innovation, enterprise and strong institutions can transform economies. The second must never be repeated: prosperity must not depend upon exploitation, whatever form it assumes.

The First Instruction: Innovate

When the Dutch East India Company, or VOC, was established on 20 March 1602, long-distance trade was expensive, uncertain and dangerous. Voyages could take years, ships could be

lost, and capital could remain committed without guarantee of return.

The VOC developed a more sophisticated model. Instead of financing individual voyages separately, it pooled capital from numerous investors into a continuing corporate enterprise. Investors held shares in the company, and those shares became transferable.

That development was transformative. Ownership itself became tradable.

A secondary market in VOC shares developed in Amsterdam, combining several features familiar to modern finance: pooled capital, divided ownership, transferable securities, professional management and continuing corporate existence.

The VOC did not invent investment or share ownership. Its significance was that it combined these mechanisms at unprecedented scale and demonstrated how dispersed private capital could finance enterprises beyond the means of individual merchants.

Capital could be mobilized. Risk could be distributed. Ownership could be transferred. Savings could be converted into productive investment.

This made the VOC an important precursor to the modern stock market and demonstrated an enduring principle: capital becomes more productive when strong institutions provide confidence, scale and liquidity.

From Dutch Commerce to British Caribbean Trade

England observed and competed with Dutch commercial success.

The Navigation Ordinance of 1651 sought, in part, to weaken Dutch dominance of the carrying trade and redirect commerce through English ships and merchants. The seizure of Jamaica from Spain in 1655, followed by Navigation legislation in 1660, 1662 and 1663, helped consolidate an Atlantic system increasingly organized around

English shipping, colonial production and metropolitan markets.

The British West Indian economy differed from the Dutch model. The VOC centred substantially on a chartered corporation. The British system became a wider network connecting plantations, merchants, shipping, insurance, banking, manufacturing, government policy and imperial markets.

Sugar became one of its principal engines.

The Dutch demonstrated the power of organized financial capital. The British demonstrated the power of integrated value chains reinforced by state policy.

Both helped shape modern capitalism.

Both also exposed its dangers.

The Second Instruction: Reject Exploitation

The VOC combined commercial innovation with monopoly, military force, territorial conquest, slavery and other forms of coerced labour. Across its Asian and Cape networks, enslaved people were transported, owned and employed within an economic system in which human beings themselves became commodities.

The British West Indian plantation economy carried exploitation to an immense Atlantic scale. Sugar generated extraordinary wealth, but the system rested fundamentally upon the enslavement of Africans and their descendants and the denial of their freedom, dignity and ownership of their own labour.

The lesson is fundamental:

Economic sophistication does not automatically produce economic justice.

A system can be innovative, profitable and internationally successful while remaining profoundly unjust.

That warning remains relevant because exploitation does not always return in recognizable form.

Colonial monopoly may become ex-

cessive market dominance. Control of territory may become control of strategic resources, technology or finance. A developing country may export raw materials while processing, branding, intellectual property and much of the profit remain elsewhere.

A tourism economy may attract substantial investment while insufficient ownership, procurement, skills development or profit remains within the domestic economy.

These relationships are not inherently exploitative. Foreign investment, international trade and multinational enterprise are indispensable to development, especially for small states.

The critical distinction is between partnership and dependency.

Development Must Build Capability

The appropriate response is not isolation from international capital. It is informed, strategic engagement with it.

Capital should be welcomed on terms that create enduring national value.

Investment should create employment, but also skills, technology, entrepreneurship and domestic enterprise.

Natural resources should generate revenue, but also productive assets for future generations.

Tourism should attract international capital while expanding local ownership and procurement.

Trade should open markets while enabling developing economies to move progressively into higher-value activities.

Economic growth and economic development are therefore not synonymous.

Growth measures activity. Development measures capability.

The essential questions are simple:

What value remains locally? What capability has been created? What opportunities have citizens gained? What has been preserved or expanded for future generations?

Those questions distinguish sustainable development from dependency.

Antigua and Barbuda at a Historic Moment

These lessons acquire particular sig-

nificance as Antigua and Barbuda approaches the 45th anniversary of Independence on 1 November 2026.

Independence is more than sovereignty over territory. Its deeper economic meaning is the responsibility to convert national resources, labour, enterprise and international partnerships into lasting prosperity.

The symbolism of 2026 is especially powerful.

From 1–4 November 2026, Antigua and Barbuda will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting under the theme “Accelerating Partnerships and Investment for a Prosperous Commonwealth.”

A nation once situated within a colonial commercial system will welcome Commonwealth leaders to discuss partnership, investment and shared prosperity.

That moment should invite consideration not merely of the quantity of investment, but of its quality.

The central question is not simply how much capital can be attracted. It is whether that capital strengthens productive capacity, resilience, domestic ownership and long-term national opportunity.

True partnership should leave both sides stronger.

A Caribbean Responsibility

The same principle applies across the Caribbean Community.

Small Caribbean states face structural constraints: limited domestic markets, exposure to external shocks and climate events, and dependence on imported capital, technology and essential goods.

Regional cooperation should therefore be understood not as a diminution of sovereignty, but as an instrument for strengthening it.

Individually, small states possess limited negotiating weight. Collectively, they offer greater market scale, stronger bargaining capacity, deeper pools of talent and a more influential diplomatic voice.

The Caribbean must engage the world with openness and purpose: welcoming investment while building

domestic capability; cooperating internationally while strengthening regional resilience; and pursuing prosperity without surrendering control over the foundations of its future.

History’s Two Instructions

History matters because it illuminates choices still before us.

The Dutch East India Company demonstrated what institutional innovation and organized capital could achieve, but also how commercial power could coexist with slavery, coercion and conquest.

The British West Indian system demonstrated the extraordinary power of integrated commerce, but also the human consequences when economic ambition became detached from dignity.

The two lessons must therefore be held together.

Innovation without justice can create wealth while perpetuating inequality. Development without capability can produce growth while deepening dependency.

The durable path lies in combining enterprise with fairness, investment with national capacity, regional cooperation with sovereign purpose, and international partnership with institutions strong enough to protect the public interest.

As Antigua and Barbuda marks 45 years of Independence and welcomes the Commonwealth to its shores, the moment calls for confidence without complacency, openness without dependency, and ambition anchored by principle.

The measure of successful development is ultimately not how much capital enters a country, but how much enduring capability, opportunity and dignity it leaves behind.

History has already given us its two instructions:

Repeat the innovation.

Never repeat the exploitation—in any shape, form or disguise.

Disclaimer:

The views expressed are those of the writer

Commentary

PRIVY TO THE CCJ: HOW MUCH SHOULD THE PUBLIC KNOW?

The Caribbean Court of Justice has now changed the way its judges are assigned to panels. With immediate effect, all judges will sit on all panels unless a judge is formally excused for a legitimate reason. The three panel leaders will comprise the President of the Court and the two most senior judges. The CCJ says the revised arrangements are intended to promote consistency, transparency and flexibility in the allocation of judicial work.

That sounds sensible. But given what has happened around the Court in recent weeks, it also raises a much bigger question: how much of the way the CCJ operates are we now supposed to be privy to?

The leaked internal correspondence involving judges of the Court has exposed serious concerns about its administration, including allegations surrounding the constitution of judicial panels. Those allegations remain allegations. They have not been established as fact, and the President of the Court, Justice Winston Anderson, has rejected the suggestion that panels were manipulated to predetermine outcomes. That distinction matters.

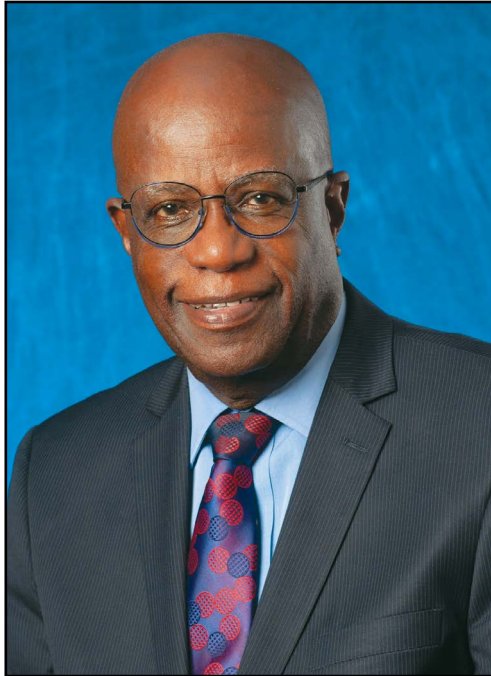
But so does this: whoever was behind the leak may have done the Caribbean public a favour by exposing questions that might otherwise have remained entirely within the walls of the Court. At the same time, the leak has inflicted serious damage on the credibility of an institution that the region desperately needs to be seen as independent, professional and beyond manipulation.

Both things can be true.

The public may have needed to know that there was serious internal disquiet within the Court. Yet the manner in which the information became public has damaged confidence in the very institution whose integrity the disclosure was supposed to protect.

That is the uncomfortable reality facing the CCJ.

The allegations must be investigat-



ed. They cannot simply be dismissed because they emerged through a leak. But neither should the Caribbean treat leaked allegations as established facts. The proper response is investigation, explanation and, where necessary, reform.

The Court's new panel arrangements therefore deserve more attention than a simple announcement that the rules have changed. If transparency is the objective, the public should understand the principles governing the new system. What constitutes a legitimate reason for a judge to be excused from a panel? Who determines that? Is the decision recorded? Will there be a public record of panel composition? If a judge is assigned and later removed or excused, will that be disclosed?

These questions do not require us to enter the private deliberations of judges. Judicial confidentiality is essential. Judges must be free to disagree, deliberate and change their minds without political or public pressure. But there is a difference between protecting judicial deliberations and placing the administrative machinery surrounding judicial work beyond legitimate scrutiny.

tiny.

And the wider Caribbean environment makes that distinction even more important.

In Antigua and Barbuda, Prime Minister Gaston Browne recently launched an extraordinary attack on an unnamed sitting judge over what he regarded as lenient sentences for criminals. He told the judge that if he could not "follow the lead of Parliament" and impose longer sentences, he should leave the country or face deportation and being declared persona non grata. Caribbean Heads of Judiciary condemned the remarks as a threat to judicial independence. Browne subsequently reaffirmed his support for an independent judiciary and redirected his argument toward sentencing policy and public safety.

There is nothing wrong with a government questioning sentencing policy. Parliament has the right to change the law. Governments have a responsibility to respond to crime and public concern. But telling a sitting judge that he should leave the country because of the sentences he imposes crosses a very different line.

Judicial independence is not a luxury. It is one of the foundations of democratic government.

Then came Jamaica's Senate President, Tom Tavares-Finson, whose unusually strong intervention brought the CCJ controversy directly into Jamaica's debate over whether the country should replace the Privy Council with the CCJ as its final appellate court. He described it as "extremely reckless" for Jamaica to consider joining the CCJ while allegations of panel manipulation remain unresolved and called for the matter to be dealt with publicly.

His concern about the allegations cannot simply be dismissed. If judicial panels were ever manipulated to influence the outcome of cases, that would be an extraordinarily serious matter.

But his intervention also demon-

Commentary

strates how quickly an internal dispute at the CCJ can become ammunition in the much larger Caribbean argument over whether we should trust our own regional court.

That is where we need to be careful.

The CCJ should not be defended blindly. Nor should the Privy Council be romanticised simply because it is British. The Caribbean created the CCJ because there was a conviction that our region could build an institution capable of administering justice according to the highest standards, while developing a distinctly Caribbean body of jurisprudence.

That project is bigger than any individual judge, any president of the Court or any current dispute.

The CCJ's Strategic Plan for 2025 to 2032 places considerable emphasis on judicial independence, public trust, communication, access to justice, organisational resilience and a high-performance culture. Those principles now have to be demonstrated in practice.

The current crisis could therefore become an opportunity.

The Court can demonstrate that transparency does not threaten judicial independence. Properly designed,

transparency can protect it. A clear and predictable system for assigning judges, recording legitimate recusals and protecting against arbitrary changes could strengthen confidence rather than weaken it.

But that requires more than a notice announcing a new arrangement.

We should resist both extremes now emerging in the public conversation. One says: nothing to see here, trust the Court and move on. The other says: the leaked allegations prove that the Court cannot be trusted.

Neither is good enough.

The proper Caribbean response is simpler: investigate it, explain it, fix what needs fixing and then strengthen the institution.

And perhaps whoever leaked the correspondence needs to understand something as well. Confidential judicial communications exist for a reason. A leak may expose wrongdoing, but it can also damage the institution, compromise relationships among judges and undermine confidence in the administration of justice.

A public service may have been performed by exposing serious questions. Institutional damage was also done.

Both things can be true.

The Caribbean has spent decades building the CCJ. We should not allow an internal dispute, however serious, to destroy confidence in an institution that is central to the region's legal future. But neither should we protect the institution by protecting it from scrutiny.

The judges are custodians of the Court. They are not its owners.

So perhaps the question following the latest announcement is not simply why the CCJ has changed its panel arrangements.

The bigger question is this: **What does transparency mean at the CCJ from this point forward?**

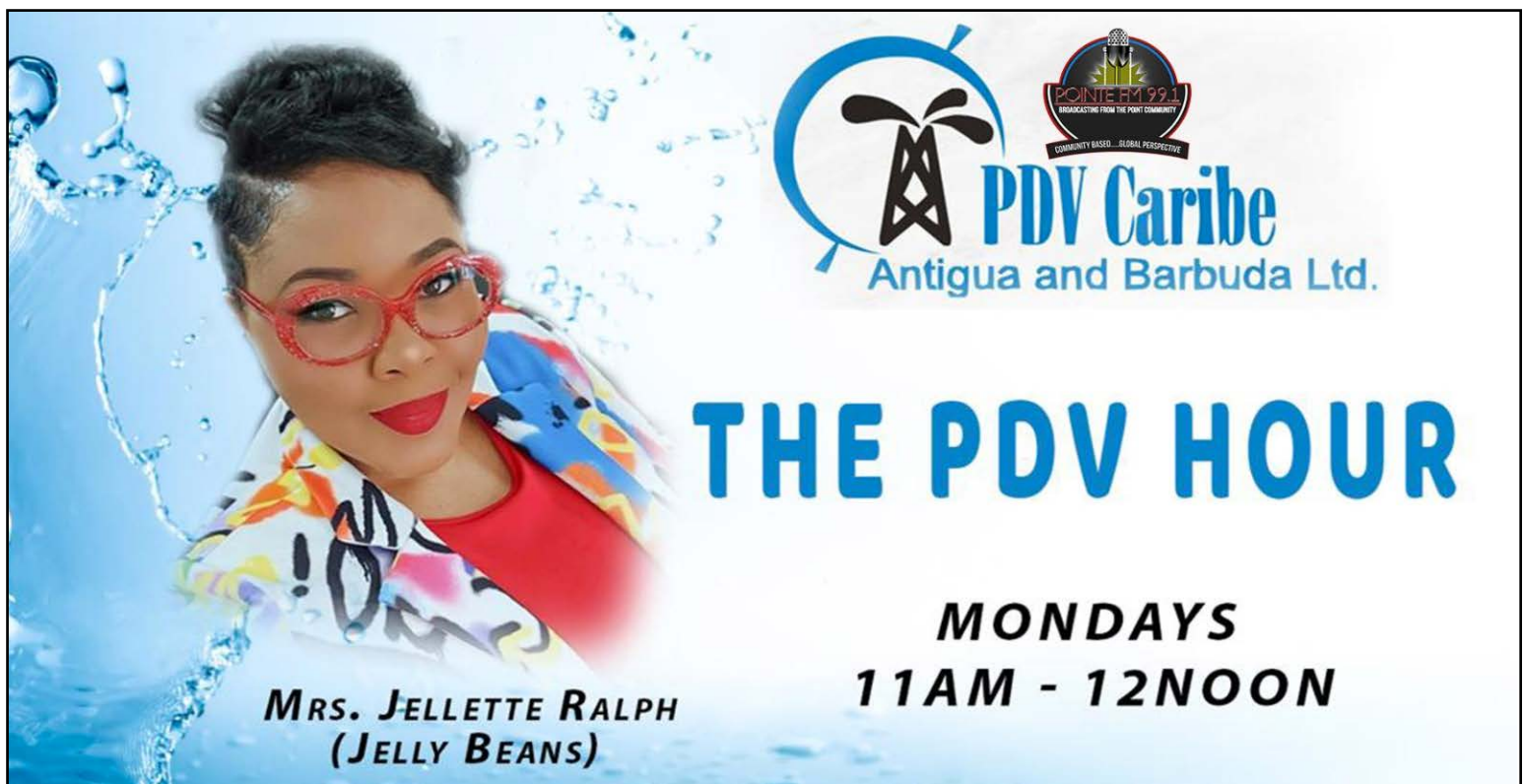
We do not need to be privy to everything. But we do need to know enough to trust the machinery of justice.

The Court's authority rests on law. Its independence rests on institutional safeguards. But its legitimacy rests on public trust.

And trust, once tested, is rebuilt not by asking the public to look away, but by giving the public good reason to keep looking.

That is the real transparency test for the CCJ.

Caribbean Bridges by Julian Rogers
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Commentary

The siege on Cuba's right to grow, process and eat its own food.



Sergio Martínez González. Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to Antigua and Barbuda.

In recent weeks, the U.S. State Department announced a new round of economic sanctions against Cuba, this time targeting industries that had historically been exempt from the brutal economic warfare measures the U.S. has waged against Cuba for over 66 years. The aim now is to completely block the country's ability (both public and private sector) to purchase food and agricultural products, food processing equipment, and supplies that would boost domestic agricultural and food production.

For example, a company like the **Bühler Group**, a Swiss industrial conglomerate, faces the threat of sanctions from the US government if it fulfills its contract with Cuba to sell parts for wheat milling equipment. The same is true for a compa-

ny from another third country that has been unable to sell Cuba parts needed for the operation of machinery used to clean and sort legumes. This creates enormous difficulties in processing basic agricultural products like wheat and beans, which in turn reduces the amount of basic food reaching Cuban households.

Meanwhile, the measures against Cuban port operators and the threats of draconian sanctions against any shipping company or its insurers that transport goods to Cuba, are significantly worsening the shortage of basic necessities. **More than 7,000 containers destined for Havana, containing food, urgently needed medicines of all kinds, and essential parts and components to maintain the functioning of the deteriorating electrical system, among others items, are currently stranded at various points in the Caribbean. This follows the decision by companies such as Germany's Hapag-Lloyd and France's CMA CGM to abruptly suspend their operations that for more of 30 years they have practiced with Cuba, while other shipping lines are also refusing to transport these goods to Cuban ports for fear of US sanctions.**

With these new measures, the US government seeks to bring about the complete collapse of both domestic food production and food imports to Cuba. In other words, it is also using the fundamental right to food as

a deadly weapon against the Cuban population.

The aforementioned sanctions exacerbate the already dire situation and living conditions of more than 9 million people in Cuba, following the imposition of a total oil blockade by the US, which has been in place for over seven months. This blockade, in addition to causing long periods of blackouts of 20 and 30 hours, hinders basic sanitation and food security, paralyzes transportation systems, and has had serious consequences for healthcare services for the entire population. To cite just a few examples of the inhumane health consequences of the energy blockade, today 98,000 patients are currently on waiting lists for the surgical treatment they require. Among them are 12,000 children between the ages of zero and ten, due to the lack of electricity in operating rooms and the necessary resources for these procedures. Meanwhile, 67,000 children under one year old have not yet received their complete vaccination and immunization schedule. In Washington circles, this policy has been named as "the Gaza Plan for Cuba."

Few days ago, high-ranking officials from the United Nations and its Human Rights Council unequivocally recognized that the illegal and unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States against Cuba, flagrantly violate Article 2 of the UN Charter and are part of a broader regime



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Commentary

PAGE 17

change strategy fallen by different US Administrations for more than six decades. In this regard, they stated that “The United States government must end all threats and hostile acts against the sovereignty of Cuba and revoke all measures it has imposed on the country that are contrary to international law,” and that “The Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations must urgently address these threats as a matter of international peace and security.”

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel during his speech on the commemoration of the Day of Rebellion last July 26th, said that “the US blockade only works because of the complicity of those who fear the power of Washington more than the judgment of history. This is a new call to the conscience of the world. Do not become accomplices to another genocide. Every time a part of the world remains silent in the face of aggression against Cuba, international law is weakened. Every time a government accepts the illegitimate sanctions of the US, the principle of non-intervention is eroded. Every time companies are being pressured to abandon their investments in Cuba, and others are hesitant to do so for fear of reprisals, strengthen the economic and global dictatorship of a single power.

A new session of the United Nations General Assembly will soon begin, where, as every year, Cuba will reiterate its condemnation of the criminal blockade imposed by the US government on the Cuban people. Governments must decide whether, on this occasion, they will maintain their brave and independent historical stance of denouncing the illegal and inhumane policy of total economic strangulation against Cuba, or whether, fearing the threats and blackmail of the powerful northern empire, they will choose to abandon Cuba to its fate through their silence, becoming complicit in the genocide carried out by the US against a solidarity people who have always extended its generous hand to all in need.





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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.
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U.S. JUDGE STRIKES DOWN TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S 75-COUNTRY IMMIGRANT VISA FREEZE

A United States federal judge has struck down a Trump administration policy that suspended the issuance of immigrant visas to nationals of 75 countries, including several Caribbean states, ruling that the measure exceeded the legal authority of Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

U.S. District Judge Jeannette Vargas of the Southern District of New York issued the ruling on Friday, August 21, describing the State Department policy as “patently unlawful.” The judge found that federal immigration law does not give the Secretary of State authority to categorically direct consular officers to deny immigrant visas solely because of an applicant’s nationality.

The controversial policy took effect on January 21, 2026, and paused immigrant visa issuance for nationals of 75 countries while the State Department reviewed what it described as the risk of applicants becoming dependent on public benefits in the United States.

Caribbean countries affected included St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, among others.

The lawsuit was brought by immigrant-rights organisations Catholic Legal Immigration Network and African Communities Together, together with affected visa applicants and U.S. citizens sponsoring relatives.



Judge Vargas ruled that the blanket nationality-based restriction conflicted with the statutory framework governing immigrant visa decisions and vacated the policy.

The decision represents a significant development for families across the Caribbean and other affected regions who have faced delays or refusals

while seeking permanent immigration to the United States.

The ruling concerns the 75-country immigrant visa suspension and should not be confused with separate U.S. travel and visa restrictions affecting certain countries under other presidential measures.



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Regional News

Cuba says US sanctions blocking efforts to open economy

The United States has demanded that Cuba open up to private investment, and Cuba has passed sweeping reforms to encourage just that.

So Cuba's UN ambassador says he wants to know why Washington keeps piling on sanctions that stymie the very economic opening it has sought for decades.

Ambassador Ernesto Soberón Guzmán, in an interview this week with The Associated Press, directed his question to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the main architect of the Trump administration's Cuba policy.

"What are you afraid of? If you are so convinced that the Cuban government is an incompetent government, why do you need to implement almost every two weeks new sanctions?"

The US State Department responded to a request for comment with a quote from Rubio, saying new sanctions will continue to be announced every couple of weeks to close off "escape valves that they're trying to create in every mechanism".

Then last Thursday, the US imposed more economic penalties on Cuban industries, targeting state-owned mining, metal and construction companies.

Cuba has been pushed to the brink by an oil blockade imposed by the United States in January on top of a decades-old embargo, coupled with the escalating sanctions. The moves by US President Donald Trump's administration, meant to put pressure on the government by depriving it of funding, have worsened already debilitating blackouts, cut workers off from public transport, crippled infrastructure and deepened shortages in medicine and food in the Caribbean island nation.

Guzmán said the sanctions are the main obstacle to Cuba opening up its economy. He said the impact of the US measures – specifically the shortage of electricity and lack of fuel to run a



business or travel – has turned off investors and tourists, a major source of Cuba's income.

Some companies have pulled out of Cuba, which relied on tourist revenue and cited "significant operational, legal, economic and financial difficulties" in explaining its decision to leave.

"Literally, the United States has done everything imaginable to try to prevent foreign investors," said William LeoGrande, a professor at American University and a leading expert on US-Cuba relations. "When they say, 'Well, we want to see Cuba open up to foreign investment', they're being disingenuous. ... It's not possible for them to succeed without some kind of sanctions relief."

The goal of Trump's Republican administration, he said, is "not just to open up Cuba economically but to overthrow the Cuban government – to change the nature of the Cuban political system".

John Kavulich, president of the US-Cuba Trade and Economic Council, said Cuba had to make changes when it lost its economic lifeline with the U.S. ouster in January of Venezue-

lan leader Nicolás Maduro.

"The result is the Cuban government in the last eight months made more commercial, economic and financial changes to the country than they have as a group since the revolution," he said.

Nonetheless, the Trump administration keeps ratcheting up sanctions, putting more pressure on Cuba, which is responding by making more changes, Kavulich said.

"But from our standpoint, there are two parts missing: One is Cuba implementing by regulation everything that it's announced, and secondly, the Trump administration allowing US companies to have more access to the Cuban marketplace while these changes are under way," he said.

The changes announced by Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel in June aim to significantly shift Cuba's economy and industry, which have been strictly controlled by the socialist government since the 1959 revolution.

They include more space for private businesses, imports and exports without the state as an intermediary, free hiring of personnel, authorization for

private banks, investment by Cubans abroad and opportunities for fast-food chains to establish themselves on the island.

Guzmán said there are opportunities for investments in real estate, solar farms and energy to help ease the country's electricity shortage, as well as in marinas and the tourism industry.

Christopher Hernandez-Roy, acting director of the Americas programme

at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, recalled that the last economic opening under President Barack Obama's Democratic administration "was later throttled by the Cubans themselves, who feared that the opening went too far and appeared to threaten political control".

Today, he said, it appears the Cubans really do want economic reforms and outside investment. Díaz-Canel's eco-

nomics reforms are not impossible, but US sanctions "significantly constrain their prospects for success," Hernandez-Roy said.

He noted the irony that US pressure "is helping push the Cubans toward greater economic liberalisation out of necessity, while simultaneously limiting the resources and access necessary for those reforms to actually improve the economy". (AP)

Six foreigners detained for conducting illegal mining activities in Guyana

The Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) on Friday said six foreigners, including Brazilians and one Chinese, have been detained after they were found conducting unauthorised mining activities within one of Guyana's mining districts.

The authorities said they found the individuals operating an underground mining operation through a shaft without the required approval.

"The illegal miners were found and detained through the joint efforts of the GGMC Corps of Wardens and the Guyana Police Force. The illegal miners are currently in police custody as investigations continue," the GGMC said.

The country's Ministry of Natural Resources said it is reminding industry players that all mining districts across the country remain under surveillance as part of ongoing efforts to detect and curb illegal mining operations.

"Any individual – Guyanese or foreign – found conducting mining activities in breach of Guyana's laws and regulations will face the full force of the law," it added.

The ministry said that it is reminding all miners and operators that they must secure the required licences, permissions and regulatory approvals before commencing any mining



activity.

"Compliance with the country's mining laws is mandatory and viola-

tions will be dealt with accordingly," it added. (CMC)

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Regional News



TTPS stalls on request into child porn probe

The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) has taken nearly four months, and counting, to provide basic information about its investigation into underground child pornography rings, repeatedly extending a legally prescribed 30-day response period under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Despite three extension requests and repeated follow-ups by the Sunday Express, the TTPS has yet to say whether the investigation remains active, how many arrests have been made, or how many cases have been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

Here's the timeline of what has transpired to date:

On April 30, the Sunday Express contacted TTPS' corporate communications officer, Joanne Archie, seeking an update on the police investigation into the underground pornographic rings and received no response.

That day, the Sunday Express also filed a FOIA request with the TTPS' Legal Department.

The request sought out basic information about the investigation, like whether it remained open and active, the unit of the TTPS it is currently assigned to, the number of arrests made in relation to child pornography, number of suspects interviewed, and the number of cases referred to the DPP.

The Sunday Express also sought records of the TTPS' overall efforts to address the phenomenon, including the number of child pornography reports it had received between 2020 and present day, the number of investigations opened as a result, the num-

ber of charges laid, and the number of cases referred to the DPP.

An acknowledgement was received in early May via e-mail, the TTPS then indicating that a response would be provided on or before June 8, 2026.

Legally, responses to an official request for information are to be delivered within 30 days of the application being made.

Section 15 of the FOIA states that a "public authority shall take reasonable steps to enable an applicant to be notified of the approval or refusal of his request as soon as practicable but in any case, not later than 30 days after the day on which the request is duly made".

By June 8, no further communication from the TTPS had been received.

The Sunday Express called and e-mailed the Legal Department repeatedly, seeking a response. Two days later, on June 10, the TTPS responded via e-mail, requesting an extension that it said would allow them until July 10 to respond.

In that response, the TTPS said it was still awaiting receipt of information from the relevant department to provide the Sunday Express with a substantive response. It noted that when its office receives the documents pursuant to the request, the applicant would be notified in writing about whether it had been approved or denied.

Thirty days passed before the TTPS requested a second extension on July 10, stating that the information requested was being extracted from a "decentralised unit" and indicated that

a response would be sent to the Sunday Express on or before August 10.

By last Thursday, the TTPS had not provided the information requested, nor explained why it had not done so, despite numerous requests for updates. The Sunday Express pointed out that its non-response did not correspond with the FOIA's legally prescribed time frame for a response.

At 4 p.m. last Friday, three days after the Sunday Express yet again enquired of the TTPS if it intended to respond, the Sunday Express received a third request for an extension. The TTPS asked for an additional 30 days from August 20 to respond to the request, expiring on September 21.

The extension request did not account for the ten days since its second extension request expired, during which the Sunday Express repeatedly made attempts to contact the TTPS.

The requested extension would mean that should the TTPS choose to approve the Sunday Express' request and provide answers on the status of its investigation into the child pornography rings on September 21, it would have taken them 144 days to do so.

Last Friday the Sunday Express asked the TTPS to account for the delay, the ten-day gap between extension requests, and to acknowledge that the legally prescribed time frame has long elapsed.

We asked the TTPS to identify the "decentralised administrative unit" from which the information was being sourced. To date no response has been received. (Trinidad Express)



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Gang rivals join forces to promote peace

Two young men from opposing sides of a long-running gang conflict in Laventille have publicly joined forces to promote peace.

And according to Homeland Security Minister Roger Alexander, their reconciliation could mark the beginning of a “second chance” for communities battered by gang violence.

Kashif “K-Man” Sankar, 24, and Mesach “Plumpy Boss” Emmanuel, 29, appeared together yesterday at a back-to-school drive at Alexander’s Tunapuna constituency office where they publicly endorsed an end to the violence and called on young people to reject street lifestyle.

Their appearance came as Alexander and Justice Minister Devesh Maharaj urged communities in Laventille, Beetham Gardens, Sea Lots, Morvant, Tunapuna and surrounding areas to embrace the opportunity for peace.

Alexander said the two men’s decision to sit together would have been difficult to imagine several years ago.

“A couple of years ago, warfare, even in the music, but they are sitting here today, on the same chair, with the same vision. Let’s bring an end to this war in Laventille, Sea Lots, Beetham, Maloney, Tunapuna, different environments,” he said.

Alexander said the violence had cost communities too many lives and deprived young people of opportunities, while children had been forced to hide from gunfire.

He said the Government was prepared to support efforts to create safer communities, but the residents themselves had to demonstrate the peace was genuine.

“I told them this is the beginning of the opportunity for a second chance. To make their first impression,” Alexander said.

The minister said he had been approached about the initiative nearly two months ago by people involved in the communities, and agreed to support it if they were serious about ending the con-



flict.

He said the peace could also restore normal life in communities where residents had become accustomed to fear and isolation.

“We want the gas trucks to go up back inside Laventille Hill and in Beetham Gardens. We want the taxis to start to go. We want the man who’s selling goods to the parlour,” Alexander said.

He said businesses needed to be able to operate freely, and residents needed to regain the ability to move around their communities without fear.

Sankar, who has a following among young people through his music, used the platform to deliver a blunt warning to youths considering a life of crime. “The life of crime only has two things in it. Poverty and death,” he said.

“The street life has nothing in it. Because when you get older, you want a family, you want a nice car to drive, you want to live in a nice house. When you live a life of crime, you don’t get that at all,” he said.

Sankar also said people in the communities were increasingly supportive of the peace, having grown tired of years of violence.

Sankar has previously faced gang-related charges. In 2024, he was charged

under the Anti-Gang Act with being a gang member and professing to be a gang member—charges which followed a police investigation into videos posted on social media.

In 2023 Sankar survived a brazen daylight ambush along the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway, St Augustine. His entourage had just left Piarco International Airport. The attack resulted in four deaths, including three men in the car with him and an innocent woman.

Emmanuel, too, in 2024 was shot while with his entourage in St Maarten.

Police were told Emmanuel had just performed at a concert in the Maho area and was leaving in a black minivan with his entourage when they were confronted by a group of armed men.

The suspects opened fire on the vehicle, resulting in five persons, including a woman, being shot and injured.

At the time, Emmanuel was out on bail, having been charged with being a gang member and for drug trafficking.

At yesterday’s event, Sankar said he and Emmanuel would also perform on the same stage last night, adding that positive music was being prepared for release.

Alexander said he was encouraged by reports that residents were already visiting areas they had previously avoided and attending social gatherings together.

“If it’s forever, listen, we endorse it forever. If it’s for a short time, we move it early, de-escalate, and let us start the journey all over again. It’s about holding that community,” Alexander said.

He said too many lives had already been lost to gang warfare and challenged residents to ensure the current peace was sustained.

Both Emmanuel and Sankar were scheduled to perform together last night.

Emmanuel said he would make his official statement on the matter during that performance at Summer Stage, Queen’s Park Savannah, Port of Spain. (Trinidad Express)

Girl, 17, killed in Swedish sword attack, police say



A 17-year-old girl was killed in the deadly sword attack at a high school in central Sweden on Friday, police have confirmed.

Two boys aged 12 and 17 were also seriously injured in the attack at Brinnell School in Fagersta, according to local authorities, while another person sustained minor injuries.

An 18-year-old man was arrested but has not been identified. Police said they were treating the case as murder and attempted murder.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and opposition leader Magdalena Andersson visited the school, where flower tributes have been laid to hon-

our the victims, on Saturday morning.

Students at the school had only just returned to the classroom following the summer break when the deadly attack unfolded on Friday afternoon.

The police later confirmed they fired shots after being called to the scene but did not say whether the alleged attacker was hit before he was detained.

Sweden's public broadcaster reported that the suspect was wearing a helmet. Local media also said he was a former student.

The region went into a state of emergency on Friday, but it had ended by Saturday.

The school has just under 500 students on its roster, according to SVT, and is located 170km (105 miles) north-west of the capital, Stockholm.

Investigators have carried out two house searches in connection with the suspect, police said.

On Friday, Sweden's Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson described the attack as a "serious incident," and said "we do not know what lies behind the act, but we know that police are working very intensively", in a post on X.

Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf said he received the news "with dismay and sadness". (BBC)



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Harvard agrees to US\$53m settlement over body parts stolen and sold

Harvard Medical School says it agreed to pay US\$53 million to settle class action lawsuits by relatives of body donors whose remains were sold on the black market by its former morgue manager.

Harvard Medical School Deans George Q. Daley and Bernard S. Chang announced the development in a letter to the community last Tuesday, calling the actions of former morgue manager Cedric Lodge “despicable, abhorrent, and a flagrant betrayal of our values as a medical community”.

Pending court approval, Harvard said that two class action settlement funds totalling US\$53 million will be established to resolve the lawsuits. A Harvard Medical School spokesperson on Thursday referred to the letter when asked for comment and said they had no additional information to share.

The lawsuits were brought by 47 relatives of people whose remains were potentially mishandled and sold. The remains were donated for research and education.

Harvard has said it cannot determine precisely which donors’ remains Lodge stole. After he was charged in 2023, the school said it reviewed information from federal investigators along with records showing when donors’ remains were sent for cremation and when Lodge was on campus to determine which donors may have been affected. The settlement covers relatives or designees of people who donated their remains to Harvard Medical School between January 1, 2018, and March 31, 2023.

Last year, Lodge was sentenced to eight years in prison for stealing and



selling body parts “as if they were baubles”. Authorities said Lodge was at the centre of a ghoulish scheme in which he shipped brains, skin, hands and faces from cadavers to buyers in Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

His wife, Denise Lodge, was sentenced to just over a year in prison for assisting him. Six other people who bought remains from Cedric Lodge also pleaded guilty and have been sentenced, according to Harvard.

In one example, Cedric Lodge provided skin to a buyer so it could be tanned into leather and bound into a book, a “deeply horrifying reality,” Assistant US Attorney Alisan Martin said in a court filing.

After Harvard finishes using a donated body for research or teaching, the body typically is returned to the family or cremated. Lodge acknowledged removing body parts before cremation. Harvard has said he acted without the school’s knowledge

or permission.

In their letter, Daley and Chang said Lodge’s actions “do not reflect the reverence we hold for the altruistic individuals who selflessly donate their bodies” to the school’s Anatomical Gift Program.

“We reaffirm our deep sorrow and empathy for the families of donors who may have been impacted,” they said.

In addition to the payments, Harvard Medical School agreed to provide families with a statement condemning Lodge’s actions and summarizing improvements made to the Anatomical Gift Program. The school also plans to establish an annual financial aid scholarship for medical students beginning in the 2027-28 academic year to honour anatomical donors.

Harvard said it has enacted recommendations from a panel of outside experts appointed in 2023 to review the program after Lodge was charged. (AP)

Iran condemns U.S. plans to announce new sanctions

Iran on Saturday denounced U.S. plans to announce new sanctions that could put further strain on the Islamic Republic's economy and have an impact on its most important trading partners including China.

After nearly six months of war since the U.S. and Israel launched air-strikes against Iran on 28th February, the sides are not firing at each other but also showing no sign of pursuing peace talks.

Oil shipments are at a virtual standstill in the Strait of Hormuz, with Tehran threatening to strike any unauthorised oil tankers that try to transit the vital waterway, and Iran's economy is already under immense pressure from sanctions.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent is due to hold a press conference at 2 p.m. EDT (1800 GMT) on Monday after threatening "the toughest sanctions in history" on Iran.

Bessent has also urged cooperation with Washington by China, which buys more than 80% of Iran's shipped oil, according to 2025 data from analytics firm Kpler. Beijing has urged diplomacy.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baghaei, said on Saturday the imminent U.S. announcement of new economic sanctions was an "assertion of extraterritorial sovereignty over every independent member state of the United Nations."

"Such secondary sanctions find no foundation in international law," he said in a post on X.

The secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Mohsen Rezaei, told state television that Tehran would target the interests of countries helping the United States.

"We are telling all nearby countries not to join the U.S. economic war, otherwise we will consider them as enemies," Rezaei said.

U.S. President Donald Trump, who has warned of economic consequences against any country that provides "any type of lifeline to Iran," said on Friday that Washington was observing "what happens" in the conflict.

"They would love to make a deal, but they're not ready to make the right deal, in my opinion," Trump said of Iran.

While the U.S. has effectively blocked Iranian vessels in their ports, the Strait of Hormuz remained bottled up with thousands of seafarers stranded on hundreds of vessels.

Only four commodity ships sailed along the strait on Thursday, none of them large crude carriers or liquefied natural gas tankers, ship-tracking data showed.

However, Iran has granted permission for a number of Iraqi oil tankers to pass through the Strait following repeated requests from Baghdad, Iran's state news agency IRNA reported on Saturday.

IRNA said obtaining special permission for Iraqi tankers was one of Baghdad's main requests during a visit to Iraq by Parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf.

U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright said the U.S. military helped move a seven-day average of 8 million barrels a day of oil through the strait. That's down from more than 20 million per day before the war or about one of every five barrels consumed worldwide.

U.S. attacks have severely diminished Iran's economy and devastated its navy and air force, but Tehran maintains enough missile and drone capability to impede oil tanker traffic and attack regional rivals.

Abdollahi, the armed forces chief of staff, sought to underline Iran's

missile capabilities during a visit to an underground plant manufacturing ballistic missiles that was reported by state television on Saturday.

"This plant has been able, much better than in the past, to produce equipment superior both in capacities and quality and in quantity," he said.

Qalibaf, Iran's parliamentary speaker, said Tehran had received "numerous messages" from neighbouring countries about establishing new regional security arrangements and economic cooperation.

Qalibaf, who did not say which countries he was referring to, accused the U.S. of endangering the security of its allies in the region for the sake of Israel, adding that an independent, "homegrown" regional order would deliver peace and security.

Trump, meanwhile, has yet to achieve objectives he set at the start of the war such as dismantling Iran's nuclear programme – the state of which remains uncertain given that U.N. inspectors have been shut out since 2025 – and creating conditions for Iranians to overthrow their clerical rulers.

Thousands have been killed, mainly in Iran, where 168 Iranian school children were killed on the first day of the war. The U.S. has reported more than 750 military personnel wounded and 18 killed.

While Iran remains defiant, President Masoud Pezeshkian has also called for a diplomatic solution.

"It would be better to end the war today, when we are powerful and have dignity, and the whole world acknowledges our victory and emphasises that America, contrary to all regulations, attacked our schools, hospitals, and infrastructure and is hated in the world," the ISNA news agency quoted him as saying on Friday. (Reuters)

Dozens of co-ordinated arson attacks hit southern Thailand

More than 50 co-ordinated arson and incendiary attacks “aimed at creating unrest” have been carried out across Thailand’s insurgency-hit south, the Thai military has said.

At least two people were injured, with a local government office building, a convenience store, and a stolen vehicle among the targets set on fire.

The incidents took place across the country’s southern border provinces between 20:00 local time (13:00 GMT) and midnight on Saturday, the military’s Internal Security Operations Command said in a statement.

Most were reported in Narathiwat province, with others occurring in neighbouring Yala and Pattani.

According to the Bangkok Post, two women were injured when a bomb exploded in Muang district in Narathiwat province.

Telecommunication towers were set on fire in several locations, and security officials warned residents not to touch suspicious objects.

Authorities imposed an overnight curfew in the Narathiwat province that was lifted on Sunday morning. No further attacks had been reported on Sunday.

No group has claimed responsibility for the arson attacks.

Since 2004, a low-level conflict has simmered in the southernmost provinces of Buddhist-majority Thailand, as rebels in the Muslim-majority region battle for greater autonomy. More than 7,000 people have been killed in the violence so far.

The insurgency is mainly led by the Barisan Revolusi Nasional.

Since talks facilitated by Malaysia began in 2013, the peace process has repeatedly stalled amid changing governments in Bangkok, with internal divisions on both sides.

In July, five soldiers were killed in a



gun and bomb attack at a checkpoint in Narathiwat prompting the authorities to postpone a planned dialogue process.

Thai media report insurgents often target security officials and government buildings, sometimes ahead of visits by officials to the region.

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and members of his cabinet are scheduled to make a two-day visit to the city of Hat Yai in southern Songkhla province next week to discuss investment projects, flooding prevention and security issues. (BBC)



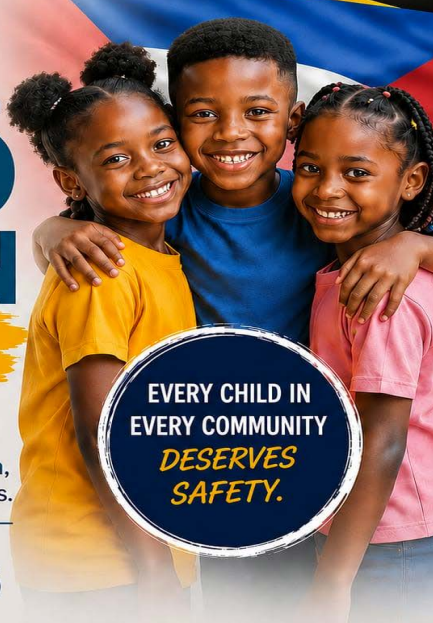
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Sports News



Five-member team to represent Antigua at CAC bodybuilding championships

The Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Bodybuilding and Weightlifting Federation (ABAB&WF) has named a five-member team to represent the twin-island nation at the Central American and Caribbean (CAC) in Guatemala next week.

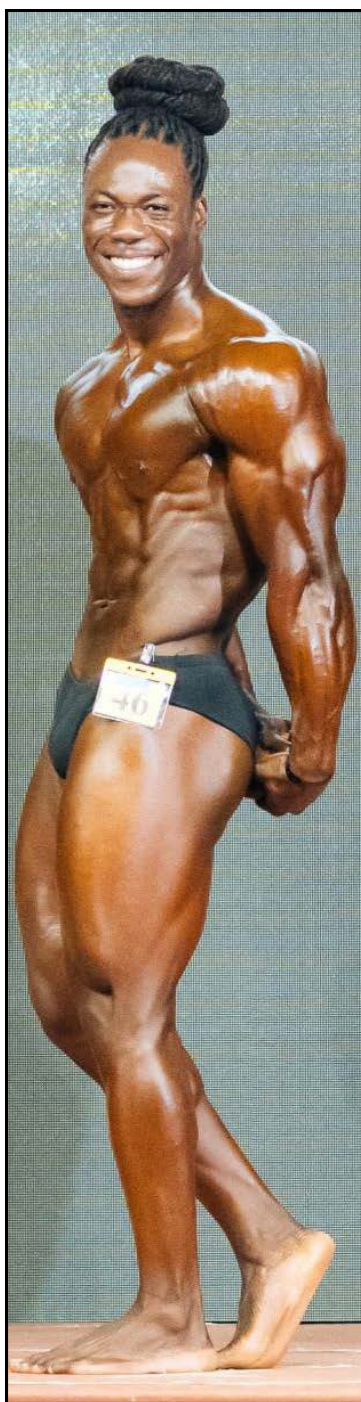
The 53rd Central American and Caribbean Fitness & Bodybuilding Championship will take place in Guatemala City from August 27 to 31.

The team comprised five athletes that were among the outstanding performers at the National Bodybuilding Championships, which was hosted by the ABAB&WF at St. Anthony's Secondary School on Saturday, August 8.

Among them is Tiffany Gordon, winner of the Bikini Fitness Senior (Class B), and Franklin Carbon, who won Senior Bodybuilding (Class B) and Masters Bodybuilding (over 40) titles at the recent national championships.

Also included is Jonte' Barnes, who claimed a second-place finish in Senior Bodybuilding (Class A).

The other members of the team are Che-Vaughn Ferris and Andrei Phillip. Che-Vaughn Ferris won Senior Bodybuilding (Class A), and Andrei Phillip captured



Che-Vaughn Ferris

the title in Senior Men's Physique (Class B).

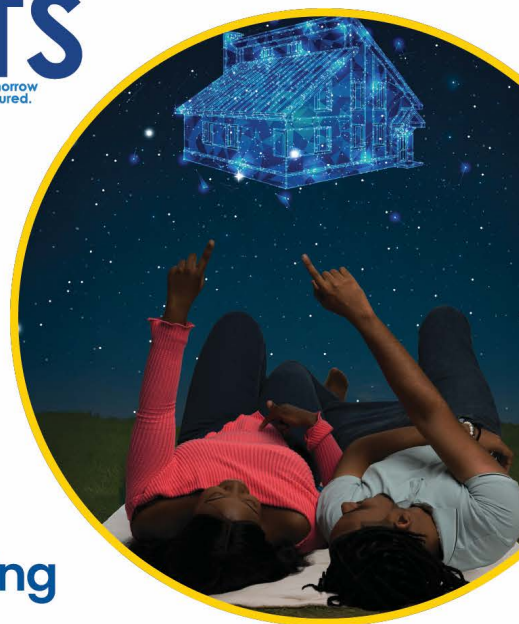


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Man City rally for win, Liverpool draw at Newcastle in EPL

LONDON (AP) -- A warm welcome from the fans at the start. A stoppage-time winner at the end. For Enzo Maresca, it was the “perfect day” as he earned his first victory as Manchester City manager.

Man City produced a stirring late rally in Maresca’s first Premier League game in charge, scoring twice in the final 10 minutes to grab a 2-1 win at home to Bournemouth on Sunday.

Josko Gvardiol placed a finish into the bottom corner in the first minute of added-on time for the winner, which was initially given offside before being awarded following a video review. Marc Guehi had equalized with an 84th-minute header from a corner to start the comeback.

Maresca, the successor to Pep Guardiola, punched the air when Gvardiol’s goal was awarded and went onto the field after the final whistle to hug his players.

A huge banner, reading “Welcome back Enzo,” had been held aloft by City fans as the Italian — Guardiola’s assistant in City’s treble-winning 2022-23 season — emerged from the tunnel before kickoff.

Wearing a sharp black suit, Maresca certainly looked the part on the touchline but the slickness synonymous with City’s play under Guardiola down the years wasn’t quite there until the late comeback sparked by substitute Rayan Cherki, who set up both goals.

“It is the perfect day, to be honest,” Maresca said. “I was very pleased when the game started to see the banner on the other side. And I was pleased because we give them the joy of the three points. It was quite emotional and the perfect day.”

Maresca began his time as Guardiola’s replacement with a 3-0 loss to Arsenal in the Community Shield last weekend and has had to deal with the departure of star midfielder Rodri to Barcelona.

Dominik Szoboszlai converted a pen-



Manchester City's Josko Gvardiol (24) celebrates with teammates after scoring his side's second goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Bournemouth in Manchester, England, Sunday, Aug. 23, 2026. (AP)

alty in the ninth minute of stoppage time to salvage a 2-2 draw for Liverpool at Newcastle in a match overseen by two new managers.

Before kickoff, the teams united to pay tribute to Kevin Keegan — a star player for both clubs — following his death last month at age 75.

Players from Newcastle and Liverpool wore shirts with “Keegan” and the number 7 on the back in the warmup at St. James’ Park, while there was a mosaic in the center circle, a tribute video and a huge tifo in the stands dedicated to the former England star.

Szoboszlai smashed a spot kick into the top corner after debutant Victor Munoz was fouled in the area in a dramatic finish.

Joe Willock looked to have scored a 57th-minute winner for Newcastle, one minute after coming on as a substitute and two minutes after Cody Gakpo had equalized for Liverpool. Anthony Elanga put Newcastle ahead in the fifth minute.

Liverpool striker Alexander Isak was jeered by Newcastle fans when he

came off the team coach and then every time he touched the ball, a hangover from his switch of clubs at the start of last season.

Matthias Jaissle was taking charge of Newcastle for first time, while Andoni Iraola is Liverpool’s new manager as Arne Slot’s replacement.

Brighton scored four goals in the opening 31 minutes and also missed a slew of great chances in a 4-0 hammering of Aston Villa in the other early game.

To make matters worse for Villa, Joao Gomes was sent off for kicking out at Brighton’s Georginio Rutter in the 40th but the visitors somehow didn’t concede any more goals.

It has been a tough offseason for Villa, with key players Morgan Rogers, Youri Tielemans, and Ezri Konsa leaving and speculation surrounding the future of Ollie Watkins and Emi Martinez at the club.

Brighton was sharper, having been in European qualifying action in mid-week.

Sports News

Antigua Pitbulls finish second at youth tournament in St. Lucia

The junior national basketball team, the Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls, claimed second-place in the 5th Annual Aloysius Daniel Youth Summer Basketball Invitational in St. Lucia, which was held from August 17 to 21.

The Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls finished the six-team round-robin tournament with a record of four wins and one defeat, securing a commanding 119-26 victory over the BFTF Pitbulls of St. Lucia in their final encounter on Friday.

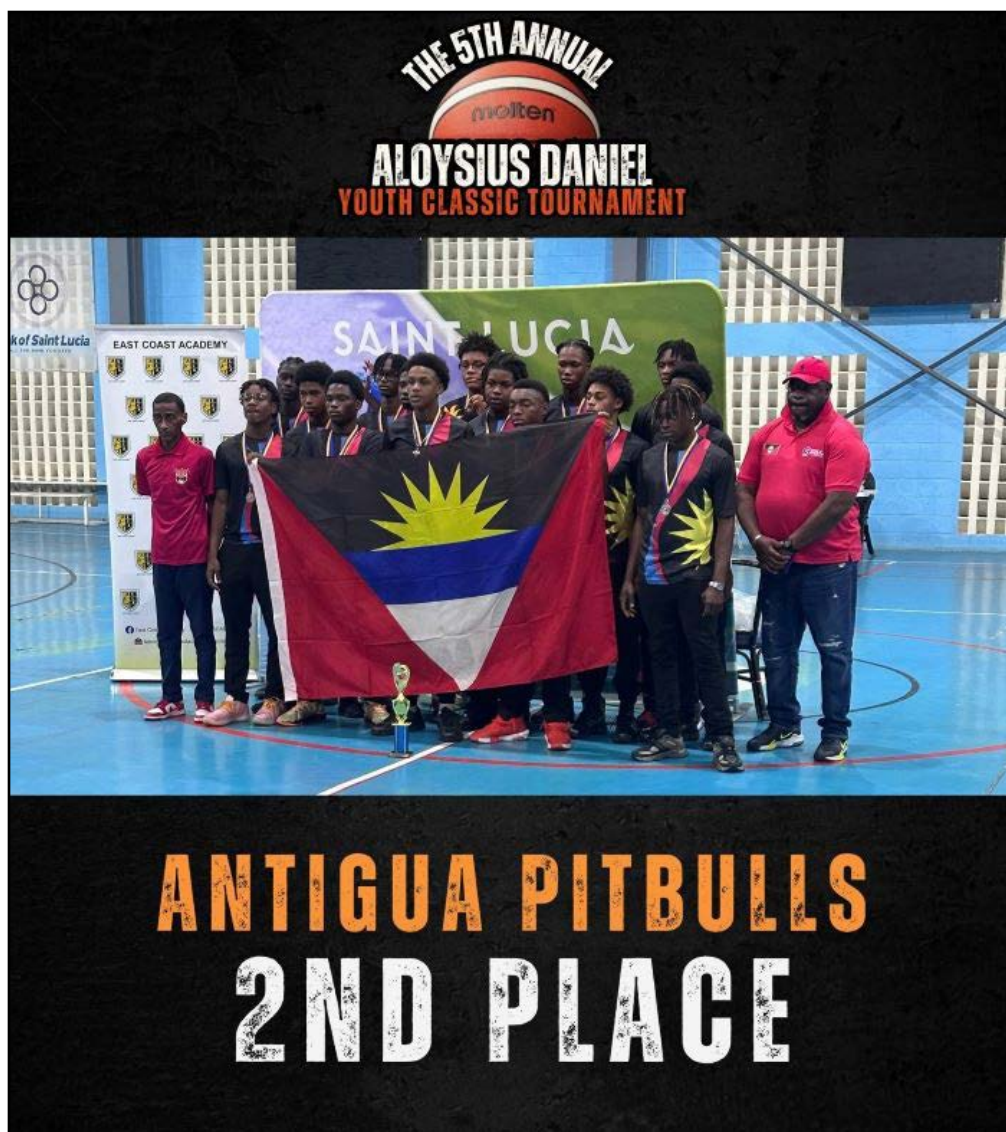
Jayden Lewis and Yohhan Nicholas of the Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls earned selection on the All-Tournament Team. Both young men delivered exceptional performances throughout the tournament and proudly represented Antigua and Barbuda on the regional stage.

The Pitbulls suffered their only loss of the tournament to the unbeaten NCA Warriors of Trinidad, which captured the title for the fourth consecutive year by winning all five matches. St. Lucia's ECA Lions finished in third place.

After beating the ECA Tigers of St. Lucia 140-23 and snatching a narrow 68-65 victory over St. Lucia's ECA Lions, the Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls recorded their third win with a 118-51 victory against D-UP Academy of Guyana in the penultimate round of matches.

In the other matches in the penultimate round, defending champions NCA Warriors of Trinidad and Tobago maintained their unbeaten run, recording their fourth successive victory with a crushing 123-29 triumph over BFTF Pitbulls of St. Lucia, and the ECA Lions prevailed 113-26 against fellow St. Lucian team ECA Tigers.

From the opening whistle, the Pit-



bulls established complete control, exploding for 27 points in the first quarter while holding D-Up Academy to just 10 points.

The Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls continued their offensive assault in the second quarter, adding 32 points to take a commanding 59-28 half-time advantage.

The Pitbulls scored another 33 points in the third quarter, stretching the lead to 92-40 before closing the contest with 26 fourth-quarter points. D-Up Academy managed just 11 in the final period as Antigua completed the convincing 67-point victory.

Leading the Pitbulls' offensive ex-

plosion was Jaden Lewis, who shot a game-high 41 points along with four steals and four assists.

Gabriel De-Souza converted 17 points; Marcus Murphy produced 10 points, seven steals, six rebounds, three assists, and three blocks; Nathan Matthew provided nine points, seven assists, six steals, five rebounds, and four blocks; and Tristan Thibou chipped in with seven points for the Pitbulls.

The Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls also dominated the statistical battle with a total of 39 rebounds, 31 steals, 16 assists, and 11 blocks.

Antiguans bow out in semi-finals at CFU Boys U-14 Challenge Series

Antigua and Barbuda's young Bena Boys were ousted in the semi-finals of the 2026 Caribbean Football Union (CFU) Under-14 Boys Challenge Series in the Dominican Republic on Friday.

The young Antiguanians suffered a 3-1 loss to Suriname, while Guyana prevailed 3-2 in a dramatic penalty shootout against St. Martin following a 2-2 draw in the Tier II semi-finals in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Suriname took the lead in the 25th minute when Alexander Alberga beat a defender before calmly slotting the ball into the far corner, leaving Antigua and Barbuda goalkeeper Zuriel Archibald with no chance.

Antigua and Barbuda responded just two minutes later. Leyland Powell delivered a well-weighted ball across the face of goal to find Kalique Martin unmarked. Martin made no mistake, volleying powerfully past Suriname goalkeeper Jehundi Finisie to level the score at 1-1.

The young Antiguanians came close to taking the lead in the 43rd minute when captain Allan Henry unleashed a shot that sailed just over the crossbar.

Suriname regained the advantage in the 45th minute. Valentino Amaisi received a through pass and found himself one-on-one with Archibald. He kept his



The starting XI of the Antigua and Barbuda national team for their Tier II semi-final match against Suriname in the CFU Under-14 Boys Challenge Series in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on Friday, August 21, 2026. (Photo courtesy CFU)

composure and fired into the near post to put Suriname 2-1 ahead.

Suriname continued to press after the restart and extended their advantage in the 64th minute when substitute Jabon Austin collected the ball outside the 18-yard box and unleashed a low, powerful strike into the back of the net.

Antigua and Barbuda pushed forward in search of a response, with Jordon Murray testing Finisie from a free kick in the 67th minute. The Suriname goalkeeper was equal to the effort, making

an important save to preserve his team's two-goal advantage.

Suriname held firm through the closing stages to secure their victory and advance to the Tier II final against Guyana.

Antigua and Barbuda qualified for the semi-finals after playing unbeaten, winning all three round-robin matches to finish at the top of **Tier II Group B in the preliminary stage of the competition**, which is organized by the Caribbean Football Union.

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three wickets at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in their fourth CPL encounter on Thursday night.

The Falcons completed the highest run-chase in a CPL encounter at the venue, reaching 191 for seven with three balls to spare after the Patriots posted 187 for six off their 20 overs.

Falcons' opener Evin Lewis, who was dropped twice, capitalized to hit a top-score of 48 off 38 balls, including five sixes.

After losing fellow opener Amir Jan-goo for 2 and Karima Gore for 22 off 15 balls, Lewis shared a crucial 78-run

third wicket partnership with Hasan Nawas, who struck 33 off 28 balls.

Cameos by captain Moeen Ali, Shadad Khan, and Shamar Springer ensured that the Falcons achieved their challenging victory target before a large and supportive home crowd.

Ali slammed an unbeaten 25 off 12 balls, Khan struck 30 off 12 balls, and Springer belted 15 off six balls. Captain Jason Holder claimed two for 39, and seamer Kyle Mayers picked up two for 41.

Dasun Shanaka executed the art of power-hitting in the final overs to add some well-needed injection and pro-

pelled the Patriots to a respectable total after being sent in to bat.

Shanaka slammed an unbeaten 49 off 17 balls, smashing five fours and four sixes. Opener Kyle Mayers made 34 off 18 balls, Jason Holder scored 27 off 25 balls, and Andre Fletcher chipped in with 20 off 24 balls. Medium pacer Shamar Springer picked up two for 42.

The Patriots remain at the bottom of the table with two points from four matches and now head back to St. Kitts for their home leg, beginning on Thursday against the Jamaica Kingsmen at Warner Park.

Antigua Falcons beat TKR to claim 2nd home win in 2026 CPL



All-rounder Shadad Khan, second right, celebrate with Antigua and Barbuda Falcons' captain Moeen Ali after claiming a wicket against the Trinbago Knight Riders in their CPL match at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Saturday, August 22, 2026. (CPLT20)

The Antigua & Barbuda Falcons maintained their 100 percent home record in the 2026 Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) by pulling off a five-wicket victory over defending champions Trinbago Knight Riders (TKR) at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Saturday night.

All-rounder Shadad Khan smashed an unbeaten half century and Kusal Perera struck 34 not out off 24 balls to lead the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons to victory at 168 for five with nine balls to spare after restricting the Trinbago Knight Riders to 165 for six off their 20 overs.

Khan slammed 52 not out off 20 balls, and his unbroken sixth-wicket partnership of 76 runs with Perera was enough to bring the Falcons back from a precarious start to the run chase.

Khan crafted arguably the performance of the tournament so far, as he

starred with both bat and ball, conceding just eight runs and claiming a wicket in his four overs to earn the Player of the Match award.

The Knight Riders top order looked to silence the home crowd early as Colin Munro cracked 46 off 33 balls, and Nicholas Pooran, who hammered 43 off 17 balls, annihilated the Falcons attack as TKR ended the power play on 73 for one.

But the Falcons showed plenty of gusto between the end of the Power Play and the strategic timeout, picking up the crucial wickets of Pooran and Munro as well as Matthew Breetzke for two in that period.

After an early assault, the introduction of Khan and Tobagonian Joshua James into the Falcons' attack was a turning point for the home side. James took two for 23, including the notable scalps of Pooran and Keiron Pollard

for nine. Off-spinner Rahkeem Cornwall picked up two for 17.

The Knight Riders lost their way, and aside from Pooran and Munro's early antics, the rest of the team's scores were rather ordinary, and the momentum at the break was with the Antigua Falcons.

Opener Amir Jangoo struggled to make 31 off 36 balls after his opening partner Rahkeem Cornwall was run out for 14 in the second over of the Falcons' innings that stuttered to just 33 runs in the powerplay.

What followed was a fascinating battle between the two sides with the Falcons trying to keep a consistent pace just behind the required run rate and the Knight Riders bowlers taking a steady flow of wickets to stunt the momentum.

But Khan and Perera put on a display of destructive hitting to tilt the match firmly into the Falcons' favour.

The eighteenth over was the crucial blow, as twenty-one-year-old Nathan Edward got it all wrong, having bowled nicely previously. He conceded 27 runs in the over and even had to be replaced for the final ball by Pollard after a second waist-high no ball.

After that, the game was in Falcons hands, needing 11 off 12. Shadad Khan dispatched the first and third balls of the penultimate over, which was bowled by Terrence Hinds, to seal the win for the Falcons and ensure back-to-back losses for the Trinbago Knight Riders. Hinds finished with two for 36.

Back-to-back wins propelled the Falcons, who have played five matches, to the top of the table for now.

The Antigua & Barbuda Falcons kicked off their home leg in style, edging the St. Kitts & Nevis Patriots by

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