

APUA Points to Fuel Shock as Electricity Bills Climb

Story on page 2



the first National Child Protection Town Hall Meeting held at the the John E. St. Luce Finance and Conference Centre

APUA Points to Fuel Shock as Electricity Bills Climb

Amidst growing public backlash over the sharp increase in electricity rates, Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) attempted yesterday to explain the factors behind the higher charges, pointing to a dramatic escalation in fuel costs and increased electricity consumption.

During a press conference, Acting Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operations Officer Roger Tonge said 2026 has been an especially challenging year for the utilities company, with external and geopolitical developments significantly affecting its fuel procurement costs.

Tonge provided a month-by-month breakdown of APUA's fuel order costs yesterday, showing a substantial increase from the beginning of the year.

In January, APUA's fuel orders totalled approximately \$11 million, followed by \$10 million in February and \$12 million in March.

However, costs increased sharply in April, reaching \$19.4 million, followed by \$17 million in May, \$19 million in June and a high of \$21.8 million in July.

Tonge said the figures demonstrated a relatively stable first quarter followed by a dramatic increase in fuel market volatility. According to him, the escalation in fuel costs coincided with the Iran conflict and instability in international commodity markets.

APUA purchases diesel and heavy fuel oil to operate its generating units,



and the authority was forced to absorb significantly higher costs as fuel prices increased.

Roger Tonge explained that APUA initially held the fuel variation charge at 55 cents per kilowatt-hour, despite the sharp increase in its fuel bill in April. The decision was based partly on expectations that the international conflict would be relatively short-lived and that fuel prices would subsequently decline.

But that did not happen Tonge said.

He explained that fuel prices remained elevated, resulting in overall operating costs significantly above what APUA had anticipated and budgeted for in 2026.

The Chief Operations Officer stated that the authority subsequently made the case to its board and Cabinet that an increase in the fuel variation charge was necessary to reflect the higher cost of fuel. However, he stressed that

APUA did not immediately pass the full calculated increase on to consumers.

According to Tonge, the fuel variation charge should have risen to approximately 66 cents per kilowatt-hour in April and 88 cents in May based on the actual fuel costs. Instead, APUA held the charge lower.

In May, customers were billed a fuel variation charge of 70 cents per kilowatt-hour, compared with an actual calculated cost of 88 cents. In June, the charge increased to 80 cents, again below the calculated 88 cents.

The Acting CEO revealed the approach was intended to partially subsidise the increased fuel costs and cushion the impact on consumers.

"We've tried to subsidise a bit and ease the effect of these increased costs that the public would bear," he said.

He added that APUA continues to monitor international fuel prices and



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Acting Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operations Officer Roger Tonge

intends to adjust the fuel variation charge when costs decline.

Electricity Business Unit Manager Andre Mathias also participated in yesterday's press conference and pointed to another factor affecting household electricity bills: increased consumption amid exceptionally high temperatures.

Mathias said the widespread use of air-conditioning has contributed to higher electricity demand, noting that air-conditioning units are now found in almost every home.

While newer inverter-type units are generally more energy efficient than traditional systems, he explained that increased use can still result in higher overall consumption.

According to Mathias, consumer behaviour plays an important role in determining electricity usage.

The Electricity Business Unit Manager compared the situation to the introduction of more energy-efficient lighting, noting that consumers can sometimes use more electricity simply because they believe the more efficient technology costs less to operate.

"It's like you're moving from some homes without AC to homes with AC."

With temperatures remaining high, Mathias said consumers should expect increased electricity usage, particularly from cooling equipment.

He also acknowledged that the rising cost of fuel has compounded the situation, with geopolitical developments beyond APUA's control contributing to higher generation costs.

Mathias also pushed back against suggestions that APUA and Government are not sufficiently committed to renewable energy.

He reiterated that the authority has been moving toward cleaner sources of generation for years.

Mathias recalled that when APUA previously approached Cabinet for additional generating capacity, the easiest option would have been to install additional fossil-fuel generators.

However, he said the Government made it clear that it wanted the country to move toward cleaner energy sources.

This led APUA to explore liquefied natural gas (LNG) as an alternative to heavier fossil fuels, which Mathias described as a cleaner form of fossil-fuel generation.

He said the authority's renewable energy efforts have continued alongside those initiatives.

Mathias highlighted several renewable energy projects already connected to or being developed for the national grid. These include the 4-megawatt Bethesda Solar Farm and a 3-megawatt solar installation at the airport.

APUA also has plans for another 1.7-megawatt solar plant at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium.

He said some existing renewable-energy installations are not currently operating at full capacity, but APUA has recently re-engaged a contractor to undertake repairs.

The authority is also pursuing battery storage as part of its renewable-energy expansion.

Mathias detailed that solar and wind power are intermittent sources of energy and therefore require storage and grid stabilisation to operate effectively alongside conventional generation.

Batteries can respond quickly to fluctuations on the grid, helping to stabi-

lise the system when renewable generation changes.

APUA is also preparing to expand opportunities for customers who generate their own renewable energy.

Mathias said the authority has allowed customers to connect renewable-energy systems to the grid since 2011, when it introduced an interconnection policy. The original arrangement used net metering, allowing customers to effectively offset electricity consumed from the grid with electricity generated from their renewable systems.

However, APUA moved from net metering to net billing in 2015, which Mathias said was necessary to ensure that APUA could recover the costs associated with maintaining the grid, metering and billing customers.

The utilities company is now working on a policy that would allow customers with renewable-energy systems to incorporate battery storage.

Mathias said discussions are underway with local installers and a policy framework is expected within weeks. He noted that the policy must also address safety concerns for APUA employees, particularly linesmen working on the electricity network.

Unlike conventional standby generators, batteries operate silently, making it more difficult for workers to know whether a system is still feeding electricity into an isolated section of the grid.

Mathias said safeguards must therefore be established to ensure that customer-installed batteries cannot inadvertently energise sections of the network where APUA workers are carrying out repairs.

"We don't want is a situation where we have isolated an area for safe work by the linesmen, and then to find out later that somebody with a battery had it connected, and it endangers the life of our linesmen," he said.

APUA says the planned policy will address those risks while allowing customers to take greater advantage of renewable energy and battery technology.

APUA Plans US\$25M Smart Meter Rollout to Transform Electricity Billing



The Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) is preparing to significantly expand its Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system in a move officials say will transform electricity billing and give customers unprecedented access to information about their consumption.

Acting CEO and Chief Operations Officer Roger Tonge said the authority intends to scale up the project over the coming months, with a major deployment expected later this year or early next year.

The investment, estimated at US\$25 million, is expected to address several problems associated with traditional meter reading, including extended billing cycles, access difficulties, mechanical meter failures, human error and electricity tampering.

Tonge explained that while APUA generally aims to maintain a 30-day billing cycle, circumstances can sometimes cause meter readings to take longer.

He said customers should therefore pay attention to the daily consumption figure on their bills when comparing usage.

“So imagine your cycle now is 35 days. You would expect the bills to be

higher than usual,” Tonge said.

“But at the bottom of the bills has the daily consumption, so it’s important to look at the average daily consumption, because that should be consistent, irrespective of how many days it takes me to meter.”

He acknowledged that customers have raised concerns when billing periods have been extended.

Tonge explained that APUA subsequently sought to get the following billing cycle back on schedule, which would help reduce the impact on the subsequent bill.

“What we tried to do is to make sure that we ran on time for the subsequent period, so that you would see a reduction in your bill, your follow-up bill,” he said.

However, he admitted that extended billing periods understandably cause concern among customers.

Roger Tonge said APUA is also looking at ways to communicate more effectively with customers when meter readings are delayed.

“What we’re trying to do now is to just be able to be more proactive and indicate when we’re late, to provide the public with that information

and indicate to them the reasons why they’re late,” he said.

He explained that meter readers can sometimes be prevented from accessing meters because of circumstances such as rain or other conditions that make it difficult to reach properties.

The AMI system, he said, will significantly reduce those challenges.

“Now, what we’re going to do to address that is we’re moving to an AMI system,” Tonge said.

AMI, or Automated Metering Infrastructure, uses smart meters and communications technology to automatically transmit electricity consumption information to APUA.

Tonge said the authority has already begun ordering water meters and is working to secure additional electricity AMI meters.

“We’ve had pilot projects ongoing for a number of years,” he said.

Under a fully operational AMI system, the authority will receive regular readings without requiring meter readers to visit individual properties.

“We get readings actually every day with a really fully functional AMI system,” Tonge explained. “Meter readers will not be required to go out and read your meters. The readings will be sent automatically to a central server, and from there the bills will be generated.”

According to the Acting CEO, the new technology should also reduce errors associated with mechanical meters and manual data entry.

He pointed out that mechanical meters can fail, while mistakes can also occur when readings are manually entered into handheld devices.

“Sometimes they may punch in a one, but they should have punched it in another number,” he said.

“We hope to mitigate against those



kind of errors in the near future.”

He added that AMI would provide another important benefit by helping the authority monitor possible electricity tampering.

Customers, meanwhile, would have greater access to information about their own electricity usage.

“You’ll be able to monitor your services better, too, because you will get that information,” he said. “You’ll be able to see that information on an ongoing basis.”

Electricity Business Unit Manager Andre Mathias described the technology as potentially transformative for consumers.

“It will be a game changer,” Mathias said.

He explained that customers would no longer have to wait until the end of a billing cycle to understand how much electricity they are consuming.

“The customer will be able to see the consumption, basically not just month by month,” he said.

“They’ll see daily, hourly, as far as electricity is concerned.”

Mathias said this level of information could help customers identify the periods when their electricity use is highest.

“You will be able to see at what time of the day you have increased your consumption,” he said.

He suggested that customers could use the information to identify specific activities responsible for higher usage.

Mathias said AMI would also give APUA a much stronger tool to combat electricity tampering.

“For the AMI meters, if you take out the meter, it sends a signal back to the utility, so we know that someone is tampering,” he said.

The technology could even allow the authority to disconnect a service remotely where necessary.

He stressed, however, that APUA would communicate with the customer before taking such action.

“Obviously, we will contact the customer. We wouldn’t be so responsible to disconnect and reconnect without advising the customer,” he said.

Beyond billing and tampering, Mathias said the technology could also play an important role in managing outag-

es.

The technology would also eliminate the need for meter readers to enter customers’ properties simply to obtain consumption data. Mathias noted that previous concerns involving locked gates and dogs would largely disappear because the information would be transmitted electronically.

“We wouldn’t have that issue because the readings come directly to APUA via communication links,” he said.

Tonge said the authority views the AMI project as an important part of its modernization programme and intends to increase the scale of deployment significantly.

“It’s a project that’s underway, and we intend to really scale up over the next few months,” he said.

Mathias said the authority is targeting a major deployment later this year or early next year.



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Minister Turner Announces Community-Based Child Protection Town Halls



The Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation will take its national child-protection campaign into villages and communities across Antigua and Barbuda following the first National Child Protection Town Hall Meeting.

Minister Rawdon Turner confirmed that Tuesday night's meeting at the John E. St. Luce Finance and Conference Centre was the beginning of a broader public-engagement programme.

"This was never intended to be a one-off town hall," Turner said.

The minister said the Ministry plans to organize smaller and more intimate meetings in different communities, allowing residents to discuss concerns, ask questions and learn how to identify and report child abuse.

The announcement followed calls



from members of the audience for a second meeting, as several people were unable to share their experiences and recommendations before the event ended.

Turner said the community ses-

sions are intended to reach people on a more personal level and encourage residents to accept greater responsibility for protecting children.

He expressed disappointment

with the turnout at the first meeting, arguing that public participation should have been significantly higher given the seriousness of the child-abuse crisis.

The minister criticized people who frequently comment about child abuse on social media but fail to participate when opportunities are provided to propose solutions.

Turner said he was especially moved by the courage of two survivors who publicly described the sexual abuse, disbelief and emotional trauma they experienced.

He asked for permission to use their stories in future public-education efforts, saying their testimonies could encourage other victims to seek help.



The minister said future town halls will continue emphasizing the responsibilities of parents, relatives, neighbours, churches and community organizations.

He recalled growing up in a single-parent household but being surrounded by neighbours and

other adults who watched over children in the community.

That community-based support, he said, has significantly declined.

“The village needs to wake up. We’ve fallen asleep,” Turner said.

He also called on churches to extend their work beyond their buildings and become more active within vulnerable communities.

Minister of State Kiz Johnson encouraged the public to stay tuned for details about the upcoming meetings.

She said the first town hall should not be remembered merely as an evening of discussion but as the moment Antigua and Barbuda decided to take stronger action to protect its children.

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Local News

Social Protection Board Receives Timely Donation from Senator Shaquan O'Neil



Senator O'Neil. "The work that the Social Protection Board has done over the years and witnessing the graduation showed me that Social Protection is home for these children. As a senator, I'm committed more than ever to supporting that cause in any way possible."

The Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation, through the Social Protection Board, remains committed to ensuring that vulnerable children and families across Antigua and Barbuda are supported as they prepare for a new school year.

The Social Protection Board received a donation of household and back-to-school support items Tuesday morning at the Board's headquarters from Senator Shaquan O'Neil on behalf of families under the Board's care.

The gesture follows Senator O'Neil's appearance as a guest speaker at the Board's Child Beneficiaries Graduation on July 21, 2026, at which approximately 60 children graduated.

Senator O'Neil said that meeting the beneficiaries and hearing about the work led by Ms. Mary Baltimore and her team moved him to contribute further support as families prepare their children to return to school.

"When I look at the table here, I see breakfast, I see lunch, I see dinner, and even a snack and even to have their clothes washed and to have a shower," said Mary Baltimore, Operations Manager at the Social Protection Board.

"This donation is not simply household items, but it goes toward supporting families as they prepare their children to go back to school," said



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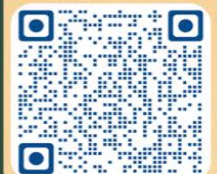


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Family and Social Services Records 287 Child Abuse Cases, Including 30 Sexual Assaults, in 2026

The Family and Social Services Division within the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation has handled 287 child-protection cases so far this year, including more than 30 matters involving alleged sexual assault.

Director of Family and Social Services Feona Charles-Richards disclosed the figures during Tuesday night's National Child Protection Town Hall Meeting.

The other cases include physical abuse and neglect.

Charles-Richards said child-protection reports generally reach the Division through three main pathways: the education system, the healthcare system and members of the community.

Once a report is received, officers conduct an investigation and assess whether a child must be removed from the home and placed with relatives,



Director of Family and Social Services Feona Charles-Richards

foster parents or a residential facility.

Sexual-assault reports are referred to the police Special Victims Unit, while children are taken for medical examinations and evidence collection.

However, Charles-Richards said the process does not always work as intended.

She described the system as slow, particularly when children require justice, and said there are cases that continue to haunt social workers.

Meanwhile Charles-Richards thanked foster parents who make themselves available to care for children but stressed that Antigua and Barbuda needs a stronger and more coordinated protection system.

"The process is supposed to be intake, investigation, assessment, removal if needed and finding alternative care," she explained.

Charles-Richards also called for stronger screening to prevent convicted offenders from working in places such as schools and daycare centres.

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flow Turns CPL Sixes into Support for Communities

- *...across the Caribbean, every six scored will help support causes that matter.*

MIAMI, Florida (August 25, 2026) – Leading telecoms provider Flow is turning every six scored in the 2026 Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) into an opportunity to give back, with initiatives supporting education, sport, health, and community development across five markets.

As part of Flow's sponsorship of the CPL, each participating market has developed a local "Every Six Gives Back" initiative that connects the excitement of the tournament with meaningful support for communities.

In Jamaica, the Flow Foundation has pledged a cash donation for every six struck during the four CPL matches at Sabina Park, with the funds supporting back to school initiatives. In Barbados, Flow will contribute US\$50 for every six struck by the Barbados Tridents towards cricket gear for local cricket clubs.

In Antigua and Barbuda, US\$50 will be donated for every six hit by the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons, up to a maximum of 40 sixes, with the proceeds shared between the Sunshine Home for Girls and St. John's Hospice. Meanwhile, in St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Lucia, the company will provide free connectivity services to local cricket clubs.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Flow will donate TT\$200 for every six scored by the Trinbago Knight Riders during the tournament to the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities.

"CPL brings people together through a sport that is deeply woven into the fabric of Caribbean life. Whether we are supporting education, young athletes, healthcare or inclusion, these initiatives demonstrate that the impact of our partnerships can extend well beyond the boundary," said Inge Smidts, Chief Executive Officer, Liberty Caribbean.

Liberty Caribbean are the operators of Flow, BTC and Liberty Business.

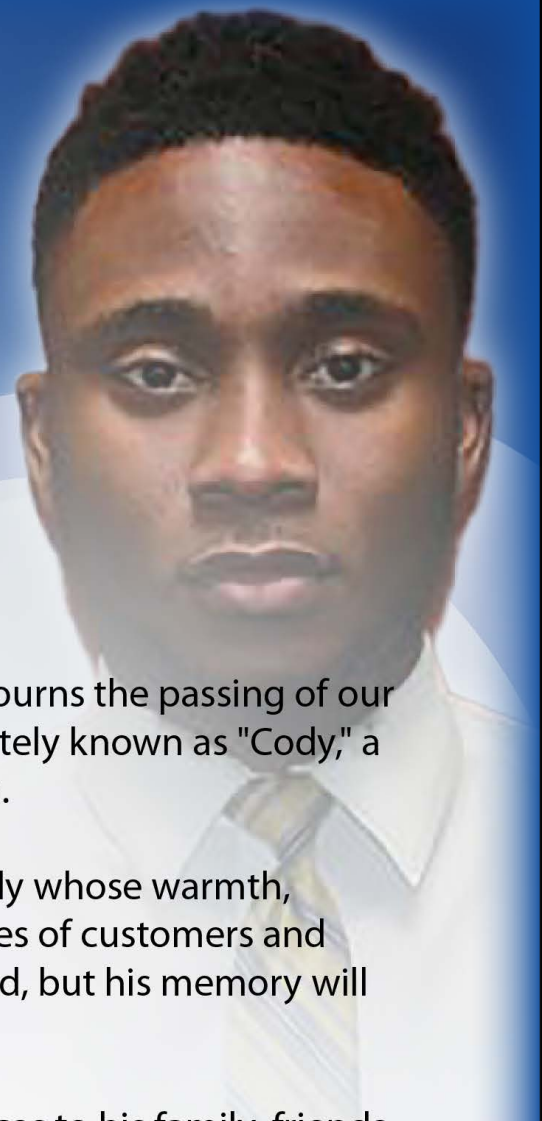
"There is something powerful about turning a moment of celebration into an opportunity to give back. With every six, we are not only celebrating the excitement of the game, but also creating support for young people, families and organisations doing important work in our communities."

As fans follow their favourite teams throughout the tournament, every six will now carry an added significance, helping to generate support for causes that matter across the region.



IN LOVING MEMORY

Garth Gomes
“Cody”



The **Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank Ltd.** mourns the passing of our dear colleague and friend, Garth Gomes, affectionately known as "Cody," a Teller at our Coolidge Branch.

Garth was a valued member of the ECAB family whose warmth, professionalism, and dedication touched the lives of customers and colleagues alike. His presence will be deeply missed, but his memory will remain with us.

At this time of loss, we extend our sincere condolences to his family, friends, and loved ones. We keep them in our thoughts and prayers and hope they find strength and comfort in the cherished memories they shared with him.

Rest in Peace, Cody.

"Those we love don't go away; they walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near."

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WCPL FIXTURES

BARBADOS 2026

SAT 5 SEP **BT**  **V**  **TKR** 3:00 PM

SUN 6 SEP **JE**  **V**  **GAW** 2:00 PM

THU 10 SEP **TKR**  **V**  **JE** 10:00 AM

SAT 12 SEP **TKR**  **V**  **GAW** 10:00 AM

SAT 12 SEP **BT**  **V**  **JE** 3:00 PM

SUN 13 SEP **GAW**  **V**  **BT** 2:00 PM

WED 16 SEP **PLAYOFF** **2ND V 3RD** 10:00 AM

THU 17 SEP **FINAL** 2:00 PM



WCPL



September 9 candidate registration deadline



Candidate registration for Haiti's upcoming elections will close on September 9, according to the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP).

The CEP has circulated the election timetable to political organisations, outlining the online registration process for candidates, which began on August 20.

The council said online registration will close on September 3, after which candidates will have until September 9 to submit the required documents. Applications will be reviewed between September 10 and 17, with a preliminary list of approved candidates due to be published on September 17.

Earlier this month, the CEP announced that the first round of long-awaited presidential and legislative elections, along with a constitu-

tional referendum, will be held on December 13. The vote will mark the first time Haitians have gone to the polls since 2016, when Jovenel Moïse was elected president. Moïse was assassinated on July 7, 2021.

Preliminary results from the first round are expected on December 19, with final results scheduled for January 9, 2027.

A second round of presidential and legislative elections, together with local elections, is planned for February 21, 2027. Final results for the presidential and legislative run-offs are expected on March 7, while final local election results are due on March 12.

Campaigning for the first round is scheduled to run from October 5 to December 12. The second-round campaign is set to take place between Jan-

uary 10 and February 20, 2027.

The CEP said 17 of the 18 recognised political groupings, representing 228 political parties, have been approved to contest the polls.

Meanwhile, Culture Minister Emmanuel Ménard, accompanied by his chief of staff and several colleagues, registered to vote on Monday at the National High School in Pétion-Ville.

During the registration exercise, Ménard announced plans for a balanced schedule that would allow candidates to present their programmes on state media. He also indicated that a civic education and voter-awareness campaign would be launched ahead of the elections. (CMC)

Two Jamaicans selected for Yale cultural heritage fellowship

Two Jamaican cultural heritage leaders have been selected for Yale University's Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (IPCH) Directors Forum (YDF), becoming the only Caribbean representatives in the programme's second cohort.

Dr Kirt Henry, director of the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica/Jamaica Memory Bank, and Faith Anderson, director of Liberty Hall: The Legacy of Marcus Garvey, are among 12 fellows chosen from nine countries across Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean for the international fellowship programme.

YDF is a global network of cultural heritage leaders working to preserve, protect, and share both tangible and intangible heritage, including artworks, photographs, archives, and other cultural collections, as well as living traditions such as cuisine, music, and practices passed down through generations.

The 12-month non-residential fellowship builds on Yale's broader Africa initiative, which aims to strengthen long-term partnerships, knowledge exchange, and collaboration. To date, the programme has supported 16 fellows, trained more than 80 professionals, and helped establish eight conservation centres across Africa.

"This cohort reflects the breadth and depth of leadership shaping the cultural heritage sector globally," Charlotte Ashamu, director of international programmes at Yale IPCH, said.

"The fellows represent institutions ranging from community-based heritage sites and cultural centres to leading museums, as well as practitioners working to sustain rich traditions in areas such as cuisine and textile design. Together, they bring perspectives from institutions stewarding cultural collections and those preserving living traditions in their communities, enriching the exchange between Yale and cultural leaders worldwide."

Through the forum, Yale seeks to



deepen engagement with cultural institutions and practitioners across regions by fostering knowledge exchange, collaboration, and shared learning.

Participants will take part in convenings, workshops, and engagements with Yale faculty and peers aimed at strengthening leadership in cultural heritage and expanding professional networks while enhancing their institutions' capacity to care for collections such as photographs, artworks, and historical documents.

In his reaction, Dr Henry, who manages national collections and intangible cultural heritage across Jamaica and the wider Caribbean, told *The Gleaner*: "This fellowship presents an important opportunity to strengthen my leadership and institutional management through engagement with experienced cultural leaders and exposure to diverse approaches to museum management, collections stewardship, and innovation."

Henry said it would also provide a platform to share the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica/Jamaica Memory Bank collections internationally, identify new strategies for expanding and improving access to the collections, particularly for communities whose heritage they represent, and enhance the global visibility of the Ja-

maica Memory Bank.

Additionally, the fellowship will facilitate expert guidance on safeguarding its fragile and irreplaceable materials while supporting the institute's broader efforts to rebrand and position itself within a global cultural context, he said.

Anderson, who leads Jamaica's only museum dedicated to highlighting the life and legacy of National Hero Marcus Garvey, said: "The fellowship presents a valuable opportunity for critical exchange and professional engagement around the evolving responsibilities of cultural-heritage institutions. I look forward to drawing on this experience to strengthen Liberty Hall's work in the stewardship, interpretation, and public engagement of the material and intellectual legacy of Marcus Garvey while advancing its role as a dynamic space for research, learning, and cultural dialogue."

The other fellows in this year's cohort are Aisha Adamu Augie and Fu'ad Lalwal of Nigeria; Sylvia Arthur of Ghana; Iona McCreath of Kenya; Jess Kilubukila of the Democratic Republic of Congo; Wandile Mabaso and Batauna Vundla of South Africa; Silvia Rosi of Togo; Raquel Barreto of Brazil; and Ana Elizabeth González of Panama.

The second cohort further strengthens links between Africa and the African Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Established in 2011, the Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage is dedicated to advancing preservation through art, science, and human connection. Its mission is to preserve and promote cultural heritage through interdisciplinary research, conservation, and educational opportunities across Yale's campus and internationally.

Through partnerships and programmes in the Global South and beyond, the IPCH promotes collaboration across Yale's collections and strengthens the wider cultural heritage community. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

Regional News

PM hints at scrapping income tax

Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit has raised the possibility of abolishing personal income tax in Dominica by 2028, saying he has long opposed the measure on philosophical grounds.

Addressing a town hall meeting hosted by the ruling Dominica Labour Party (DLP) ahead of the September 7 by-election in the Roseau North constituency, Skerrit said that, when the party first took office in 2000, income tax rates stood at 20 per cent, 35 per cent and 40 per cent.

“We reduced it to 15, to 25, and to 45. And we increased the tax threshold from EC\$12,000 (US\$0.37 cents) a year to EC\$30,000 a year,” Skerrit said, telling supporters that “that was the first time that we saw any real change where income tax in Dominica is concerned”.

He said his administration later introduced further tax reductions after returning to office, despite both the opposition United Workers Party (UWP) and the Dominica Freedom Party (DFP) having held office in the interim.

“... they never touched it and then we decided this year to allow working people and taxpaying people to keep more money than they’re earning, because, for me personally, I’m not an income tax person, I do not like income tax.

“From a philosophical standpoint, I believe that people should be allowed to keep their property that they worked for ... I believe more in consumption taxes, that you pay based on what you consume is more equitable.

“And so I am not ruling out that, if we’re able to implement the measures in the budget, and see an increase in revenues to the country, that, by 2028, we remove income tax altogether and allow them to keep more of what



they have,” Skerrit said.

He added that the administration hopes any additional income retained by taxpayers would be spent in the wider economy, particularly as tourist arrivals continue to grow.

Earlier this month, Finance Minister Dr Irving McIntyre, while presenting the EC\$1.15 billion national budget to Parliament, said the government had consistently reduced the income tax burden on working Dominicans.

He said that, following the country’s

economic recovery and the successful completion of its International Monetary Fund (IMF)-supported programme, the government began providing significant tax relief from 2009.

“We reduced the tax rates to 15 per cent, 25 per cent and 35 per cent. We also increased the tax-free threshold first to EC\$25,000 and then to EC\$30,000. We increased mortgage deductions from EC\$15,000 on one property to EC\$30,000 and EC\$15,000 on a first and second property, respectively. We allowed deductions for student loans, home and medical insurance.”

According to McIntyre, the measures reduced the income tax burden on workers and removed thousands of Dominicans from the tax net, allowing households to retain a larger share of their earnings.

“Today, despite a global environment marked by economic uncertainty, this government will again provide relief to further empower the hardworking people of Dominica. It is therefore my pleasure to propose that, effective January 1, 2027, the government will replace the income tax rates of 15 per cent, 25 per cent and 35 per cent with a single, flat rate of 10 per cent,” he said. (CMC)

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UN secretary general condemns latest gang attack in Haiti

United Nations (UN) Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, on Tuesday condemned the latest gang attack that left more than 30 people dead in the hillside community of Kenscoff overlooking the capital, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

A coalition of criminal gangs led by Viv Ansanm is being blamed for the violence on Sunday night.

The UN said that the attack reportedly killed at least 47 people, including 22 who were reportedly executed in a church compound where they had sought safety.

The UN said the relentless attacks on communities and the loss of lives underscore the alarming security conditions in Haiti and reinforce the urgent need to intensify Haitian and international security efforts to counter these ruthless gangs.

“The secretary-general reiterates his call for Haitian authorities to ensure that those responsible for the attacks are held to account, including through the specialised judicial units, recently created with international support to investigate mass crimes,” his spokesman Stéphane Dujarric told the daily news briefing.

Kenscoff’s Mayor Jean Massillon told reporters on Monday that “it was a night of terror” and videos circulating on social media show members of the powerful Ansanm coalition storming the town’s centre and going on a



killing spree.

The gang members attacked a church filled with people already fleeing gang violence, killing residents and torching vehicles and homes, with the videos showing bludgeoned bodies lying in pools of blood.

Dujarric said that the UN humanitarian colleagues on the ground in Haiti are working with the local communities and local authorities to verify the information and assess what people need following this horrendous violence.

He said that the UN Integrated Office in Haiti reported that during the second

quarter of 2026, from April to June, at least 1,408 people were killed and 656 others injured because of violence across Haiti. Gang attacks accounted for more than half of all killings and injuries recorded during this quarter.

“The report emphasises the importance of keeping Haiti on the international agenda and accelerating the full deployment of the Gang Suppression Force. It also calls for progress on investigations into mass crimes and reiterates that all use of force by law enforcement officials, or other actors acting on behalf of the state, must comply with international human rights law,” Dujarric added. (CMC)



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WEDNESDAY

09

SEPTEMBER

SICK AND SHUT IN

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🕒 10am



FRIDAY

11

SEPTEMBER

CULTURAL FOOD FAIR

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🕒 10 am Until



SATURDAY

12

SEPTEMBER

COMMUNITY DAY

📍 Most Villages

🕒 10am



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Door was locked at Pakistan hospital where fire killed 14 babies, witnesses say

It was just after dawn on Wednesday morning at a maternity ward in the Pakistani capital when a horrific blaze erupted.

It would go on to kill 14 infants as parents say they waited hours for help to arrive.

Hivsa Walid was near the room at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) hospital with her sister-in-law, who had given birth days earlier. She initially heard a shout and thought a patient had died - but then she saw smoke.

The pair fled with the baby, who is so small she does not yet have a name.

"We didn't even think about our belongings. We just grabbed the baby and rushed downstairs.

"Some patients had delivered their babies just that night. I don't even know how we managed to get down - it was all a blur."

The fire broke out in an air-conditioning unit on the third floor of the mother and child unit at PIMS, one of the main state-run hospitals in Islamabad. Only one of the 15 babies present was saved.

Khurram Mehmood, 40, told AFP news agency there was a long wait for rescue workers. "I lost my daughter. She was only three days old," he said.

Jaweria, the mother of another victim, told AFP news agency the door to the maternity ward was locked.

"For two hours I kept crying and wailing," she said. "Police arrived after four hours and said they are here to investigate."

"Why did the doctors leave the children there?" she asks.

"To hell with you, rescue team and police. Babies burnt to death there, but nobody could save them."

Rana Imran Sikander, the hospital's



executive director, told the BBC the ward's door was not locked but was manned. He cited the need to protect babies from being stolen, something that has happened before at government hospitals.

Walid suggested PIMS's safety protocols were inadequate, despite it being a major hospital. "There should have been fire extinguishers and protocols, but no one was doing anything - everyone was just running."

The father of a baby who died told Reuters he had been visiting the ward for eight days and the building had "no fire security, no proper exits".

"All doors were closed, only one door was for us to visit our children. They kept the other doors locked because they feared we would come to see our children too often."

Several eyewitnesses have claimed duty staff were not around.

People had to "break the door down" and rescue teams were forced to smash the windows to control the flames, a witness who did not give her name told AFP.

Abdul Ghafoor, another witness, told AFP he tried to get into the building to rescue patients but couldn't reach the maternity ward.

"There was thick black smoke inside

and patients were trapped," he said. "Rescue teams arrived after almost two hours."

Islamabad's Chief Commissioner Sohail Ashraf has said rescue teams reached the scene "immediately" after the emergency call was first made, according to AFP.

PIMS is one of the biggest hospitals in Pakistan's capital, with 156 beds in its maternal and child health unit.

Pakistan has dealt with a number of major fires in recent years, with poor safety laws, building codes and lax enforcement often blamed for steep death tolls.

Survivors of a fire which killed dozens at a Karachi shopping mall in January this year said locked exits likely contributed to the high number of fatalities.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed his "deep sorrow and heartfelt regret" over the latest blaze, and instructed authorities to "conduct an immediate investigation", according to a statement from his office.

He has also suspended Federal Health Secretary Aslam Ghauri, a top official in the health department.

"Such a situation with children is irreparable", the statement said. (BBC)

German airport worker dies of malaria after ‘mosquito arrives on plane’



A Frankfurt Airport worker has died of malaria after a rare outbreak led to six employees contracting the serious infection spread by mosquitoes.

It is believed the mosquitoes arrived at Germany's busiest airport on a plane, according to German public health officials.

The remaining five infected individuals are receiving medical treatment, a spokesperson for airport operator Fraport said.

Traps have been installed at the airport and mosquitoes captured will be analysed in a laboratory to determine their species and origin.

“Sadly, we must confirm that one employee has died as a result of the infection,” the Fraport spokesperson told the BBC.

“We have provided comprehensive information to all employees and encourage them to consult a doctor if they experience any symptoms.”

It was reported in July that the outbreak involved four infected workers.

The Robert Koch Institute - a German federal government agency and research institute for disease control and public health - previously said the four employees fell ill between 4 and 6 July and the mosquitoes were brought in by plane.

The institute said malaria in Germany almost exclusively affects long-haul travellers who were infected in malaria-endemic areas, and that malaria transmitted within a German airport is rare.

“The lack of a travel history can lead to a delayed diagnosis. A de-

layed diagnosis increases the risk of a severe course of the diseases,” the institute said in its epidemiological bulletin.

The last case of airport malaria was in 2023 also at Frankfurt Airport, it added.

The BBC has contacted Frankfurt Public Health Department, who is leading the investigation into the outbreak, for comment.

Malaria is a disease spread by some types of mosquitoes biting humans, and is mostly found in tropical countries, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The infection, which is preventable and curable, is caused by a parasite and does not spread from person to person. However, symptoms can be mild or life-threatening. (BBC)

Two Jamaicans selected for Yale cultural heritage fellowship



Two Jamaican cultural heritage leaders have been selected for Yale University's Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (IPCH) Directors Forum (YDF), becoming the only Caribbean representatives in the programme's second cohort.

Dr Kirt Henry, director of the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica/Jamaica Memory Bank, and Faith Anderson, director of Liberty Hall: The Legacy of Marcus Garvey, are among 12 fellows chosen from nine countries across Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean for the international fellowship programme.

YDF is a global network of cultural heritage leaders working to preserve, protect, and share both tangible and intangible heritage, including artworks, photographs, archives, and other cultural collections, as well as living traditions such as cuisine, music, and practices passed down through generations.

The 12-month non-residential fellowship builds on Yale's broader Africa initiative, which aims to strengthen long-term partnerships, knowledge exchange, and collaboration. To date, the programme has supported 16 fellows, trained more than 80 professionals,

and helped establish eight conservation centres across Africa.

"This cohort reflects the breadth and depth of leadership shaping the cultural heritage sector globally," Charlotte Ashamu, director of international programmes at Yale IPCH, said.

"The fellows represent institutions ranging from community-based heritage sites and cultural centres to leading museums, as well as practitioners working to sustain rich traditions in areas such as cuisine and textile design. Together, they bring perspectives from institutions stewarding cultural collections and those preserving living traditions in their communities, enriching the exchange between Yale and cultural leaders worldwide."

Through the forum, Yale seeks to deepen engagement with cultural institutions and practitioners across regions by fostering knowledge exchange, collaboration, and shared learning.

Participants will take part in convenings, workshops, and engagements with Yale faculty and peers aimed at strengthening leadership in cultural heritage and expanding professional networks while enhancing their institutions' capacity to care for collections such as photographs, artworks, and historical documents.

In his reaction, Dr Henry, who manages national collections and intangible cultural heritage across Jamaica and the wider Caribbean, told *The Gleaner*: "This fellowship presents an important opportunity to strengthen my leadership and institutional management through engagement with experienced cultural leaders and exposure to diverse approaches to museum management, collections stewardship, and innovation."

Henry said it would also provide a platform to share the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica/Jamaica Memory Bank collections internationally, identify new strategies for expanding and improving access to the collections, particularly for communities whose heritage

they represent, and enhance the global visibility of the Jamaica Memory Bank.

Additionally, the fellowship will facilitate expert guidance on safeguarding its fragile and irreplaceable materials while supporting the institute's broader efforts to rebrand and position itself within a global cultural context, he said.

Anderson, who leads Jamaica's only museum dedicated to highlighting the life and legacy of National Hero Marcus Garvey, said: "The fellowship presents a valuable opportunity for critical exchange and professional engagement around the evolving responsibilities of cultural-heritage institutions. I look forward to drawing on this experience to strengthen Liberty Hall's work in the stewardship, interpretation, and public engagement of the material and intellectual legacy of Marcus Garvey while advancing its role as a dynamic space for research, learning, and cultural dialogue."

The other fellows in this year's cohort are Aisha Adamu Augie and Fu'ad Lawal of Nigeria; Sylvia Arthur of Ghana; Iona McCreath of Kenya; Jess Kilubukila of the Democratic Republic of Congo; Wandile Mabaso and Batana Vundla of South Africa; Silvia Rosi of Togo; Raquel Barreto of Brazil; and Ana Elizabeth González of Panama.

The second cohort further strengthens links between Africa and the African Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Established in 2011, the Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage is dedicated to advancing preservation through art, science, and human connection. Its mission is to preserve and promote cultural heritage through interdisciplinary research, conservation, and educational opportunities across Yale's campus and internationally.

Through partnerships and programmes in the Global South and beyond, the IPCH promotes collaboration across Yale's collections and strengthens the wider cultural heritage community. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

Dolly Parton, music star, actor and beloved figure who spanned generations, dies at 80 of cancer



Dolly Parton, the country music icon whose soaring vibrato vocals, poignant songwriting and sparkling costumes defined her rise from a log cabin in the Tennessee mountains to the height of stardom and acclaim, has died in Nashville. She was 80 years old.

“After bravely facing a brief battle with cancer, Dolly departed her earthly life today at the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center surrounded by loved ones,” her publicist, Marcel Pariseau, said in a statement Tuesday.

Known for her curvy physique, massive blond wigs and skin-tight outfits that served her self-deprecating wit, she was among the most beloved personalities in music and beyond — the rare celebrity whose appeal transcended generations, geography and politics.

She wrote hundreds of songs, including classics like “Jolene,” “Coat of Many Colors” and “I Will Always Love You,” that totaled more than 100 million worldwide sales and more than 1 billion online streams. Parton, who plucked bejeweled banjos, guitars and dulcimers with her long fingernails during performances, was a generous philanthropist and successful businesswoman whose projects included a theme park in the Smoky Mountain foothills near her birthplace.

Her career was forever influenced by her upbringing as one of 12 children

born into what she called a “dirt poor” Tennessee family. She started her education nonprofit, Imagination Library, to send free books to children in Tennessee because her father, who quit school to work on the farm, struggled to learn to read.

Parton’s first musical performances were in church, where her grandfather was a preacher. By age 10, she was learning guitar and singing on local television shows. At 13, she appeared on the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, where Johnny Cash introduced her as “a little girl here from up in East Tennessee.”

With a suitcase of songs, she followed her uncle, Bill Owens, also a songwriter, to Nashville after graduating high school in 1964. Fred Foster, who produced Roy Orbison, Willie Nelson and more, saw her potential and got her songs cut by other artists, as well as recording and releasing Parton singing her own material. By the mid-1970s, Parton was a Nashville queen.

Parton’s partnership with Porter Wagoner, a pencil-thin pompadoured star with flashy rhinestone outfits, was key to her career. She honed her acting skills on his syndicated TV show and he advocated for her to get a record deal at RCA. Their first duet, “The Last Thing on My Mind,” was released in 1967, the same year she started her

own publishing company.

While their duets were often big radio hits, Parton’s solo singles didn’t chart as high at first. With Wagoner as a co-producer, she began to adjust her country warble to a more polished, pop-leaning style.

She got her first No. 1 solo single with “Joshua,” and reached the Top 5 with the ballad “Coat of Many Colors,” about how her mother sewed together scraps of clothes to make a coat Parton wore “so proudly” even as her peers mocked her for being poor. The song, with its Biblical references and ode to maternal love, was later made into a children’s book and a TV movie.

In 1973, she had the hit that made her career — “Jolene,” a country music standard with its steady, churning rhythm and Parton’s repeated delivery of the title as she pleads for the woman not to steal her man.

The song topped the country charts, crossing over to pop and later being released internationally, opening up new audiences for Parton. “Jolene” is one of her most covered compositions, including by Miley Cyrus (Parton’s goddaughter), Olivia Newton-John and The White Stripes.

She left Wagoner’s show in 1974, amid reports of squabbling between the two, although they continued to record together and Wagoner stayed her producer for years after that. But the relationship turned litigious when Wagoner sued her in 1979 for millions in management fees and royalties.

She followed “Jolene” with a huge hit in 1974, “I Will Always Love You,” an ode and farewell to Wagoner that helped her win the Country Music Association’s female vocalist of the year back-to-back in 1975 and 1976. She famously turned down Elvis Presley, who wanted to record it, because she would not share publishing rights.

Decades later, Whitney Houston’s version of “I Will Always Love You” became a smash for the soundtrack of her 1992 film “The Bodyguard,” and

broke sales records. Houston won a Grammy for her performance in 1994, presented to her by Parton.

“Here You Come Again,” a pop crossover hit and one of the few she didn’t write, further established Parton as a multi-genre entertainer and brought her first Grammy Award in 1979.

“A lot of people thought I had totally lost my mind,” she told The Associated Press in 1979 of changing her singing style. “But I had no fear of change. I expected success, but I was braced for failure. I didn’t care if people thought I was wrong. In my own heart, I knew I was doing the right thing.”

Parton’s other crossover hits included the title song from “9 to 5,” the 1980 comedy starring Parton, Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin; and her duet with longtime friend Kenny Rogers, “Islands in the Stream,” written by brothers Barry, Maurice and Robin Gibb of the Bee Gees. In 1987, she collaborated with Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris on the million-selling “Trio” album.

For millions of fans, she was simply “Dolly,” a mixture of Southern charm, humor and glamour. But she was also considered a feminist role model for holding the reins of her own career, writing her own songs, owning her content and looking after her finances in an entertainment world dominated by men.

Parton was open to making fun of herself; when she hosted “Saturday Night Live” in 1989 she told the writers that her only restrictions were she wouldn’t curse and she wouldn’t make fun of Jesus. She regularly joked about her breasts or her dumb blonde appearance, but with a wink that she was the one controlling the laughs. In the memoir “My Life So Far,” Fonda remembered Parton’s way with a wisecrack, “usually high raunch,” and a laugh that was “somewhere between a girl’s giggle, an explosive shriek, and a cascade of little bells.”

After her gown split down the front when she won CMA’s entertainer of the year in 1978, Parton quipped: “My Daddy said that’s what I got for putting

50 pounds of mud in a five-pound bag.”

Throughout her career, she embraced a glamorous style, often wearing custom curve-hugging rhinestone dresses and bodysuits even if they drew tsks from others in the industry. Her look was always a part of her larger musical business plan.

“I knew my songs were good even if I had been ugly as sin,” she told the AP in 2014. “So I thought, ‘Well, I would have probably chose to look this way even if I had been a waitress.’ I mean, this is my look. I mean, I like a lot of makeup. I like a lot of hair. I like flashy clothes. I like to show it off. But that’s just who I am.

She married Carl Dean, an asphalt paving contractor, in the mid-1960s; they were together until his death in 2025 at the age of 82. Though rarely seen in public, he was an influence on her career. She told NPR that she wrote “Jolene” about a flirty bank teller who seemed to take an interest in Dean.

In her first major film role, Parton played alongside Fonda and Tomlin as office workers who rebel against their tyrannical boss in “9 to 5.” Critic Roger Ebert called her a “natural-born movie star” and the title song earned her two Grammy Awards and a ranking of 78 on the American Film Institute’s list of top 100 movie songs. Starring roles in “The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas” and “Steel Magnolias” followed.

“I never thought of myself as a movie star,” she told AP’s Bob Thomas in 1979. “I knew I’d be a star, but as a singer or as a writer of songs or books or poetry. I wanted to be a famous performer and wear flashy clothes, but singing in movies was not one of my ambitions. My family lived in the mountains and we didn’t see movies.”

Her love affair with TV and film continued for decades, with appearances alongside Cyrus on “Hannah Montana” and adaptations of her music for Christmas specials, films and streaming series. She also became an author, her books ranging from the memoir “Dolly” to a bestselling novel co-authored by James Patterson, “Run, Rose, Run.”

The stage adaptation “9 to 5: The Mu-

sical” debuted in 2009, and “DOLLY: A True Original Musical” is set to open Jan. 19, 2027, on what would have been her 81st birthday.

Beyond her music, Parton’s most lasting legacy might be her generosity and broad appeal.

When a deadly wildfire swept through the Smokies in 2016, she held an all-star telethon and set up a foundation that sent monthly checks to residents whose homes were damaged or destroyed.

She opened up her Dollywood theme park in East Tennessee, a major economic driver in Appalachia that draws tourists from around the country, and established the Dollywood Foundation. She wrote books and memoirs, was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame and was given a lifetime achievement award by the Recording Academy. She was selected for the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2025.

With 55 Grammy nominations and 10 wins, Parton is the third-most nominated woman in Grammy history, only behind Beyoncé and Taylor Swift.

Parton spanned social and political divides, through multiple generations of fans, urban and rural and in between. In tumultuous election years, it wasn’t uncommon to see “Dolly for President” shirts. But she was strict in not voicing her own political beliefs, often turning aside questions about presidents, candidates, policies and other controversies.

“I don’t do politics,” Parton told host Jad Abumrad on his hit podcast “Dolly Parton’s America.”

“I have too many fans on both sides of the fence. Of course, I have my opinion about everything, but I learned years ago to keep your mouth shut about things.”

When the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation sent out a ballot in 2022 with her name on it, though, she said she felt she hadn’t earned it, the voters answered with a “Hello, Dolly.” Parton showed up to the induction ceremony, performed and then put out a rock album. (AP)

Infantino attends CFU meeting despite objection from CONCACAF

FIFA president Gianni Infantino has reportedly angered the **Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF)** president Victor Montagliani by attending a Caribbean Football Union (CFU) president meeting in the Dominican Republic over the weekend despite being asked not to.

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) Ickford ‘Nyah’ Roberts attended the meeting in which Infantino met with FIFA Member Associations from the Caribbean Football Union in Punta Cana, on the sidelines of a FIFA Forward-supported CFU Under-14 Boys Challenge Series, an event which he said showed the benefits of investing in the game globally.

Founded in 1978, the CFU comprises 31 members – 25 of them FIFA Member Associations. Under the FIFA Forward 3.0 cycle (2023-2026), FIFA provides up to five million US dollars to each regional body, funding CFU initiatives including the annual CFU Under-14 Challenge Series.

According to reports, multiple sources attending the CFU meeting said many of the CONCACAF members were infuriated by Infantino’s behaviour, particularly as he had been asked to stay away by their president.

Infantino allegedly hijacked the meeting to announce FIFA-funded development projects for the region with millions of dollars



FIFA president Gianni Infantino, fourth from right, and presidents of member associations of the CFU in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on Sunday, August 23, 2026. (FIFA)

that had been delayed for months.

In a letter addressed to Infantino on Friday, Montagliani had asked Infantino “in the name of football to reconsider your attendance,” pointing out his presence would take the spotlight away from a regional Under-14 tournament being held alongside the meeting.

“I believe that considering the governance crisis surrounding FIFA as a result of your controversial FIFA Forward Enterprise proposal, the media will focus on this situation, which will unfortunately significantly take away from the technical nature of the CFU youth competition,” the letter, which was obtained by multiple media outlets stated.

“As such, I respectfully ask you in the name of football to reconsider your attendance as it will unfortunately undermine the technical nature of this important youth development activity.”

Despite that entreaty, Infantino is understood to have turned up

at the resort of Punta Cana with a large FIFA entourage, including the secretary general Mattias Grafström, and Elkhann Mammadov, a staunch ally who is responsible for maintaining good relations with the 211 members in his role as director of member associations.

The FIFA president has come under pressure from other soccer leaders, with Montagliani joining with his counterparts from European governing body UEFA and the Asian Football Confederation to ask for a re-evaluation of the global governing body’s current leadership, saying their trust had been “broken through deception.”

It came after Infantino advanced a proposal branded FIFA Forward Enterprise, which would’ve seen the World Cup welcome private investment, including selling shares to an investment group Thrive Eternal, founded by Josh Kushner.

Williams sisters to play doubles together at the US Open



Serena Williams, left, first bumps Venus Williams, right, both of the United States, during a women's doubles match against Marta Kostyuk, of Ukraine, and Peyton Stearns, also of the United States, at the Cincinnati Open tennis tournament in Mason, Ohio, Monday, Aug. 17, 2026. (AP)

NEW YORK (AP) — Serena and Venus Williams are teaming up again at the US Open. The sisters will play doubles at the tournament after receiving a wild card Wednesday into the event they won twice.

Serena Williams returned to tennis this summer after a four-year absence, and the sisters were set to play at Wimbledon before Serena had to withdraw after injuring her knee in her singles loss. They played in the Cincinnati Open, losing in the first round.

The Williams sisters won the 1999 and 2009 US Open doubles titles and are 27-7 in their nine appearances. They last played in 2022, losing in the first round in what was expected

to be Serena's final match in Flushing Meadows.

Serena, 44, played with Carlos Alcaraz in mixed doubles Tuesday, winning one match before losing in the quarterfinals. Venus, 46, is entered in the women's singles event.

The Williams sisters teamed to win 14 Grand Slam doubles titles along with Olympic gold medals in 2000, 2008 and 2012. They shared the No. 1 ranking in women's doubles for eight weeks.

Serena opted not to compete in singles at the US Open, where she won six of her 23 Grand Slam singles titles. But she felt good enough to accept wild cards into both doubles events.

She and Venus won their first US Open doubles title the same year the younger Williams won her first singles championship there. The height of their dominance as a team would come about a decade later.

They won the Australian Open and Wimbledon in 2009, before picking up their second title in Flushing Meadows later that summer.

They won in Australia again in 2010 and then picked up the French Open title, making the sisters the holders of all four major trophies at the time. The first round of the women's doubles tournament will begin on Thursday, September 3.

Italy latest nation to pull support for Infantino's reelection as FIFA president



FIFA President Gianni Infantino gestures as he meets the media at the FIFA World Cup closing press conference in Doha, Qatar, Friday, Dec. 16, 2022. (AP)

ROME (AP) — The Italian soccer federation became the latest in a growing list of nations to withdraw its support for embattled FIFA President Gianni Infantino.

The FIGC issued a statement on Wednesday saying it would no longer back Infantino's bid for reelection in March because of "the recent initiatives promoted by the FIFA president concerning governance and the development of international competitions."

Infantino has come under increasing pressure to step down over his now-aborted plan to sell stakes in soccer's biggest tournament, the World Cup, to private equity investors.

Three of the sport's continental confederations accused him of "deception" and European soccer body UEFA threatened a boycott of FIFA competitions.

"We will continue to work alongside

UEFA and the other European federations to promote a vision of soccer based on merit, solidarity, sustainability, and the centrality of fans," FIGC President Giovanni Malagò said.

"We identify with a model of dialogue, listening, and shared responsibility that has, until now, allowed soccer to grow, innovate and at the same time defend its founding principles."

Romania followed suit on Wednesday, with the soccer federation's executive committee voting not to support Infantino for a new mandate.

"FIFA needs today a new leader who can produce consensus and unity, inspire trust and who has the ability to bring us all together," FRF President Răzvan Burleanu said at the end of the meeting.

The soccer federations in England, Wales, and Ireland withdrew their support for Infantino's reelection earlier

this month, while Norway has called on him to step down as well as issuing a statement with five other Nordic countries — Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, and the Faeroe Islands — to say they had "lost confidence" in his leadership.

Infantino has been FIFA president since 2016 and, until the backlash over his proposals, seemed sure to be reelected unopposed next year in Morocco. FIFA has set a Nov. 18 deadline for challengers to nominate.

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.

CPL momentum expected to jumpstart cricket at Sabina Park

Stakeholders are projecting that the economic and cultural momentum generated by the return of the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) will help drive higher attendance and commercial success for next year's international matches at Sabina Park in Jamaica.

After a subdued start, more than 26,000 fans attended matches over four days as the CPL returned to Jamaican cricket's Mecca for the first time since 2019.

The Jamaica Kingsmen, watched by 3,500 fans on Tuesday, August 18, lost their first game at Sabina Park. Despite that setback, 5,800 patrons turned out for their second match on Thursday, August 20, which also ended in defeat.

However, after 8,450 fans cheered them to their first win of the season last Saturday, another 8,500 spectators passed through the turnstiles for their victory last Tuesday.

Venues have not yet been confirmed, but the West Indies women are scheduled to host Pakistan in December this year and England next April, while the men's team is expected to face leading opposition, including India and England, in 2027.

Although the final figures are not yet available, stakeholders believe the CPL's return to the largest English-speaking country in the Caribbean by population signalled a boost for the economy.

Peter Miller, the CPL's head of public relations and communications, said the franchise would partner with experts to assess the tournament's economic impact using empirical data.

"But what I can tell you is that there was a significant cohort. Just the way to look at it from an arrivals point of view is just the CPL arriving represents a significant number of people coming into the country.

"You had the teams coming in, you know, obviously the Kingsmen team, all of whom stayed at hotels in New Kingston, filling up rooms. Then the visiting teams as well. We've had the TV crew there for 10 to 11 days who are, you know, boys that enjoy going



Players of the Jamaica Kingsmen huddle before the start of their first home against the Barbados Trident in the 2026 CPL at Sabina Park in Jamaica on Tuesday, August 18.

out and spending money in restaurants and in taxis," said Miller.

He also pointed to the number of family members and supporters who travelled from overseas, boosting hotel occupancy during a period when Kingston traditionally experiences lower occupancy levels.

"I know from looking at the Trinidad and Guyana matches, there were a lot of people that had come into Kingston just to follow their team, both from the US and from the US diaspora and from the countries themselves. So it does tend to end up representing significant inward-bound tourist numbers," said Miller.

Miller described Jamaica as a very important market for the CPL, noting that fan support compared favourably with that seen elsewhere in the tournament.

"I think, you know, it's year one, and I think it will build. And it's year one of a new brand, but to see the level of people that we saw attend the matches as the games went on, and what we saw is attendance increased as the games went on. I think it will only get better from that point of view. Jamaica's a hugely

important market for us," argued Miller.

As the Jamaica Cricket Association (JCA) looks ahead to celebrating its centenary in 2027, president Dr. Donovan Bennett is hoping Sabina Park will host some of the marquee fixtures.

"One of the things that we have going in Jamaica, unlike a lot of countries in the Caribbean, the population here comes out to watch cricket. You get crowds in Jamaica, and even some of the West Indies players will tell you that they prefer playing in Jamaica to anywhere else because that '12th man' is out there pushing them and cheering them along. That's a very important factor in any sport," Bennett said.

He said 2027 will be a landmark year in Jamaican cricket. "Next year is a very exciting year. Not only is the Jamaica Cricket Association 100 years old next year, so we have to put something on, it's our centenary, but India and England will be touring the Caribbean next year. So all of what has happened here, I think, has put us in a pretty good place to be able to get some of those tours being played in Jamaica," said Bennett.

Antigua Falcons topple Tridents in Caribbean Premier League



Captain Moeen Ali, third from left, celebrates and leads the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons off the final after beating the Barbados Tridents in their last home match in the CPL at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Tuesday, August 25, 2026. (CPLT20)

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons returned to winning ways in the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL), defeating the Barbados Tridents by 30 runs in their final home game at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium on Tuesday night.

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons made 155 for five off their 20 overs after losing the toss and being sent in to bat. The Tridents suffered their first defeat of the competition after collapsing from 93 for three, with the match finely balanced in their chase of 156.

A devastating middle-order collapse saw the Tridents lose four wickets in two overs before eventually being bowled out in 18 overs for 125, losing their final seven wickets for just 32 runs.

Rivaldo Clarke struck 27, Kevlon Anderson got 22, opener Zachary Carter scored 17, and Quinton de Kock with 16 were the only batsmen to reach double figures for the Barbados Tridents.

Captain Moeen Ali led from the front for the Falcons with an unbeaten 56, before pacer Joshua James grabbed three for 18 and leg-spinner Shadab Khan, who claimed two for 23 with a decisive

spell in the 13th and 14th overs, effectively securing the victory for the Falcons.

Antigua and Barbuda Falcons' fast bowler Alzarri Joseph bagged two for 12, and left-arm spinner Sufyan Moqim captured two for 36.

Earlier, the Falcons were sent in and endured a disastrous start, with Rahkeem Cornwall (0) bowled via the first ball of the match by a Daniel Sams' yorker.

Amir Jangoo (26) and Karima Gore (27) both made starts, but without a substantial partnership developing, the Tridents appeared to be in control and on course to restrict the Falcons to around 120.

Ali, however, had other ideas, blasting 56 not out off 37 balls, including four sixes and three fours.

The Falcons captain shifted the momentum dramatically, particularly during the final six overs. His unbroken 75-run sixth-wicket partnership with Shamar Springer, who hit 19 not out in an important supporting role, gave the Falcons a much more defendable total.

Ali then exploded in the final over, smashing three consecutive sixes off

Sams, with 72 runs coming from the final 36 balls. Off-spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman captured two for 32.

The Tridents' chase got off to a nervy start when Shian Brathwaite was dropped with his first ball on his T20 debut. He was unable to make the most of his reprieve, however, departing for just seven.

Quinton de Kock's dismissal, with Cornwall returning to the attack to claim the big wicket, brought Rivaldo Clarke and Kevlon Anderson together in what became a crucial partnership for the Tridents.

The pair settled in and appeared to be rebuilding the chase, but the game quickly turned. James had Anderson well caught by Springer in the deep before dismissing Sherfane Rutherford for a duck with the very next ball, brilliantly caught by substitute fielder Anderson Phillip.

The sudden double blow left the Tridents with new batters at the crease, and the innings began to unravel rapidly.

Captain Chris Green, who was left not out on nine, attempted to steady the ship alongside countryman Sams, who also made nine, but with the required rate climbing to 12 an over, the task became increasingly difficult.

Sufyan Moqim wrapped up the innings by claiming the final two wickets in just two deliveries.

The victory capped the Falcons' four-match home leg, with the Antigua and Barbuda-based side once again receiving strong support from the home crowd.

The Falcons now return to the road to face the St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots at Warner Park on Sunday.

The Tridents will play their fourth match of their campaign on Friday against defending champions Trinbago Knight Riders at the Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad.