

# Antigua and Barbuda Strengthens United Kingdom Engagement Ahead of CHOGM 2026

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*Twin sisters Sonya and Sonia Knight are presented with the certificate of ownership of their new home by Minister of Social Transformation Rawdon Turner as other officials look on*

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## Antigua and Barbuda Strengthens United Kingdom Engagement Ahead of CHOGM 2026

Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P. Chet Greene, met with United Kingdom Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Chris Elmore MP, as diplomatic engagement intensifies ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2026.

Discussions focused on Antigua and Barbuda's preparations to host CHOGM from 1–4 November, continued United Kingdom engagement and opportunities to strengthen cooperation in support of a successful and impactful meeting of Commonwealth leaders.

Minister Greene highlighted the importance of strong partnerships as Antigua and Barbuda prepares to welcome the Commonwealth, noting that CHOGM presents an opportunity to advance practical cooperation, investment and shared priorities across the 56-member association.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to reinforce the longstanding relationship between Antigua and Barbuda and the United Kingdom and to consider how both countries can continue working together within the Commonwealth. Karen-Mae Hill, High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom and CHOGM 2026 Focal Point, also con-



**E.P. Chet Green and Chris Elmore MP**

tributed to the discussions, particularly on United Kingdom engagement and coordination in support of Antigua and Barbuda's CHOGM priorities.

CHOGM 2026 will be held under the theme "Accelerating Partnerships and Investment for a Prosperous Commonwealth", reflecting Antigua and Barbuda's focus on building stronger partnerships and delivering mean-

ingful outcomes for Commonwealth member states.

The engagement forms part of Minister Greene's programme of consultations in London ahead of the November summit. Also attending the meeting was Mr Caleb Gardiner, Third Secretary at the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission in London.





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## Education Minister Urges Parents to Play Greater Role in Students' Mental Wellbeing



**The Honourable Daryll S. Matthew, Minister of Education**

Minister of Education Daryll Matthew has affirmed his government's commitment to providing the resources necessary to deal with mental health among students, but said parents and guardians must share equal responsibilities in managing their children's wellbeing.

Acknowledging the numerous challenges young people must navigate in the world today, Minister Matthew said within the public education system, Cabinet approved the employment of more guidance counsellors to assist students as is necessary in order to significantly reduce or eliminate violence and other forms of anti-social behaviours in schools.

"A child may be disturbed for whatever reason. They lash out at a student and a fight breaks out. These things happen and these are the kind of things that we're trying to keep out of our schools," Matthew said.

According to him, everyone has a role to play in helping to manage the mental health of students, but added that the onus is greater on the parents to ensure they do all in their power to provide that added layer of protection for their offspring, crucial support he pointed out that is lacking.

"I keep saying that there's some parents that use our schools as glorified daycares. You have problems in the home, you're not supporting your children at home, but you pack them off to school for five, six, seven hours a day and they

become the teachers' problem and they become the problem of other students," Minister Daryll Matthew argued.

"We don't want that sort of thing in our schools so, we're encouraging parents to become part of your child's life, particularly as it relates to their development at an early stage."

Reflecting on recent comments made by a Prime Minister within CARICOM that disruptive students should be sent back home to their parents, the education minister stated that such a declaration may not necessarily be the solution to the problem. He agrees that the learning environment should not be held hostage by students displaying anti-social behavior. However, Mr. Matthew stressed the importance of collaboration with parents to avoid "disruptive elements in the education system".

"We will provide the support that they

need here at school. We'll provide the guidance counsellors, we'll do whatever we can here to ensure that while they're here, they can receive the sort of support that they need to grow and develop as a young and upcoming human being. But it cannot be exclusively the responsibility of schools to look after and to raise children." The Minister of Education, Science and Technology asserted.

Minister Matthew also highlighted the impact of social media on children's mental health and the steps some countries are taking to curb its use among specific age groups. While saying that Antigua and Barbuda is not at that stage, he admitted that at some time, a conversation will have to be held on the topic in the interest of students across Antigua and Barbuda.



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# Local News

## Five Campuses, One College: ABCAS Welcomes Its First Student Intake



The Antigua and Barbuda College of Advanced Studies (ABCAS) has welcomed its first student intake since the amalgamation of five tertiary institutions under the ABCAS umbrella.

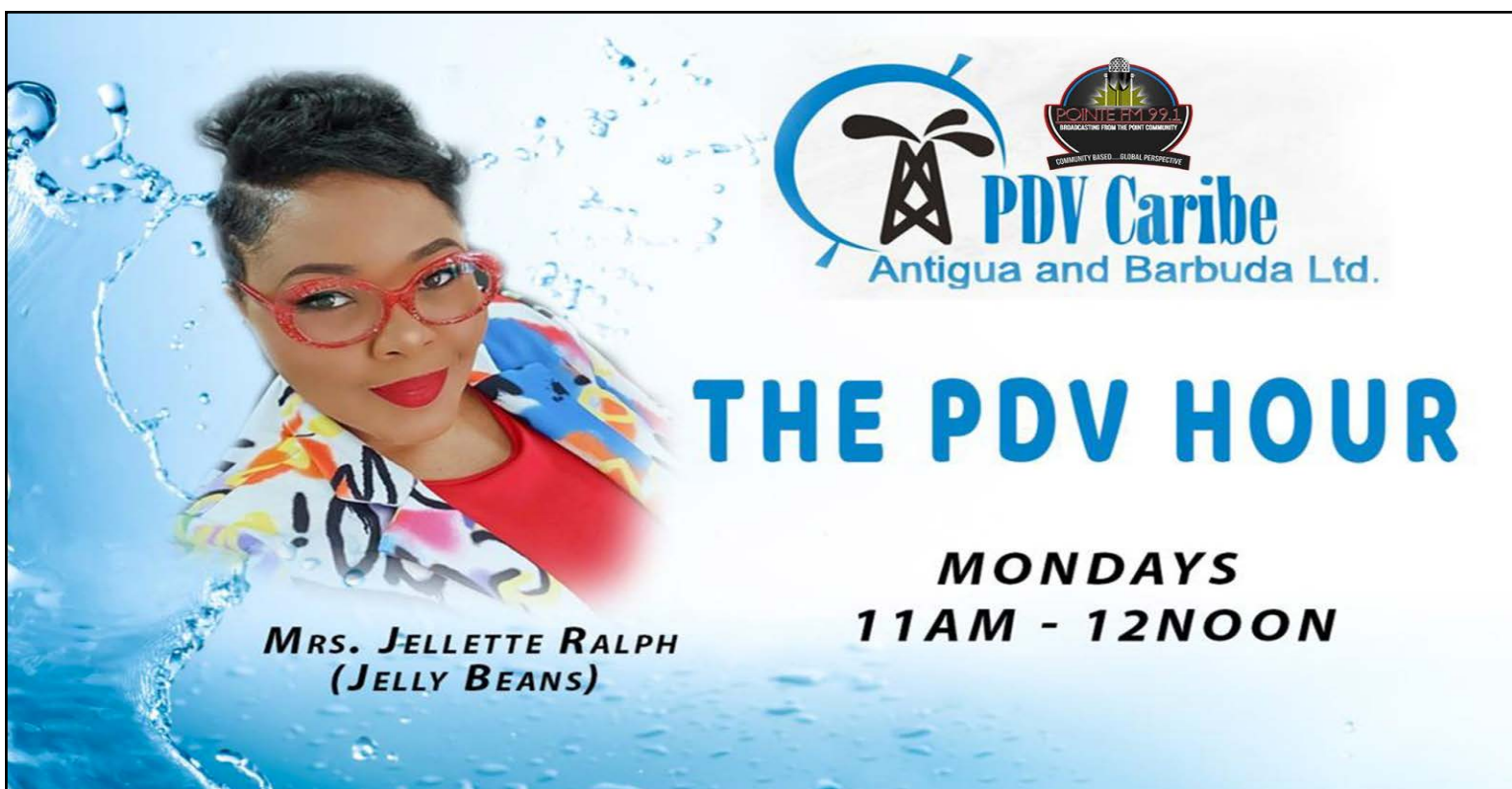
Just over 1,200 students have enrolled

across the College's five campuses for the 2026/2027 academic year. This is the first group of students to enter the institutions as part of one unified college following the transition to ABCAS.

Students are pursuing programmes through the School of Business, Innovation and Information Technology at the Eustace Hill Campus; the School of Tourism and Hospitality at the Muriel O'Mard Campus; the School of Technical and Vocational Education at the Harrison Centre; the School of Education, Arts, Science and Industry at the Dr. Alister Francis Campus; and the School of Agriculture at the Glanvilles Campus.

The School of Agriculture welcomed its first-ever cohort of eight students, marking the beginning of student enrolment in the school. The milestone forms part of a wider effort to strengthen agricultural training and create clearer pathways for young people interested in careers and entrepreneurship within the sector.

The Honourable Daryll S. Matthew, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, said the first intake



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demonstrates the broader purpose behind bringing the five institutions together under ABCAS.

*“ABCAS was established to do more than bring five institutions under one name. It allows us to pool resources, expertise and facilities that previously existed across separate institutions and use them more effectively for the benefit of our students. It also gives us an opportunity to reduce duplication, strengthen the quality and range of programmes available, and create clearer pathways from education and training into the areas where our country needs skilled people. Ultimately, the measure of ABCAS will be the opportunities it creates for our people and the contribution its graduates make to the continued development of Antigua and Barbuda.”*

President of ABCAS, Dr. E. Jonah

Greene, said the arrival of the College’s first intake is significant as ABCAS builds on the collective strengths of its five campuses.

*“For our students, being part of ABCAS should mean access to the collective strengths of the entire College. Each of our campuses brings its own expertise, experience and areas of specialisation, and our responsibility is to ensure those strengths work together. As we welcome this first intake, our focus is on providing students with a strong education, practical preparation and the support they need to move*

*confidently into further study, employment or entrepreneurship.”*

As the 2026/2027 academic year gets underway, ABCAS welcomes its new and returning students and looks forward to a productive year of learning, growth and opportunity across all five campuses.

The College remains committed to providing relevant, high-quality academic, technical and vocational education that equips students with the knowledge and skills to pursue their ambitions and contribute meaningfully to nation-building.



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## HAPPI at 80: Yorks Stalwart Lolita Edwards Receives New Home on Her Birthday

It was a birthday celebration unlike any other for Yorks community stalwart, Lolita Edwards, who received the keys to a new home as she marked her 80th birthday on Tuesday.

Edwards was surrounded by relatives, friends, government officials and members of the Yorks community as the home was formally handed over under the Home Advancement Programme for the Poor and Indigent (HAPPI).

Minister of Social and Urban Transformation, Rawdon Turner, described the occasion as a fitting tribute to a woman who has devoted many years to her community.

"Lady Edwards, happy birthday. On behalf of the people of Antigua and Barbuda and the Gaston Browne administration, we are here today to present you with a beautiful home," Minister Turner said.

"The journey might have been long, but we are at the finish line. We answered the call, and we are here. The proof is in the pudding."

Senator Angelica O'Donoghue was instrumental in helping to advance the initiative and was recognised for her advocacy and involvement in ensuring that Edwards received the assistance she needed.

Tourism Minister and St John's Rural North MP Charles "Max" Fernandez was also present for the milestone occasion and joined in celebrating Edwards, who is widely regarded as a stalwart of the Yorks community.

HAPPI Coordinator Inspector Veldon Ragguette said the project reflected the value of government, corporate citizens and residents working together to assist vulnerable members of society.

"What I like about HAPPI is that it is a community project, where we come together to assist the less fortunate in the respective communities," he said.





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## Twin Sisters Sonya and Sonia Receive New Home Under HAPPI Programme



Twin sisters Sonya and Sonia Knight were all smiles on Tuesday as they received the keys and certificate to their new home in All Saints through the Government's Home Advancement Programme for the Poor and Indigent (HAPPI).

The 30-year-old sisters were presented with the completed home during a ceremony attended by government officials, community representatives and

members of the team responsible for its construction.

The house is the 190th home delivered under the initiative, which assists vulnerable residents who cannot afford to build or adequately repair their homes.

Minister of Social and Urban Transformation Rawdon Turner congratulated the sisters and acknowledged

that they had waited some time for the project to be completed.

Turner said that although 190 homes have been delivered, the programme has identified at least another 500 homes that need to be built.

He appealed for patience from applicants, explaining that delays are caused by limited manpower and the large number of vulnerable people re-

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# Local News



quiring assistance.

“It’s not that we have forgotten you. It’s not that we don’t care. It is a manpower issue. It is an issue with the availability of resources,” Turner said.

The minister disclosed that the Government is examining additional options, including prefabricated homes, to complement the work currently be-

ing undertaken and accelerate the delivery of housing assistance.

Turner also defended the involvement of inmates from His Majesty’s Prison in constructing homes under the programme. He said their participation allows them to give back to society, develop practical skills and improve their chances of finding employment

after completing their sentences.

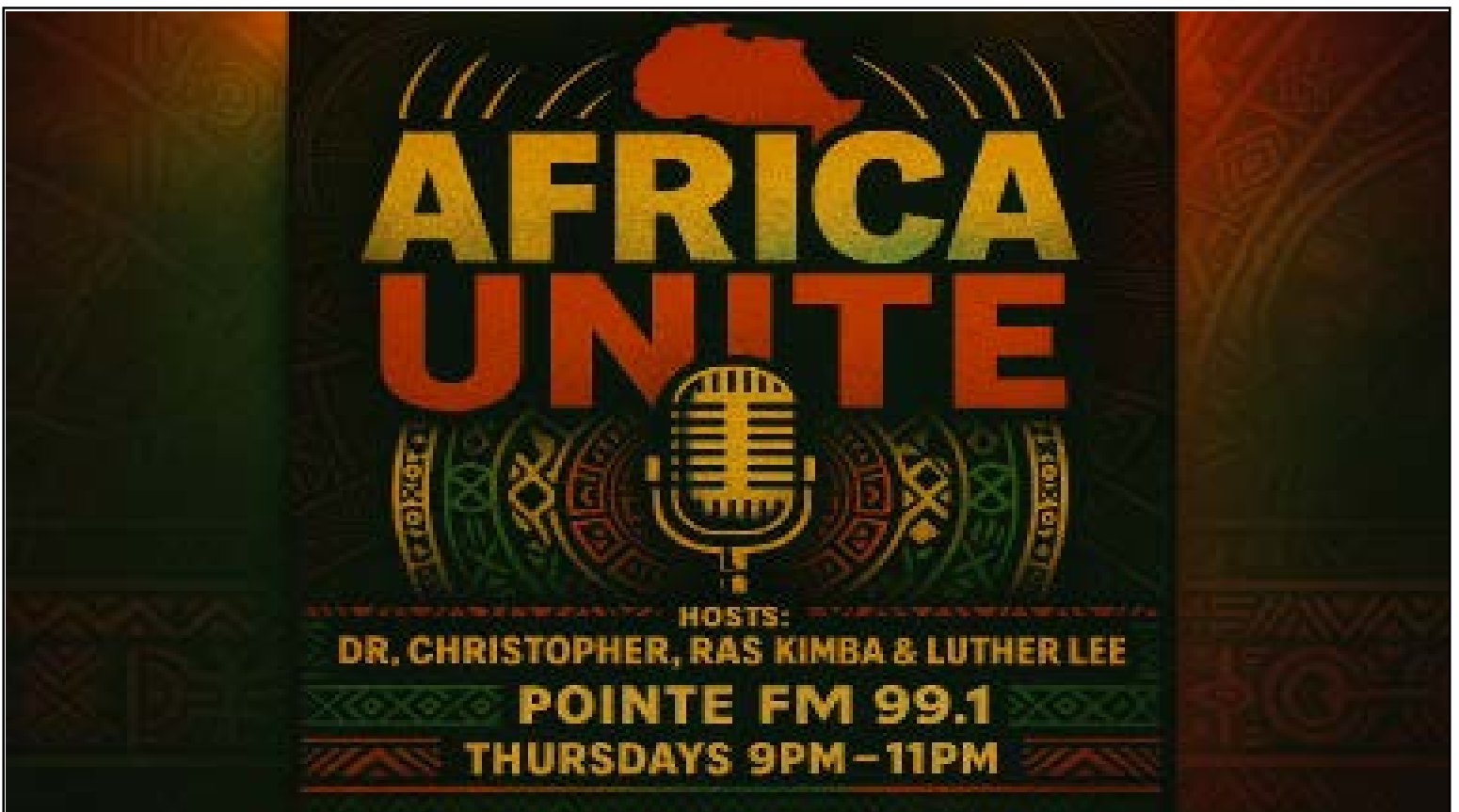
“A part of rehabilitation should be community service. A part of rehabilitation should be learning a skill, so when you leave, you’re better able to contribute positively back towards society,” he said.

Turner recalled encountering former inmates who had secured employment in construction after learning valuable skills through the HAPPI Programme.

Operations Manager of the Social Protection Board Mary Baltimore said the sisters were receiving more than a physical structure, they were being given a home in which they could experience peace, happiness and security.

She thanked Minister Turner, the HAPPI team led by Inspector Veldon Raguette, prison officers, inmates and everyone who contributed to completing the project.

Caretaker for All Saints East and St Luke Lamin Newton described the handover as another demonstration of the Government’s commitment to helping vulnerable citizens.



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## AT&LU Takes First Step In Representation of The Supervisory Unit at WIOC

The Antigua Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU) is reporting that it has held its first official meeting with members of the Supervisory Unit at the West Indies Oil Company (WIOC), which it currently now represents.

AT&LU President Bernard de Nully along with the shop stewards held the meeting as a way of consulting with the membership in preparation for the submission of proposals for its first Collective Bargaining Agreement on behalf of the supervisors for consideration by Management. "The CBA will ensure the Supervisor rights and entitlements are protected for years to come," de Nully stated.

Meanwhile, the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) says it continues to support stronger trade unionism across the region as workers organise, build representation, and advance their collective rights.

It noted that in Antigua and Barbuda, President de Nully, CCL Zone Representative and member of the General Council, participated in the first official meeting with members of the AT&LU within the Supervisory Unit of West Indies Oil Company (WIOC).



"This is more than the negotiation of an agreement—it is about building worker representation, securing rights and entitlements, and ensuring that supervisors have a collective voice in shaping their terms and conditions of employment.

Across the Caribbean, our comrades continue to organise, negotiate and strengthen the institutions of trade unionism. The CCL stands with them in advancing decent work, collective bargaining and social justice," it said in a statement.

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## Operation Restore Confidence Nets More Than 30 Suspects, Firearms and Ammunition



**Assistant Commissioner of Police and head of the Criminal Investigations Department, Lisborn Michael**

The Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda has arrested more than 30 people for various offences since the launch of Operation Restore Confidence on 15th August 2026, as authorities intensify efforts to combat robberies and other serious crimes across communities.

Assistant Commissioner of Police and head of the Criminal Investigations Department, Lisborn Michael, said the operation was developed following consultations with communities through Stronghold meetings, with information gathered being used to guide police operations.

“We are trying our best to deal with the situation where the whole issue of the robberies are concerned within the various communities,” Michael said, stressing that “one robbery is far too many.”

According to the senior police officer, during the first week of Operation Restore Confidence, police arrested and charged 22 people for serious offences, including break-ins and robberies. Those matters are now before the courts.

To date, more than 30 people have been apprehended for different offences,



es, while police have also recovered six firearms and one modified flare gun. The recoveries bring the total number of firearms seized by police this year to 45.

Since Lisborn’s interview last Saturday, the number is expected to increase.

Police also recovered 43 rounds of ammunition during the operation, bringing the year-to-date total to 351 rounds.

ACP Michael also disclosed that the operation has resulted in the apprehension of individuals who were wanted in other jurisdictions in connection with murder investigations.

He said those individuals have since been returned to their respective countries.

The head of the CID also raised concerns about similarities between some of the robberies being committed in Antigua and Barbuda and crimes occurring in other Caribbean jurisdictions.

tions.

He specifically referenced the firearm reportedly used during the robbery at the All Saints Road Service Station last week, noting that he had not seen that particular type of firearm in Antigua and Barbuda for some time.

Michael said the weapons appeared to be more consistent with firearms used in robberies in Jamaica.

Against that backdrop, Assistant Commissioner of Police Lisborn Michael called for law enforcement agencies to review and strengthen their existing Memoranda of Understanding, particularly in relation to information sharing. He stressed the importance of proper screening and comprehensive background checks on people entering Antigua and Barbuda.

Michael also publicly commended the police officers assigned to Operation Restore Confidence for their work in addressing serious crimes and improving public safety.

## CIBC Caribbean Names Vincere Barthley- Cochrane As its Unsung Hero, 2026



The annual exercise undertaken by CIBC Caribbean Bank to single out individuals who make outstanding contributions to their respective communities and whose works hitherto go unnoticed...has named Vincere Barthley-Cochrane as its Unsung Hero for 2026.

In an unveiling ceremony held at the bank on Tuesday, Barthley-Cochrane was presented with a cheque for US\$5,000.00, a plaque and a bouquet of flowers. The presentation was made by the bank's country manager, Priscilla Leonce who explained the bank's rationale for mounting the competition each year.

"We celebrate individuals whose quiet, consistent work touched lives across our community — people who showed up, day after day, without applause, without cameras, and without expecting a single word of thanks. That event reminded all of us at CIBC why this award exists in the first place: because the true measure of a commu-

nity isn't found in its headlines, but in the everyday acts of service that hold it together," she remarked.

She added that at CIBC, they believe their role goes far beyond banking. "We are woven into the fabric of this country — its businesses, its families, its future. And nothing reflects that connection more than an event like this, where we get to shine a light on people whose contributions might otherwise go unnoticed: the volunteer who shows up before dawn, the mentor who never misses a call, the neighbour who quietly carries others through their hardest days," she explained.

Barthley-Cochrane is being singled out as a passionate educator, youth advocate, mentor, and community leader whose life's work has been dedicated to nurturing, empowering, and creating opportunities for young people.

Throughout her years of service, one theme has remained constant: her unwavering belief that every child deserves a chance to succeed.

"She firmly believes that when young people are given guidance, encouragement, and opportunities, they can achieve remarkable things. This conviction has shaped her work in education, church ministry, sports, community service, and foster parenting. Her greatest joy comes from seeing young people discover their potential and develop into confident, responsible adults," her profile reads.

Barthley-Cochrane community work includes serving as a netball coach, an executive of the National Netball Association, choir director for the All Saints Anglican Church Youth Choir, an officer of the Antigua Girls Guide Movement, a teacher and foster parent.

The second place in the contest went to Rita Phillip-Harris who received a cash prize off US\$2,500.00.

Barthley-Cochrane will represent Antigua and Barbuda at the Caribbean Unsung Hero competition that will take place over the coming months in Barbados.



The poster features a vibrant background image of three carnival dancers in elaborate costumes with large, colorful feathered headdresses. The costumes are adorned with gold jewelry and sequins. The background is a mix of bright colors and abstract geometric shapes.

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**06**

SEPTEMBER

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**09**

SEPTEMBER

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SEPTEMBER

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SEPTEMBER

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# Regional News

## Surinamese drug kingpin arrested in Colombia after more than a decade on the run

Colombia has confirmed that Surinamese-born drug kingpin Eldrich Boedhoe has been arrested in the city of Medellín, ending an 11-year man-hunt.

Boedhoe, who still has to serve a 12-year prison sentence in the Netherlands, had considered himself untouchable in the South American country and for years served as a key player in the transatlantic illegal drugs trade.

Video footage released by Colombian authorities shows the man in his fifties sitting quietly on a terrace in the upscale Laureles neighbourhood. The peace was abruptly disturbed when a Colombian cop suddenly pulled him from his chair and put him in handcuffs. Boedhoe, who appeared completely surprised, did not resist arrest.

Boedhoe has since been handed over to the Colombian Public Prosecution Service. He is being held in custody awaiting his extradition proceedings.

Authorities said the arrest is the result of intensive international cooperation. INTERPOL had been searching for the Surinamese-Dutch national for years using the so-called "Red Notice", an international arrest warrant for the most wanted criminals.

He was eventually traced to Colombia, and according to judicial authorities, Boedhoe fulfilled a crucial, coordinating a pivotal role within an international drug cartel. They said that the network was involved in collecting and shipping cocaine from Colombia to Europe, with the Netherlands, France and Spain as the main final destinations.

The investigation that led to his conviction at the time focused on cocaine smuggling in 2012. At the time, the cartel used drug couriers on regular scheduled flights, hiding the drugs in suitcases with false bottoms to circumvent airport checks.



Boedhoe's criminal career is impressive. As early as October 2010, he was sentenced by the Court of Appeal in the Netherlands to a prison term of four and a half years for his involvement in the smuggling of an estimated 120 kilos of cocaine. At the time, he organised drug shipments hidden in shipping containers with bananas.

After serving this sentence, he emerged as a "drug kingpin" eventually leading to his 12-year jail term for large-scale drug trafficking. But he escaped in 2015, settling in Medellín, the notorious birthplace of the Colombian drug trade.

bian drug trade.

The authorities said that during his 11 years on the run, Boedhoe managed to forge alliances with local Colombian drug organisations and continued to coordinate the logistics behind cocaine shipments to Europe.

They said his fondness for riding his motorcycle through the city ultimately proved fatal, and law enforcement agencies set their sights on him and followed him on Sunday to the terrace in Laureles, where his freedom came to an end. (CMC)

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## CPL Hall of Fame award named in honour of Sir Garfield Sobers



The Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) has announced that the trophy presented to each year's player inducted into its hall of fame will be officially named the Sir Garry Sobers Award, in tribute to the man universally recognised as the greatest all-rounder West Indies cricket has ever produced.

The naming follows the recent launch of the CPL Hall of Fame which will honour two inductees annually, one player and one off-field contributor.

Dwayne Bravo and Ian Bishop were confirmed as the inaugural class, and the CPL has now secured the Sobers family's blessing to attach Sir Garry's name to the award, marking one of the most significant moments in

the league's history.

As one of the finest cricketers the game has ever seen and a defining figure of West Indies cricket, Sir Garry's name gives prestige to the Hall of Fame recognition.

The Sir Garry Sobers Award will be presented for the first time at the CPL Hall of Fame Gala Dinner on September 15, 2026 at the Hilton Barbados.

The evening is being held in support of the Sir Clive Lloyd Healthcare Foundation's prostate cancer awareness, testing, and early detection work across the Caribbean.

With the trophy carrying Sir Garry's name the gala brings together two of West Indies cricket's most respected

figures for a single showpiece night in support of the region.

Pete Russell, CEO of CPL, said "Sir Garry Sobers was, without question, the greatest all-rounder the game has ever seen, and having his name on this award means a great deal to everyone at CPL. We are enormously grateful to the Sobers family for trusting us with his name and his legacy. It gives this trophy, and this hall of fame, a weight our players will carry with real pride. To present it for the first time at a gala dinner in support of Sir Clive Lloyd's Healthcare Foundation makes 15 September an even more prestigious night for West Indies cricket." (CMC)

# Regional News



## Evidence handed over as MV Barima accused trio further remanded

The three men facing murder charges in connection with the catastrophic July 18 sinking of the MV Barima were further remanded to prison on Monday, following state prosecutors' confirmation that full disclosure of evidence has been handed over to the defense.

Vessel Captain Kevin Price, Chief Mate Rondell Roberts, and Goods Superintendent Delon Granderson appeared virtually before Magistrate Ravindra Mohabir at the Charity Magistrate's Court. The court granted the defence until September 14 to review the State's evidence and decide whether to file preliminary statements.

Should they choose to do so, Magistrate Mohabir set an October 19 deadline for submission, with formal paper committal proceedings scheduled to begin on November 16.

The formal murder charges, instituted following legal advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), stem from one of the deadliest maritime disasters in recent memory. The vessel capsized on the night of July 18, en route to Port Kaituma, Region One from Georgetown. The tragedy claimed 73 lives, including children, while 76 survived. At least 30 individuals remain unaccounted for at sea.

The court appearance follows emotional scenes earlier in the legal process when Captain Price broke his silence while being escorted in handcuffs into



Name: Kevin Price

the Georgetown Magistrates' Court. Overcome with tears, the 40-year-old Melanie Damishana resident shouted out that the government-assigned vessel was wildly unseaworthy and 87 years old.

"I ain't deserve this, father God... I ain't deserve this," Price cried out to reporters outside the courthouse, alleging the ferry lacked critical safety gear, including a functional anchor, radar, search and rescue transponders, and an Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB).

Price further alleged that the ship's inflatable life rafts had been expired for two years. "Those life rafts expired since 2022, and maritime did an inspection and did not write off that vessel," he claimed.

The disaster has ignited intense public scrutiny surrounding regulatory oversight, vessel maintenance, and poten-

tial overloading. While survivors and grieving relatives maintain the ferry was carrying far too many passengers and heavy cargo, government authorities have continued to deny claims of overloading.

All three defendants, Price, Roberts, 42, of Grove Public Road, and Granderson, 33, of Fellowship, will remain in custody pending the start of November's committal proceedings.

The captain of the ill-fated MV Barima and two other senior crew members were jointly charged back in July, with murder over the ferry disaster that claimed more than 100 lives off the Essequibo coast. The trio was hauled before the Georgetown Magistrates' Court, where they were remanded to prison pending the start of legal proceedings. The indictable charge was read by Chief Magistrate Judy Latchman, who remanded all three men to prison. The matter was transferred to the Charity Magistrate's Court and adjourned to August 3, 2026.

Meanwhile, in a press release, police said following legal advice obtained from the Director of Public Prosecutions, the three employees attached to the Transport and Harbour Department were charged with the offence of murder, contrary to common law, in relation to the tragic deaths of passengers who were on board the MV Barima. (Kaieteur News)

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## Canada strikes back with tariffs on about \$20 billion worth of US goods

Canada struck back at United States President Donald Trump on Tuesday with tariffs on about \$20 billion worth of US goods, in response to the latest round of tariffs on Canada.

The outcome could resonate far beyond Canada, showing other governments whether a smaller US ally can withstand Trump's economic pressure.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney says US demands could hollow out key Canadian industries and limit the country's independence, while Trump's threats to Canadian sovereignty have rallied the public behind him.

"Carney and Canada have become symbolic of resistance to him," Canadian historian Robert Bothwell said.

"And what he'll want to do is make an example of Carney and Canada and

theoretically terrify everybody else while in fact showing them that they need to remove themselves even further from the United States."

The tariffs hit hundreds of American products, including steel, aluminum, cheese, appliances, clothing, cosmetics and farm equipment, at rates of 15%, 25% or 50%.

Canada says its tariffs match Washington's dollar for dollar and rate for rate. They take effect at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday under an executive action known as an order in council and cover about \$20 billion in American goods, roughly 6% of the \$333.6 billion the United States exported to Canada last year.

RBC Economics, the research arm of the Royal Bank of Canada, said the measures were unlikely to dent

US growth overall but could hit some businesses hard.

Canada has already gone beyond tariffs in other ways. Eight of its 10 provinces continue to restrict or ban sales of US alcohol.

The Distilled Spirits Council says US spirits exports to Canada fell more than 70% year over year after those restrictions took effect.

Since Canada-US trade talks collapsed August 21, Trump and his administration have unleashed a barrage of tariffs, threats and personal attacks portraying Canada as weak and dependent.

On Monday, Trump threatened to ban the sale of aircraft from Canada's Bombardier, unless they manufacture planes in the United States. (AP)



## Nepal flood death toll rises as rescuers scour tunnels

The death toll from Nepal's devastating flood rose on Tuesday to 1,357, with 5,326 people still missing, the country's disaster authority said nearly two weeks after the August 26 disaster.

In China, 43 people were confirmed dead and 519 missing, according to state media, bringing the overall toll to 1,400 dead and 5,845 missing.

Authorities in Nepal have been trying to verify the numbers of missing people by collating data from across the country.

"We have been compiling reports and verifying them. That is what has caused the increase in the number," Prakash Pokhrel, assistant spokesman at the disaster authority, told AFP.

"We are trying to get to a number that is close to reality."

Rescue work continued in Nepal for a 14th day after the glacial and mountain collapse near the China-Nepal border swept away roads, bridges and homes.

Nepali rescuers are focusing on three hydropower projects where they believe workers could still be trapped, the disaster agency said.

Hundreds of hydropower workers are among the missing, but the rescue of three from deep inside tunnels — two Nepalis on Friday and a Chinese man on Saturday — has raised hopes that others could still be alive.

"Our search and rescue operation is ongoing," Dharam Raj Uprety, chief of the country's disaster authority, told AFP.



"We are hoping that there might still be survivors in at least three projects, and we are pushing our operations there."

Foreign experts, including from China, India and South Korea, are aiding Nepali teams.

Nepal's foreign ministry said it had not given up hope of finding survivors.

"Hopes of finding survivors remain, and the reported number of people missing inside the tunnels remains unverified," the ministry said in a statement.

With mortuaries overflowing, Nepal has buried hundreds of bodies in mass graves after collecting DNA samples for future identification, according to police.

While the exact cause of the glacial collapse is unclear, climate change is accelerating glacial melt worldwide, increasing the risk of such disasters.

Nepal, a largely rural nation of 30 million people that has contributed little to the greenhouse gas emissions driving global warming, has said reconstruction could cost billions of dollars.

David Fisher, of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said reaching communities isolated by the floods was a daunting task because of "narrow and dangerous" access routes.

"Every delay means families wait longer for the support they urgently need," he said in a statement. (AFP)



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## WHO says it needs 5,000 more healthworkers to tackle Ebola in DRC



“The problem is to identify those fast enough to make sure that we can cover the growing need,” he explained.

“Every treatment centre that is fully staffed and functional means more life saved and a stronger chance of bringing this outbreak under control.”

The current Ebola epidemic is caused by the Bundibugyo strain, for which there is currently no approved vaccine or treatment. Several treatments and vaccines are being tested.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said on Tuesday it needed 5,000 extra health workers to help tackle the highly contagious Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The outbreak, officially detected in mid-May, has spread to six provinces in the country’s conflict-plagued east and northeast.

Since May 15, the virus has killed 3,175 people among the more than 6,600 confirmed infected, the WHO said, citing official Congolese figures.

Health services lack sufficient staff and resources and have been overwhelmed by the surge in cases of Ebola, which is transmitted through contact with bodily fluids and can cause severe internal and external bleeding and organ failure.

The WHO said it hoped to create 3,000 beds for patients in Ebola treatment centres in the DRC.

With three medical staff needed for each patient, that means training 9,000 health workers, said Luca Fontana, a senior technical official with the United Nations’ health agency.

“More than 900 beds have been built within the first two months of the response and we have now reached close to 1,400 beds across 59 treatment centres,” he told a press briefing in Geneva.

“Despite this extraordinary effort, we estimate that another 1,600 beds will be required to meet the rapidly growing needs,” he continued.

“Right now we have nearly 4,000 healthcare workers currently working inside the treatment centres. So it means we need 5,000 more.”

Fontana said the health ministry in Kinshasa was racing against time to find suitable medical staff in other regions to bring into the Ebola-affected provinces.

It has hit regions in the north and east where the presence of the state is weak, health infrastructure is largely lacking and myriad armed groups have roamed for decades.

Fontana said that while in the initial stages, most patients admitted to treatment centres came from Bunia, the capital of Ituri province, sick people were now arriving from villages “far beyond” the epicentre.

This was “a clear sign” that the outbreak is spreading and the WHO response “must adapt”, he stressed.

Ebola has killed more than 15,000 people in Africa in the last 50 years.

The worst outbreak previously recorded in DR Congo killed nearly 2,300 people of the 3,500 reported infected between 2018 and 2020. (AFP)

## Asbestos 'nearly everywhere' after 9/11 - new documents reveal air-quality concerns



New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani released a tranche of 170,000 documents that show officials had concerns about air quality in Manhattan soon after the 9/11 attacks, even as the public was told the air was safe.

The mayor said the documents reveal asbestos was found “nearly everywhere” they tested near Ground Zero, the site where the World Trade Center towers collapsed in 2001.

“People got sick because the leaders they trusted lied and told them they were safe to breathe in toxic air,” Mamdani said at a news conference with survivors.

Illnesses related to the dust and smoke from the collapse of the Twin Towers have claimed more lives than the attacks themselves,

US health officials say.

The document release resolves a lawsuit brought by advocacy group 9/11 Health Watch, which sued the city for the documents.

City officials found 68 boxes of the documents last year. Officials had previously said they did not have them.

“Administration after administration has ignored those calling for answers and clarity,” Mamdani said, standing next to television host and 9/11 survivor advocate Jon Stewart. “We will do no such thing.”

Thousands of people have experienced health effects like cancer from the terrorist attacks, including many who have died, after breathing in hazardous contaminants from

the building collapses.

The pages of air quality reports and other documents were released through an online portal, timed with the 25th anniversary of the attacks.

Mamdani said City Hall will spend more than \$34m (£25m) on the effort. He said the documents show what the city “knew about the toxic air around Ground Zero, when they knew it, and how they acted to limit liability”.

More documents are to be shared over the course of the next year.

The release comes after years of survivors advocating for more transparency from city officials.

Speaking at the news conference on Tuesday, Stewart said the documents show the city didn’t recognise that the air that everyone was

breathing in downtown Manhattan was toxic until October of 2001.

“So to be fair to them, they only buried that information for 25 years,” he said sarcastically.

The documents include an October 2001 file known as the “Harding Memo”, in which an aide warned former Deputy Mayor Robert Harding - serving under Mayor Rudy Giuliani - that the city could face as many as 35,000 legal claims for its response to the attacks.

The document states that the city could be sued because health advisories caused individuals “to return to the area too soon (causing toxic exposure or emotional harm)”.

Days after the attack, city and federal officials - including the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - declared that the air near the Twin Towers was safe, though research suggests people were breathing in toxic chemicals.

Christine Todd Whitman, the head of the EPA at the time, later apologised for this declaration, saying the agency “did the very best we could at the time with the knowledge we had”.

Elizabeth Cascio, a former New York Fire Department (FDNY) emergency medical technician, previously told the BBC that she suffered sinus issues and headaches after responding to the attacks.

“We all knew the air quality was not safe – it was very toxic in terms of how it felt,” she said. “Initially, when I came off the bus and arrived at the Trade Center, you felt like you had to hold your breath. But there’s only so long you can hold your breath. I could feel the particles coming into my nose and mouth and thought: ‘This can’t be good’.” (BBC)



## CPL Hall of Fame award named after Sir Garfield Sobers



*Sir Garfield Sobers*

The Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) has announced that the trophy presented annually to the player inducted into its Hall of Fame will be officially named the Sir Garry Sobers Award, in tribute to the man widely regarded as the greatest all-rounder West Indies cricket has ever produced.

The move follows the recent launch of the CPL Hall of Fame, which will honour two inductees each year, one player and one off-field contributor.

Trinidadians Dwayne Bravo and Ian Bishop were confirmed as the inaugural inductees, and the CPL has now secured the blessing of the Sobers family to attach Sir Garry's name to the award, in what it described as one of the most significant moments in

the league's history.

One of the finest cricketers the game has produced and a defining figure in West Indies cricket, Sir Garry lends the award a prestige and history befitting the Hall of Fame it represents.

The Sir Garry Sobers Award will be presented for the first time at the CPL Hall of Fame Gala Dinner at the Hilton Barbados on Tuesday, September 15.

The event is being held in support of the Sir Clive Lloyd Healthcare Foundation's prostate cancer awareness, testing and early-detection initiatives across the Caribbean.

With the trophy now carrying Sir Garry's name, the gala will bring together two of the most respected figures in West Indies cricket for a

showcase evening in support of the region.

Pete Russell, CPL's chief executive officer, said, "Sir Garry Sobers was, without question, the greatest all-rounder the game has ever seen, and having his name on this award means a great deal to everyone at CPL. We are enormously grateful to the Sobers family for trusting us with his name and his legacy.

"It gives this trophy, and this Hall of Fame, a weight our players will carry with real pride. To present it for the first time at a gala dinner in support of Sir Clive Lloyd's Healthcare Foundation makes September 15 an even more prestigious night for West Indies cricket."

## Cricket Australia announces sale of Big Bash League franchise to private investors



*The Perth Scorchers won the men's Big Bash League in Australia in 2026, their sixth title.*

SYDNEY (Reuters) - Cricket Australia announced on Tuesday that private investment would be introduced into the Big Bash League (BBL) from the 2027-28 season, starting with the sale of the Melbourne Renegades Twenty20 franchise.

An earlier CA privatisation proposal, which would have allowed the sale of 49% of BBL franchises and 100% of a team from those states which have two, was scuppered in April by the cricket boards of New South Wales and Queensland.

"CA will invite bids from private owners for the Renegades with a view to them playing the 2027-28 season under new ownership," the governing body said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Pending the result of that process, CA will consider taking other clubs to market under a self-determina-

tion model that gives each state member the ability to assess the optimal pathway for its own club and community."

The Renegades, BBL champions in the 2018-19 season, are owned by Cricket Victoria, which backed CA's original plan.

CA had hoped to raise up to A\$600 million (US\$432.48 million) from its initial privatisation plan to safeguard the future of the sport, boost its finances and improve its competitiveness in the booming T20 market.

Despite a revenue boost from hosting a lucrative five-test series against cricket's financial powerhouse India, CA reported a net deficit of A\$11.3 million for the 2024-25 financial year.

"By opening the door to private investment in the Big Bash Leagues, Cricket Australia is taking a delib-

erate step to strengthen and secure the long-term future of the game," CA Chairman Mike Baird said in Tuesday's statement.

"Importantly, CA and its members will maintain control over the most significant aspects of Australian Cricket operations."

Influential figures in Australian cricket have voiced opposition to opening the league to private money, saying it could mean a damaging loss of local control.

Some of the concerns stemmed from the growing global footprint of Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise owners, who now control or hold stakes in T20 teams in England, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, and the West Indies.

CA Chief Executive Todd Greenberg said in May that he thought those fears were overblown.

"India are such a huge part of cricket, but we're not looking to sell the game to India. That's it, full stop," he told SEN radio.

"We are looking to add value to our clubs and bring good partners in, and the decision on who those partners are is at the behest of the states."

Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced in July that December's BBL season opener between the Renegades and Perth Scorchers would take place in the Indian city of Chennai.

# Sports News

## Gauff, Rybakina, and Zheng advance to US Open quarter finals

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Home favourite Coco Gauff and world number two Elena Rybakina sailed into the US Open quarter-finals on Monday, while China's Zheng Qinwen mounted another extraordinary fightback to upset six-times Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek.

Top seed Alexander Zverev beat Italian Luciano Darderi 6-2, 6-2, 7-6(3) at Arthur Ashe Stadium, the German surprised to finish before midnight after coming through a couple of five-setters earlier in the tournament.

Zverev, who is bidding for a second Grand Slam title after winning the French Open in June, avenged his defeat by Darderi at the Italian Open in Rome earlier this year.

Fourth seed Gauff outclassed compatriot Iva Jovic 6-1, 6-4 to set up a clash with fellow French Open champion Mirra Andreeva for a place in the semis.

Gauff is the sixth American player into the quarters, joining Jessica Pegula, Emma Navarro, Frances Tiafoe, Alex Michelsen, and Ben Shelton.

Rybakina continued her quest for a third major title with a 6-1, 6-4 win over former US Open champion Naomi Osaka, who was hampered by an Achilles tendon injury that had flared up in the previous round.

The victory leaves second seed Rybakina one win away from becoming world number one for the first time, with Olympic champion Zheng awaiting her in the quarters.

The win was another encouraging sign for Rybakina, who had arrived in New York with questions over her fitness after retiring from the Cin-



cinnati Open in the build-up to the tournament.

Zheng has become something of an escape artist at Flushing Meadows.

After coming back from a 0-5 deficit in the deciding set against third-round foe Madison Keys, she let the first five games slip through her fingers in 20 minutes against 2022 champion Swiatek.

However, she clawed her way back into the match and collapsed to the court with her face in her hands after sealing the win on the fourth match point.

Zheng is the first qualifier since Emma Raducanu in 2021 to reach the quarter-finals of the women's draw, as she battles back from a chronic elbow injury.

Andreeva's entertaining match against Anastasia Potapova ended on a sour note as the Austrian went down injured in the final game.

Potapova valiantly retook the court but could not prevent the inevitable

as Andreeva sealed the 5-7, 6-4, 6-3 win with a backhand strike before going across the net to hug her opponent.

The evening session in the men's draw was not short on drama. At Louis Armstrong Stadium, Karen Khachanov fought back to claim a 7-5, 4-6 6-7(6) 6-1, 6-4 win over 20-year-old American Learner Tien, while on the Grandstand court Bot-ic van de Zandschulp emerged victorious after a five-hour marathon against Arthur Gea.

The 21-year-old Gea had been one point away from becoming the first lucky loser in Grand Slam history to reach the quarter-finals, before his Dutch opponent engineered a 3-6, 6-7(0), 7-6(7), 7-6(3), 6-4 comeback win.

Earlier on Monday, Belgium's Alexander Blockx dispatched Argentine 24th seed Francisco Cerundolo 6-3, 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 to reach his first Grand Slam quarter-final.

## Dembélé, Kane and Mbappé headline shortlist for Ballon d'Or

PARIS (Reuters) - Harry Kane, Erling Haaland and Lionel Messi have all made the 30-man shortlist for the 2026 Men's Ballon d'Or, while Cape Verde's World Cup hero Vozinha has been nominated for the Yashin award, organisers France Football announced on Tuesday.

Kane had a stunning season with Bayern Munich and England, scoring 73 goals for club and country in 65 matches and helped secure a treble of Bundesliga, German Cup, and German Super Cup as well as leading his nation to the World Cup semi-finals.

Haaland netted 58 goals in 64 games for Manchester City and Norway, while eight-times Ballon d'Or winner

Messi had 75 goal contributions in 49 matches for Inter Miami and Argentina, who he helped to reach the World Cup final.

Also among those on the shortlist are Jude Bellingham, Kylian Mbappe, Ousmane Dembele and Lamine Yamal but not five-times winner Cristiano Ronaldo despite the Portugal forward lifting the Saudi Pro League title with Al-Nassr.

The women's shortlist includes Poland's Barcelona quadruple-winner Ewa Pajor, Alexia Putellas, who featured for Barca and Spain but has now joined London City Lionesses, and Manchester City's prolific Jamaica striker Khadija 'Bunny' Shaw.

Cape Verde's Vozinha was nominated for the Yashin Trophy awarded to the best goalkeeper, with his standout World Cup performances putting him on the 10-man shortlist after he helped his country advance from the tournament's group stage.

He will compete against Spain's World Cup-winner Unai Simon and Argentina's Emi Martinez plus fellow African nominees Yassine Bounou and Edouard Mendy.

The 70th edition of the Ballon d'Or will be staged in London for the first time at a ceremony on October 26 as a tribute to Stanley Matthews, who won the first Ballon d'Or.



Betis' Diego Llorente, right, challenges Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe, center, during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Betis and Real Madrid in Seville, Spain, Friday, Sept. 4, 2026. (AP)



## No wildcard guarantees for Diamond winners

*Jamaica's female sprinter Tina Clayton celebrates after winning the women's 100 meters at the Diamond League athletics meeting in Brussels, Belgium, on Saturday, September 5, 2026.*

World Athletics has overhauled the wildcard system for the 2027 World Championships in Beijing, and the changes could affect several of Jamaica's biggest stars from last weekend's Diamond League Final.

Their 2026 titles will no longer automatically translate into a guaranteed place at next year's global showpiece.

Under the updated rules, wildcard places for Beijing will now be awarded through three routes, up from two.

They are automatic entry for defending 2025 world champions, winners of this weekend's inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Championship in Budapest, and winners of the 2027 Wanda Diamond League season.

That final distinction is the crucial one. It means Diamond Trophy winners from last weekend's final in Brus-

sels, including men's 100-meter world champion Oblique Seville and reigning world silver medallist Tina Clayton, cannot count their 2026 titles towards a Beijing wildcard.

Seville's place is already secure as the reigning world champion from 2025. Clayton is not in the same position and will need either to successfully defend her Diamond League title next year or win gold in Budapest this weekend to secure an automatic berth.

Long jumper Tajay Gayle remains well positioned for a fifth consecutive World Championships appearance, but his route now appears more likely to run through Budapest this weekend or by retaining the Diamond League crown next summer.

A further 26 Jamaicans are set to compete at the Ultimate Championships in

Budapest from September 11 to 13, where victory could provide a more direct route to a Beijing wildcard.

The Jamaica Athletics Administrative Association will discuss the wildcard rule changes and their implications for team selection in the coming weeks after the Budapest meet concludes.

Meanwhile, Jamaica appears unlikely to benefit from the outstanding form of Olympic bronze medallist Rajindra Campbell, who became the first Jamaican to surpass 23 metres in the shot put while claiming the Diamond Trophy.

The national record holder, who is favoured to win the Ultimate Championship, has reiterated his intention to represent Türkiye at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, signalling that he has no plans to compete for Jamaica at the 2027 World Championships.