

Gas Station Operators Press Government For Higher Margins

Story on page 2

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Some gas station operators closed their businesses on Wednesday causing long lines as motorists were forced to wait for hours to be filled up at those which remained open

Local News



Gas Station Operators Press Government For Higher Margins

Pandemonium unfolded on Wednesday as traffic jams congested the streets of Antigua following industrial action by gas station operators across the island. The action commenced Wednesday morning, with only West Indies Oil Company outlets remaining open to serve motorists island-wide.

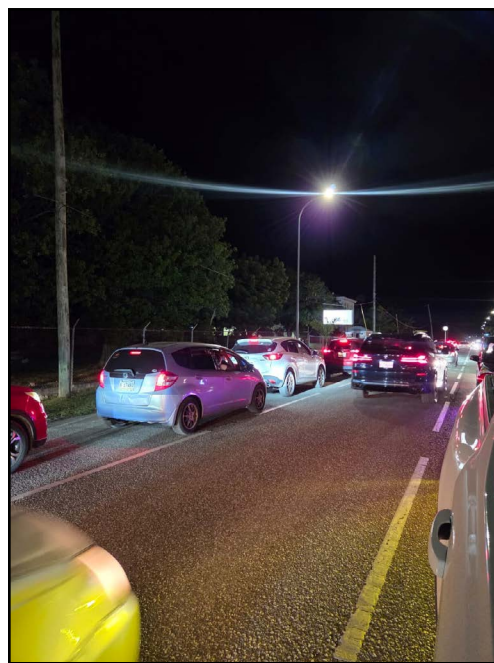
In a series of public statements, Prime Minister Gaston Browne condemned the action. According to the Prime Minister, the government had established an arrangement to assist gas station dealers until December. He remains adamant that the government has not “reneged on the agreement,” further calling the recent action “unjustifiable.”

In one post, the Prime Minister explained that “the gas station dealers are asking the customer to pay them more for gas and diesel” — an increase that would be entirely incurred by motorists without government subsidies.

The government had therefore initially brokered a deal to defer the increase until December, when the additional cost would be passed on to consumers. Prime Minister Browne maintains that “the permanent increase that the dealers are requesting has to be scientifically determined, not implemented arbitrarily,” in order to avert inflationary pressures that could undermine economic growth and development.

All WIOC locations operated late into the night to service motorists affected by the strike.

To confront the issue and avoid a recurrence, Prime Minister Browne has directed WIOC to invest in the neces-



sary infrastructure to establish additional locations across the island. He says the move is aimed at mitigating

the threat of an oligopoly “locking down the country to increase their margins.”

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Taxi Operators Call for Proper Policing as Freeland Reviews Concerns in St. John's

Taxi association representatives have called for proper policing in St. John's, saying parking violations and passenger solicitation are disrupting their operations around Heritage Quay and other sections of the city.

The concerns were raised during a walkthrough with Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism, Michael Freeland, who accompanied operators to several locations to examine the difficulties they face while serving cruise passengers.

Operators said designated taxi spaces were being occupied by drivers outside the association, while double-parking and vehicles stopped along yellow lines were restricting access and making it difficult for buses to manoeuvre.

They called for stronger police presence and consistent enforcement to address the practices, which they said were affecting the orderly movement of vehicles and the collection of passengers.

A representative outlining the concerns said some vehicles displaying airport taxi stickers were using spaces designated for the St. John's taxi association.

"Basically, parking and maneuverability across St. John's," the representative said, summarising the issues brought to Freeland's attention.

The walkthrough allowed association members to show the minister locations where improperly parked vehicles were making it difficult for buses to enter and leave the area. Their concerns extended beyond the designated taxi spaces to traffic movement through surrounding



streets.

Passenger solicitation within Heritage Quay was another issue raised during the visit.

The association operates from two areas, including a location closer to the cruise vessels. Representatives complained that individuals outside the association were approaching visitors before they reached the established taxi collection points and directing them elsewhere.

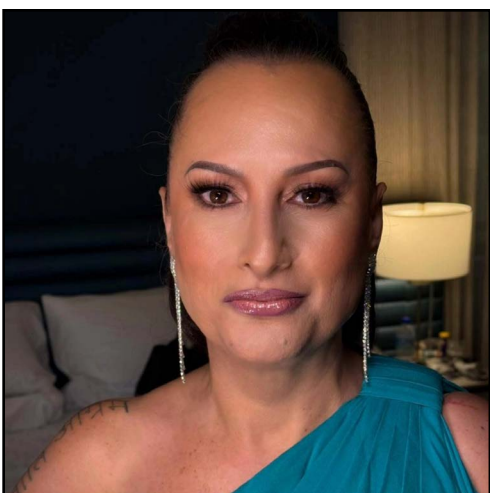
According to the account of the walkthrough, some solicitors positioned themselves between sections of the boardwalk to intercept passengers. Operators also raised concerns about drivers working without stickers identifying them as association members.

The representatives want greater oversight of parking and passenger collection arrangements, alongside proper policing to ensure that designated spaces remain accessible and traffic can move more freely.

They said addressing these concerns would allow taxi operators to carry out their work more efficiently and improve the experience of visitors moving through the cruise port area.

The walkthrough gave Freeland an opportunity to observe the locations identified and hear directly from operators. No specific enforcement measures or commitments were outlined in the account of the visit.

Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission to Host 4-Day Songwriting Workshop



The workshop will be facilitated by Kitwana Israel of AdvoKit Productions and Emmanuel Rudder, acclaimed Caribbean music professionals and accomplished songwriters and

producers whose collective experience spans the Caribbean, North America, and Africa.

With more than a decade of experience as a producer and songwriter, **Kitwana Israel** has collaborated with some of the Caribbean's most celebrated artists, including Kes, Machel Montano, Bunji Garlin, Patrice Roberts, Nailah Blackman, Skinny Fabulous, and Freetown Collective. His work reflects a deep commitment to advancing Caribbean culture and to creating opportunities for emerging creative talent.

Joining him is **Emmanuel Rudder**, a songwriter, producer, and creative mentor with more than two decades of industry experience. Rudder has written and co-written numerous regional

The Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission (ABFC) is taking another bold step to strengthen the nation's creative industries with the launch of the Songwriting Workshop, a four-day intensive programme designed to equip aspiring and emerging songwriters with the creative, technical, and business skills needed to succeed in today's evolving music industry.

Scheduled for 24 - 27 November 2026 with time and venue to be announced, the workshop forms part of the Commission's ongoing investment in music development and talent cultivation through its newly established Music Production & Artist Development Department, led by Devon "ChippyG" Joseph Jr.




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hits for artists including Machel Montano, Patrice Roberts, Kes, Benjai, Nailah Blackman, Denise Belfon, and Ricardo Drue. His extensive catalogue includes two Soca Monarch-winning productions and the co-written Olympic anthem "Conqueror," performed by Kes.

More than a traditional classroom experience, the Antigua Songwriting Workshop is designed as a hands-on creative incubator where participants will have the opportunity to conceptualize, write, record, and develop an original song from inception to completion.

Participants will receive practical training in:

- Songwriting techniques and creative processes
- Concept development and storytelling
- Freestyling, toplining, and traditional songwriting
- Vocal recording and production
- Harmonies, ad-libs, tuning, and editing
- Copyright, publishing, and music rights management
- Music distribution, marketing, and promotion
- Contracts, pricing, and music business models

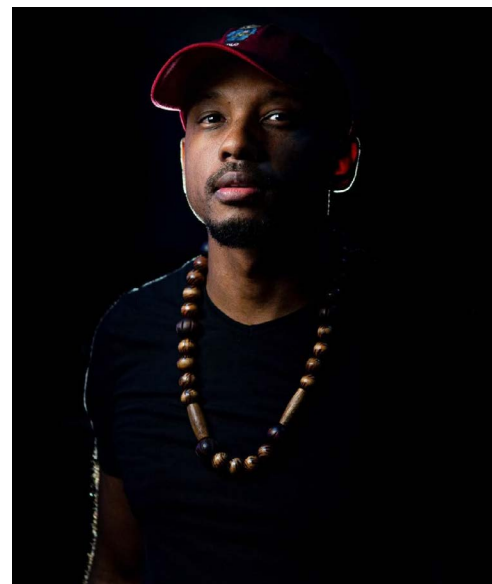


- Navigating the opportunities and challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in music

In addition, participants will gain valuable insight into every stage of the modern music production process, including recording, vocal production, mixing, mastering, artwork development, and digital release strategies.

The programme will conclude with a specialized media training session focused on artist branding, radio interviews, and public engagement, helping participants develop the confidence and communication skills necessary to promote themselves and their work effectively.

Ambassador Elizabeth Makhoul, Chairperson of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission, "The Songwriting Workshop represents ex-



actly the type of strategic investment we must make if we are serious about building a stronger and more competitive music industry. This workshop is not a one-off initiative. It is part of a larger vision to develop our music ecosystem, empower our creatives, and ensure that Antiguan and Barbudan music continues to make its mark across the world."

With very limited places remaining, interested participants in the writers' workshop are urged to secure their place without delay. Registration can be made by submitting your name, email address, and contact number via WhatsApp at (268) 727-9201 or by emailing them to info.nfo@ab.gov.ag. An acknowledgement of receipt by email or WhatsApp confirms registration.



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Local News

Antigua and Barbuda's Minister Joseph delivers poignant call for climate action following Tuvalu visit

Following his visit to Tuvalu on 5–6 October 2026, Environment Minister, Michael Joseph, shared his reflections at the Pre-COP31 Leaders' Plenary in Fiji on the evening of 6 October, just hours after returning.

His remarks drew congratulations from participants and were described as poignant—a reality check that will help frame the high-level ministerial sessions on 7 and 8 October.

Drawing parallels between Tuvalu's vulnerability and Barbuda's experience following Hurricane Irma, Minister Joseph stressed that climate action must protect people, culture, livelihoods, dignity and sovereignty. He made clear that keeping 1.5°C within reach means keeping islands livable and enabling communities to remain in the places they call home.

The Minister called for transformational investment and accessible,



predictable climate finance, while affirming Antigua and Barbuda's strong endorsement of the Taku Pakasoa Declaration and solidarity with the Pacific.

Minister Joseph is one of only two ministerial representatives from the Caribbean participating in the meeting, with Barbados also represented.

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INDEPENDENCE *Church Service*



SUNDAY
18
OCTOBER 2026



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CENTER



4:00 PM



NATIONAL
EVENTS
DEPARTMENT
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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Bring our culture. Shape our identity.

LOGO DESIGN COMPETITION

CASH PRIZE - EC \$2,500

ENTRY CRITERIA

- Open to Antiguan and Barbudan nationals at home and abroad of all ages.
- Use of AI-generated content is strictly prohibited
- Each participant may submit one logo via email to Performingartscompetition@ab.gov.ag
- Submissions must include the final logo in PNG and PDF formats-in both full-color and black-and-white (monochrome) versions-along with the editable source file.
- Include a short description explaining your design concept and how it reflects the theme *Bring our culture, Shape our identity*

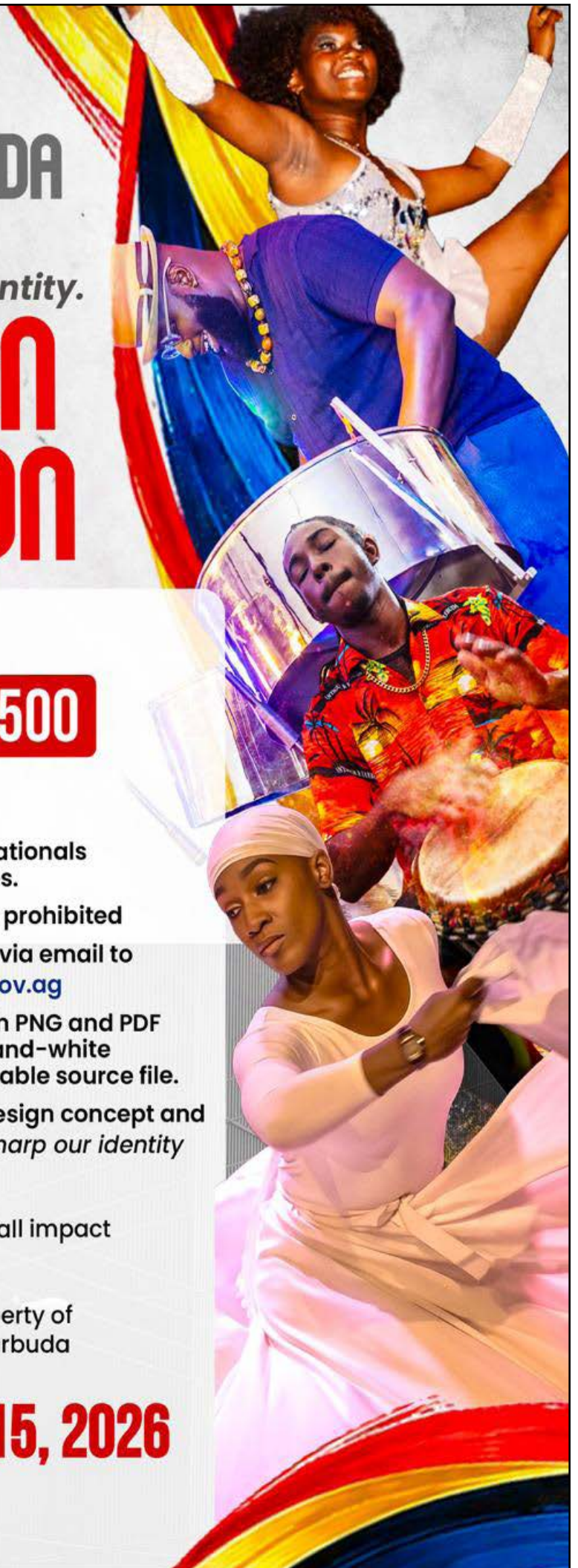
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DAKAR 2026



YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES

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Meet Antigua and Barbuda's Youth Olympians Bound for Dakar 2026

Antigua and Barbuda National Olympic Committee (ABNOC) has announced its team for the 2026 Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, Senegal, taking place from 31 October to 13 November 2026.

Intense preparations are underway as Antigua and Barbuda finalise plans for Dakar. ABNOC is confident it will field its strongest agegroup athletes to date and provides them with the experience and support needed to compete at the highest levels for youth sport. The Youth Olympic Games combine elite competition with education on antidoping, athlete welfare and life skills, giving promising young athletes invaluable international exposure.

The delegation will be led by ABNOC Chef de Mission Karen Joseph, a highly experienced and respected youth welfare officer, assisted by certified ABNOC Welfare Officer Eric Henry. Antigua and Barbuda will compete in three sports with a team of

five athletes.

Team roster

- Athletics

- Tyra Fenton — 200m (will carry the nation's flag at the Opening Ceremony) - Competing on 10th Nov

- Zonique Charles — Women's javelin - Competing on 9th Nov

- Aswald Baptiste — Athletics Track Manager

- Sonia Williams — Athletics Field Manager

- Table Tennis

- Stuti Kashyap — Women's singles

- Aleena Edwards — Team Manager

- Swimming

- Espriit Shaw — 100m fly, 50m fly, 100m freestyle, 50m breaststroke (Male Flag Bearer)

- Keziah Joseph — 200m freestyle, 100m freestyle, 50m freestyle, 50m fly

- Nelson MolinaFojo — Team Manager

The Youth Olympic Games were created by the International Olympic Committee and approved in 2007 to provide a global, Olympicstyle multisport event for talented young athletes that pairs highlevel competition with education on Olympic values, athlete welfare and antidoping.

The inaugural Summer Youth Olympics were held in Singapore in 2010, followed by the first Winter Youth Olympics in Innsbruck in 2012; Summer and Winter editions now alternate so there is a YOG every two years. Designed for athletes typically aged 14–18, the Games are smaller in scale than the senior Olympics and feature innovations such as mixedNOC teams and a Culture and Education Programme to foster sporting, social and personal development — Many Youth Olympic medalists go on to success at senior Olympic and international levels.

Hopeful Hearts to Launch Good Deeds Day at Government House on Friday

The Hopeful Hearts Foundation will on Friday mark Antigua and Barbuda's official launch of Good Deeds Day, a global initiative that unites non-profit organisations across more than 150 countries under the shared goal of spreading kindness and strengthening communities.

For Hopeful Hearts Founder Kristina Louisa, the initiative provides an opportunity for Antiguan and Barbudans to be a positive force in their country and communities.

The Hopeful Hearts Foundation has been selected as the national leader for Good Deeds Day for Antigua and Barbuda and it will play a central role in coordinating activities held under the banner of the initiative.

In Antigua and Barbuda, participating NGOs will come together to undertake a coordinated community service project as part of the initiative.

The Foundation will host the official launch on Friday, October 9, at Government House. The event will also serve as a pinning ceremony for members of the Antigua and Barbuda Scout Association, who will receive their Good Deeds badges from Chief Scout and Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams.

The Scouts will receive the honour following a collaborative effort between the Scout Association and the Hopeful Hearts Foundation, which saw essential items donated to the newly introduced Sickie Cell Unit at the Holberton Complex.

In a statement, Louisa hopes the initiative will motivate Antiguan and Barbudans to perform good deeds, and to utilize their capacity to make a positive difference.

She highlighted that during her two years coordinating initiatives through the Hopeful Hearts Foundation, ap-



proximately 2,000 people across Antigua and Barbuda have directly benefited, a majority of which are not made known to the public.

Good Deeds Day will potentially become an annual fixture in Antigua and Barbuda, with the first local observance scheduled for April 11, 2027. A registration form will go live

alongside Friday's launch, allowing members of the public to indicate their interest in participating in activities planned for Good Deeds Day.

Registration will be open to all Antiguan and Barbudans.

Halo Foundation Mobilises Assistance For the St. Vincent de Paul Facility

The Halo Foundation has mobilized assistance for the St. Vincent de Paul Care Facility with donations coming from Gaye Hechme of Island Living Antigua/Moongate and Cage Enterprises (of the late Everod Roberts), as well as the Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Williams (in their personal capacities).

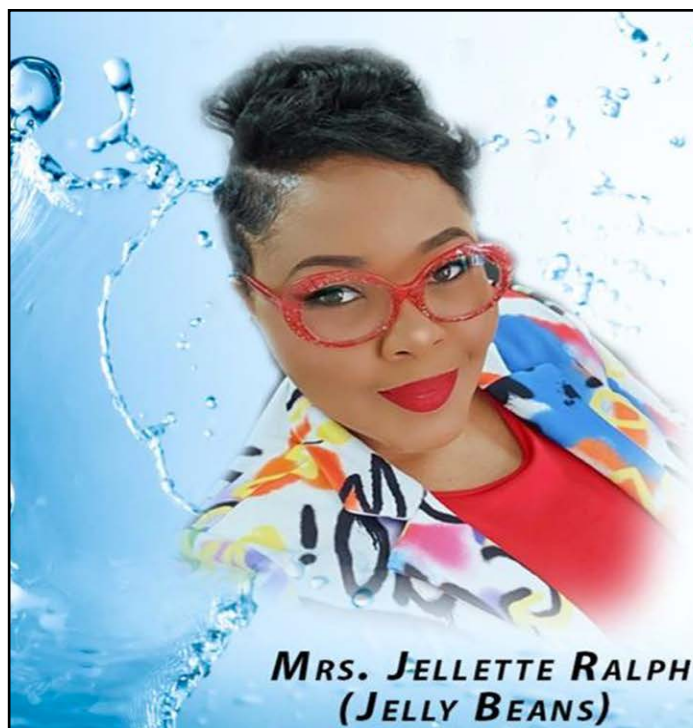
These individuals and organisations partnered to provide the funding for the St. Vincent de Paul Care Facility. The premises benefitted from a necessary reconstructed driveway and the installation of two brand new gates and motors.

The Board of St. Vincent de Paul, with active participation from Patricia Collins, was instrumental in the installation of a perimeter fence and strategic oversight.

The project was undertaken to improve accessibility and an additional gate was added to make entry and exit easier and safer for the elderly, who are brought to the facility on a daily basis.



This joint effort demonstrates the impact that can be achieved when individuals collaborate to address the needs of the vulnerable in the society.



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THURSDAY
22
OCTOBER 2026



SIR VIVIAN
RICHARDS
STADIUM



8:30 AM



NATIONAL
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Good Humans 268 Inc. Gets Help to Complete A Second National Flag Made from Bottle Caps



Momentum continues to build ahead of CHOGM 2026 as Good Humans 268 Inc. celebrates the completion of the second flag in its Commonwealth Bottle Cap Flag Project, created in collaboration with the Antigua and Barbuda Travel Agents Advisory Committee (ABTAAC).

The Canadian flag was brought to life using recycled bottle caps as members of ABTAAC joined the Good Humans 268 Inc. team at John Hughes to participate directly in the process. The collaboration represents another important step toward the ambitious goal of creating flags representing the 56 Commonwealth nations ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Antigua and Barbuda.

ABTAAC's support extended beyond the flag-making activity. The advisory committee also made a donation towards the ongoing recycling effort, helping to support essential supplies including garbage bags, gloves and glue needed for the work being carried out by Good Humans 268 Inc.

Members of the advisory committee were also able to accompany the CHOGM Task Force and Good Humans 268 Inc. to J.T. Ambrose Primary School as part of the ongoing CHOGM School Tour Outreach. This



gave the group an opportunity to experience another side of the initiative and to see firsthand how students are being engaged around CHOGM, the Commonwealth, recycling, environmental responsibility and national participation.

Through their involvement at both J.T. Ambrose Primary School and John Hughes, members of the advisory committee were able to gain a closer understanding of the hands-on work that Good Humans 268 Inc. has been undertaking and will continue to undertake across Antigua and Barbuda.

With two flags now completed, 54 remain, and Good Humans 268 Inc. is

calling on businesses, schools, community organisations, teachers, students, families and members of the general public to become part of what is developing into a national movement.

"This is bigger than making 56 beautiful flags," said Joshuanette Francis, President of Good Humans 268 Inc. "CHOGM has given us an opportunity to show what can happen when environmental action, inclusion, education and community participation come together. Every bottle cap collected has the potential to become part of a flag, but more importantly, every person who begins recycling becomes part of changing how Anti-



gua and Barbuda thinks about waste.”

The Bottle Cap Flag Project forms part of a wider national outreach initiative being implemented by Good Humans 268 Inc. in partnership with the CHOGM Task Force. Through the initiative, students across Antigua and Barbuda are learning about CHOGM, the Commonwealth, recycling and environmental responsibility while being encouraged to collect recyclable materials and take a more active role in protecting their communities.

However, the organisation says the long-term vision extends well beyond the CHOGM period.

While the colourful bottle-cap creations provide a visible representation of what can be achieved through recycling, Good Humans 268 Inc. is using the initiative to continue advocating for stronger systems, policies and legislation that support recycling and waste diversion nationally.

At the centre of that vision is also the creation of sustainable employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

“For us, recycling has never only been about removing a bottle from the environment,” Francis explained. “It is about asking what happens next. Can that bottle or bottle cap create value? Can the recycling industry create jobs? Can persons with disabilities be trained and employed within that system? Can we develop legislation that makes recycling part of how we operate every day rather than something we do occasionally? Those are the conversations we want this project



to continue long after CHOGM.”

Good Humans 268 Inc. is therefore encouraging members of the business community to get involved not simply as sponsors, but as active partners in creating a legacy.

Businesses can participate by collecting bottle caps and recyclable materials, supporting the creation of individual Commonwealth flags, encouraging staff participation, assisting with materials and resources, or partnering with the organisation on broader recycling and disability inclusion initiatives.

Schools and teachers are also being encouraged to continue incorporating recycling and environmental education into their classrooms and school communities. Students have already demonstrated tremendous enthusiasm throughout the national school outreach, reinforcing the organisation’s belief that changing behaviour among young people can ultimately influence households and communities across the country.

The collaboration with ABTAAC demonstrated the power of hands-on participation and practical support.



From helping create the Canadian flag, to contributing essential supplies, to joining the school outreach, the advisory committee was able to experience the initiative at multiple levels and see the scale of the work being undertaken.

As Antigua and Barbuda prepares to welcome the Commonwealth, Good Humans 268 Inc. believes the flags can become more than decorations. They can tell a story about creativity, partnership, environmental responsibility and the type of country Antigua and Barbuda wants to build beyond CHOGM.

There are now 54 flags left to create.

The invitation is open.

Good Humans 268 Inc. is encouraging Antigua and Barbuda to collect, recycle, participate and become part of the greatness—not only to prepare for CHOGM 2026, but to help build a more sustainable and inclusive Antigua and Barbuda where recycling creates opportunities, communities take responsibility for their waste, and persons with disabilities are included in the jobs and industries of the future.



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ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA 45TH INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

SUNDAY
18
OCTOBER

Independence Church Service

Precision Center

4:00 PM

THURSDAY
22
OCTOBER

National Youth Rally, Special Drills and Cheerleading Competition

Sir Vivian Richards Stadium

8:30 AM

SUNDAY
25
OCTOBER

National Food Fair

Sir Vivian Richards Stadium

10:00 AM

National Schools' Panorama

Sir Vivian Richards Stadium

6:00 PM

MONDAY
26
OCTOBER

National Heroes Day Wreath Laying Ceremony

Heroes Park – Sir Sydney Walling Highway

10:00 AM

National Independence Business Decor Competition

Starts: October 26

Ends: October 29

TUESDAY
27
OCTOBER

Voices in Harmony - Festival of Choirs

St. Anthony's Secondary School

8:00 PM

WEDNESDAY
28
OCTOBER

Schools' Independence Programs

Schools Across the State

Island Treasures Gala - Golden Age

Casa Palmadita

THURSDAY
29
OCTOBER

Barbuda Day Activities

Evening of Theatre

St. Anthony's Secondary School

7:00 PM

FRIDAY
30
OCTOBER

Independence Calypso Competition

Green Lounge – Cedar Valley

8:00 PM

National Dress and Flag Day

SUNDAY
1
NOVEMBER

Independence Flag Ceremony

Barbuda

7:00 AM

Independence Ceremonial Parade

Sir Vivian Richards Stadium

5:45 PM



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SCHEDULE IS TENTATIVE
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Jamaica recruiting health professionals from Cuba, Africa amid staffing shortages



The Government is turning to Cuba and Africa for emergency medical reinforcements as chronic staffing shortages continue to push the public health sector to its limits.

Health and Wellness Minister Dr Christopher Tufton told Wednesday's Post Cabinet Media Briefing that his ministry would be recruiting hundreds of medical professionals from Cuba and Nigeria in addition to those already here from Ghana.

"Over the next three years, the ministry will recruit some 300 specialist nurses, doctors and other health professionals to work in the Jamaican public health system," he said.

"In the case of Nigeria, the new agreement builds on health cooperation already under way. Previously, we had welcomed four nursing specialist educators under the Nigerian Technical Aid Corps Programme, who continue to contribute to specialist training and service delivery

in the public health system."

Tufton also explained how the 43 Ghanaian nurses who came in last month have been deployed across Jamaica's health sector.

"The Western Regional Health Authority (WRHA), which manages health facilities in St James, Westmoreland, Trelawny and Hanover, has received 18 of the specialist nurses," he said.

"The South East Regional Health Authority (SERHA), which oversees Kingston and St Andrew, St Thomas and St Catherine, has 13 nurses assigned. NERHA (North East Regional Health Authority, which includes St Ann, St Mary and Portland) has received two; and the Southern Region (Clarendon, Manchester and St Elizabeth) six. Four of the 43 have been deployed to the University Hospital of the West Indies."

The nurses are specialists in various areas, including Critical Care,

Paediatrics, Operating Theatre, Nurse/Midwife, Emergency, Oncology, and Mental Health/Psychiatric and are among the first cohort of a targeted 400 healthcare workers expected from Ghana under the four-year agreement between both countries.

Scores of Cuban health professionals left Jamaica starting in March after the Government discontinued its 50-year-old bilateral medical cooperation programme with Cuba. But Tufton explained that 157 doctors and nurses have since returned to the island.

"The largest complement, 69 professionals, has been assigned to South East Regional Health Authority, with 26 deployed to Southern Regional Health Authority and 28 to the Western Regional Health Authority," the health minister revealed.

"An additional 25 professionals have been assigned to the University Hospital of the West Indies, with the remaining nine engaged at the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the North East Regional Health Authority. This 157 is in addition to the 43 other Cuban medical professionals who had remained in country and brings the total cadre of Cuban medical professionals in the public health service to 200."

The Cuban health professionals are now engaged through direct individual contracts and not through the Cuban government. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Regional News

PAGE 19

UWI to honour Ralph Gonsalves with research scope at Cave Hill



The University of the West Indies (UWI) says it will dedicate a research scope in honour of former St Vincent and the Grenadines prime minister and academic, Dr Ralph Gonsalves.

Principal of the UWI Cave Hill Campus, Professor R Clive Landis, made the announcement during the Fifth Owen Arthur Distinguished Lecture last Saturday, at which Dr Gonsalves was the featured speaker.

Professor Landis said the University Council, at its April 17 meeting, approved the establishment of a Centre for Public Policy and Governance at the Cave Hill Campus in recognition of Dr Gonsalves's six decades of service, scholarship and political leadership across the Caribbean.

Gonsalves, 80, served as prime minister from 2001 to 2025, and as the leader of the Unity Labour Party (ULP) since 2001. He is the longest continuously serving prime minister since St Vincent's independence in 1979, with almost 25 years in office. He now serves as Opposition Leader after the ULP lost the November 2025 general election to the New Democratic Party (NDP) headed by attorney Dr Godwin Friday.

Prior to entering politics, Gonsalves attended the UWI, graduating with degrees in Economics and Government before receiving his doctorate from the

University of Manchester in 1974.

Gonsalves, an attorney, was called to the bar at Gray's Inn in London in 1981.

Professor Landis said that Gonsalves had requested that no building or centre be named after him and that in response, the university decided to dedicate a research scope focused on development, sovereignty and educa-

tion in his honour.

Professor Landis added that the Owen Arthur lecture, in honour of the former Prime Minister of Barbados, would serve as the inaugural entry in the body of research to be conducted through the Centre for Public Policy and Governance. (CMC)



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All applicants:

- **Must be 18 years and older**
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Regional News



Strong El Niño may bring drought, humid heat to Caribbean over next three months

The Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF) says a very strong El Niño could worsen drought and bring prolonged humid heat across parts of the Caribbean over the next three months, with heatwaves likely in some areas.

In its latest Caribbean Climate Outlook Newsletter for October to December, the Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum said the strong El Niño, during the second half of the Atlantic Hurricane Season and the transition out of the region's wet and heat seasons, could result in an expansion of impactful drought.

CariCOF said humid heat is expected to peak in October in the Guianas and could linger in the Lesser Antilles, potentially resulting in heatwaves.

The climate phenomenon is also associated with unusually irregular and infrequent tropical cyclone activity, as well as fewer showers, wet spells and excessive rainfall events.

El Niño occurs when trade winds across the tropical Pacific weaken or reverse, allowing warm surface water to move eastward towards the Americas.

"Nevertheless, high to extremely high potential for flooding, flash floods, cascading hazards and associated impacts remains across the region, with the possible exception of the ABC (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao) Islands and French Guiana and coral reef bleaching potential around the Bahamas and the Greater Antilles," CariCOF said.

It said that dusty Saharan air intrusions, though infrequent at this time, can further inhibit tropical cyclone activity, while exacerbating heat and deteriorating air quality.

According to CariCOF, as of September 1, short-term drought has developed in Antigua, north-northwest Bahamas, Central Cuba, Grand Cay-



man, Grenada, north east Puerto Rico, St Barts, St Kitts, St Vincent, Tobago, while severe (or worse) long-term drought is developing in Grand Cayman, west French Guiana, Tobago, St Barts, St Kitts, and the Windward Islands.

CariCOF said the January-to-March period will mark the progression towards the peak of the Caribbean dry season and the transition out of the cool season in March.

"This year's very strong El Niño, combined with unusable heat in the tropical North Atlantic, will drive higher than usual air temperatures across the Caribbean. The unusual heat should be more comfortable at

least through February, but will compound growing rainfall deficits in the many areas where agricultural and hydrological drought is in place or will likely build up."

CariCOF said that this could expand and worsen drought, with likely growing cascading impacts across various sectors of the economy even by May 2027.

"Strong El Niño events further tend to decrease the risk of severe weather throughout much of the region, but the risk of flooding, flash floods and cascading impacts remains moderate," CariCOF said, adding that, "The very strong Niño means an earlier start to the 2027 heat season." (CMC)

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Over 100 arrested in Belgium student protests over education costs

Police in Belgium have detained more than 100 people after demonstrations in the city of Liege against the rising cost of education turned violent in some places, as similar protests grip neighbouring France.

Students rallied in the city on Tuesday and Wednesday against overcrowded classrooms and difficulty accessing resources in Belgium's French-language education system.

Eighty people were detained during the protests, and 27 were formally arrested, the Belga news agency reported, citing the Liege police.

Some protesters damaged property and set fires, the police added.

Attendees insisted that shortcomings in the education system gave them no choice but to take to the streets.

"When we saw nothing was changing without protests, we decided we would start," said Amelia Di Salve, a 19-year-old studying to become a teacher, who added that protests in "France did influence us a little".

"We support each other because we're facing pretty much the same issues," Alfred, another 19-year-old student, told the Reuters news agency.

Authorities were attempting to defuse tensions and head off further unrest.

"Dialogue can be established," Willy Demeyer, the mayor of the city of Liege, told Belgian broadcaster RTBF, adding that he hoped "young people can express their grievances in a peaceful way and if possible have those concerns heard".

In Belgium, education is managed independently by the country's linguistic communities, and there is no single national curriculum.

Instead, the Flemish population regulates education in Belgium's Dutch-speaking Flanders region while French-speaking Wallonia oversees its own curriculum.



Parents can decide where to enrol children in the bilingual capital Brussels.

The protests in Liege follow sporadic violent demonstrations over the summer in Brussels against an increase in tuition fees for students in French-speaking areas from 835 euros

(\$930) to 1,194 euros (\$1,340).

Belgium's education budget has been under pressure as a result of a cost-of-living crisis and the spiralling cost of energy, issues that are helping fuel student protests in France as well. (REUTERS)

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Trump administration proposes US\$70,000 fee for international students to work in US



The Department of Homeland Security on Wednesday proposed a US\$70,000 fee for international students seeking to work in the United States, the latest effort from the Trump administration to crack down on foreign enrollment.

A proposed rule would require schools to pay the fee for every student who participates in the optional practice training programme, known as OPT, which allows students to work in jobs related to their major during or after their time in school.

Students are generally eligible for one year of work post-graduation, though certain science, technology, engineering and math majors are eligible for an additional two years.

Schools would be required to pay the US\$70,000 for each new student's initial application to the programme, and a US\$30,000 fee for each renewal.

American colleges and universities heavily recruit students from overseas

as a source of tuition revenue.

Tech companies and other industries also hire many international students for technical roles.

The OPT programme allows international students to gain hands-on experience and fill labor shortages in high-demand STEM fields, said Fanta Aw, CEO of NAFSA, an association that represents international education.

"Driving away the talents, perspectives, and aspirations of international students will only hurt American innovation, economic growth, workforce development, and global leadership," Aw said in a written statement.

In a statement, DHS described the fee as a response to fraud and abuse of the visa program, which it called a "pipeline for cheap foreign labor."

The public has 60 days to comment on the proposal before DHS can finalise it and put it into effect.

The proposal also could face legal

challenges from higher education groups or business associations that could delay it.

The proposed rule is part of its wider efforts to crack down on immigration and reshape higher education.

Last year, the Republican administration began suddenly terminating the legal status of thousands of international students, detaining and deporting many of them.

This summer, the administration finalized a rule that sought to prevent international students from staying in the US for more than four years without approval from the federal government.

The move drew swift backlash from higher education leaders who said it would increase the burden on schools and noted that many programs are longer than four years by design.

A federal court prevented the rule from taking effect in September. (AP)

Christa Pike is angry and confused after surviving execution attempt, attorney says

Christa Pike was “angry and confused” in the hours after regaining consciousness following Tennessee’s failed execution attempt, first asking, “Where am I?” her lawyer said Wednesday.

Pike, believed to be the first person to survive after receiving lethal injection drugs during an execution, stunningly woke up as plans were being made to remove her from life support, just six days after she was strapped to a gurney in the death chamber, said attorney Randy Spivey.

“But on Tuesday, to the shock of everyone ... Christa woke up and began talking,” Spivey said.

Pike, who was sentenced to death for the 1995 beating and stabbing death of classmate Colleen Slemmer, is aware of what happened to her, at least up to a point, Spivey said.

Many questions remain, though, about her prognosis for recovery and whether Tennessee will make another attempt to execute Pike, now age 50.

Her lawyers said Wednesday that she has suffered enough and want the governor to commute her sentence. A judge in Nashville told the state on Wednesday to save evidence from the execution attempt as Pike’s attorneys try to find out more.

The failed execution on Sept. 30 has renewed scrutiny of how states carry out the death penalty, in particular the use of lethal injection. Texas was set to carry out Wednesday the first execution in the U.S. since Tennessee attempted to put Pike to death.

Pike’s legal team said she still can’t move her arms or swallow and has some cognitive confusion. She also



has pneumonia and a blood clot in her arm, Spivey said. Her hands were extremely swollen when they saw her Tuesday in the hospital, shackled to a bed, he added.

Her prognosis remains unclear and she has a long road to recovery, he said.

AP correspondent Julie Walker reports Lawyers for a Texas man seek to block his execution, citing the failed execution of Christa Pike.

“She is angry and confused about everything right now,” Randy Spivey said during a news conference following a court hearing about pre-

serving evidence.

Spivey, who was not with Pike when she woke up, was told her first words were, “Where am I?” and “Who are you?”

The Death Penalty Information Center says Pike is the first person to survive after receiving lethal injection drugs during an execution.

At the hearing Wednesday, a judge told the state that the Tennessee Department of Correction needs to save evidence including “anything that was in the actual room.”

Chancery Court Judge I’Ashea Myles said she plans to issue a sweeping order that will direct the state to maintain recordings, witness accounts, emails, drugs, syringes, IV lines and other medical items.

The Tennessee Attorney General’s Office had argued a court order was unnecessary. John W. Ayers, assistant attorney general, said some evidence from the death chamber already had been collected and logged. He declined to comment after the hearing.

Pike’s attorneys accused the state of carrying out the attempted execution in secrecy, saying more transparency is needed. They also repeated their calls for clemency for Pike. Republican Gov. Bill Lee has not yet indicated how he’ll respond.

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AROUND THE WORLD



Outside the courthouse, Michelle Nowell yelled “Justice for Colleen” as Pike’s attorneys talked with supporters.

“The victim is Colleen. The victim is not Christa Pike,” said Nowell, who was among a group outside the prison last week where the failed execution took place.

The governor postponed the state’s only other execution for this year and ordered a review of what went wrong. The state’s prison chief resigned.

Medical and lethal injection experts have focused on the possibility that a problem with the IV line caused the drug to pool in her tissue rather than entering her bloodstream.

Pike’s attorneys wrote in a court filing that “apparently at no point did any member of the execution team realize that the IV lines were not correctly placed or that the veins had blown.”

State officials have not yet offered an explanation.

The attempted execution got underway when Pike was given a chance to make a final statement. About five minutes later, she raised her head and said her arm was hurting. At some point she appeared to lose consciousness, but she could be heard breathing heavily until media were escorted from the witness room nearly 90 minutes into the execution. An ambulance took Pike to a hospital.

Dr. Joel Zivot, a professor of anesthesiology and surgery in Atlanta who consulted as an expert for Pike’s legal team, said it could be weeks or months before anyone knows exactly what her recovery might look like, and whether her competency could be restored so the state can try again to execute her. (AP)





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Round of 16 set in ABFA pre-season knockout cup

Old Road FC became the highest seed so far to crash out of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) pre-season knockout tournament.

The fourth-seeded Old Road FC was ousted during the first set of matches in the Round of 16 in the ABFA Pre-Season Knockout Cup.

Jets Football Academy prevailed 5-4 in a penalty shootout against Old Road FC after both teams fought to a 2-2 draw at the end of regulation in their Round of 16 encounter at the Golden Grove playing field.

Zaheim Green scored both goals during regulation play for Old Road FC, converting a penalty kick in the 11th minute and snatching a late equalizer with a strike in the 88th minute.

Michael Peters scored in the 52nd minute, and Tajjah Christian had a 58th-minute conversion for Jets Football Academy, which advanced to the quarter-finals.

But defending champions and top-seed Sandals and Inet Jennings Grenades remain on course to make a successful defense of the title, which they won in the 2022/23 season, the last time the competition was held.

The Jennings Grenades, fifth-seed Garden Stars FC, and ninth-seed Freemans Village Scorpions all won their respective matches in the Round of 16 to join Jets Football Academy in the quarter-finals.

Howayne James and Obafemi Poyotte produced hat tricks, firing the Jennings Grenades into the next round with a 9-1 drubbing of Parham FC at Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

James had conversions in the sev-



The Jets Football Academy team

enth, 85th, and 86th minutes, while Poyotte scored in the 13th, 42nd, and 54th minutes.

The other goals for the Jennings Grenades were converted by Eugene Kirwan in the 56th minute, Barrington Blake in the 73rd minute, and Ryhim Griffith in the 75th minute. Trevaughn Harriette scored a consolation goal in the 62nd minute for Parham FC.

Garden Stars FC overcame a two-goal deficit to snatch a 3-2 victory over the Young Lions of Old Road in their Round of 16 match at the Golden Grove playing field.

Goals by Deante' Anthony in the 13th minute and Xavier Joseph in the 20th minute gave the Young Lions a two-nil lead. But Kenja Benjamin struck twice, with conversions in the 29th

and 49th minutes, to draw Garden Stars level at 2-2.

Wilton Rhodes snatched victory for Garden Stars FC, scoring a late winner with a strike in the 89th minute.

The Freemans Village Scorpions prevailed 4-2 in a penalty shootout against the Greenbay Hoppers after both teams played to a 1-1 draw at the end of regulation in their Round of 16 encounter at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

Cody Richardson gave the Scorpions a one-nil halftime lead with a 36th-minute conversion. Jahzime Bartley forced the match to be decided via the shootout when he snatched a late equalizer for the Greenbay Hoppers by converting a penalty kick in the 86th minute.



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Winning start for PMS in defense of school boys under-16 title



The Princess Margaret School team with their medals and trophy after winning the Under-16 Boys Division league title in the Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth, and Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup Secondary Schools' Football Competition at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium (SVRS) on Wednesday, January 14, 2026. (File Photo)

Reigning three-peat champions Princess Margaret School (PMS) made a successful start in defense of their Boys Under-16 Division title in the Ministry of Sports Cool and Smooth JOMA Caribbean Schools Football League on Tuesday.

Princess Margaret School launched their campaign in this year's competition by snatching a 1-0 victory over last year's losing finalist, Antigua Grammar School (AGS), in their opening-round match at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

Allan Henry snatched the winner by scoring the only goal of the match with a strike in the 11th minute of play.

The Ottos Comprehensive School (OCS) won their opening match, pulling off a 3-0 victory against Jennings Secondary School at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

The goals were scored by Lythaddeus Christian in the 11th minute, Jevon Gray in the 46th minute, and Kaleel Lawrence in the 54th minute.

All Saints Secondary School (ASSS) and St. Joseph's Academy both launched their campaigns by securing one-nil victories over their respective opponents.

Asantae Warner's 26th-minute conversion was sufficient to give All

Saints Secondary their victory against St. Mary's Secondary School (SMSS) at the Golden Grove playing field.

Tajae Samuel scored in the 40th minute as St. Joseph's Academy prevailed against the Sir Novelle Richards Academy (SNRA) in their opening encounter at the Radio Range playing field on Ottos.

But there were no winners in the other opening-round match between St. Anthony's Secondary School (SASS) and Clare Hall Secondary School (CHSS).

Both teams fought to a goalless draw in their encounter at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.



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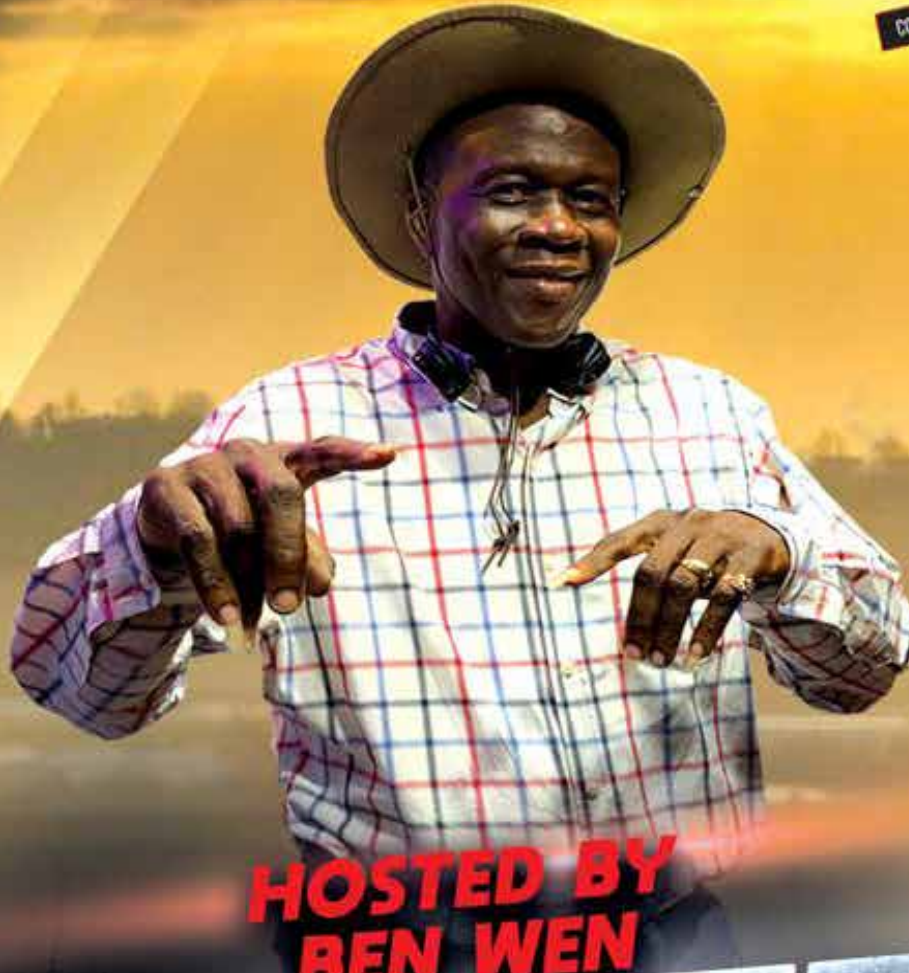
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West Indies women sweep Zimbabwe 3-0 in T20 series



West Indies women's Jahzara Claxton, left, and Stafanie Taylor added 71 run together against Zimbabwe women during the third T20I in Harare, Zimbabwe, on Wednesday, October 7, 2026. (Zimbabwe Cricket).

The West Indies completed a 3-0 sweep of the T20I series against Zimbabwe with an eight-wicket win in the third and final game in Harare on Wednesday.

Zimbabwe put up their best total of the series, with Kelis Ndhlovu's 65 helping the home side to reach 142 for six off their 20 overs. But Stafanie Taylor's unbeaten 39-ball 64 ensured the visitors chased the target down with 18 balls to spare.

Zimbabwe, after being restricted to 97 for nine and 106 for seven in the first two games, made a better start after choosing to bat. Beloved Biza struck four boundaries in her 16-ball 21 and added 27 with Ndhlovu before Shawnisha Hector had her caught by Chinelle Henry in the fourth over.

Ndhlovu then put together another

useful partnership of 39 with Chiedza Dhururu, although the pair scored at exactly a run a ball. The slow progress meant Zimbabwe were 79 for three after 13.1 overs, but Ndhlovu remained the key wicket.

Taylor broke the partnership by having Dhururu trapped lbw for nine. She then struck again to remove Muger-Tiripano earlier in the innings and finished with excellent figures of two for eight from four overs.

Ndhlovu eventually found another gear. She brought up her half-century off 36 balls, hitting six fours and three sixes, before falling to Jahzara Claxton in the 19th over for 65 off 48.

Christine Mutasa's unbeaten 24 off 19 and a late six from Michelle Mavunga helped Zimbabwe add 49 runs in the final five overs.

The West Indies began the chase positively, reaching 43 in the powerplay, but lost Realeanna Grimmond for 17 in the third over. Jahzara Claxton joined Taylor and the pair kept the required rate under control, putting on 71 off 56 balls.

Claxton's 38 off 37 was eventually ended by Biza in the 12th over, leaving West Indies on 90 for two. That was as close as Zimbabwe came to making a game of the chase. Taylor took charge thereafter.

She had reached 35 off 23 when Claxton departed and then accelerated alongside Jannillea Glasgow. The veteran struck 11 fours in an unbeaten 64 off 39 balls, while Glasgow finished unbeaten on 15 off 15. The pair added 53 off 30 balls to take West Indies past the target in the 17th over.

Antiguans beat Aruba to advance in CONCACAF Nations League



Antigua and Barbuda's Benna Boys midfielder Sean Tomlinson, left, celebrates with teammates after scoring against Aruba in their final match in Group B of League C in the CONCACAF Nations League at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Tuesday, October 6, 2026. (CONCACAF)

Host Antigua and Barbuda's senior Benna Boys qualified for the League C Championship and the League A+C Play-In after beating Aruba in a top-of-the-table clash to win Group B of League C in the 2026/27 Confederation of North, Central America, and Caribbean Association of Football (CONCACAF) Nations League in Antigua on Tuesday night.

Substitute midfielder Brandon Satchell struck a late winner that allowed Antigua and Barbuda to snatch a 3-2 victory over Aruba in the final match of the three-team Group B of League C at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in North Sound.

Satchell produced the winner for the Benna Boys in the 86th minute when he connected on a cross across the goal with a firm right-foot shot into the back of the net.

The late winner brought both relief and jubilation for the Antiguan who

took a two-goal lead before conceding twice, which allowed Aruba to draw level at 2-2.

A header by midfielder **Sean Tomlinson** gave Antigua and Barbuda an early lead in the 5th minute. Fellow midfielder **Thomas James Bramble** doubled the Benna Boys' lead with a long shot from outside the box in the 11th minute.

A header in the box by **Walter Bennett** in the 14th minute reduced the deficit, and teammate **Carlito Ferreira** snatched the equalizer for Aruba with a right-foot volley from outside the area in the 50th minute.

The result secured Antigua and Barbuda's ticket to the League C Championship, which also involved Aruba as the best overall second-place finisher along with Group A winners Montserrat and Group C champions St. Martin.

Montserrat finished at the top of

Group A of League C, securing a 4-1 win against hosts Turks and Caicos Islands at TCIFA National Stadium in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands, in their final match on Tuesday.

St. Martin won Group C of League C, coasting to a 6-0 victory against the Bahamas at Bethlehem Soccer Stadium in St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands (USVI), in their final outing on Tuesday.

The final-four League C championship will feature two semi-finals. Antigua and Barbuda will face St. Martin, and Montserrat will clash with Aruba. The two semi-final winners will advance to the final to determine the overall League C champions.

Meanwhile, all four League C teams will also contest a Play-In against opponents from League A, who failed to qualify from their respective round-robin group phase to the knockout stage.

Martinique and El Salvador finished fifth and sixth, respectively, in Group B of League A. Trinidad & Tobago took fifth place, and Nicaragua ended in sixth place in Group A of League A.

During the League A and C Play-In, Antigua and Barbuda will take on Trinidad and Tobago, and Aruba will face Martinique. St. Martin will tackle El Salvador, and Montserrat will clash with Nicaragua.

The CONCACAF Nations League quarter-finals and League A and C Play-In will be contested on a home and away format during the FIFA international match window from November 9 to 17.