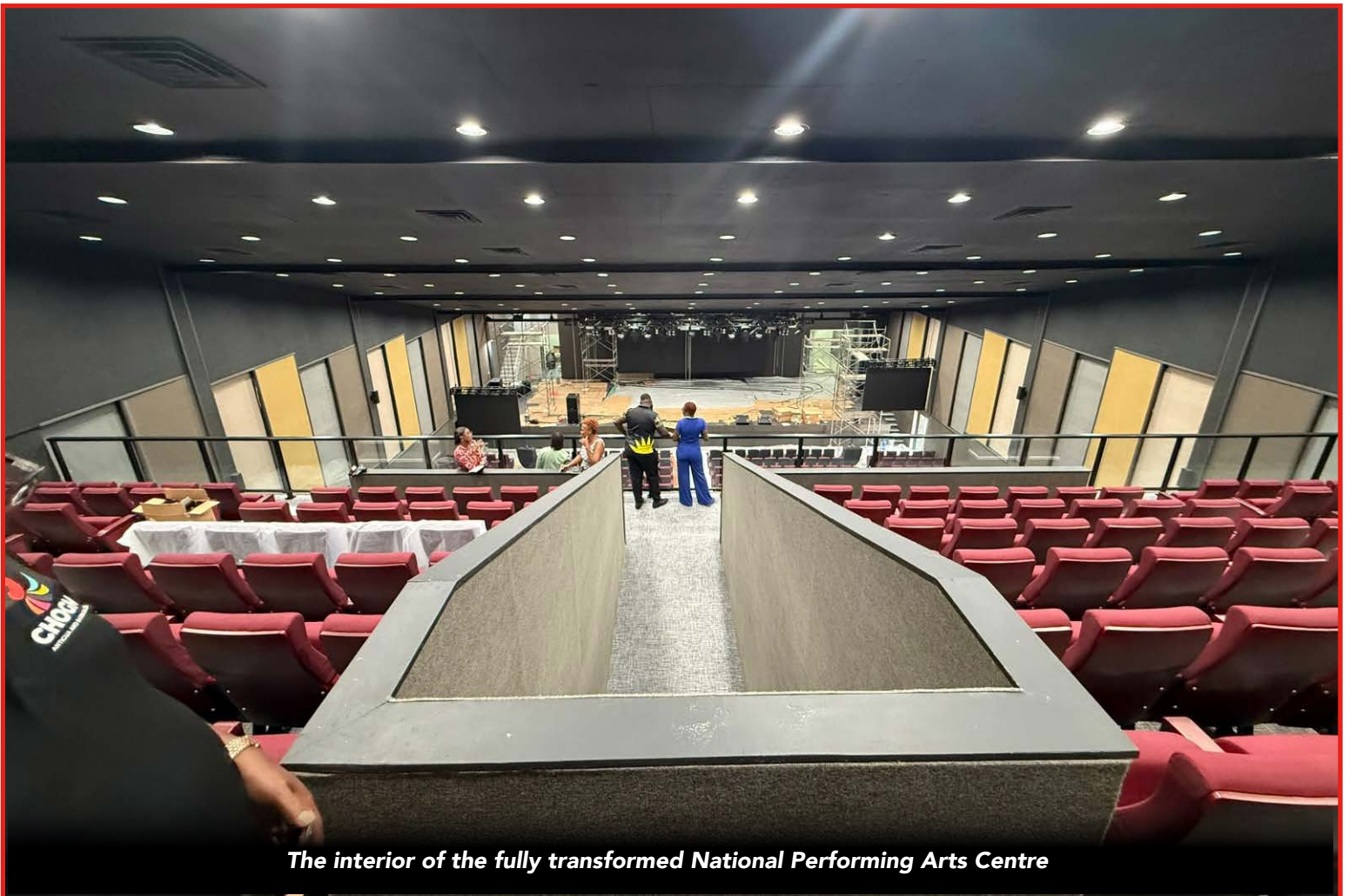


Cabinet to Increase Gas Station Dealers' Margins By Yearend

Story on page 2



The interior of the fully transformed National Performing Arts Centre

Local News

Cabinet to Increase Gas Station Dealers' Margins By Yearend

The demand for higher profit margins from the gas station dealers occupied much of the discussion at Wednesday's meeting of the Cabinet.

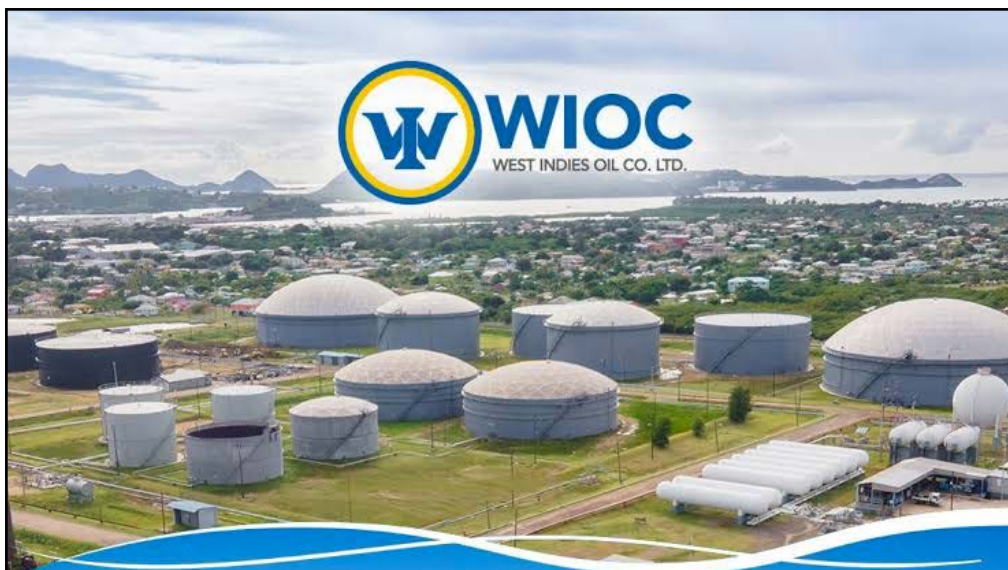
According to Cabinet spokesman, Maurice Merchant the meeting discussed the concerns raised by service station dealers regarding their request for an increase in the profit margin received on the sale of petroleum products.

Cabinet noted that several service station dealers closed their businesses on Wednesday under the guise of attending a meeting. The Cabinet considers the action unfortunate, particularly given the essential nature of the service provided to the public and the Government's ongoing engagement with the dealers on their concerns.

The Cabinet reaffirmed that the Government **accepts that service station dealers are deserving of an increase in their profit margin** and remains committed to granting an adjustment. However, Cabinet determined that the present period of instability and rising prices on the international petroleum market does not provide the most appropriate environment in which to implement the increase.

The Government anticipates that there could be some easing of petroleum prices towards the end of the year and believes that this would provide a more appropriate opportunity to implement an adjustment without placing an undue additional burden on consumers.

Cabinet has therefore instructed the **Financial Secretary to expedite a meeting with representatives of the service station dealers** to continue discussions on the matter and to establish a clear path towards implementation of the proposed in-



crease before the end of the year.

The Cabinet emphasised that the Government's position should not be interpreted as a rejection of the dealers' request.

"The Government has already accepted the principle that the service station dealers deserve an increase in their margin. The issue is one of timing. At a time when international fuel prices are unstable and rising, the Government must carefully balance the legitimate interests of the dealers with its responsibility to protect consumers from additional increases at the pump," Cabinet stated.

Cabinet expressed the expectation that the service station dealers will continue to engage the Government constructively as both sides work towards a mutually acceptable outcome.

During its deliberations, Cabinet also expressed concern about the level of concentration within the service station market and the potential consequences for consumers when a significant number of stations cease operations simultaneously.

In response, Cabinet advised the **West Indies Oil Company Lim-**

ited (WIOC) to pursue the establishment of **three additional service stations at strategic locations across the country**. The proposed expansion is intended to increase access to fuel, strengthen the resilience of the national fuel-distribution network and ensure that consumers have adequate alternatives throughout Antigua and Barbuda.

Cabinet reiterated that reliable access to fuel is essential to the functioning of the economy and the daily lives of citizens and residents. Any expansion of the service station network should therefore be guided by the need for adequate geographic coverage, competition and continuity of supply.

The Government remains committed to constructive engagement with the service station dealers and to honouring its commitment to an adjustment in their profit margins at an appropriate time **before the end of 2026**.

Cabinet is confident that through continued dialogue, the interests of dealers and consumers can be appropriately balanced while ensuring stability in the country's fuel market.

The Formal Opening of the Performing Arts Centre Takes Place On October 23



The formal opening of the National Performing Arts Centre is scheduled for October 23, eleven days before it hosts its first major event, the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) on November 3.

Minister of Urban Renewal, Rawdon Turner, whose ministry spearheaded the project, informed the Cabinet that the transformation work of the old Deluxe Cinema to this multi-million-dollar facility is now complete with the testing of the audio-visual equipment now underway.

“Workers are presently carrying out a comprehensive deep cleaning of the facility and completing minor finishing works. The Government expects the **official opening of the Performing Arts Centre on 23rd October 2026.**

“The new facility, which has been created through the extensive refurbishment and transformation of the former Deluxe Cinema building, will accommodate approximately **850 persons** and provide Antigua and Barbuda

with a modern venue for the performing arts, cultural productions, conferences and other major national and international events,” Cabinet spokesman reported.

The Cabinet congratulated Minister Turner and the team responsible for the project on the quality of the transformation, describing the redevelopment of the former Deluxe building as an important example of the Government’s broader approach to restoring and repurposing buildings within St. John’s.

Meanwhile, Cabinet has established a **three-member ministerial team** to oversee the Government’s comprehensive redevelopment of St. John’s. The team comprises **Minister responsible for Utilities Melford Nicholas; Min-**



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Local News



ister responsible for Urban Transformation, Rawdon Turner; and Works Minister Maria Browne.

The redevelopment programme will commence with a major focus

on High Street, forming the first stage of a wider initiative to revitalise the commercial centre of the capital.

The decision builds upon the Government's ongoing urban renewal pro-

gramme and the public consultation process launched earlier this year. That consultation attracted significant public participation and brought together government ministries, statutory bodies, businesses and residents to discuss the future development of St. John's.

The programme envisages improvements to roads and drainage, utility infrastructure, sidewalks, public spaces and the general appearance of buildings within the city. Earlier plans include the Ministry of Works coordinating with APUA to replace ageing water infrastructure before major road reconstruction, reducing the likelihood that newly completed roads would later have to be excavated for utility works.

Cabinet emphasised that the redevelopment of St. John's is intended to produce lasting improvements for residents, businesses and visitors and to restore the capital as an attractive, functional and vibrant centre of commerce, culture and national life.

Midweek Deals

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\$19.99

-Leg and Thigh
-Biscuit
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\$17.99



People's Benefit Programme's Stipend Increases to EC\$300 Monthly



Beneficiaries of the People's Benefit Programme (PBP) operated by PDV Caribe Antigua and Barbuda Ltd. (PDVCAB) will see an increase in their stipend from the current \$215.00 per month to \$300.00 per month from the next payment cycle.

The increase of EC\$85 per month, representing almost a 40 percent adjustment, is intended to provide greater assistance to vulnerable beneficiaries who have received the same monthly benefit for approximately 20 years, despite substantial increases in the cost of living.

There are currently 1,495 registered beneficiaries under the People's Benefit Programme. The increase will result in an additional expenditure of approximately EC\$127,075 per month, or EC\$1.525 million annually, increasing total annual PBP expenditure from approximately EC\$3.857 million to EC\$5.382 million.

The Cabinet welcomed the increase as an important social-protection measure and noted that it reflects the Government's continuing commitment to ensuring that vulnerable citizens are not left behind as the cost of essential goods and services rises.

Cabinet further approved a Vagrant Care Initiative aimed at improving the health, hygiene and dignity of vulnerable and homeless persons in and around St. John's.

A donor has already committed to providing a portable shower unit. PDVCAB will collaborate with the Soup Kitchen and the Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross to facilitate access to showers and clothing, while providing logistical assistance and hygiene supplies.

The estimated cost to PDVCAB is approximately EC\$2,500 to EC\$3,500 per month, or EC\$30,000 to

EC\$42,000 annually.

Cabinet also approved the transfer of an identified parcel of Crown Land, located east of the St. John's Fire Station on Factory Road, to PDVCAB for the development of a modern, purpose-built headquarters.

PDVCAB has operated from rented premises for the past 21 years. The Company also incurs additional rental costs for space used at the Multipurpose Centre for the distribution of utility booklets.

The proposed headquarters will provide improved facilities for public service delivery, training, disaster-response collaboration and income-generating activities. It will also include provision for a permanent home of refuge for vulnerable persons.

The transfer of the Crown Land is expected to strengthen PDVCAB's institutional position by providing the Company with a tangible fixed asset estimated at up to EC\$5 million, while eliminating its current accommodation expenditure.

The Cabinet welcomed the proposals, particularly the increase in the People's Benefit Programme, as a tangible demonstration of the Government's commitment to social protection, dignity and improved quality of life for vulnerable citizens, while strengthening PDVCAB as an institution capable of delivering sustainable public-benefit programmes.



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Teachers and Students Undergo Training In Agricultural Techniques



Training continued at the Cedar Grove Primary School the second beneficiary School under the GEF SGP UNDP funded project with 10 teachers including the principal and two students participating in a capacity building session focusing on Nursery Management and Seedling Production.

The project entitled Sustainable Agricultural Community Outreach and Food Security Programme focuses

on innovative technologies currently being implemented to support school gardens.

Due to the prolonged drought conditions caused by El Nino transplanting of seedlings was delayed due to the absence of reliable adequate rainfall for irrigation. This hydroponics system requires fresh water with a low electric conductivity should be between the parameters of 0.00 -0.30.

Several seedlings such as thyme, parsley, lettuce and kale were transplanted to the hydroponics system.

Two educational institutions – the Victory Centre and the Cedar Grove Primary School - are benefiting from the project which is being coordinated by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA)

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INDEPENDENCE *Church Service*



SUNDAY
18
OCTOBER 2026



PRECISION
CENTER



4:00 PM



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- 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*

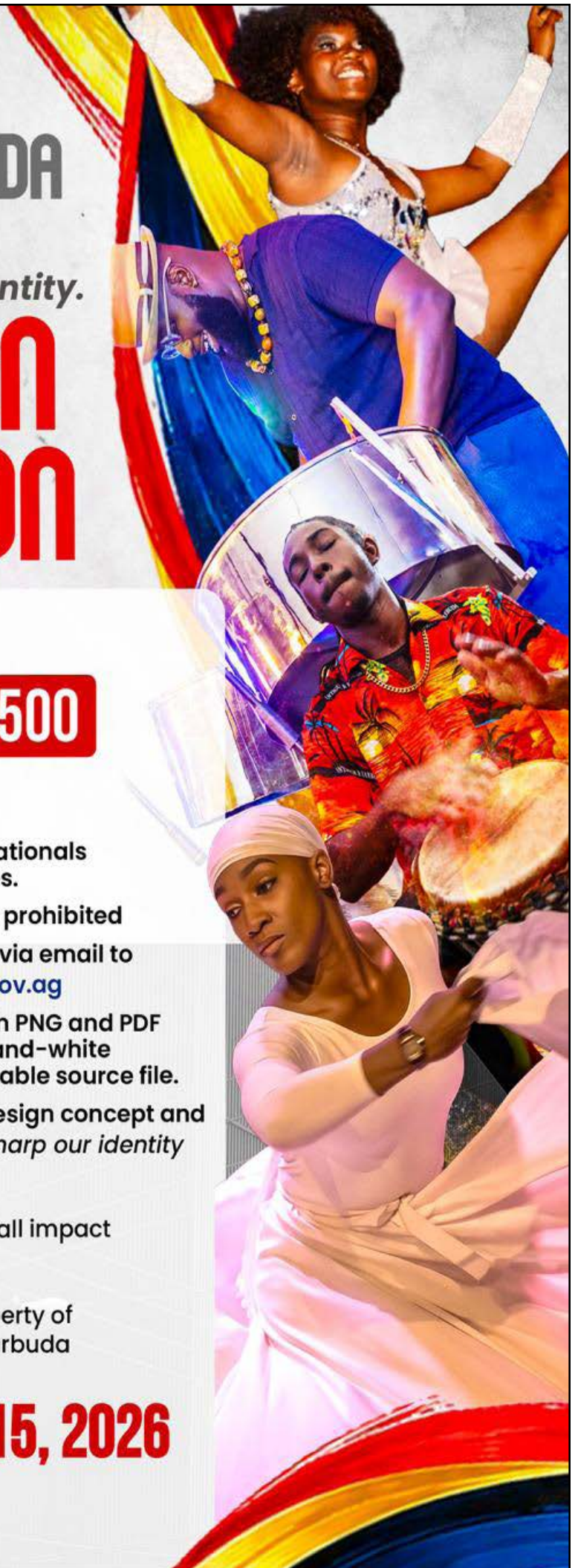
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All Four Juveniles Back in Police Custody Following Escape from Bolans Police Station

The four juveniles who had escape from lawful custody at the Bolans Police Station are now back in police custody.

Three of the juveniles, ages 15 and 17, were apprehended by police in the Liberta area at approximately 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 8, following a search operation.

Meanwhile, 17-year-old Damien Jeremiah had surrendered himself to police on Wednesday evening, October 7, accompanied by a relative.

It is alleged that the four juveniles, who are residents of the Dennis Bowers Rehabilitation Centre, escaped from custody on Tuesday, October 6.

The circumstances surrounding their escape remain under investigation.

The Police Administration expresses sincere appreciation to members of the



public for their continued support, vigilance, and cooperation throughout the search efforts.

The Police Administration further commends the officers involved in the

search for their diligence, professionalism, and commitment to ensuring that all four juveniles were safely returned to police custody.

Investigations remain ongoing.



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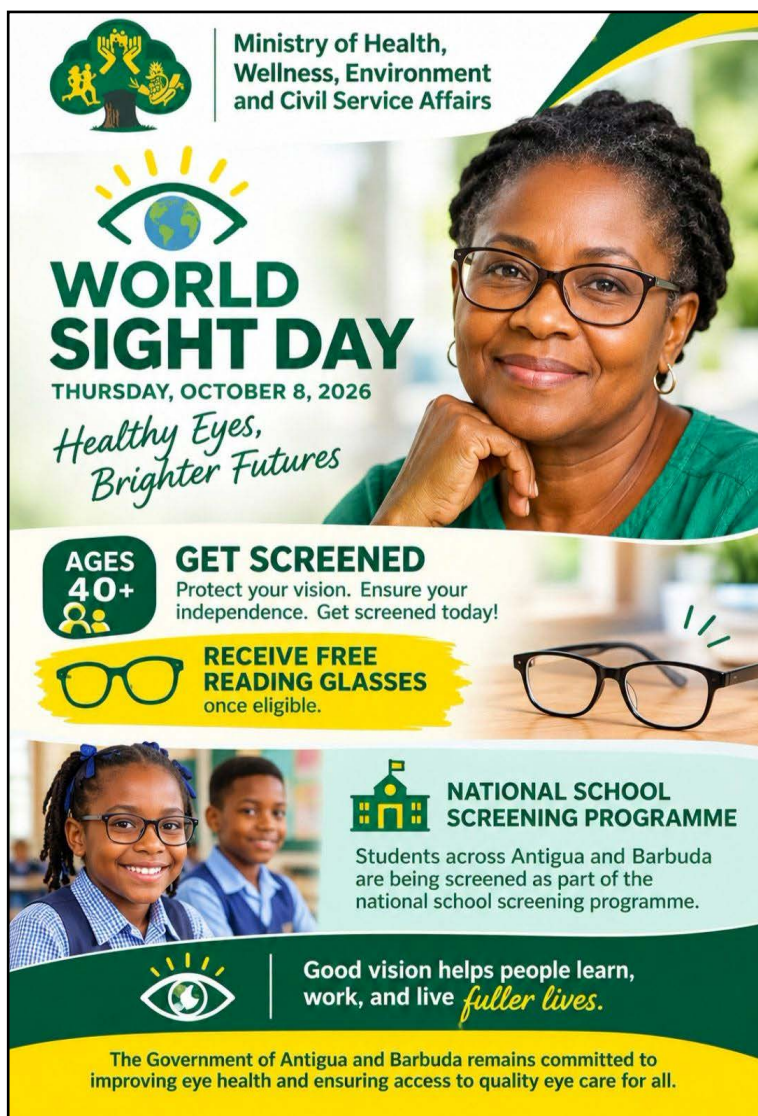

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World Sight Day 2026 Focused On Vision Care



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NATIONAL SCHOOL SCREENING PROGRAMME
Students across Antigua and Barbuda are being screened as part of the national school screening programme.

Good vision helps people learn, work, and live fuller lives.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda remains committed to improving eye health and ensuring access to quality eye care for all.

World Sight Day was observed internationally on Thursday, but here in Antigua and Barbuda the Ministry of Health used the occasion to focus on its ongoing vision care programme it launched several months earlier.

In a statement, the ministry reminds everyone that protecting their vision is essential to health, independence and quality of life.

“Adults aged 40 and over are encouraged to get screened through the Prime Minister’s Vision Initiative, with free reading glasses provided to

eligible persons. At the same time, the National School Screening Programme continues to screen students across Antigua and Barbuda, supporting early detection of vision problems and helping children see clearly as they learn and grow,” the ministry statement noted.

It said the Government of Antigua and Barbuda remains committed to promoting eye health, strengthening early detection and expanding access to quality eye care for people of all ages.



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MINISTRY OF
SPORTS &
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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
AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Haiti: When the Promise of a Haitian-Led Solution Begins to Fade



By Sir Ronald Sanders

Who speaks for Haiti? It is a question the international community can no longer avoid.

For years, governments and international organisations have insisted that the country's deepening crisis must have a "Haitian-led solution". The principle is sound. Haitians must determine their country's future. But the expression is wearing thin because there is little evidence of a sufficiently legitimate, representative and coherent political process capable of delivering such a solution.

The issue is not whether the solution should be Haitian-led. It is who may legitimately claim to lead it, and by what mandate.

UN experts have presented mounting

evidence alleging that some persons who have exercised political influence in Haiti maintained relationships with the armed gangs responsible for much of the country's destruction.

A report by the United Nations Panel of Experts on Haiti describes connections between armed groups and political, economic and security actors. It identifies former legislators allegedly involved in supporting criminal organisations and warns that relationships between gangs and political figures could be used to influence elections.

The report alleges that former parliamentarian Alfrédo Junior Antoine supplied weapons, ammunition and financial resources to armed groups. It also alleges that former Senator Nènel Cassy supported armed men to advance his political interests. Both have denied the allegations.

The experts warn that political figures with historical connections to gangs may exploit those relationships to mobilise support, intimidate opponents and influence electoral outcomes.

These allegations require investigation and due process. But their wider significance is unmistakable. Haiti's criminal organisations do not operate in isolation from the country's political and economic life.

Gangs have been used to control territory, protect commercial interests, intimidate opponents and acquire influence.

The question, therefore, is not simply how Haiti can defeat its gangs. It

is how the country can establish legitimate government when networks that have exercised political influence are implicated in sustaining criminal power.

A Chatham House study published in August 2026 confronts this difficulty directly. Its authors observe that diplomats routinely call for Haitian leadership without adequately answering which Haitians are supposed to provide it.

Based on interviews with 1,332 Haitian adults in May, the study reveals the wishes of ordinary Haitians and the conduct of their political class.

More than 75 per cent of respondents expressed little or no trust in politicians. Only 2.9 per cent had a great deal of trust in them.

Yet almost 90 per cent considered elections important to Haiti's future, while 82.9 per cent wanted them held in 2026 or 2027. The survey also found that 83.4 per cent opposed allowing gang members or gang leaders to hold positions in government, while 66.9 per cent rejected amnesty for armed group members.

These findings suggest that Haitians have not abandoned democracy, legitimate government or accountability. What they distrust is a political class that has failed to deliver them.

The absence of agreement among politicians should not be mistaken for an absence of national aspirations. Nor can an arrangement among competing political interests automatically be



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described as “Haitian-led” simply because its participants are Haitian.

The electoral timetable has now been thrown into uncertainty. Presidential and legislative elections had been scheduled for 13 December 2026, but the Provisional Electoral Council has extended candidate registration until 31 October, postponed the campaign timetable and indicated that a revised electoral calendar will be published.

Even if another date is announced, the deeper questions remain: who will control the political process, and will criminal organisations or their sponsors influence its outcome?

International fatigue is another danger.

Yet progress remains painfully limited. Other conflicts, economic pressures and security priorities compete for attention and resources.

If international engagement weakens, ordinary Haitians will suffer. Those who profit from weapons and drug trafficking, extortion, kidnapping, territorial control and diverted public resources will not. Political and economic actors who benefit from weakened institutions have little interest in independent courts, accountable policing or transparent administration.

Haiti must not be abandoned because its political actors cannot agree. That would leave the population to bear the consequences of failures for which ordinary citizens have little responsibility. Equally, international assistance cannot mean financing one transitional arrangement after another without clear obligations, measurable results and accountability.

Haitian ownership must be preserved, but its meaning must be clarified.

It should mean supporting institu-

tions with lawful mandates, transparency and public accountability. Participation must extend beyond political factions to civil society, community organisations, women and young people, professional and religious bodies, and legitimate private-sector representatives.

It should mean listening to the Haitian population, whose priorities the Chatham House study has helped to illuminate. It should also mean investigating the networks identified by the UN experts, enforcing sanctions, interrupting weapons supplies and ensuring that persons credibly implicated in serious crimes face independent judicial scrutiny.

The Gang Suppression Force and the Haitian National Police must receive the resources necessary to protect communities, alongside the judicial and administrative institutions without which security gains cannot endure.

The same Chatham House survey revealed understandable caution. Although 49.5 per cent supported the Force’s presence, 54.2 per cent doubted that it could accomplish its mission. That scepticism strengthens the case for adequate resources, clear objectives, measurable performance and accountability.

None of this requires foreign governments to choose Haiti’s leaders or dictate its constitutional future. That would undermine the sovereignty international assistance is supposed to protect. But sovereignty must not become an excuse, within Haiti, for ignoring criminal influence, institutional failure or the absence of accountable leadership.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of American States (OAS) have a par-

ticular responsibility to insist upon this distinction. Their engagement should broaden Haitian participation and strengthen institutions capable of commanding public confidence.

Haiti’s tragedy is not that its people lack the desire for democracy. It is that the institutions through which their wishes should be expressed have been weakened, while armed groups and their associates have acquired extraordinary influence.

The expression “Haitian-led solution” should never be abandoned as a principle. But it must not be invoked, whether by Haitian political actors or international partners, as a substitute for confronting the realities that have repeatedly prevented such a solution from becoming legitimate, meaningful and sustainable.

A genuinely Haitian-led solution requires more than agreement among political factions. It requires an inclusive national process, transparent and time-bound transitional arrangements, the exclusion of criminal influence, stronger public institutions and credible elections in which Haitians can freely choose their leaders. International partners should support that process with security, resources and technical assistance, while insisting upon accountability and measurable progress.

The Haitian people have the right to determine their future. The task now is to ensure that this right belongs to them, and not to the gangs or those who sustain them.

(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda’s Ambassador to the US and the OAS. He is also Chancellor of the University of Guyana. The views expressed are his own)



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200 Cubans back in public health system

THE Government has re-engaged 157 Cuban medical professionals months after the collapse of a long-standing bilateral health-care arrangement with Cuba, bringing the number of health-care workers from the neighbouring Caribbean island now serving here to 200.

Health and Wellness Minister Dr Christopher Tufton made the disclosure at Wednesday's post-Cabinet press briefing at Jamaica House, saying the latest arrivals had been appropriately deployed across the public health system.

"The renegotiated agreement with our Cuban health-care workers has resulted in, to date, an engagement of some 157 Cuban medical professionals, including doctors and nurses, who have returned to Jamaica to support health-care delivery across the island," Tufton said.

The largest complement, 69 professionals, has been assigned to the South East Regional Health Authority (SERHA), while 28 have been deployed to the Western Regional Health Authority and 26 to the Southern Regional Health Authority.

Another 25 have been assigned to University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI), while nine are serving within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the North East Regional Health Authority.

The 157 are in addition to 43 Cuban health-care workers who opted to remain in Jamaica after the Government ended the previous country-to-country arrangement and offered them the option of continuing to work under individual contracts.

Tufton said the latest re-engagement brings the number of Cuban medical professionals in Jamaica to 200, compared with 277 before the renegotiated arrangement.

"We basically gave them an offer. We



said, we can't do the arrangement as was the case, but if you return and it's your option, your choice, we would engage you in a direct contract," he said.

"So, we are close to where we were, and they have been appropriately deployed."

The development comes after Jamaica announced that it would discontinue the existing technical cooperation arrangement with Cuba after both governments failed to reach an agreement on the terms of a new framework.

The previous agreement had expired in February 2023, but Cuban medical professionals continued working in Jamaica while negotiations for a replacement arrangement continued. In March this year, the Government said it was willing to engage the professionals individually under Jamaican labour laws to ensure continuity of services.

At the time, the health system had about 260 Cuban health-care workers, with the largest group consisting of 97

assigned to SERHA. Others were deployed across the western and southern regions, UHWI and specialised services, including the Jamaica-Cuba Eye Care Programme.

The end of the bilateral arrangement subsequently exposed staffing gaps at some public facilities. At Cornwall Regional Hospital in St James, for example, 27 Cuban health-care workers, including nurses, doctors and radiotherapists, left with the hospital having to recruit locally and look overseas for specialised personnel to fill some vacancies.

The Cuban programme has been a major component of Jamaica's public health-care system for decades, with the eye-care programme in particular providing specialised services to Jamaicans since 2010.

Tufton on Wednesday expressed appreciation to the Cuban professionals who had chosen to return.

"I want to thank those who have chosen that option because the system needs them," he said. (Jamaica Observer)

SVG to host 10th OECS council of ministers meeting

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will host the 10th Meeting of the OECS Council of Ministers on Human and Social Development from 7–8 October 2026 at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Diamond, bringing together Ministers and senior officials from across the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to advance regional cooperation on social protection, social inclusion and human development.

The Meeting will be held under the theme, “Advancing Social Protection in the OECS: Policy, Practice and Learning,” and will provide an important platform for Member States to examine priority social development issues, share national experiences and good practices, and strengthen collective approaches to building more responsive, inclusive and resilient social protection systems across the Region.

The OECS Council of Ministers on Human and Social Development provides a forum for Ministers responsible for human and social development to deliberate on issues that directly affect the well-being and quality of life of people across the Eastern Caribbean. The Council also facilitates collaboration among Member States, regional institutions and development partners to address emerging social challenges and strengthen systems that support vulnerable populations.

The 10th Meeting is particularly significant for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as the country currently serves as incoming Chair of the OECS Council of Ministers on Human and Social Development and will host the Meeting for the first time.

The hosting of the Meeting provides an opportunity for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to contribute to shaping the regional human and social development agenda while sharing its



national experiences and initiatives in areas including social protection, community development, social inclusion and resilience-building.

The Meeting also comes at an important time as OECS Member States continue to strengthen their capacity to respond to economic and social

vulnerabilities, natural hazards and other shocks affecting households and communities.

Over the two-day Meeting, Ministers and senior officials will consider a range of priority areas aimed at strengthening social protection and social inclusion throughout the

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Discussions will include disability inclusion, including the needs of children with disabilities; financing of care systems; regional child policy; adaptive and shock-responsive social protection; disaster risk financing; and resilience-building.

The Meeting will also review progress under the Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategic Action Plan 2023–2030, while providing space for Member States to share innovations, lessons learned and practical approaches that can strengthen social protection delivery across the Region.

A key focus will be strengthening partnerships and regional collaboration to ensure social protection systems are increasingly responsive, integrated, adaptive, and capable of supporting people and communities before, during, and after shocks.

The 10th Meeting builds on the outcomes of the 9th Meeting of the OECS Council of Ministers on Human and Social Development, held in St. Kitts and Nevis on 10 September 2024 under the theme, “Regional Development and Sustainability through Quality Education and Social Empowerment.”

The 9th Meeting addressed several important areas, including strengthening social protection and social inclusion across the OECS, advancing the Social Inclusion and Social Protection Action Plan 2023–2030, promoting peer learning among Member States, strengthening collaboration with regional agencies and development partners, and advancing work towards an OECS Regional Child Policy, Strategic Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

The Meeting also considered issues including mental health, digital safety, climate resilience and adaptation, as well as national experiences and good practices in social assistance and social protection.

The 10th Meeting will build on these areas of collaboration while placing particular emphasis on translating regional policy priorities into practical approaches that can improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

The Meeting will officially commence with an Opening Ceremony on Wednesday, 7 October 2026, at 9:00 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Diamond.

The Ceremony will bring together the Honourable Prime Minister, lo-

cal Ministers, OECS Ministers, senior government officials, development partners and other distinguished guests.

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines looks forward to welcoming Ministers, senior officials, development partners and other stakeholders from across the OECS as the Region continues to work together towards stronger social protection systems and a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable Eastern Caribbean. (St Vincent Times)



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Dominica approves new electricity tariff

The Dominica Electricity Services Ltd (DOMLEC) yesterday announced that it had received approval for a new electricity tariff rate from November 1, this year, saying the approval marks an important step in the continued evolution of island's electricity sector.

In a release, DOMLEC, the lone supplier of electricity on the island, did not indicate the level of the new tariff which it said had been approved by the Independent Regulatory Commission (IRC). It said the last tariff review was undertaken in 2007 even though a tariff reviews every three years is mandated by the Electricity Act.

"Despite the inflation over the last two decades, our fixed charges for operations and maintenance haven't been adjusted since; this change allows us to address needs that allow us to deliver a better service," said DOMLEC's general manager, Dwayne Cenc, adding that the approval is critical to the company's ability to provide quality service and ensure reliability of electricity supply to customers.

The IRC had earlier indicated that the new structure includes lower rates during off-peak periods and that before implementation, DOMLEC is expected to carry out public relations and outreach activities so customers can become familiar with the changes before they begin appearing on electricity bills.

The new tariff structure will be applied in accordance with the approved regulatory framework, IRC's executive director Justin Kase said.

"The Commission intends to monitor customer bills from this period through the end of the year and potentially longer. The exercise will examine whether the expected impact is appearing on bills while also deter-



mining whether DOMLEC is achieving the revenue targets established through the rate review.

"That follow-up matters, because a tariff review is ultimately tested outside the consultation room. Customers experience it through the bills they receive each month," Kase added.

The approved tariff takes effect as the country advances its transition towards a more sustainable and renewable energy-based electricity system, including the introduction of geothermal power into DOMLEC's energy mix.

DOMLEC said geothermal power is an indigenous renewable energy resource that reduces the electricity system's dependence on imported diesel fuel, which is subject to international

market price fluctuations.

According to DOMLEC business development engineer Felix Julien, customers are already experiencing the positive impact of Dominica's growing use of geothermal energy.

"Geothermal is already helping to cushion the high cost of fuel, and we are seeing our prices starting to stabilise due to its increased production."

The country's investments in renewable energy, battery energy storage and related infrastructure are part of a broader effort to achieve the national goal of 100% renewable electricity generation by 2030.

DOMLEC said it recognises that changes to electricity rates are of significant interest to customers, and is committed "to providing clear, timely and accessible information to help customers understand what the approved tariff means for their electricity bills.

"Over the coming weeks, DOMLEC will provide customers with additional information on the new tariff, including explanations of the different customer classes, how electricity bills are calculated, the role of the fuel surcharge, Time-of-Use considerations and practical ways customers can manage their electricity consumption," it stated. (Trinidad Express)

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UK police charge Royal Navy member accused of working with foreign power



Police in the United Kingdom say they have arrested and charged a member of the Royal Navy accused of working with an unnamed foreign power after an investigation by counterterrorism police.

Teddy Young, 24, was charged with two offences under the National Security Act for allegedly obtaining protected information and preparing to transfer it for the benefit of a foreign power.

In a statement, authorities alleged that between November 2024 and May 2025, Young “obtained, copied, recorded or retained protected information, intending the conduct to benefit a foreign power... contrary to section 1 of the National Security Act 2023”.

Young is due to appear at London’s Westminster Magistrates’ Court later on Thursday.

“These are very serious charges against a serving member of the armed forces,” Commander Helen Flanagan, Head of Counter Terrorism Policing London, said in a statement.

“We have worked extremely closely with relevant operational colleagues within the Ministry of Defence as our investigation has progressed to ensure appropriate measures could be taken to mitigate any potential risks linked

to this matter,” she added.

UK media reported that the officer was arrested at his home in Bedfordshire on Tuesday before he was taken into custody in London.

The police clarified that the case is not related to the ongoing investigation into an incident at the RAF Fairford airbase. (Al Jazeera English)

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Christa Pike now walking after failed US execution, lawyer tells BBC

Christa Pike is “up and walking” while in hospital after last week’s botched attempt to execute her in the US state of Tennessee, a member of her legal team says.

Pike, 50, who was sentenced to death after murdering Colleen Slemmer with her then-boyfriend in 1995, survived two lethal injections on 30 September. Experts described it as unprecedented.

Speaking late on Wednesday to BBC Radio 4’s Today programme, lawyer Stephen Ferrell said he had not spoken to Pike directly but that he had learned she was moving around her hospital room for the first time while still being mentally “foggy”.

Earlier, a court ordered the state of Tennessee to preserve all evidence related to the failed execution.

That evidence could lay the groundwork for a future lawsuit against the state.

The Pike case is now in uncharted territory, as Pike is believed to be the only person to have survived an execution attempt by lethal injection.

The failed execution was branded a “mess” by the mother of Slemmer, who was among those pushing for Pike to be put to death.

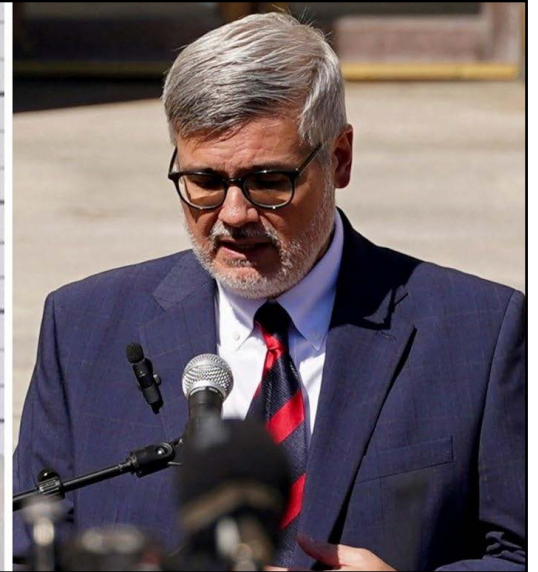
Pike’s boyfriend at the time of Slemmer’s gruesome murder, Tadarly Shipp, was spared the death penalty because he was not legally an adult when the crime was committed. He remains in prison.

Pike was 18 and Shipp was 17 when they beat, tortured and killed 19-year-old Slemmer, whom they had met at a job training camp for troubled teens.

In their updates on Pike’s condition after the attempted execution, her team had previously said she was awake and speaking, and experiencing anger and confusion. She was said at that stage to be handcuffed to her bed.

In the latest updates, given to the BBC, Ferrell said Pike was continuing to experience the after-effects of the drug pentobarbital, which was injected into her body in two doses by prison staff during the scheduled execution on 30 September.

Once it became clear that Pike was not



going to die, she was taken to hospital, where she was initially unconscious and declared to be in a critical condition.

As of late on Tuesday, though, she was “fairly well”, Ferrell told the BBC.

“What’s been described to me is that physically there’s quite a bit going on, that her arms are very injured and she’s not able to use them very much.”

Of her physical movements, he added: “She is up and walking for the first time today, but just around the room, not very far.”

Turning to her mental state, he said: “I think it’s kind of good and bad. Good that she is fairly with it, but she’s also somewhat foggy. She can lose her train of thought really easily and forgets where she’s going.”

Ferrell said much remained unknown about what happens next. “I assume [the situation for Pike] will keep improving, but there could be some permanent damage. We don’t know that yet.”

He added that the team wanted Pike to receive psychological support, since that “clearly is necessary now”.

Ferrell and his colleagues - who highlighted ahead of the attempted execution that Pike had a condition that would make the injection method difficult - oppose any new attempt by state prison authorities to follow the same approach.

They are also calling on the state governor, Bill Lee, to downgrade Pike’s punishment to the lesser sentence of life

in prison without parole.

Meanwhile, Tennessee’s proponents of capital punishment have suggested that a different method be used. Senator Marsha Blackburn, the Republican candidate for state governor in next month’s election, said: “Bring back the electric chair.”

Asked during a court hearing on Wednesday whether the state intended to reschedule Pike’s execution, the state’s attorney general said he did not know.

For now, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee has ordered a pause on all executions in the state for the rest of the year, and has said he wants answers about what went wrong. The state’s prisons chief is resigning after the failed execution.

Wednesday’s court hearing related to the preservation of evidence following the first attempt.

The judge, I’Ashea Myles, ordered that “anything that was in the actual room needs to be preserved and maintained,” including IV lines and syringes, as well as waste, like packaging, inserts, and labels.

The judge also demanded documentation on Pike’s psychological condition prior to, during and after the 30 September execution attempt.

She advised the state to take “special care” not to misplace or accidentally delete any information that may be pertinent to the case. (BBC)

WHO presses Russia over death of worker at plague institute



A top official with the World Health Organization said it doesn't know how a lab worker in Siberia died, and she urged Russia to provide more information about a case that prompted global concerns about suspected pneumonic plague.

Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO director of epidemic and pandemic management, said the UN health agency doesn't know what the "causative agent" was behind the woman's October 2 death, which unconfirmed reports in Russia blamed on pneumonic plague — a less common but severe form of plague that can spread from person to person.

In its tersely worded statements, Russia's public health watchdog, Rospotrebnadzor, does not link the case to pneumonic plague, saying only that the lab worker had contracted pneumonia of "unknown" origin and that "extensive" testing found no evidence her illness was caused by any of the pathogens she worked with at the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Research Institute of Siberia and the Far East.

"We don't understand how she was infected," Van Kerkhove said. "We need information in a timely way. We need regular information. We need answers to the follow-up of the questions that we have asked."

"We have posed these questions to our colleagues in the Russian Federation. In fairness, they have responded. We've gone back with more questions," she said.

The comments suggested the UN health agency has more questions than answers about the situation at the lab, which focuses on plague and was founded about a century ago to study the disease in Siberia, where the plague occurs naturally in wild animals.

Russian authorities have kept a tight lid on information about the case, which has been surrounded by secrecy.

While the case has raised global concerns, Russian state TV and other national state-controlled media have largely steered clear of the subject. Some state-backed news outlets withdrew earlier reports about the case.

Rospotrebnadzor said Sunday the lab worker was diagnosed with "pneumonia of unknown etiology", meaning its origin was not known.

A state TV station in Irkutsk reported she died October 2 in a hospital in Shelekhov, a town just outside Irkutsk. Officials have quarantined that hospital and were monitoring the contacts of the worker, authorities said.

Russia has said the pneumonia initially presented as a "typical" acute respiratory viral infection, the WHO has said, acknowledging that pneumonia is commonplace.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Russian authorities had indicated that no case of plague had recently been reported in the Irkutsk region, and that they had placed about 200 contacts in quarantine.

President Donald Trump said he would discuss the issue during a call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, because Wednesday is the Kremlin leader's 74th birthday.

"They're sharing it a little bit with our people. We expect them to share it a lot with our people," Trump said, adding that the Russians claimed to have the situation under control.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said earlier Wednesday that a Putin-Trump call hasn't been set yet but could be organised quickly.

Asked Wednesday if the incident was a sign that plague might be developed as a bioweapon, Trump said, "We don't think so. We're going to find out soon enough, but we don't think so." (AP)



A vibrant poster for the Antigua Carnival 70th Anniversary. The background features a collage of images showing carnival dancers in elaborate, colorful feathered costumes. In the center, there is a logo consisting of a stylized bird or fan shape with segments in yellow, green, blue, red, and pink, and a small flag of Antigua and Barbuda. Below the logo, the text 'ANTIGUA' is in bold black, 'Carnival' is in a large pink script, and 'THE CARIBBEAN'S GREATEST SUMMER FESTIVAL' is in smaller black capital letters. Further down, 'Legendary' is in pink script and '70' is in large, sparkling, 3D-style numbers. At the bottom, a white box contains the dates 'JULY 20TH - AUGUST 3RD 2027' in bold pink capital letters. Below this box, social media icons for Facebook and Instagram are followed by the text 'ANTIGUA CARNIVAL' and '@ANTIGUAFESTIVALSOFFICIAL'.

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Sports News



Curtain Bluff ends BOE's perfect run in business basketball league

Curtain Bluff Resort ended the unbeaten run of defending champions, the Board of Education (BOE), in the 2026 Cool and Smooth Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Business League on Monday evening.

The Curtain Bluff Resort wrapped up their campaign in the round-robin competition by pulling off a stunning 72-70 victory over the Board of Education in the second game of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Webster Baptista sank 17 points, and Shaloom Bloodman and Kareem

Edwards each converted 14 points for Curtain Bluff Hotel, which finished their league campaign with a record of eight wins and four losses from their quota of 12 games.

Adonis Humphreys and Xavier "X-Man" Meade each converted 20 points, and Danny Perez scored 10 points for the Board of Education, who suffered their first loss after winning all eight previous games.

The result allows last year's losing finalists, Richie's Shooterz, to overtake the BOE and take sole leadership of the 13-team competition.

Richie's Shooterz maintained their

perfect run to remain as the only unbeaten team by surging to their ninth win in as many matches with a 103-49 drubbing of CTM Auto Spa in Wednesday's opening game.

Steven Matthew shot a game-high 37 points, Jaheem James sank 26 points, Nickon McGregor converted 17 points, and Cohen Desouza scored 14 points for Richie's Shooterz.

Hansel Piper sank 12 points, and Sheldon Gomes scored 10 points for CTM Auto Spa, who slumped to their sixth defeat in 10 games.


 An advertisement for ACB Caribbean mortgages. The background is red with white and yellow geometric patterns. On the left, the ACB Caribbean logo is shown above a house icon with a key. In the center, the text 'MORTGAGES DESIGNED JUST FOR YOU' is displayed in large white and yellow letters. Below this, there are two callouts: '50% off legal fees' and '100% Financing'. On the right, a family (mother, father, and child) is smiling. To their right, the text 'Apply today.' is written in large yellow letters. At the bottom right, there are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

APUA Telecoms suffer first loss in defense of business league title



2025 Business Football League champions APUA Telecoms

The Galley Bay Ballers ended the unbeaten start of reigning champions APUA Telecoms in defense of their title in the 2026 JOMA Caribbean Ministry of Sports Business Football League Championship during the latest round of matches.

After winning their previous three matches, APUA Telecoms suffered their first loss in a 3-1 defeat against the Galley Bay Strikers in their Group 2 clash at the Keithley Sheppard playing field.

The result allows the Galley Bay Ballers to extend their unbeaten run and remain at the top of Group 2 and the overall standings with 15 points after claiming their fifth win in as many matches.

The 2024 champions, Hermitage Bay Strikers, which finished third last year, maintained their unbeaten start in Group 4, recording their fourth win in five matches with a 4-0 drubbing of Jack Idle at the Golden Grove playing field.

Keyonna Beach Hotel and the Cen-

tral Housing and Planning Authority (CHAPA) Warriors also maintained their perfect start to the competition.

Keyonna Beach Hotel extended their unbeaten run to remain at the top of Group 1, securing their fourth consecutive win by snatching a 1-0 win over Jumby Bay Resort at Golden Grove.

The Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHAPA) Warriors made it four wins in a row in Group 3 by surging to a 5-1 victory over Public Works Asphalt at the Fort Road playing field.

The University of the West Indies (UWI) Frigate Bird FC claimed their second win in four matches in Group 1 by snatching a 2-1 victory against the Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board (ABTB) at Radio Range.

The West Indies Oil Company (WIOC) Oilers, KOSCAB Powerade FC, the American University of Antigua (AUA) FC, Postal Services, and Cocos Hotel all recorded their first win in the competition.

After losing all three previous matches in Group 2, the West Indies Oil Company (WIOC) Oilers were awarded a 3-0 victory via default over National Housing Development (NHD) Legends, who failed to show up for their match at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

KOSCAB Powerade FC, who also suffered losses in their previous three matches in Group 4, rebounded to claim a 5-2 victory over Central Marketing Corporation (CMC) at the Fort Road playing field.

The American University of Antigua FC also ended a string of three consecutive defeats in Group 2 to secure a 2-0 victory over the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium (SVRS) at Radio Range.

The Postal Services won for the first time in four matches in Group 1 by pulling off a 4-1 victory against Blue Waters Hotel at Golden Grove.

After losing all three previous matches, Cocos Hotel rebounded to pull off a 4-1 victory over Public Works Department (PWD) FC in their Group 4 affair at Fort Road.

Two other matches ended in draws. His Majesty's Prison (HMP) United and the Jolly Harbour Stingers battled to a 2-2 draw in their Group 3 encounter at Radio Range.

After winning all three previous matches in Group 3, the Department of Immigration extended their unbeaten run in Group 3, recording a 1-1 draw with the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority at Radio Range.

Sports News

Rotary's Interact Clubs donate football equipment to CPTSA Wings



Members of the CPTSA Wings pose with the football equipment which were donated by Rotary's Interact Clubs earlier this month.

The Rotary's Interact Clubs of Christ the King High School (CKHS) and St. Joseph's Academy (SJA) schools made a recent donation to the CPTSA Wings Sports Club's Football Division.

According to a media release from the CPTSA Wings, the donation of football and training kits to the sports club's football unit is timely and greatly appreciated.

Chairperson of the CPTSA Wings Football Unit Barbara Coates said, "We are at the start of a new football season, and this generous donation provides important financial support,

allowing our club to use our limited resources for other areas of development.

Coates adds that "this donation comes at a time when we are seeing increased crime involving our young people. It is encouraging to see young people choosing positive activities and, in turn, helping other young people to benefit from those opportunities.

"This is what we want to celebrate, young people getting involved, giving back, developing their talents, and creating positive opportunities for others.

Coates also expressed the CPTSA

Wings' gratitude to the Rotary's Interact Clubs for their contribution, which is a tangible investment in the development of young people.

"A heartfelt thank you to the Interact Clubs of Christ the King High School and St. Joseph's Academy for investing in our young people," Coates stated.

"Your contribution is more than equipment; it is an investment in discipline, teamwork, development, and positive change. We appreciate you, we celebrate you, and we encourage you to continue making a difference."



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MPL to stage annual Cool and smooth Sherma Jackson Business League



TG Welding softball cricket team

One of Antigua and Barbuda's most exciting softball cricket tournaments, the Mandy Premiere League (MPL), is scheduled to commence in a few weeks.

Last year's champions, TG Welding, won the MPL for the third consecutive year in 2025 despite suffering two losses to the Antigua Barbuda Defence Force, the only team to have beaten them.

Thagpaul Gaimchand is a Guyanese national who is the owner and manager of the TG Welding team and has been sponsoring sports in Antigua Barbuda for several years.

The MPL is expressing its gratitude to all workers, supporters and sponsors, including Gaimchand, who is

well known for his support towards sports in Antigua and Barbuda.

The MPL is thanking Gaimchand for the assistance he has given to the MPL and wishes that more business places would follow suit.

TG Welding's captain, Visal Gobin, often claims that in order to win, nothing else but effort is acceptable.

The tournament is a 10-over aside competition in which a female player must bowl an over and bat between one and five.

Last year's female Most Valuable Player (MVP) was Kimberly Anthony of Buck and Sons Landscaping Services, which finished second in the tournament. Essan Warner of TG

Welding won the male MVP award.

A number of businesses have expressed interest in participating for the first time in this year's tournament. The MPL is also exploring the possibilities of having schools participating in the competition.

The MPL has also been involved in a number of community activities, including assisting fire victims and persons in need of medical assistance.

The MPL also participated in blood drives in conjunction with the lab at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center (MSJMC) and engaged in free screening for hypertension, diabetes, and cholesterol in collaboration with the Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS).

Quarter-finalists decided in ABFA pre-season knockout cup



Pigotts Bullets football team

Four teams advance to complete the quarter-finalists in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) pre-season knockout tournament on Wednesday.

Second seed Aston Villa Lions FC, third seed Pigotts Bullets FC, sixth seed Potters Tigers FC, and 10th seed John Hughes secured their berths in the quarter-finals after winning the second set of matches in the Round of 16 in the ABFA Pre-Season Knockout Cup.

Aston Villa Lions FC benefited from a hat trick of own goals from defender Keith Conner to record a 4-1 win against Willikies FC at the Fort Road playing field.

After Judah Christian scored in the first minute to put the Villa Lions ahead, Hector scored own goals in the eighth and 25th minutes to give the opposing team a 3-0 advantage at halftime.

Captain Novelle Francis reduced the deficit for Willikies FC with a 65th-minute conversion before his teammate Conner restored Villa's three-goal margin by scoring his third own goal in the 76th minute to complete his hat trick.

The Pigotts Bullets FC advanced to the

final eighth with a 6-1 drubbing of English Harbour FC at the Sea View Farm playing field.

It was English Harbour FC, which scored first via a conversion by Roger Hurst in the second minute of play. But the Pigotts Bullets took control of the match by scoring twice to take a 2-1 lead at halftime.

Cardel Roberts scored the equalizer in the ninth minute, and Akeem Isaac added a second via a 45th-minute conversion. The Pigotts Bullets scored four more goals in the second half to wrap up a comfortable victory.

Sujae Mcbean scored in the 50th minute; Vashami Allen had a 73rd-minute conversion; Tyrique Thwaites found the back of the net with a strike in the 82nd minute; and Akeem Williams completed the rout by scoring the final goal in the 84th minute.

The Potters Tigers FC notched up a 4-0 victory over Ottos Rangers FC at the Pigotts playing field.

Keon Greene produced a 17th-minute conversion, and Bryan Daniel scored in the 24th minute to give the Potters Tigers a two-nil lead at halftime.

Mark Portsmouth converted the third goal for the Tigers in the 62nd minute, and Defrante Braithwaite sealed the win with a 67th-minute conversion.

John Hughes FC knocked out seventh seed Green City FC by pulling off a 2-1 victory in their Round of 16 encounter at the Golden Grove playing field.

Tijahni Isaac scored both goals on either side of half-time for John Hughes FC, converting with strikes in the 28th and 86th minutes. Darbel Noda Tito reduced the deficit by scoring a late

goal for Green City FC in the 88th minute.

The winners on Wednesday will join the other four teams that won their Round of 16 matches on Monday in the quarter-finals.

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, ninth-seed Freemans Village Scorpions, and 20th-seed Jets Football Academy all won their respective matches in the Round of 16 to secure their berths in the quarter-finals.

The Jennings Grenades will take on the Freemans Village Scorpions, and Garden Stars FC will face Jets Football Academy in the quarter-finals on Saturday, November 14.

The other two matches in the quarter-finals will take place on Sunday, November 15. Aston Villa Lions will tackle John Hughes FC, and the Pigotts Bullets will clash with the Potters Tigers.