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Demand for Short-term Rentals Heats Up

Story on page 2



Governor General Sir Rodney Williams (in suit) joins officials of the Ministry of Social Transformation and members of the family in celebrating the 100th birthday of Gladys 'Delores' Philip on Wednesday

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Demand for Short-Term Rentals Outstrips Demand for Other Accommodations



Visitor demand for short-term rental properties in Antigua and Barbuda is now outpacing the demand for the more traditional accommodation.

According to Minister of Tourism, H. Charles Fernandez, short-term rentals, more commonly called Air-B-n-B, currently represent some twenty-percent of the country's available room-stock, estimated at just over 5000 rooms. This means that more than one thousand of all rooms fall into the short-term rentals category.

"What we have seen since COVID-19, is that demand for short-term properties is expanding faster than the demand for the traditional hotel rooms. We still have more hotel rooms than we do short-term rentals, but that sub-section of the marketing is growing at a faster rate," Minister Fernandez disclosed.

According to the minister the majority of these properties are owned by Antigua and Barbuda nationals who are increasingly taking a bigger slice of the tourism pie.

"It is fair to say that upwards of twenty percent of our room stock are locally owned. You would be hard-pressed to get a group of nationals to inquest US$15 million into a hotel property, but if you were to look now you are seeing more investments in short-term rentals. In many cases, we have the banks that are supporting many of these ventures. This is because the banks are seeing these investments as a safe bet to lend their money," Fernandez stated.

The tourism minister emphasized that compared with thirty years ago to what obtains today, there has been a complete change in mindset by nationals, the finance institutions and other stakeholders in the tourism sector which is currently experiencing more investments projects with nationals being at the helm.

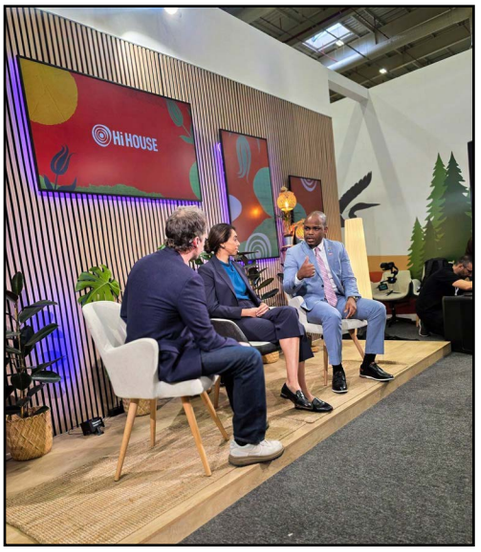
"What we have done in the Ministry of Tourism is to beef up our Inspection and Licencing Department, so that when someone advertises a property, we would go and inspect to ensure that what they advertise is in fact what they offer the guests. We have to secure our nation's reputation so we ensure that they 'live up' to established standards," he declared.



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Local News

Environment Minister Advances SIDS Priorities Through Climate Advocacy and Diplomacy





Minister of Environment, Michael Joseph, is continuing to advance Antigua and Barbuda's climate priorities and the wider interests of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) through a series of media, policy and diplomatic engagements at the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) in Antalya, Türkiye.

Among his engagements, Minister Joseph participated in an interview with HI Impacts, alongside Ambassador Ilana Victorya Seid, Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), where discussions focused on the significance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and what exceeding that threshold could mean for Small Island Developing States.

The discussion examined the increasingly severe consequences of climate change for vulnerable island nations, including more intense hurricanes, coastal erosion, rising sea levels and the threats these pose to communities, infrastructure and economic development. Particular attention was given to the implications for tourism, a major economic pillar for many Caribbean countries, where damage to coastlines, beaches and tourism infrastructure can have far-reaching consequences for employment, investment and national revenue.

Drawing on Antigua and Barbuda's own experiences, Minister Joseph highlighted the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma in 2017, particularly in Barbuda, where the entire population had to be evacuated following the destruction caused by the storm. He used the experience to demonstrate how a single extreme weather event can disrupt an entire community, displace residents, destroy livelihoods and place enormous demands on a country's recovery efforts.

The Minister also held discussions with representatives of the RSCI concerning the State of SIDS 2026 Report. The engagement provided an opportunity to examine the development challenges confronting small island nations, including their exposure to external shocks, environmental vulnerabilities and the need for greater international support to strengthen resilience and sustainable development.

In addition to these engagements, Minister Joseph held bilateral discussions with Rachel Kyte, the United Kingdom's Special Representative for Climate, and representatives of the European Union, representing AOSIS in the continued COP31 negotiations.

These discussions form part of ongoing diplomatic efforts to advance the collective priorities of small island nations, particularly as countries seek stronger international commitments and practical action to address the climate crisis. Key concerns for SIDS include keeping the 1.5-degree Celsius target within reach, securing accessible and predictable climate financing, strengthening adaptation measures and ensuring that commitments made at previous climate conferences translate into tangible support for vulnerable countries.

As COP31 negotiations continue in Antalya, Antigua and Barbuda remains actively engaged in advocating for climate action that recognises the particular circumstances of small island nations. For countries such as Antigua and Barbuda, the outcomes of these negotiations have direct implications for the protection of communities, the resilience of critical infrastructure, the sustainability of tourism and the long-term security of future generations.

APUA Provides Update Following Island Wide Outage and Restoration

The Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) advises the public that unplanned island-wide power outages occurred on Tuesday, 17 November, at approximately 3:35 p.m., following an attempt to energise a transformer that exports power from the Blackpine Power Plant.

The process involved transferring power generation from one transformer to another as part of routine system management and checks. During the process, an issue developed with the outgoing 11 kV breaker, which exports power from the Blackpine Power Plant, and maintenance was required. After maintenance on the circuit breaker was completed, an attempt was made to energise the transformer. An unforeseeable system collapse occurred, resulting in an island-wide power outage.

APUA, in collaboration with APC, immediately began efforts to restore electricity service after the fault was isolated. However, system challenges during restoration resulted in several interruptions as the system was progressively brought back online. Restoration is a meticulous, coordinated process involving power plant technicians and system control operators.

Generation must be carefully matched with the amount of electricity being used by customers to maintain system stability. There was no shortage of generation capacity. However, challenges and delays arose while efforts were made to bring the LNG and other generation units online to support the restoration process.

APUA and APC teams continued working to safely stabilise the system and restore service. Electricity service was fully restored by approximately 7:00 p.m. APUA recognises the inconvenience caused by the extended and intermittent outages and appreciates the public's patience and understanding. APUA and APC will conduct a detailed assessment of the events and the sequence in which they occurred.



Following this assessment, measures will be put in place to strengthen the system and minimise the likelihood and duration of similar outages in the future. APUA remains committed to maintaining a reliable electricity supply and to safely and efficiently restoring service when unplanned interruptions occur.



Friends of MSJMC Donates Two Incubators Valued at More Than EC $70,000 to SLBMC's NICU

The Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) has received two new neonatal incubators, valued at more than EC$70,000, through a donation from Friends of Mount St. John's, providing an important boost to the hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

The equipment was formally presented to the hospital today, marking another significant contribution by the organization to the care and services provided at the nation's hospital.

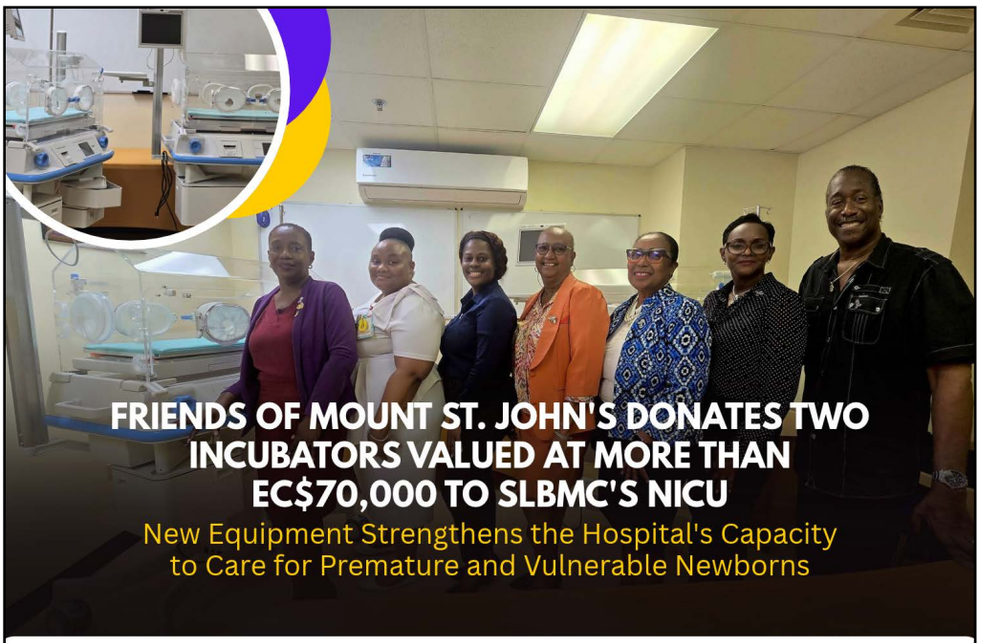
The donation comes during Prematurity Awareness Month, a particularly meaningful time to recognize the importance of specialized care for babies born too soon and those requiring additional support in their earliest days of life.

"We are grateful to everyone who continues to support Friends of Mount St. John's and make our work possible, said **President of Friends of MSJMC Dwayna Derrick**. "To the members of the public who purchase tickets, attend our events and contribute in whatever way they can, and to the businesses who support our fundraising efforts, thank you. Every contribution matters and this donation is a clear example of what we can accomplish when a community comes together."

"We are proud to support the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre and remain committed to doing what we can to help strengthen the services it provides. We are happy to continue this work, and we want everyone who supports us to know that their generosity is making a real difference to patients, families and the wider community."

Chair of the Department of Pediatrics, Dr. Saleem Hughes welcomed the donation, highlighting the importance of having the right equipment to support the care of the hospital's youngest patients.

"When a baby is born prematurely or is critically ill, the transition from the mother's womb to the outside world







can be particularly challenging. In those circumstances, an incubator provides a safe, controlled environment where the baby can receive the warmth, protection and specialized support needed during those critical early days."

"For us, it is important that we are always in a position to provide that level of care to any baby who needs it and to support families during what can be an incredibly difficult time. These two incubators strengthen our capacity to do just that. They are an important addition to our NICU and will help our team continue providing the specialized care our most vulnerable newborns deserve."

Every baby in the NICU deserves the best possible care, and having the right equipment makes a real difference to how we provide that care. These incubators will support our team's work as we care for some of our most vulnerable patients. We are grateful to Friends of Mount St. John's for recognizing the needs of our unit and helping us to meet them."

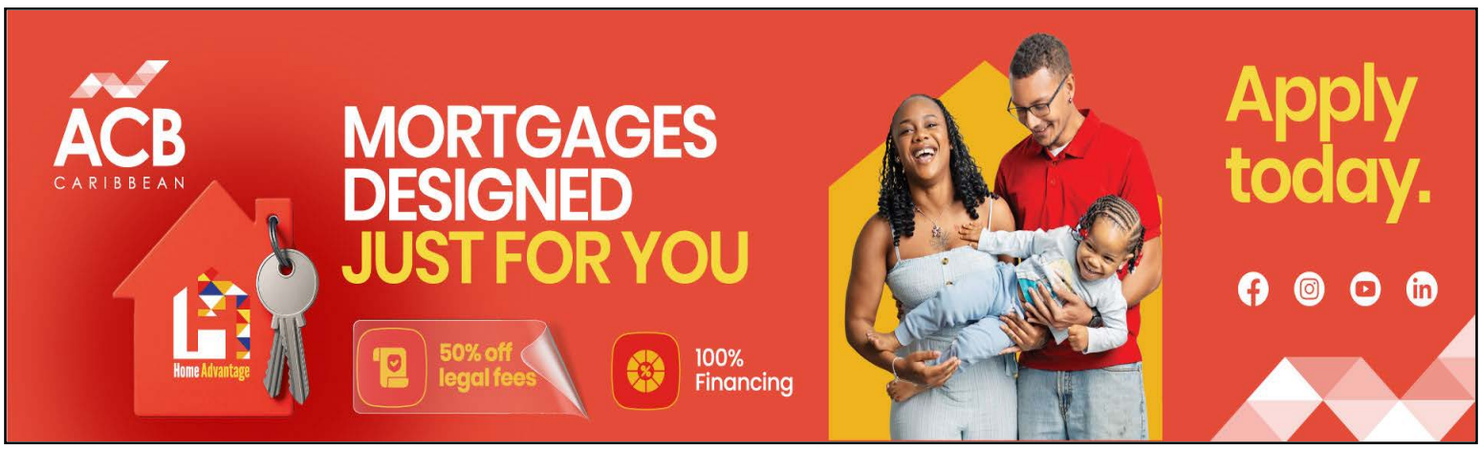
Head of Marketing and Communications, Salma Crump, noted that the donation serves as a powerful reminder of how community fundraising translates into tangible healthcare improvements.

"Sometimes, you buy a ticket to a fundraiser, attend an event or make a contribution without realizing just how much of a difference it can make. This is a perfect example. Those individual contributions, when brought together, have helped fund an investment of more than EC$70,000 in equipment that our hospital truly needs. Every ticket purchased, every event supported and every contribution counts. It all adds up, and today we are seeing just how far that collective generosity can go."

Crump added that the hospital is particularly grateful for the organization's continued commitment.

"Friends of Mount St. John's has consistently shown up for this hospital, and that means a great deal to us. More importantly, it makes a difference to the families who place their trust in our care and the healthcare professionals who work tirelessly to give these little ones the best possible start. To everyone who has helped make this possible, please know that your contributions matter. We see it, we appreciate it, and the families who benefit from this care will too."

The SLBMC continues to recognize the important role of community partners and supporters in strengthening healthcare services and improving the care available to patients and families across Antigua and Barbuda.



CAF and GEF launch USD 10 million project to tackle sargassum in the Caribbean

Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) presented SargMarine at COP31, a regional project financed through a USD 10 million GEF grant to address massive sargassum influxes and reduce their impact on marine and coastal ecosystems, tourism, fisheries and communities across the Greater Caribbean. The presentation of the initiative was also supported by Mexico and France.

The project also envisages USD 67.3 million in co-financing. CAF will serve as the implementing agency, the Organization of American States (OAS) as the executing agency, and the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) as a technical partner. The initiative aims to facilitate information sharing, strengthen countries' capacity to anticipate and manage sargassum influxes, and develop alternatives for its productive use that can create opportunities for local economies.

"Sargassum is a transboundary phenomenon, but our responses remain largely national. Overcoming this fragmentation requires strengthening existing mechanisms, building on the capacities of regional organizations, and reaching agreements that enable more effective joint action," said Lina Mondragón, CAF's Climate Action and Positive Biodiversity Manager.

The scale of the phenomenon requires a response that connects scientific information with public policy decisions and investment. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, 37.5 million tonnes of



sargassum were recorded in the Atlantic in May 2025, the highest volume observed since monitoring began in 2011. Massive accumulations affect economic activity in coastal areas and place increasing pressure on ecosystems and community health.

"The initiative has already received final approval. This means it is ready to get underway. We are ready to drive action on the ground," said Chizuru Aoki, Manager of the GEF's Conventions and Funds Division.

During the launch of the initiative at COP31, Fabio Arjona Hincapié, Colombia's Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, highlighted the need to address sargassum from a regional perspective and strengthen cooperation among affected countries.

"Local solutions definitely will not work on their own," he said, emphasizing the importance of developing joint responses and strengthening regional and international negotiating capacity to address the phenomenon.

Strengthening the ability to anticipate sargassum influxes was among the priorities highlighted by Matthew Samuda, Jamaica's Special Envoy for Climate Change, Environment, Oceans and the Blue Economy.

"Jamaica's priorities are to strengthen monitoring and forecasting. We want to know when it will arrive and where," he said.

He explained that this information can help determine where protection efforts should be concentrated and support planning for the productive use of sargassum, whose viability also depends on understanding the availability of raw material.

Ana Emilia Pimentel, the Dominican Republic's Vice Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, called for responses to the phenomenon to take community needs into account alongside an assessment of its economic consequences.

"We also have to think about this from the perspective of the people," she said, highlighting the social dimension of a challenge that requires greater cooperation among affected countries.

For Caribbean countries facing increasingly frequent sargassum influxes, SargMarine will help turn regional cooperation into more coordinated monitoring, preparedness and response.



Antigua and Barbuda's Centenarian Club Membership Continues to Grow



Gladys Philip, affectionately known as "Delores," celebrated her 100th birthday on Wednesday, November 18, joining Antigua and Barbuda's growing list of centenarians.

Born in St. John's to Adelaid Burton Joseph and Zachariah Philip, she grew up in Antigua before moving to the United States in the 1970s. She returned home in 2000 and cared for her sister, who lived to the age of 96.

Speaking at the birthday celebration, the Governor-General thanked Philip for her life and reflected on the care she had shown her family. He also pointed to the longevity of the two sisters, noting that one had reached 96 and the other was now celebrating 100.

"We want to thank you for your life and thank God for your life as well," the Governor-General said, wishing Philip many more, healthy and happy days. He also presented her with a birthday card and a fruit basket from Government House.



The gathering ended with three cheers for the centenarian, whom one attendee affectionately called "Aunt Delores."

The Community Development and Citizens' Engagement Division, which falls under the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation, extended its congratulations to Philip on reaching the milestone.

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Junior Codrington
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Barbados



Steffon Andre Thompson
Frozen Caribbean
A C Tech
The Bahamas



Rudolph Moseley
Original Patties
The Bahamas



Raynard Rigby
Baycourt Chambers
The Bahamas



Kyle Albury
Kraven and Weelz
Car Rentals
The Bahamas



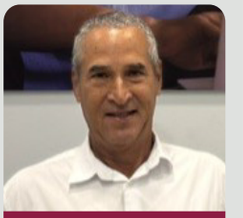
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Transformation Landscape Development
The Bahamas



Chris Tilling
Cocoplum Management
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Victor Porras Perez
VIP Appliance Services
Cayman Islands



Stephen G. Heal
Blue Wave Store
Cayman Islands



Micheal Maxwell
Maxwell JA Shipping
Jamaica



Lindsay McFarlane
SNL Jamaican Tours
Jamaica



Christopher Foster
Frecar Services Limited
Jamaica



Sunder Purushotam
Samtani Trading Limited
Jamaica



Roger Fraites
Fraites Bakery
St. Kitts & Nevis



Sailesh Nainaney
Smart Electronics
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FLOW

SLBMC HOSTS INAUGURAL ANTIGUA & BARBUDA CLINICAL NEUROLOGY SUMMIT, BUILDING ON REGIONAL STROKE CARE MILESTONE

Three-day event brings together regional and international expertise to advance neurological care and professional development.





The Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) has successfully hosted the inaugural Antigua & Barbuda Clinical Neurology Summit, the first dedicated clinical neurology summit of its kind in Antigua & Barbuda, bringing together medical professionals, specialists and healthcare practitioners for three days of learning, knowledge exchange and collaboration.

Held November 13–15, 2026, at the American University of Antigua (AUA) Conference Centre, the hybrid summit welcomed both in-person and virtual participants. The program focused on key areas of neurological care, including migraine, stroke and epilepsy, with a dedicated nursing program on the final day.

The event attracted participants from across the Caribbean, as well as the United States and Canada, with virtual participation extending as far as Scotland. This international reach provided an opportunity for healthcare professionals from different settings to connect, exchange knowledge and engage with specialists in the field.

The summit was organized as part of SLBMC's continued efforts to strengthen neurological services and build clinical capacity, following the hospital's achievement of certification as an Essential Stroke Centre by the World Stroke Organization (WSO). SLBMC is currently the only facility in the English-speaking Caribbean to hold this designation.

Chair of the Summit Organizing Committee, Dr. Gaden Osborne, Neurologist and Chair of Subspecialty Services at SLBMC, said the summit was an important next step in building on that achievement and strengthening the region's approach to neurological care.

"We were particularly pleased with the caliber of speakers who joined us for this inaugural summit. We brought together experienced regional and international specialists with deep expertise in migraine, stroke and epilepsy, giving participants access to valuable clinical insights, current research and practical perspectives that can inform patient care. Just as importantly, the program reflected the need to look beyond a diagnosis and consider the whole patient. We explored neurological conditions across different stages of life, with discussions addressing both adult and pediatric care, as well as specific considerations such as women living with epilepsy. This broader perspective is essential because effective neurological care must recognize the individual, their circumstances and their specific needs.

"Our WSO Essential Stroke Centre certification was an important milestone, but we know that advancing neurological care requires continuous learning, collaboration and investment in our people. This summit is another step in that direction. We hope the relationships and knowledge shared over these three days will continue to translate into stronger, more comprehensive neurological services across Antigua and the wider region."

The program featured presentations and discussions led by regional and international specialists, creating opportunities for healthcare professionals to engage with current approaches, share experiences and consider how knowledge can be translated into clinical practice.





The summit also placed emphasis on professional development across disciplines. The final day included a dedicated nursing program, recognizing the important role nurses play in the assessment, management and ongoing care of patients with neurological conditions.

Lyandra Richards, Head of SLBMC's Learning and Development Department, highlighted the value of creating learning opportunities that bring healthcare professionals together across different areas of practice.

"Continuing professional development is essential in healthcare. The knowledge and approaches we use in clinical practice must continue to evolve, and our healthcare professionals need opportunities to learn, exchange ideas and strengthen their skills. Having a dedicated nursing program as part of the summit was particularly important because advancing patient care requires the involvement of the entire healthcare team. We want participants to take what they have learned beyond the conference and apply it in ways that make a difference in practice."

Head of Marketing and Communications at SLBMC, Salma Crump, said the summit represented an important achievement for the hospital, while also demonstrating Antigua & Barbuda's potential to attract and host specialized professional events.

"Bringing this summit to life involved much more than organizing a conference. It required coordination across clinical teams, professional bodies, sponsors, partners and a range of stakeholders, all working towards a shared goal. We wanted to create an event that was meaningful for healthcare professionals, relevant to the advancement of neurological care and capable of bringing expertise to Antigua & Barbuda.

"There is also a wider opportunity here. Antigua & Barbuda is actively expanding its MICE sector (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) as it works to position itself as a premier regional and international business events hub. Events such as this summit demonstrate that we can attract specialized expertise, facilitate important professional exchanges and create opportunities that extend beyond the conference room. Healthcare conferences have the added value of contributing to professional development and strengthening the quality of care available to our people."

Crump added that the summit builds on the hospital's progress in neurological care and reflects the importance of continuing to invest in knowledge and collaboration.

"Being the only facility in the English-speaking Caribbean with WSO Essential Stroke Centre certification is a significant achievement, but we recognize that progress in healthcare must be continuous. This summit is another step in that journey. It creates space for our professionals to learn from others, share their own experiences and build relationships that can support further development. We are pleased to have helped bring this level of clinical engagement to Antigua & Barbuda, and we see real value in continuing to develop opportunities of this kind."

The inaugural Antigua & Barbuda Clinical Neurology Summit marks an important step in SLBMC's ongoing commitment to strengthening neurological care, supporting its healthcare workforce and contributing to the advancement of specialist services in Antigua and Barbuda and the wider Caribbean.

More information about the inaugural Antigua & Barbuda Clinical Neurology Summit, including program highlights and event details, is available at neuroantigua.org.


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The New Competition for Investment Capital



By Garfield Joseph, MBA

When a new hotel opens in Antigua and Barbuda, most people see the visible benefits: construction activity, employment opportunities, increased visitor arrivals, and new business for local suppliers. What many do not see is the intense global competition that took place before that investment decision was ever made.

Before that hotel was built, investors likely compared Antigua and Barbuda with dozens of destinations across the Caribbean and around the world. They evaluated opportunities, risks, infrastructure, workforce skills, market access, and the likelihood of long-term success before ultimately choosing Antigua and Barbuda.

That reality was brought into focus recently by a Caribbean Investment Report published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The report highlighted an encouraging but important reality for the region. Foreign direct investment into Caribbean economies increased to approximately US$18 billion in 2025, yet those inflows remained heavily concentrated in a relatively small number of countries and major projects.

The report prompts an important question: Why do some countries attract investment more successfully than others?

The answer is increasingly important because investment capital has become one of the most competitive resources in the global economy.

Viewed relative to the size of national economies, the report becomes even more interesting. While Guyana and Suriname led the region largely because of energy-related investments, several small island developing states also performed strongly. Foreign direct investment in 2025 was equivalent to approximately 14% of GDP in Grenada, 13% in Antigua and Barbuda, and 10% in both The Bahamas and Saint Lucia.

These figures demonstrate that small states can compete successfully for global capital when they provide attractive opportunities, stable policy environments, and investor confidence.

Every country wants investment, but not every country attracts it. In today's global economy, capital has more choices than ever before. Investors can place their resources in thousands of projects across dozens of countries, making the competition for investment one of the defining economic challenges of our time.

Countries around the world are competing vigorously for one of the most valuable resources in today's economy: investment capital. Governments celebrate major investment announcements, new hotels, manufacturing plants, technology hubs, and infrastructure projects. Yet what is often overlooked is the tremendous effort required to attract, secure, and retain that investment.

Investment capital does not arrive by accident. It is earned through years of policy development, institutional strengthening, business facilitation, and the building of trust. In today's highly competitive environment, attracting investment is less about promoting opportunities and more about creating the conditions that give investors confidence they can succeed.

At its core, investors are seeking three things: the opportunity to earn appropriate returns, confidence that the rules of the game will remain reasonably stable, and assurance that economies are open to capital, trade, ideas, technology, and talent. Countries that provide these conditions are often better positioned to attract long-term investment than those that rely solely on incentives or promotional campaigns.

Why Capital Matters

Investment capital is the fuel that powers economic growth. It finances new businesses, expands existing enterprises, creates jobs, introduces new technologies, strengthens infrastructure, and increases productivity.

For small island developing states and emerging economies, investment plays an even more critical role. Domestic savings and public resources are often insufficient to finance the level of growth and transformation required. External investment therefore becomes an essential source of financing, expertise, innovation, and market access.

When capital flows into a country, it does more than fund projects. It creates opportunities for suppliers, contractors, professionals, educators, and workers. Entire economic ecosystems can emerge around successful investments.

The challenge is that capital is highly mobile. Investors can choose from dozens of countries, hundreds of cities, and thousands of potential projects. They do not invest simply because a country needs investment. They invest where they believe they can achieve sustainable returns while managing risk effectively.

What Investors Really Look For

Contrary to popular belief, incentives and concessions are rarely the primary drivers of investment decisions. Investors first seek strong fundamentals.

Returns, Stability, and Openness

At its core, investment is a balancing act between risk and reward. Investors are seeking opportunities that offer appropriate returns relative to the risks involved.

Higher-risk environments generally require the prospect of higher returns to attract capital, while countries with strong institutions, stable economic policies, and predictable business environments can often attract investors even when expected returns are more moderate because uncertainty is lower.

Investors also place significant value on policy stability. While policies naturally evolve over time, businesses making long-term investments want confidence that major decisions will be predictable, transparent, and guided by clear national priorities. Sudden policy shifts, uncertain regulations, or inconsistent implementation can increase risk and discourage investment.

Finally, investors favor economies that are open to global capital. Openness signals a willingness to participate in international markets and allows businesses to access financing, partnerships, technology, expertise, and customers beyond national borders.

Market Size and Market Access

Investors want customers.

Large domestic markets naturally attract investment because they provide a substantial customer base. Smaller countries must compensate by demonstrating access to regional and international markets through trade agreements, strategic location, connectivity, or specialized industries.

This is where tourism creates a unique advantage for countries such as Antigua and Barbuda. While the country's resident population is relatively small, its tourism industry connects it to a global marketplace that extends far beyond its shores.

Visitors, yacht owners, business travelers, international brands, and investors interact with the economy every day, creating demand for accommodations, transportation, professional services, construction, retail, entertainment, and a wide range of supporting industries.

In many respects, tourism expands the effective size of the market. It gives businesses access to a customer base that is significantly larger and more diverse than the resident population alone would suggest.

Investors therefore ask fundamental questions:

- How large is the market?
- Is demand growing?
- Can products and services be exported efficiently?
- What international connections and opportunities exist?

For many smaller nations, market access can be just as important as market size.

Natural Resources

Natural resources have long attracted investment because they create direct economic opportunities.

These may include:

- Agriculture
- Fisheries
- Minerals
- Energy resources
- Tourism assets
- Strategic geographic locations

However, resources alone are no longer enough. Investors increasingly seek countries that can convert those resources into sustainable economic value through sound governance, modern infrastructure, and effective management.

Technology and Innovation

Technology has become a key competitive advantage.

Investors increasingly evaluate:

- Digital infrastructure
- Connectivity
- Business digitization
- Innovation ecosystems
- Adaptability to emerging technologies

Countries are no longer competing solely on physical assets. They are competing on their ability to innovate, adapt, and participate in the global digital economy.

Human Capital and Skills

Perhaps the most valuable resource today is talent.

Investors closely examine:

- Workforce availability
- Education systems
- Technical skills
- Management capabilities
- Productivity levels
- Training opportunities

A country may possess natural beauty, strategic location, and attractive incentives, but without a capable workforce, long-term investment prospects become limited.

The race for capital is increasingly becoming a race for talent.

The Pillars of Investment Success

Successful investment attraction rests on five interconnected pillars:

Policy. Investors seek stability, predictability, and clear national direction.

Regulation. Regulations should be transparent, consistent, efficient, fair, and predictable.

Financing. Strong financial systems provide access to capital and support investment growth.

Execution. Investors ultimately judge countries by their ability to deliver on commitments and facilitate projects effectively.

Confidence. The most important pillar of all.

Investment is fundamentally a confidence decision. Investors commit resources today based on expectations about tomorrow.

Trust is built through strong governance, rule of law, transparency, professionalism, consistency, and positive investor experiences.

The New Competition for Investment Capital

The competition for capital has changed dramatically.

In the past, countries often competed primarily with neighboring nations. Today, an investor considering a project in the Caribbean may also be evaluating opportunities in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe, or the Middle East.

Technology, globalization, and access to information have expanded the range of investment options available to global capital.

As a result, governments are now competing on factors such as:

- Ease of doing business
- Speed and predictability of approvals
- Infrastructure quality
- Workforce capability
- Digital readiness
- Sustainability and resilience
- Governance standards
- Institutional effectiveness

Capital has become increasingly selective. Investors are looking not only for opportunity but also for confidence that projects can be executed successfully and risks can be effectively managed.

Investment attraction is therefore no longer simply an economic development activity. It has become a measure of national competitiveness.

Investment Attraction Is a National Endeavor

Too often, investment attraction is viewed as the responsibility of a single agency.

In reality, attracting investment requires the coordinated efforts of government ministries, regulatory authorities, educational institutions, financial institutions, utilities, infrastructure providers, and the private sector.

A country's investment brand is not defined by marketing campaigns alone. It is shaped by the experience investors encounter when they engage with its institutions.

Every permit processed efficiently, every policy implemented consistently, every infrastructure project delivered successfully, and every commitment fulfilled contributes to investor confidence.

Conclusion: Winning the Confidence Competition

The global race for capital is ultimately a race for confidence.

Investors may be attracted by market opportunities, natural resources, strategic location, or emerging technologies, but these advantages alone are rarely enough. Ultimately, they are looking for opportunities that provide appropriate returns, operate within stable policy environments, and exist in economies that are open to global capital and commerce.

This is especially true for small island developing states. Countries such as Antigua and Barbuda cannot compete on size alone. They must compete on quality, agility, responsiveness, stability, and their ability to create an environment where businesses can succeed.

Antigua and Barbuda's tourism industry offers an important lesson. Success is not always determined by the size of the domestic market, but by the ability to connect local opportunities to regional and global demand.

Perhaps that is the most important lesson of all.

Capital does not flow to countries simply because they need investment. It flows to countries that earn the confidence of investors.

Every efficient approval process, every infrastructure improvement, every transparent regulation, every successful project, and every fulfilled commitment contributes to that confidence.

In a world where investors have more choices than ever before, the countries that succeed will not necessarily be the largest or the richest. They will be the countries that consistently demonstrate competence, reliability, and a clear vision for the future.

In today's world, capital has choices. The countries that succeed are the ones that earn the confidence to be chosen.

Garfield Joseph is the Executive Director of a public sector organization in Antigua and Barbuda, where he is responsible for translating government policy and national objectives into operational action. His work spans strategic execution, financial oversight, and stakeholder engagement. He has also served as an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, teaching Business Strategy and Policy and Business, Government and Society. He writes regularly on investment, entrepreneurship, and long-term decision-making.




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Antigua Barbuda
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T&T not in talks with US on receiving third-country deportees



The Trinidad and Tobago government says it is not holding any discussions with the United States about receiving third-country nationals deported from that country.

"The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has not entered into and is not negotiating any agreement or other arrangement with the Government of the United States of America for Trinidad and Tobago to receive third-country nationals deported from the United States," Leader of Government Business in the Senate, Darrell Allahar, said on Tuesday.

He was responding to a question from the Opposition.

Several Caribbean Community (Caricom) countries have signed or negotiated bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the United States to accept or temporarily transit third-country nationals (TCNs) deported from the US.

Jamaica signed an MOU with the US in June 2026 for a transit arrangement capped at 25 people per fortnight, with a maximum of 25 individuals in the country at any time, while St Lucia entered into a bilateral agreement to receive TCNs, expecting up to 10 individuals per quarter over a two-year period.

Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica have also reached initial understandings with Washington following US visa restrictions and proposed travel bonds tied to their countries' Citizenship by Investment (CBI) programmes.

Other CARICOM countries, notably Guyana, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, and The Bahamas, have also engaged in discussions or signed framework agreements, with St Kitts and Nevis limiting prospective intake strictly to CARICOM nationals or non-violent/non-sexual visa overstays. (CMC)

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The Auction shall be held on site.

Details of the Auction may be obtained from Trevor "Teddy" Santos Inc., at telephone numbers: 562-7653 and 464-7653.

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Regional News

‘Bukele is here to free us’

Thousands of people poured into the streets of Haiti’s capital and beyond on Tuesday to praise El Salvador’s president, Nayib Bukele, and his troops as they fight gangs in the country.

Many in the crowd raised their fists and some clutched Haitian flags and signs in favour of Bukele.

“Bukele is here to free us!” some shouted.

“Give them the drones and the dogs!” others yelled in reference to the explosive drones that have targeted areas controlled by powerful gangs and the newly unveiled robot dogs making their rounds in Port-au-Prince.

Last month, Bukele deployed some 2,500 troops to Haiti after four of their own came under attack on October 18 and remain missing. Fighting between gangs and foreign forces backed by Haitian authorities has only increased since then, as Haiti remains mired in violence, with more than 20,000 people killed in the past five years.

While chants of “Bukele!” are spreading across Haiti, experts warn there’s no long-term plan to keep the country safe once the Central American troops pull out.

“This enthusiasm … could turn into anger against the government if the troops withdraw,” said Diego Da Rin, an analyst with International Crisis Group.

The group published a report Tuesday based on more than 100 interviews with officials in Haiti and abroad that reveal government failures and missteps as it urged Haitian officials to develop a plan to prevent their country from imploding once international forces leave.



“The new foreign mission promises temporary relief from the bane of gangs, but its goal is to weaken, not dismantle them,” the report said. “Haiti should start preparing now for the day when its own forces are once again summoned to take sole charge of the nation’s security.”

Forces currently fighting gangs include Haiti’s police and soldiers; a UN-backed gang suppression force; self-appointed vigilantes; and Vectus Global, a private security firm founded by former US Navy SEAL and Blackwater founder Erik Prince. Fighting gangs on their own are some 2,500 Salvadoran troops deployed when four of their own went missing after they were attacked on October 18 deep in gang-controlled territory.

International Crisis Group warned that authorities “lack a strategy to identify the most pressing threats, coordinate state efforts, and bring a lasting reduction in violence.”

Tuesday’s report noted that plans to establish a National Security Council tasked with creating a long-term strategy to make Haiti safer two years ago never materialised.

Citing interviews with former senior government officials, the report stated that some people were concerned the council would oversee intelligence gathering, which has previously been used by Haitian leaders to target political opponents. Sources also told International Crisis Group that top officials did not want to see intelligence funds redirected because they feared losing that money.

International Crisis Group also said a foreign adviser told it that a lack of national strategy means that various police units “often follow different operational guidelines depending on their foreign donors”.

As of last year, Haiti’s National Police had no more than 8,000 active officers for a country of nearly 12 million people, the report said, citing “sources with first-hand knowledge”. Many of those officers occupy command and administrative positions and are not on the street, “while others are not trained for combat”.

The report said the government shortened training from seven months to less than four to quickly increase the number of police officers.

It also warned that police promotions rarely follow criteria like seniority or merit, with some rank-and-file officers opting to work with gangs or turning to private security or arms trafficking for additional income. Lower-ranking officers in Haiti are paid about US$300 a month before mandatory deductions.

International Crisis Group called for improving salaries, benefits and facilities for police officers, as well as offering them specialised training and a “clear promotion system based on performance rather than politics”.

This week, Haitian Justice Minister Patrick Pélissier flew to El Salvador for an international conference and is expected to meet behind closed doors with Salvadoran officials.

Salvadoran Vice President Félix Ulloa said Monday that the bilateral agreement with Haiti would not be made public.

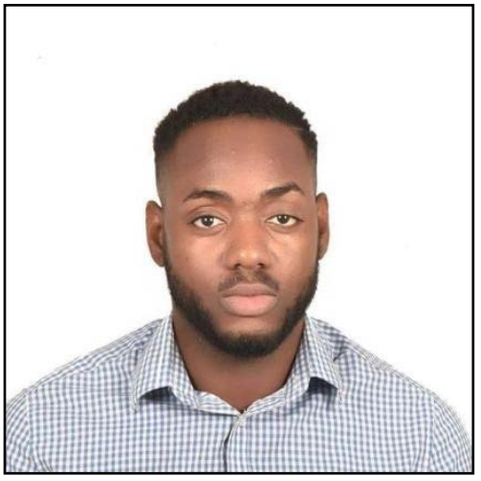
“There is a hidden agenda to criticise our operation,” he said when asked whether the deal guarantees respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Ulloa and Salvadoran Security Minister Gustavo Villatoro said that the Salvadoran soldiers would return home as soon as the four missing aviation technicians are found.

“We must begin preparing Haiti for a genuine rule of law, so that its institutions function and its legal frameworks work effectively in the future,” Villatoro said. (AP)

POINT EXPRESS ANTIGUA & BARBUDA TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

Political head won't fix CARICOM without public buy-in, says Gordon



The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is facing a credibility and legitimacy crisis and is struggling to find common ground on issues affecting sovereignty and foreign policy. However, appointing a political head as suggested by Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Mottley may not be the answer.

That's the position of Damion Gordon, a lecturer in the Department of Government at The University of the West Indies (UWI).

Instead, Gordon told The Gleaner, steps must first be taken to build solidarity around CARICOM and instil commitment to the organisation.

"People need to see the benefits of regionalism and, over time, that will build support. But, if people believe that regionalism doesn't work, which is certainly a broad view among CARICOM nationals, then that undermines the project in itself. People need to feel that the project works, [that] it delivers benefits. Those are the conversations that we should be having," he argued.

Gordon said efforts should be advanced in facilitating easier regional travel and increased trade while expanding opportunities for education and cultural exchanges across member states.

Mottley made the call for a political head for CARICOM while speaking at the Patterson Doctrine book launch at The UWI on Sunday.

"Without a political head, CARICOM will not go any further," she declared, arguing that the organisation needed a leader capable of pro-

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viding continuity, articulating the region's interests, and ensuring decisions taken by member states were implemented.

She also proposed a 0.3 per cent tax on United States imports into the region, along with a US$1 levy on cruise ship passengers and a US$2 tax on visitors staying longer in the region, as a means of ensuring the organisation remains financially viable.

But Gordon was not particularly keen on this suggestion either.

"We can't be thinking about levying and taxing on all of that," he said, stressing again the need for camaraderie in the region. "If we achieve greater levels of intraregional trade, intraregional travel, then it means that we can sustain ourselves from within."

Gordon asserted that the 53-year-old bloc has substantially lost sight of its historical mandate to build and sustain functional cooperation among member states in areas of economy, regional security and foreign policy coordination.

Not only does this affect the region's international and moral standing, he contended, but it also highlights the need to reflect on the future of the CARICOM integration model.

Gordon pointed to recent developments, such as Trinidad and Tobago's endorsement of US military strikes in the Caribbean Sea against boats suspected of trafficking drugs, despite the rest of CARICOM's push to maintain the area as a zone of peace.

He also highlighted divisions at the UN General Assembly with a recent vote calling for an end to the US embargo on Cuba. Seven CARICOM countries voted in favour of lifting the embargo; three countries, including Jamaica, abstained; another three territories did not vote; while Trinidad and Tobago became the first CARICOM state to vote against the resolution.

"Our ability to influence global affairs and to advance our own interests as a region depends on our ability to act collectively, and we have seen a departure from that [approach] recently," he said.

His comments follow similar concern expressed by former Prime Minister Bruce Golding, who asserted that CARICOM's failure to achieve true regional integration has left it vulnerable to interference, disruption and exploitation.

Golding said, although there have been some achievements in regional integration, it is nowhere near the vision set out when the organisation was established in 1973.

He cited "the problem of insularity and the protective concept of sovereignty", along with a weakness in conviction and political will, as reasons for the stunted advancement of the organisation.

Golding, who was also speaking at the book launch on Sunday, said CARICOM today would be unrecognisable to its founding fathers.

Gordon, in agreement, told The Gleaner that the founding fathers of CARICOM understood that small economies were dispensable when geopolitical tensions arise between more powerful nations and were aware that "our unity and solidarity are our most important asset".

"The vision was that, when we come together, we could create institutions and mechanisms that are better suited to advance our interests in a global system where our concerns have been traditionally underrepresented," he said.

"So, the fact that today we remain so vulnerable to external influence that we often have to compromise our own sense of sovereignty and autonomy tells us that the CARICOM project and the CARICOM vision is not achieving, it's not being realised," he added.

Gordon stated, however, that the political leadership across the Caribbean is not solely to be blamed, asserting that the civic institutions and governing institutions have been all derelict in their responsibility to build a strong sense of regional identity among Caribbean people, which is key to getting CARICOM to work.

"If you compare CARICOM with other regional integration projects such as the EU (European Union), the difference is that some other regions have been able to embed integration and a regional identity into the everyday lives of citizens," he said. "I don't think that CARICOM has been embedded in the consciousness of Caribbean people in the same way."

He said this is also partly because Caribbean leaders elevate their sovereignty and external relationships over regionalism, which, he argued, is often the more practical choice as intraregional trade only accounts for approximately five to 10 per cent of total trade in member states.

"They may feel that, if they prioritise regionalism over the other relationship – the external partnership – then the gaps that could emerge, CARICOM may not be able to fill those gaps. And those are very practical, realistic considerations," he said.

"The question that many Caribbean states ask themselves is: When we give up the traditional external development arrangements and partnerships in pursuit of the CARICOM position, how do we navigate the repercussions of that difficult choice, given our vulnerabilities and our inherent constraints?" Gordon added. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Over 200 illegal miners convicted in Guyana as crackdown intensifies

The Guyana government says it has secured more than 200 convictions against illegal miners as the campaign continues to strengthen the enforcement of the country's mining laws.

The Ministry of Natural Resources said that during the period January to October this year, more than 200 convictions had been secured against illegal miners at the Magistrates' Courts and that the prosecutions, recorded in Bartica, Mahdia and Linden, form part of its ongoing efforts to combat illegal mining, strengthen regulatory compliance and ensure that mining activities are conducted within the confines of the law.

According to the ministry's prosecution records, the offences include mining without the requisite authorisation, operating unlicensed and unregistered dredges, in addition to breaches of the Mining Act and its regulations.

Of the more than 200 convictions, a substantial number of the defendants pleaded guilty and were fined by the courts. In several other cases, defendants who initially contested the charges subsequently entered guilty pleas, while convictions were also secured following trials.

It said that three defendants who pleaded not guilty were remanded to prison pending trial and that several other contested matters remain before the courts, with bail granted to some defendants.

As part of its enforcement operations, multiple pieces of mining equipment, including excavators and other machinery, were seized.

"Significant quantities of gold were also confiscated and subsequently handed over to the relevant authorities. These seizures form part of the ministry's broader efforts to dismantle illegal mining operations and ensure that those engaged in unlawful activities are held accountable," the ministry added.



"The ministry maintains that compliance with the Mining Act and its regulations is essential to safeguarding Guyana's mineral resources, promoting responsible mining practices and ensuring accountability across the sector." (CMC)

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Rubio says US not 'under systemic attack' after series of tech outages



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has dismissed widespread concerns online that the series of recent tech outages in the past week are connected, telling reporters there was "zero evidence" of any link.

Rubio acknowledged that "people are fearful" the spate of outages, which included all flights being grounded in the US and widespread disruptions to banking, Apple and Microsoft services, could be linked or part of a plot.

"We are not under systemic attack," he said. "These events, one has nothing to do with the other, they are not inter-related."

Cyber-security experts have agreed that there is no evidence linking the outages, and many of the issues appear due to updates to old infrastructure.

In the past week, there has been a massive Microsoft outage, an apparent tech glitch which grounded all US flights for hours, and issues for the National Security Agency, outages affecting the biggest US banks and Apple.

Every affected company or agency has said the issue was not cyber-related and not the work of an outside actor.

Rubio's comments came hours after US Director of National Intelligence Jay Clayton also addressed the issue, telling Fox News the outages were not the product of a cyber-attack. He explained "lots of institutions" are patching or upgrading systems, which has caused some disruption.

Rubio was asked whether the Trump administration was concerned public fears could lead to stockpiling or a run on the banks.

He said the best way to combat such fears was for the US government to share everything they know with the American people.

"Every indicator we have is that every single one of these events has an explanation or a cause that has nothing to do with a cyber-criminal, has nothing to do with a hostile actor or another country," he said.

Technology-related disruptions have happened almost daily since Thursday, when a Microsoft outage disrupted many of its services, including email.

The next day, the US Federal Aviation Administration halted flights across the US for more than four hours with a rare national ground stop. It was the longest halting of flights since the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US.

The US transport secretary said the issue was technical and caused by a copper wire upgrade and outdated equipment.

On Monday, a United Airlines technology failure delayed about 150 flights and a JPMorgan Chase software problem disrupted service at the biggest and most utilised banks in the US.

Both United and Chase said a software issue was behind the glitch.

Apple users were impacted by outages affecting iCloud and Apple Pay on Tuesday. The company said the cause was not a cyber-attack but the outage was triggered by an an internal update.

The same day, a highly classified network used by the US National Security Agency (NSA) for internal communications also went offline for a period of time. (BBC)

Doctors raise concerns about babies born with measles

For the first time in decades, US doctors are sounding the alarm about babies coming into the world with measles.

Congenital measles happens when a pregnant woman passes the virus to her fetus in the womb. It can lead to serious complications or even be deadly for newborns.

From the start of 2025 through to the end of this September, 13 congenital measles cases were reported to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) during large measles outbreaks, according to preliminary figures published in a medical journal on Monday.

"This is a brand new phenomenon," said Michael Osterholm, who directs the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy.

The condition's emergence is driven by declining vaccination rates, which have fuelled the virus's spread so much that the Pan American Health Organization is expected to officially announce on Tuesday that the US has lost the measles-free status it's had since 2000. In the past two years, according to the CDC, there have been more than 7,500 measles cases.

"We're now seeing levels of measles that we haven't seen in 30 years," said Dr Adam Ratner, a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics' infectious diseases committee. "When you have measles under control," congenital measles doesn't happen.

The preliminary case figures were released in a public health alert published by NEJM Evidence in partnership with the centre Osterholm directs. The alert also said there were 112 cases of confirmed measles during pregnancy — almost all among women who didn't get vaccinated against measles beforehand or whose vaccination status was unknown. The alert said getting vaccinated before pregnancy and having high vaccination rates in the community "are important to prevent measles and related complications". CDC scientists authored the alert.



Guidance on congenital measles from the pediatrics academy is already reaching doctors. And Pennsylvania's health department published an advisory last month for healthcare providers, schools, childcare centers and others in the state, which currently has the largest measles outbreak in the nation.

People gain immunity to measles by getting the disease or the vaccine. Before the shots existed, lots of people were infected by the extremely contagious virus in childhood. Later, high vaccination rates protected everyone. But a new and historic reality — shaped both by the success of the vaccine and recent scepticism about it — has triggered congenital measles.

"What's happening is, we have so many women of childbearing age who were not vaccinated in the last 25 years. Nor have they ever had exposure to measles, because for the last 25 years we have beaten it back," Osterholm said. "Now, this group is highly susceptible to measles."

Doctors say the best way to prevent the disease is for women to get the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, known as MMR, before pregnancy. This protects the fetus, too, because antibodies pass from mother to baby through the placenta. Protection can last a few months after birth.

MMR can't be given during pregnancy. Unvaccinated women who have never had measles and are exposed while pregnant can get a solution containing antibodies within six days to reduce the risk of infection and complications.

If a woman gets measles towards the end of pregnancy, there's a good chance she will pass it along. An estimated 25 per cent to 30 per cent of babies born to someone who gets measles shortly before delivery may become infected, the paediatrics group says.

Babies are considered to have congenital measles if they were exposed in the uterus and doctors find evidence of measles very soon after birth. Common symptoms include fever, jaundice and a measles rash. Severe complications include pneumonia, encephalitis and a rare condition known as SSPE, a brain disorder that generally develops many years after a measles infection and is almost always fatal.

Ratner, who wrote a book about measles, said there are indications that kids with congenital measles are at higher risk for SSPE and may develop it sooner after having measles than other children. "That's something that, sadly, we're learning more about," he said.

Doctors worry that things may get worse if vaccination rates keep dropping. Outbreaks are considered unlikely if a community has a 95 per cent MMR rate, but rates in many communities have dipped below that threshold. Nationally, the CDC said, 92.4 per cent of US kindergarteners in 2025-26 received the required MMR shots.

This puts many vulnerable people at risk, including infants too young to be vaccinated. The first MMR dose is routinely given at 12 to 15 months old, and the earliest babies can get the shots is six months in outbreak areas.

"We need to get back to the point where everybody who can get vaccinated is getting vaccinated, and that's gonna take some doing," Ratner said. "It's going to be a lot of work on the part of paediatricians and public health institutions and lots of others. But it's an important thing for us to do." (AP)

Tariff relief expanded under agreement with Canada

The leaders of China and Canada agreed on Tuesday on additional tariff cuts as they pledged for deeper ties even as Ottawa navigates strained relations with the United States.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney met ahead of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, and both praised the strategic partnership they agreed to pursue this year and pointed to improving economic ties.

Carney's office said in a statement that the new measures extend and expand an earlier agreement between the countries.

Under the agreement, China will provide additional tariff relief on Canadian exports worth around CDN$400 million, including frozen pork cuts, fish and seafood.

In return, Canada will extend tariff exemptions for certain Chinese steel and aluminium products by two years.

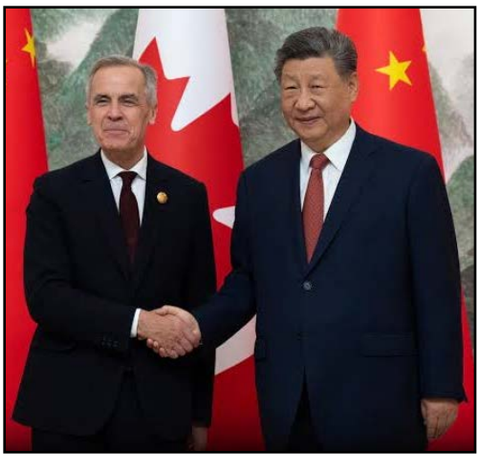
The meeting between the leaders came a day after Carney said Canada could turn to Chinese automakers if trade negotiations with US President Donald Trump fail to maintain an integrated North American auto industry.

"Improving and developing China-Canada relations serves the interests of the people of both countries and is also conducive to safeguarding world peace, stability, development and prosperity," said Xi. "This is the right choice."

Carney said that the exchanges between Canada and China have increased in the past months, and praised that now there is "greater predictability and stability" in their relationship.

"The stabilisation of our bilateral trade arrangement is indicative of how we can work together more broadly, pragmatically, to solve problems," he said.

Carney added that his country is ahead of schedule in its plan to increase exports to China by 50 per cent by the end of the decade.



Xi and Carney reached an agreement in January allowing tens of thousands of Chinese electric vehicles into Canada at reduced tariffs.

Under the January agreement, Canada reduced its 100 per cent tariff on Chinese electric vehicles to 6.1 per cent, initially allowing up to 49,000 vehicles annually, with the cap increasing over time. In exchange, China agreed to lower tariffs on Canadian agricultural products, including canola. (AP)



Trump shakes hands with Putin and Xi ahead of historic talks in China

Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin met for the first time in more than a year on Wednesday, as they prepared for landmark talks in China with Xi Jinping.

The US president was greeted off his plane by the Chinese leader as he arrived in Shenzhen for a summit of Asia-Pacific leaders, which will culminate in a closely-watched meeting between the pair and the Russian president.

After a carefully choreographed handshake and hug between Trump and Xi on the tarmac, the US president later greeted and exchanged pleasantries with Putin ahead of a reception.

Trump and Putin are expected to hold one-on-one talks on the sidelines of the summit on Thursday, in which the war in Ukraine could be discussed.

However the main focus during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (Apec) will be on the US-China-Russia talks on Thursday - the first time the trio of leaders have met together in person.

A full agenda has not been made public but there have been various hints about what could be discussed, including the wars in Ukraine and Iran, nuclear proliferation, trade tensions and developments in artificial intelligence.

It was not clear on Wednesday what form separate Trump-Putin talks would take, though a Kremlin spokesperson indicated short informal talks may happen without large delegations in the room.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has raised fears of a plan



to end the war being discussed in the absence of representatives from Kyiv or Europe.

Wednesday's handshake was the first in-person meeting between Trump and Putin since August 2025, when the Russian leader travelled to Alaska for talks on the Ukraine war which failed to deliver a breakthrough.

Xi's personal reception for Trump at the airport mimicked a similar move by the US president when the Chinese leader visited Washington in September, a gesture Xi described as "special".

In Shenzhen, a red carpet was rolled out in front of Air Force One for Trump, with a cheering crowd, honour guard, military flyover and flowers presentation all in place to welcome him.

Chinese state-run news agency Xinhua quoted Xi as saying he wanted to pursue a "constructive strategic and stable relationship based on respect, fairness, and equality".

Xi's greeting will be seen as a diplomatic gesture designed to begin the week's talks with his American counterpart on a cordial note.

The south-east Chinese city the Apec summit is being held in is a booming area for manufacturing and advanced tech.

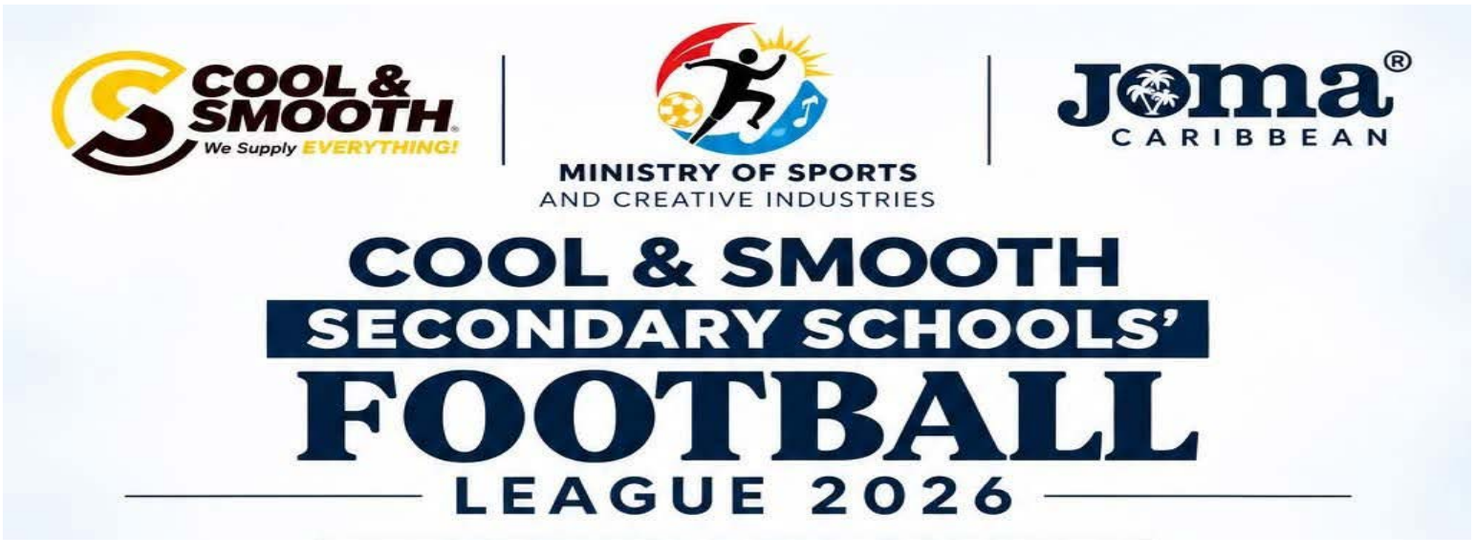
It comes against the backdrop of the ousting of Nvidia chief executing Jensen Huang, who admitted to having an affair with a woman suspected by US intelligence of spying for Beijing - a claim dismissed as a "smear" by China.

Trump has pursued warmer relations with China but the incident points to ongoing tensions between the two powers.

Several hours before Trump's arrival, Putin landed in Shenzhen and held around two hours of talks with Xi, with whom he has pressed for closer economic and defence relations.

Xi said both countries would "move forward steadily and boldly" and that the relationship was "stable as a mountain, unshaken by storms". (BBC)


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OCS maintain perfect start in school boys under-16 division league

The Ottos Comprehensive School (OCS) maintained their successful start to their campaign in the Boys Under-16 Division in the Ministry of Sports Cool and Smooth JOMA Caribbean Schools Football League on Tuesday.

The Ottos Comprehensive School made it five wins in a row by securing a 3-1 victory over Sir Novelle Richards Academy (SNRA) at the Antigua Grammar School's playing field.

Lijthaddeus Christian scored twice with strikes in the sixth and ninth minutes, and Jevoi Grey had a 44th-minute conversion for OCS to remain at the top of the 12-team standings with 15 points.

Alanni Dawkins scored a consolation goal in the 41st minute for SNRA, which remains on nine points after slumping to their second defeat in five matches.

Reigning three-peat champions, Princess Margaret School (PMS), recorded their fourth win in five matches with a 3-0 victory against St. Anthony's Secondary School (SASS) at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

Alan Henry had a double conversion with goals in the 10th and 11th minutes, and Ethan Barton scored in the 24th minute to secure the victory, which allows PMS to advance to 12 points.

St. Anthony's Secondary School remains winless and in the cellar on one point after slumping to their third defeat in four matches.

The Jennings Secondary School advanced to nine points after picking up their third win in five matches with a 6-2 drubbing of All Saints Secondary School (ASSS) at the Clare Hall playing field.

Keadon Satchell produced a hat trick with conversions in the 14th, 32nd, and 37th minutes. The other goals for Jennings Secondary were scored by Kalvin Wilman in the 16th minute, Jahaney Batchelor in the 36th minute, and Elreekk Francois in the 48th minute.

Daniel Thomas had a 22nd-minute conversion, and Lakome Francis scored in the 46th minute for All Saints Secondary, which remains on six points after losing for the third time in five outings.

The St. Joseph's Academy (SJA) claimed their second win in five matches by pulling off a 3-0 victory against Clare Hall Secondary School (CHSS) at the Clare Hall playing field.

Jarique Roberts converted twice with goals in the 49th and 54th minutes, and Erije Joseph scored in the 22nd minute for St. Joseph's Academy to advance to eight points. Clare Hall Secondary School remains on four points after suffering their third loss in five matches.

Last year's losing finalists, Antigua Grammar School (AGS), advanced to seven points after picking up their second win in five matches with a 4-0 drubbing of Pares Secondary School (PSS) at Antigua Grammar School's playing field.

Tafari Parker produced a double conversion with strikes in the 14th and 19th minutes, and the other goals for AGS were scored by Jomo Douglas in the 46th minute and T'andre James in the 59th minute.

Pares Secondary School remain on one point after crashing to their third defeat in four matches.

However, the match at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park between Irene B. Williams Secondary (IBWS) and St. Mary's Secondary School (SMSS) was postponed.

Irene B. Williams Secondary (IBWS) remains on four points from three matches, while St. Mary's Secondary School has one point from three encounters.

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Pochettino arrives in Manchester braced for relegation cauldron

MANCHESTER, England (Reuters) - Mauricio Pochettino arrived at Manchester United on Wednesday morning, after an overnight flight took their new manager from his final match in charge of the US team into a relegation battle at a club desperately seeking a revival in fortunes.

Pochettino posted a photo of Manchester from the air on Instagram, signalling the end of his seven-hour journey from Cincinnati.

A private plane had whisked him away shortly after the US beat Haiti on Tuesday, and the 54-year-old Argentine was driven straight to United's training centre at Carrington.

Pochettino has precious little time to settle into his new surroundings, however, with an away Premier League game at arch-rivals Liverpool looming large on Sunday.

United announced Pochettino's appointment on Friday, following Michael Carrick's sacking, with the manager delaying his arrival to lead the US in their two-legged CONCACAF Nations League quarter-final.

His focus must swiftly switch from international football to the daily grind of club management, where a harsh spotlight will follow his every move and a drastic change in form is needed, and quickly.

United have not won the league title since 2013, when long-serving manager Alex Ferguson retired, and the 20-times English champions have registered one win in 10 league games this season to lie 18th in the table, their lowest position at this stage of a top-flight campaign since 1986-87.

That was the season Ferguson took charge, and 40 years later Pochettino arrives in similar circumstances. Ferguson was given time at United, whose wait for another league title had reached almost two decades upon his arrival. Two days after taking charge, Ferguson's side lost at Oxford United and dropped into the relegation zone.

Manchester United finished 11th that season, and had to wait until 1993 for Ferguson to deliver the title, although he did win a European Cup Winners' Cup, FA Cup, and League Cup along the way.

Pochettino, whose only league title as a manager came at Paris St. Germain, is unlikely to be afforded such patience.

US midfielder DaMarcus Beasley, who spent a season on-loan at Manchester City, joked with Pochettino in a post-game interview on TNT Sports on Tuesday that "Manchester will always be blue."

"No way, you will see," Pochettino replied. "Give me time, give me time and that is going to start to change, for sure."



Mauricio Pochettino

Japan's Tashima submits bid for FIFA presidency



Kozo Tashima

TOKYO/BANGKOK (Reuters) - Japan Football Association (JFA) Honorary President Kozo Tashima said on Wednesday he has submitted his candidacy for the FIFA presidency after securing the support of five national federations.

Nominations for the FIFA presidential election closed at 2259 GMT on Wednesday, four months before the 77th FIFA Congress in Rabat on March 18, where the vote will take place. Gianni Infantino is seeking reelection for a fourth term as head of global soccer's ruling body.

Candidates need at least five member associations to nominate them. They should also have played an active role in football for two of the last five years as a player or official within FIFA, a confederation or a national association.

"On November 17, the JFA submitted a letter to FIFA nominating JFA Honorary President Kozo Tashima as a candidate for (FIFA)," the JFA said in a statement.

Tashima is a former Japan international and youth coach and the first Japanese candidate to stand for FIFA president. He has served on the FIFA Council since 2015.

"The JFA submitted to FIFA a letter nominating me as a candidate in the FIFA presidential election," Tashima said in a statement shared by the JFA.

"I would like to once again express my gratitude to President (Tsuneyasu) Miyamoto and all the members of the board. I would also like to sincerely thank the football associations of many countries who gave me the necessary support for this nomination.

"With a strong sense of mission and determination, I will take on this challenge so that FIFA can become a healthier and more trusted organization and contribute to the further development of football around the world."

He did not disclose which associations' nominations he had received, but told reporters at the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) annual awards ceremony in Thailand on Wednesday he would later reveal which nations had backed him.

Asked about his objectives, the 68-year-old said, "First and foremost, I believe it is essential to establish proper governance and ensure that transparency is firmly maintained.

"We must get that right first. Then, on top of that, various policies can be put forward."

Candidates must pass formal eligibility and integrity checks before standing for election, and FIFA's general secretariat must notify member associations of the proposed candidates for president at least one month before the Congress.

Infantino has faced opposition to his reelection over his aborted attempt to bring private investors into a new FIFA commercial entity holding rights linked to competitions including the World Cup.

The Swiss later apologised to the FIFA Council for the way the proposal had been handled.

Other challengers include former Switzerland captain Ramon Vega and French Football Federation President Philippe Diallo.

Bancroft says entire Australian team were aware of sandpaper plot

PERTH (Reuters) - Cameron Bancroft on Wednesday claimed that the entire Australian team had known about ball-tampering during a 2018 tour of South Africa, adding that he had lied about the extent of the plot to protect Cricket Australia's investigation into the incident.

Bancroft and fellow batsmen David Warner and Steve Smith were banned over the plan to rough up the ball with sandpaper, following an investigation by CA which found that knowledge of the plan was confined to those three players.

Australian batter Usman Khawaja's recently released autobiography contradicted the conclusion of the initial CA investigation, however, reigniting the controversy and casting a shadow over Australian cricket.

"It was not just the three of us – Steve Smith, David Warner and I — who knew about me using sandpaper on the ball in South Africa. It was the whole team," Bancroft wrote in a lengthy column published in The West Australian.

"When I was questioned during Cricket Australia's investigation, I did not give a complete and truthful account.

"I withheld important details, including when the use of sandpaper began, how long it went on for, and the involvement and awareness of others. I did this to protect Cricket Australia's investigation and not implicate others around me."

CA, which announced on Wednesday it would be opening an independent forum to allow all players to give their accounts of the incident, said it would take the time to consider Bancroft's comments.

"We respect that Cameron Bancroft has told his story, and we will take time to consider his comments," the cricket board said in a statement.



Cameron Bancroft

"We expect that there will be many dimensions to the events of 2018, which is why we have established the forum for individuals to give their version of events.

"We are finalising the terms of reference and will commence the process as soon as possible."

The four Australia bowlers who played in the 2018 Test -- Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc, and Nathan Lyon -- issued a joint statement in 2021 denying any knowledge of the plot.

Bancroft claimed the idea to use sandpaper was Warner's, but that the conversation had taken place "within a wider team environment."

"I regularly spoke to the bowlers about how the ball was behaving. I had to," he added.

"I recall conversations with all the fast bowlers Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, and Mitchell Marsh about whether it was reverse swinging enough."

Cummins had denied any involvement in the sandpaper plot last week, and his manager Neil Maxwell denied any contradiction with Bancroft's statements.

Bancroft said the "final straw" that pushed him to break his silence was Cummins' press conference last week, in which the Australia captain denied any involvement in using sandpaper and said the allegations in Khawaja's autobiography were "utter nonsense."

"What I saw, experienced and lived with — not only him, but everyone else on that tour in South Africa — is not the public account he gave in his press conference and in the years previously when he has spoken on this time," Bancroft wrote.

"In addition to what Usman already mentioned I have key recollections which affirm what he is saying. My cricket career has been destroyed and I have never been able to play for my country since Justin Langer was coach in 2019.

"But I have reached a point where continuing to protect an incomplete account of events feels more damaging than the truth."

Bancroft's international career was the worst affected of the trio involved in "Sandpapergate", with the 33-year-old making only two more appearances for Australia after the Test series against South Africa.

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SAP FC ends Young Lions' unbeaten run in ABFA's First Division



SAP FC has ended the unbeaten start of the Young Lions of Old Road in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League.

SAP FC picked up their first win in five matches by pulling off a 2-0 victory over the Young Lions in a round south derby at the Old Road playing field on Tuesday.

Following a goalless first half, Jean-Pierre Williams scored two late goals to secure the victory for SAP FC, which advanced to five points.

Williams broke the deadlock with a strike in the 79th minute and got his second goal by converting a penalty kick in the 83rd minute.

The Young Lions remain on seven points after losing for the first time in four matches.

Jean-Pierre Williams of SAP football team

After losing their season opener, English Harbour FC recorded their third consecutive draw by securing a 1-1 result against struggling Five Islands FC at the English Harbour playing field.

Both goals came in the first half, with Akeem Weekes' 12th-minute conversion giving English Harbour FC the lead before Shane Cochrane scored in the 19th minute to equalize for Five Islands FC.

The result allows English Harbour FC to advance to three points from four matches.

Five Islands FC remains winless but picked up their first point after losing all previous four matches.

The match between the Swetes Vipers FC and John Hughes FC ended prematurely due to a power outage at the Freemans Village playing field.

The Swetes Vipers have nine points from winning their three previous matches. John Hughes FC remains on four points from three matches.

The match at Golden Grove between Parham FC and Golden Grove FC was postponed.

Parham FC has four points from three matches, while Golden Grove FC remains winless and without any points after losing their previous two matches.

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