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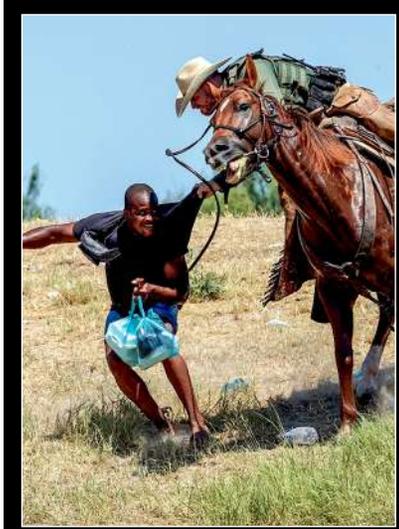
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# Becoming Rita

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Photo: (Instagram Image/Lashana Lynch)



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# REGIONAL NEWS



## Here Are Some Of The Top Headlines Making Caribbean News This Week:

### REGIONAL

CARICOM leaders have voiced their grave concern over the escalating violence and worsening situation in Gaza, advocating for an “immediate and unconditional ceasefire.” Since October 7, 2023, in response to an unexpected attack by Hamas on southern Israel that resulted in approximately 1,200 Israeli casualties, Israel has initiated a comprehensive military offensive against Hamas in Gaza.

The conflict has led to a Palestinian death toll in the Gaza Strip soaring to over 30,000, with more than 66,630 individuals injured. Reports estimate that women and children constitute 70 percent of these fatalities.

As their four-day summit concludes, the regional leaders plan to issue a statement condemning the “tragic loss of civilian lives on an unprecedented scale,” including significant casualties among women and children. They strongly denounce both the initial attacks by Hamas, including hostage-taking on October 7, 2023, and the Israeli military actions that contravene international humanitarian law and the rights of the Palestinian

people.

CARICOM advocates for adherence to the rule of law, the release of all hostages, and detainees held without charge, and highlights the threat posed by the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories to global peace and security. The organization reaffirms its commitment to a two-state solution as outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, marking it as the sole path to peace.

Furthermore, CARICOM criticizes Israel’s disregard for UN resolutions and directives from the International Court of Justice (ICJ), urging the UN General Assembly to convene an emergency session and recommend measures to ensure Israel’s compliance with international obligations.

The statement also calls for renewed efforts towards a peaceful resolution through dialogue and negotiation, urging the international community to facilitate a lasting peace that respects the rights and security of both parties involved.

Meanwhile, Jamaica will hold a meeting “within the next two weeks” on the situation in Haiti as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) leaders and the various



War continues in Gaza with no cease fire in sight. (Getty image)

stakeholders continue their efforts to finding a lasting solution to the political, socio-economic situation in the French-speaking CARICOM country.

Informed sources told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that the leaders, who are ending their four-day regular summit on Feb. 28th and the Haitian key partners “have recognized the depth of the suffering of the Haitian people.

### JAMAICA

Former Jamaica MP Jolyan Silvera, the former Western St Mary Member of Parliament,

who faces murder charges for the death of his wife Melissa in November, will stay in remand until April 11, awaiting a bail application.

Lead attorney Peter Champagnie highlighted the limitations on disclosing case details due to court-imposed restrictions on media coverage, especially concerning matters related to the Gun Court.

Melissa Silvera’s death initially appeared to be natural when she was found deceased in their Stony Hill, St Andrew residence on November 10. However, a subsequent post-mortem examination uncovered

at least three bullet fragments in her body, prompting authorities to investigate her death as a homicide. This development led to the arrest and subsequent murder charge against Jolyan Silvera, alongside at least one other charge related to firearm misuse.

### BELIZE

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reports notable growth in Belize’s economy, with real GDP growth rates of 17.9% in 2021, 8.7% in 2022, and an estimated 4.5% in 2023, driven primarily by tourism, construction, and other key sectors. This growth has led to real GDP being 16% above pre-pandemic levels in 2023 and a significant reduction in the unemployment rate from 14% in 2020 to 3.4% in 2023. Belize’s fiscal situation has improved, with public debt decreasing from 103% of GDP in 2020 to 66% in 2023 due to various factors, including a debt swap for marine protection.

However, the IMF anticipates a moderation in GDP growth, expecting rates to decrease to 3.5% in 2024 and stabilize at 2.5% thereafter.

- Compiled from CMC News



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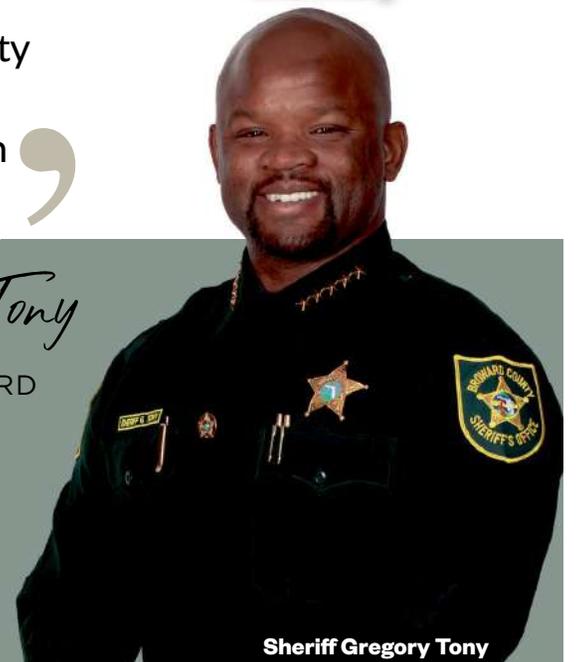


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# Haitian Group Slaps Lawsuit On Biden Administration

BY CT STAFFWRITER

A lawsuit filed against the Biden administration for its handling of Haitian migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border in Del Rio, Texas, has made significant progress, with a federal judge overseeing its first legal proceeding since its inception in 2021.

During a status conference last month, U.S. District Court Judge Jia M. Cobb set a March 8th deadline for the Haitian Bridge Alliance, which is representing 11 Haitian migrants who accused the government of mistreatment and racial discrimination while in U.S. custody.

“We were really excited to have this hearing and to be able to get a sense of what the court is thinking ... and to try to have a schedule moving forward to move this case along,” said Nicole Phillips, an attorney for Haitian Bridge Alliance.



A U.S. Border Patrol agent on horseback tries to stop a Haitian migrant from entering an encampment on the banks of the Rio Grande on Sunday near the international bridge in Del Rio, Texas. (Paul Ratje/AFP via Getty Images)

The Biden administration sought to dismiss the case, which was filed in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 20, 2021. However, on Thursday, Cobb allowed the Haitian Bridge Alliance to amend

its complaint after Title 42, a significant policy at the center of the lawsuit, ended on May 11, 2023, due to a separate court order.

In now infamous photographs, one of the plaintiffs

in the case, Mirard Joseph, was grabbed by a U.S. border patrol agent on horseback on Sept. 19, 2021. The photos appeared to show the border agent using his horse reins to hit Joseph. The images drew public outrage, including from elected and community leaders who felt the photographs harkened back to the days of slavery and racial subjugation.

Though the Biden administration maintains that an internal investigation concluded that border agents did not whip migrants with horse reins, the lawsuit - which names President Joe Biden and other Biden officials as defendants - claims that Joseph was “assaulted” and that the horse-mounted border patrol officer “lashed at him with reins, attempted to drag him back into the water, and nearly trampled him.”

While coverage of the incident in Del Rio has primarily focused on whether or not Joseph and other migrants were actually whipped by border patrol, attorneys for Haitian Bridge Alliance make clear that the substance of the case goes much deeper.

“Their constitutional rights were violated, and they were discriminated against because of their race,” said Phillips.

Speaking of Joseph, who was deported back to Haiti after the 2021 incident but now lives in the U.S., Phillips added, “What happened to him is what happens to Black people in the United States every day.”

The lawsuit argues that Joseph and thousands of other

Haitian migrants were subject to inhumane conditions while being held at a makeshift U.S. Customs and Border Protection encampment. The complaint alleges that migrants and their children were denied adequate water, food and medical services.

Joseph and other Haitian male migrants crossed back over to the Mexican side of the border to retrieve food for their families. As they made their way back to the U.S. side, they were stopped by the border officers atop horses. The now-viral photographs captured some of what happened next.

A report from an investigation conducted by a Department of Homeland Security watchdog concluded that while border patrol agents employed “unnecessary use of force” while interacting with Haitian migrants, there was “no evidence” the migrants were struck by horse reins based on interviews with border patrol officers and journalists present at the time.

The lawsuit seeks to achieve class-action status and challenges the U.S. government’s Haitian Deterrence Policy, accusing it of expelling Haitian asylum seekers under deplorable conditions. It also details the historical context of Haiti’s political and economic instability, exacerbated by U.S. foreign policy actions.

As the Biden administration faces a broader migrant crisis, the lawsuit underscores the need for fair treatment and refuge for Black migrants, highlighting the severe costs and risks they endure in pursuit of asylum.

# Caribbean Born, UN General Assembly President Calls For Immediate Ceasefire In Gaza

The Caribbean born President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Dennis Francis, on March 4th called for the implementation of “an immediate humanitarian ceasefire” in the Gaza where Israeli troops have been fighting members of the terrorist group, Hamas, since the October 7 last year incursion into Israel.

“The bombardment must stop, now,” the Trinidad and Tobago diplomat said, as the UNGA plenary meeting on the use of the “veto.”

A screen grab captured from a video shows the civil defense teams working to rebury the bodies unearthed under the soil after the Israeli warplanes bombed a cemetery at the Jibaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza Strip, Gaza on March 4, 2024. (Photo by Stringer/Anadolu via Getty Images)

Francis said that from the inception of the United Nations in 1945, the General Assembly and the Security Council, both share a single overarching duty and that is “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”

“The purpose of our meeting today underscores the vital importance of that joint responsibility and the urgency for the two bodies to strengthen their collective efforts, within their respective mandates under the United Nations Charter, to preserve and promote global peace and security. In this context, I strongly urge member states to engage in today’s debate with a proactive, solution-oriented posture, mindful of all member states’ responsibility to exert every effort to avert further violence and to save lives,” he said.

There have been calls to do away with the “veto” mechanism used by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council including



United Nations General Assembly President Dennis Francis (UN TV Screengrab)

the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China and France.

Francis said that while he welcomes the the introduction and utility of the “Veto Initiative,” most especially in relation to the accountability it seeks to foster “it is nevertheless deeply regrettable that compliant with the rules of procedure, this General Assembly must use it at all, in connection with the current deepening humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.

He said thousands of children have been killed, others are scrounging for food and watching their childhoods evaporate into the horrors of war.

“Countless mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, nieces, and nephews, ll gone. As the French would say “disparu,” disappeared. Their dreams extinguished, their potential lost forever, and their futures obliterated,” said Francis, while adding that 85 per cent of Gaza’s population, or 1.9 million people, are internally displaced and nearly 1.5 million of them now reside in Rafah – that is, more than six times the population prior to October 7th.

“I am deeply concerned about intensified Israeli airstrikes in Rafah, including in residential areas. In the words of UN Emergency Relief Coordinator

Martin Griffiths, any ground operation in such a densely populated area would “leave an already fragile humanitarian operation at death’s door. I, therefore, urgently call for maximum restraint to prevail in order to save innocent civilian lives. Israeli restrictions on the humanitarian access have drastically reduced the flow of lifesaving aid to a mere trickle.”

- NewsAmericasNow.com



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<p style="font-weight: bold;">Saturday, March 30: 2-5 p.m.</p> <p>Sandrell Rivers Theater 6103 NW 7th Avenue, Miami, FL 33127</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold;">Sunday, April 14: 2-6 p.m.</p> <p>Dennis C. Moss Cultural Arts Center 10950 SW 211th Street, Cutler Bay, FL 33189</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold;">FINALS:</p> <p>Saturday, May 11: 7 p.m.</p> <p>Miracle Theatre</p>

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# St Vincent PM Defends Sandals Resort From 'Mindless' Criticism

St Vincent and the Grenadines' Prime Minister, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, has come forward to address what he describes as baseless criticisms aimed at the soon-to-be-launched Sandals Resort in Buccament Bay. Dr. Gonsalves highlighted the dissemination of false information regarding the resort, which is set to open its doors on March 27 and will also hosted the VIII Summit for the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) on March 1st.

Concerns have arisen within the local community about the perceived lack of opportunities for local fishermen, farmers, and taxi operators to supply their goods and services to the resort. This apprehension intensified

following the announcement that Island Routes is expanding to St Vincent and the Grenadines, raising fears of competition for local taxi and tour operators.

In response, Prime Minister Gonsalves clarified that Sandals Resort had conducted several consultations with taxi and minibus operators concerning transportation logistics, ensuring that the majority of services from the airport to the hotel and vice versa would be provided by local operators. He emphasized that luxury hotels typically arrange specific transport services for VVIPs but assured that the bulk of transportation needs would necessitate local involvement.

Addressing the concerns of local fishermen and farmers, Dr. Gonsalves explained that



Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr Ralph Gonsalves is defending Sandals SVG ahead of opening.

high-end hotels, such as Sandals, generally do not purchase directly from a large number of individual suppliers. Instead, these suppliers are encouraged to organize themselves or find someone to facilitate this process. He debunked the notion that fishermen could directly sell small quantities of their catch to the resort, stressing the importance of proper packaging and quality assurance.

Dr. Gonsalves highlighted

Rainforest Seafoods as an example of an aggregator working with local fisherfolk, indicating that there are opportunities for cooperatives of fishermen to sell directly to the resort, provided they meet the required standards.

Similarly, local taxi operators seeking to serve resort guests are expected to uphold certain standards, with the St Vincent Tourism Authority providing the

necessary approval, training, and certification.

The prime minister also touched on the broader issue of aggregating agricultural products for sale to the resort, expressing disappointment that local businesspeople had not seized this opportunity earlier. He mentioned the initiative by St. Lucian entrepreneur Rayneau Gadjadhar, who, despite facing local criticism, identified a business opportunity in aggregating agricultural products for the resort.

Dr. Gonsalves shared these insights during his "Face to Face" program on NBC Radio St Vincent and the Grenadines, advocating for a more informed and constructive dialogue regarding the Sandals Resort's impact on the local economy and community.

- *Rewritten from Loop Caribbean*



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# Haiti Declares State Of Emergency And Imposes Curfew Amid Prison Break

Haiti's government has announced a state of emergency and implemented a curfew following a surge in gang-led violence over the weekend, which resulted in thousands of prisoners escaping from the country's two largest prisons.

Effective immediately, a 72-hour state of emergency has been declared, with authorities vowing to locate and apprehend the perpetrators of the attacks, including killers, kidnapers, and other violent criminals who escaped during the incidents.

The curfew will be enforced from 6 pm (23:00 GMT) to 5 am (10:00 GMT), with Finance Minister Patrick Boisvert stating that law enforcement has been instructed to utilize all legal means to enforce the curfew and capture offenders.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Ariel Henry, currently abroad seeking support for a UN-backed security force, is facing mounting pressure from gangs led by Jimmy Cherizier, also known as Barbecue, who seek to oust him from power.

According to Pierre Esperance of the National Network for the Defense of Human Rights, only about 100 inmates out of an estimated 3,800 remain in the National Penitentiary following the



This screen grab taken from AFPTV shows tires on fire near the main prison of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on March 3, 2024, after a breakout by several thousand inmates. (Luckenson Jean | AFPI Getty Images)

Saturday night assault. Reports suggest multiple casualties among prisoners.

Visiting the prison, an AFP reporter observed around a dozen bodies outside the facility, with the gate left open and minimal presence inside, according to witnesses.

Simultaneously, another facility named Croix des Bouquets was also targeted, though the exact number of escapees remains unclear. The government confirmed several casualties among prison staff and inmates in the attacks.

Amid escalating violence, Haitian authorities have urged citizens to exercise caution and support the National Police in tracking down escaped prisoners and holding perpetrators accountable.

Prime Minister Henry's whereabouts remained unknown on Sunday, following a recent trip to Kenya where he signed a security agreement to address gang violence. The ongoing unrest has led to the displacement of nearly 15,000 people, with internal displacement camps evacuated over the weekend.

Despite calls for his resignation, Prime Minister Henry has stated his intent to hold elections by August 2025, emphasizing the need for stability before proceeding with electoral processes. The last elections in Haiti took place in 2016.

- *Rewritten from Al Jazeera*



# In Haiti, Communities Help Themselves With Bio-Sand Filters

Haiti continues to be challenged by government instability and gang violence. Basic services such as municipal electricity, clean water and sanitation are not available to communities in rural areas. The breakdown of water and sanitation can result in disease outbreaks, like the cholera infections that swept the island several times over the past decade.

As a result, communities often need to step in and provide their own clean water.

The good news is clean water can be obtained using inexpensive and easy-to-build innovations like bio-sand filters.

A bio-sand filter is a container the size of an office water cooler or larger. It has an inset plastic pipe and is filled with layers of sand and gravel. Dirty water is poured into the top of a filter, where a diffuser plate evenly distributes the water over the sand bed layer. The water travels down through the sand bed, passes through

multiple layers of gravel, and collects in the plastic pipe at the bottom of the filter. The clean water then exits through the plastic piping for a family to collect.

Savius Sinclair attended a workshop held by World Neighbors and its local partners on how to build a bio-sand filter. Due to a lack of reliable clean water, his wife suffered frequently from diarrhea, vomiting and stomach aches. While less threatening than cholera, these “normal” gastrointestinal illnesses transmitted through unsafe water cause immense personal suffering. The constant illness prevented Savius’s wife and other members of his village from earning money by farming vegetables and selling them in local markets. Ill health causes people to be unable to work and in turn can perpetuate poverty.

With their bio-sand filter, Savius wife is much healthier. He and his wife now drink clean

water and can engage in regular work and other normal activities. Savius can monitor and clean the filter on a regular basis to insure a sustainable supply of clean water. Their income is stable. They and other farmers in their community are also learning simple organic farming techniques to increase output and quality and cut input costs. All 17,000 people in Savius’s farming community have expressed a desire for bio-sand filters.

Haiti has many needs. Even with its current challenges, providing access to clean water to reduce illness and facilitate economic activity is entirely possible. Inexpensive innovations like bio-sand filters are one way to do it.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** *Kate Shecter is President and CEO of World Neighbors.*

- *NewsAmericasNow.com*



# Former U.S. Secretary Of State Says America Should Help Defend Guyana’s Sovereignty

Former United States Secretary of State, Michael ‘Mike’ Pompeo, says the US should “do what it can to advocate for and help defend Guyana’s sovereignty and its freedom.”

Pompeo made the remark during his virtual speech on day one, Feb. 19th, of the Guyana Energy Conference & Supply Chain Expo 2024 held at the Guyana Marriott Hotel in Kingston, Georgetown.

Pompeo, reflecting on his recent visit to the country, praised Guyana’s hardworking population, its rich natural resources, and a government committed to leveraging the petroleum sector’s earnings to enhance national infrastructure and bolster traditional economic sectors.

He emphasized the intertwined nature of energy security with national security, urging the international community, including the United States, to support Guyana in realizing its full potential as a key player in the global energy market.

Pompeo’s call to action highlights Guyana’s pivotal role



**Former United States Secretary of State, Michael ‘Mike’ Pompeo weighs in on Guyana/Venezuela debacle.**

in the future of energy and its implications for global security.

“On my most recent trip to Guyana, a couple of weeks back, I saw a country that is well-positioned to realize its promise of incredible prosperity and opportunity. It’s a nation full of wonderful people, people who work hard, natural resources that are nearly unrivalled, and a government led by President [Dr Mohamed Irfaan] Ali, determined to build infrastructure that will improve the lives of all its citizens,” Pompeo posited.

- *NewsAmericasNow*



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# Caribbean NGOs And Political Party Urge CARICOM To Cut Ties With Israel



Palestinians walk along a street ravaged by Israeli strikes in Gaza City on February 10, 2024. (AFP image)

Several non-governmental organizations and at least one political party have reached out to the leaders of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), advocating for the suspension of all connections with Israel in response to the ongoing conflict in Gaza. These organizations are also encouraging Caribbean nations to participate in ongoing legal proceedings at the International Court of Justice,

(ICJ) against Israel's actions. Israel's military campaign targets Hamas following the group's incursion from Gaza into Israel on October 7, leading to approximately 1,200 deaths. Hamas's assault included launching thousands of rockets, resulting in the deaths of civilians across various demographics, including children and the elderly, and specifically mentioning 364

young individuals at a music event. Additionally, over 250 people were taken hostage to Gaza.

A collective identified as Trinidad and Tobago Solidarity With Palestine has called on CARICOM leaders to support South Africa in a case at the ICJ concerning the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in relation to the Gaza Strip. The letter highlights South Africa's initial success in the case but notes that the main issues remain

unresolved, emphasizing the importance of collective action in this international legal effort.

Signatories of the letter, including representatives from various Trinidad and Tobago organizations, urge CARICOM to back another ICJ case that addresses the legal repercussions of Israel's policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. They propose suspending diplomatic, trade, economic, and cultural ties with Israel, labeling it as a state that disregards international law and UN

resolutions.

The letter points to the substantial human toll of the conflict, with an estimated 30,000 Palestinians killed and 70,000 injured in the last four months, leading to significant displacement. The signatories condemn Israel's actions as genocidal and call on CARICOM leaders to take a firm stance in solidarity with the affected populations.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



## These Caribbean Countries Are Now Off The EU's Blacklist

The European Union has updated its list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes, removing several Caribbean nations from its so-called Blacklist.

The European blacklist, created in 2017 in the wake of scandals such as the Panama Papers and LuxLeaks, is meant to encourage other countries and jurisdictions to "adopt fair tax policies" and "increase tax transparency."

The EU announced that these three Caribbean countries are now off its "Blacklist." They are:

- 1: The Bahamas
- 2: Belize
- 3: The Turks and Caicos Islands.

Those still under scrutiny for their tax governance practices are:

- 1: Anguilla
- 2: Antigua and Barbuda

- 3: Trinidad and Tobago
- 4: US Virgin Islands

The EU encourages these jurisdictions to amend their legal frameworks to address identified tax governance shortcomings. Included in the list are countries that have either not participated in constructive dialogue with the EU regarding tax governance or have not fulfilled their commitments to enact necessary reforms. These reforms are expected to align with the EU's objective criteria for tax governance, which emphasize tax transparency, fair taxation, and the prevention of tax base erosion and profit shifting.

The list is revised biannually, in February and October, to reflect changes and is overseen by EU finance ministers. Notably, recent assessments by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD) Forum of Harmful Tax Practices (FHTP) identified issues in the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands related to enforcing economic substance requirements.

However, subsequent recommendations were softened, leading to their compliance with standards for jurisdictions with minimal corporate income tax.

Additionally, Belize and Seychelles were previously flagged by the OECD Global Forum for deficiencies in information exchange but have since implemented rule changes that warrant further review. Meanwhile, Botswana and Dominica received positive evaluations for their information exchange practices, leading to their removal from the list.

- *NewsAmericasNow.com*



## Court Orders Repatriation Of Grenadian Fugitives Suspected Of Murdering US Sailors

In a significant development on Monday, March 4th, a magistrate's court in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, ruled that three Grenadian fugitives, believed to be involved in the murder of two United States sailors, should be repatriated to their homeland.

Ron Mitchell, aged 30, Trevon Robertson, aged 25, and 23-year-old Atiba Stanislaus, all residents of Paradise, St. Andrew, Grenada, are suspected of killing Americans Ralph Hendry and Kathy Brandel. This occurred after the trio allegedly hijacked the couple's yacht and sailed it to St. Vincent following their escape from a police station in St. George's on February 18.

The men were jointly charged with one count of robbery with violence. Additionally, Mitchell faced separate charges, including rape, attempted rape, indecent assault, and causing harm.

During a court appearance

on Monday, Mitchell denied allegations that he had engaged in a physical altercation with officers, resulting in a gunshot wound to his leg. Senior Magistrate Colin John, who previously remanded them in custody, deemed repatriation to be the most appropriate course of action.

According to the prosecution, on February 21, law enforcement officers, acting on intelligence, located the fugitives in Petit Bordel, a village on the northwest coast of the island. Mitchell was found lying face down and attempted to resist arrest, resulting in injuries during his apprehension.

Subsequent investigations led to the discovery of Robertson and Stanislaus hiding nearby. The men admitted to arriving in St. Vincent on a yacht captained by Mitchell, disembarking at Cumberland, and using a dinghy to reach Petit Bordel.

While Robertson remained

silent, Stanislaus expressed compliance, whereas Mitchell contested the circumstances of his injury, claiming he was shot without provocation.

Magistrate John emphasized the right to medical attention for Mitchell and ordered the repatriation of the defendants to Grenada at the earliest opportunity. However, the detainees will remain in custody until logistical arrangements are finalized.

The court proceedings shed light on the defendants' criminal histories, with Stanislaus having ten convictions and Mitchell nine, primarily for offenses like housebreaking and theft.

The magistrate's decision reflects the ongoing efforts to address transnational crime and ensure justice for the victims of this heinous act.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



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# Aisha Rainford Takes Helm As President Of The Jamaican Women Of Florida

In a significant leadership shift, the Jamaican Women of Florida (JWOF) celebrated the election of Aisha Rainford as its President during the Annual General Meeting held on February 17, at the Southwest Regional Library in Pembroke Pines, Florida. Ascending from her previous role as Vice President, Rainford brings a notable background in community service, philanthropy, and corporate governance to her new position.

Rainford, a figure synonymous with dedication and advocacy for educational initiatives and community betterment, expressed her commitment to advancing the mission of JWOF. Her contributions include the

establishment of the Aisha King-Rainford Scholarship at the University of the West Indies, underlining her passion for educational support.

In her acceptance speech, Rainford highlighted her vision for JWOF, emphasizing empowerment and leadership among Jamaican women and girls in both Jamaica and Florida. "Being elected as President of JWOF is a privilege that I accept with great responsibility," Rainford remarked. "Our collective efforts will focus on impactful community service and fostering a nurturing environment for the empowerment of our members."

The newly elected board,



Aisha Rainford is the new president of the Jamaican Women of Florida, (JWOF). (Contributed image)

set to join Rainford in steering JWOF's future direction, comprises Michelle Williamson as Vice President, Noya Hastings-Ritchie as Secretary,

Pauline Foster as Treasurer, alongside other key members including Natasha Wright, Debbie Dickinson, and Caren Muir. This leadership team is

scheduled for official induction at the upcoming JWOF annual Women's Empowerment Conference and Scholarship Luncheon on March 23, 2024.

Rainford's election is seen as a pivotal moment for JWOF, promising a renewed vigor in its endeavors towards community service, education, and the empowerment of women. Her current role as Vice President of the Global Privacy Program at American Express and her personal life in Plantation, Florida, with her family, add to her multifaceted profile as a leader committed to both her professional and community roles.

Since its inception in 2013, JWOF has stood as a beacon of support and solidarity for Jamaican women and their families in Florida, championing education, mentorship, and community service. Under Aisha Rainford's presidency, the organization is expected to reach new milestones in its commitment to empowering Jamaican women.



## Dominican Charged With Killing Employee In LA

In a swift decision by a Los Angeles Superior Court jury, Ethan Astaphan, 30, of Dominican origin and owner of an illicit marijuana dispensary, along with 34-year-old Weijia "James" Peng, were found guilty of first-degree murder in the case of a young employee whose remains were discovered in the Mojave Desert in 2020.

The verdict, reached in less than three hours on Monday, convicted both men for the murder of 21-year-old Carlos Hernandez on September 22, 2020. Evidence presented at the trial included the use of a ketamine-filled syringe by Peng during the crime.

The disappearance of Hernandez was reported by his mother, Yajaira, to the Los Angeles police after he didn't come home on the day of his murder. His family tirelessly searched for him, distributing flyers throughout the city until his body was located by a volunteer with a cadaver dog on November 15, 2020.

Astaphan and Peng are set for sentencing on April 25. The prosecution argued that the motive behind Hernandez's murder was a suspicion by Astaphan and Peng that he had been embezzling funds and cannabis from the dispensary. This was supported by WhatsApp messages between the two men plotting against Hernandez after Astaphan accused him of unauthorized transactions with customers.

The specifics of whether Hernandez had actually stolen from the dispensary remained unclear. However, discussions about making an example out

of Hernandez were presented in court, with Peng expressing a desire to see Hernandez "crippled for life".

Surveillance evidence showed a physical altercation at the dispensary where Astaphan subdued Hernandez with a chokehold as Peng looked on. Peng then administered a fatal dose of ketamine to Hernandez. The duo, assisted by Peng's then-girlfriend Sonita Heng, transported Hernandez's body to the desert for burial.

The cleanup of the crime scene was captured on the dispensary's surveillance cameras the following morning. Cell phone tower data was used to trace the movements of Astaphan, Peng, and Heng.

Astaphan and Heng were arrested in November 2020, following the recovery of deleted surveillance footage by a Glendale Police Department expert. Peng faced extradition back to Los Angeles in 2022 to stand trial. Heng later agreed to a plea deal in exchange for her testimony against Astaphan and Peng.

The defense argued for a lesser charge of second-degree murder for Astaphan, suggesting the murder was not premeditated. Peng's defense strategy was not disclosed.

Family support was evident throughout the trial, with Astaphan's parents and sister traveling from Dominica and Florida, and his wife also being present on most days.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



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## Donna Marie Howe Leads With Purpose

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

The stereotypical image of the head of a mining company is a big burly man with thick muscles and a personality to match. However, the Boss at the Jamaica Bauxite Mining, (JBM), Limited certainly obliterates that widely-held view.

Managing Director, Donna Marie Howe, has been at the helm of this government-owned mining company for the past two years. And clearly, it is her passion, expertise, confidence and purpose-driven leadership style that landed her at the top of this male-dominated industry.

Acknowledging that there have been some roadblocks and hurdles, Howe, however, declared: "I achieve with my purpose-driven approach."

"When I sit around the table and I'm the only female in this male-dominated environment, their perspectives are very much the same; they still talk about it in the age where it was before. I bring a fresh perspective to it, about sustainability," Managing Director Howe explained recently in a conversation with Caribbean Today. "I have a broader vision because I think about environmental issues, the softer issues. They are factors that we have to consider. The social-cultural is a substantial part of any decision that is made."

The London-born, British-Jamaican settled in Jamaica 12 years ago and served in the public sector before taking on the leadership role at JBM. With an MBA in finance and doctorate in global finance, Howe joined global consulting firm Ernst and Young in London where she honed her skills for seven years. She then worked

with Fortune 500 companies such as General Motors and CBS, in corporate finance and mergers & acquisitions, building a structured corporate and international foundation. Now as Managing Director at JBM, Howe brings a new focus to what was once a bauxite trading company.

### STRATEGIC FOCUS

Established in 1975, JBM acted as the government's representative in partnership agreements with bauxite and alumina multinational mining partners. The government entity no longer participates in bauxite trading, but still holds the majority 51 percent equity in Jamaica Bauxite Partners operations, providing oversight over all mining activities.

Howe's mission is to realign JBM's strategic focus in line with today's concerns, while strengthening its business model to grow revenue and repurpose some of its assets. The managing director noted that the bauxite mining company, which has been in operation for seven decades, is rich in bauxite resources, assets, and land.

But with company no longer in mining operations and instead managing extraction partners, Howe redefined JBM's core activity and purpose. She then incorporated the assets within the business plan and came up with a new strategic direction.

"We're a government entity, 100%, but we have a private sector commercial purpose," Howe explained. "Governments should be successful. We have these assets and we're putting them to best use, and the wholesome parts of that is regeneration."

### FOUR PILLARS

more than 20-year career in the global financial services industry encompasses several executive leadership roles, including her current position as President, Fintech with Qenta Inc., a global fintech company focused on digitizing assets and transactions. Previously she served as President and Chief Executive Officer of First Global Bank Ltd., a commercial bank operating in Jamaica. McIntosh Robinson

One of JBM's biggest assets is the Reynolds Pier Port in Ocho Rios, once the major hub from where all bauxite was exported. It has since been used for sugar export, but has now been repurposed to export limestone, an important resource for the local and international markets. In fact, the port operations forms the first part of the managing director's four pillars, or strategic business units.

The second pillar involves land development or commercial property and where real estate has been idle, it will be repurposed to generate additional revenue. So, the building of retail outlets, housing developments, hospitality outlets, and a commercial park are planned as part of this new focus.

The third pillar also has to do with land, but will involve mined out land that will be given new uses such as agriculture and limestone activity. The fourth leg of the company's strategic focus now, is custodial management, which means managing all these operations with sustainability and environmental responsibility.

"So how do we do that responsibly? "How do we do that green?," commented Howe. "Climate action is something that we all need to address and JBM is at the forefront of that. We've got green projects on the horizon. How we use those, and the waste management, how



Managing Director, Donna Marie Howe, has been the BOSS at the government-owned Jamaica Bauxite Mining, (JBM), Limited for the past two years. (Contributed image)

they get recycled back in with reclamation, we're doing all that through the different pillars of our organization."

She added that JBM is looking into green financing, green construction, alternative products, and reducing carbon emissions at the Port. More importantly, the mining boss warned, the extraction industry is going to be heavily regulated by governance. Critical raw materials will be regulated by US and EU laws, where most suppliers are located.

"It's inevitable that we have to be compliant. So getting ahead of the curve is really important," Howe stressed.

Indeed, her forward thinking has been lauded not only by her peers within the industry, but also by international organizations.

Last year she was formally recognized as a Corporate Woman Leader from the London-based Caribbean Global Awards, an entity that celebrates accomplishment, leadership, and innovation amongst Caribbean nationals, descendants, and their supporters.

Asked how she felt about the award, Howe noted that she doesn't purposely lead as a woman, but she leads "with a concerted effort."

Obviously a demanding job, one that demands her full attention all the time, this wife and mother of three energetic young children still finds time to bring balance to her full life through meticulous scheduling, yoga, meditation, and meaningful family time.

"I'm purposeful, I'm a passionate leader," she said, extolling the power of human capacity, the importance of client and service delivery and the symbiotic relationship that comes out of working together on a transformational path.



## Parkland Corporation To Elect Jamaican To Its Board Of Directors

Parkland Corporation has announced that financial technology executive, Jamaican born Mariame McIntosh Robinson, will stand for election to its Board of Directors at its Annual General Meeting on March 28, 2024.

"Mariame is an accomplished executive with expertise in key markets that Parkland serves; the Caribbean and the United States," said Steven Richardson, Chair of the Board. "Mariame's diverse experience encompasses the digital economy, loyalty, and enterprise risk management and will be invaluable to Parkland as we advance our strategy to deliver long-term value to all our shareholders."

McIntosh Robinson's

more than 20-year career in the global financial services industry encompasses several executive leadership roles, including her current position as President, Fintech with Qenta Inc., a global fintech company focused on digitizing assets and transactions. Previously she served as President and Chief Executive Officer of First Global Bank Ltd., a commercial bank operating in Jamaica. McIntosh Robinson



Jamaican born Mariame McIntosh Robinson, will stand for election to Parkland's Board of Directors at its Annual General Meeting on March 28, 2024.

holds a Master of Business Administration from Harvard University, a Master of Economics from the University of Oxford, and a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is also a Jamaica Rhodes Scholar.

With this latest announcement, Parkland has added four highly experienced directors to its Board over the past 14 months. Collaborating with two global search firms, Parkland is adhering to a prudent refreshment of its Board, blending continuity with fresh perspectives to ensure a governance structure that supports Parkland's long-term objectives.



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# No Surprise As Do Nothing Republicans Again Choose Politics Over Solutions

Republicans have once again chosen to do nothing to solve the immigration issue they loudly complain about, after months of good faith bi-partisan negotiations in the Senate.

They once again had the opportunity to make history and pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill to help solve the problem of illegal immigration, the need for tighter security at the U.S.-Mexico border as well as dealing with the issues of DREAMERS in limbo in the country.

President Biden was so anxious to get aid to Ukraine and his friends in Israel – who are slaughtering innocent people in Gaza, that he and Democrats even supported congressional Republicans and their hard right immigration agenda push.

The Emergency National Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, totaling \$118 billion, proposed significant alterations in border policy. It allocated funds for the construction of additional border walls, extensive expansion of detention facilities, and the recruitment of more Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol agents, asylum officers, and immigration judges to alleviate the years-long backlog in asylum cases. Its aim was to expedite the asylum process,



**FELICIA J. PERSAUD**

effectively curtailing the “catch and release” policy, under which migrants are released into the U.S. pending asylum hearings, in most instances. Furthermore, it intended to elevate the standard of evidence required to attain asylum status.

The bill also stated that temporary border emergency authority would be automatically activated by the Department of Homeland Security secretary if there is an average of 5,000 or more migrant encounters a day over seven consecutive days — or if there are 8,500 or more such encounters on any single day.

Additionally, the bill earmarked increased funding to combat fentanyl trafficking and human trafficking.

Biden and congressional Democrats surprisingly agreed to all this, bending over backwards to support enforcement legislation without inclusion of legalization provisions just to help Bibi and Ukraine. For immigration hardliners in the Senate – their dreams had come through – they secured heightened enforcement without “amnesty.”

However, rather than seizing this historic opportunity, House Republicans and Puppet Master Trumpeto argued that the bill failed to meet their hard-line wish list preferences and persuaded most Senate Republicans to forget about it even though such a deal is unlikely to resurface. President Biden, who has alienated his base and a lot of Democrats with his own administration’s immigration policies, is now left holding the bag and looking like a fool as his base continues to

abandon ship.

Republicans, meanwhile, led by the Grand Wizard, are now back to pushing their racist and xenophobic conspiratorial narrative on the “Great Replacement.” The narrative, rooted in white nationalism, posits without basis that a powerful cabal of elites is deliberately replacing white Americans with immigrants. Polls show many Republican

voters believe this ignorance.

Biden was a fool to trust Republicans and to bend so far over that all he got is – well screwed. It shows the GOP will rather play political football with immigrants’ lives ahead of the November 2024 general elections, than work for the good of voters and the taxpayers who pay their wages and actually solve the problems they complain the

loudest about.

Biden is left with only one choice – executive action on the border and on DREAMERS that could re-energize his base. It’s his only choice at this stage.

*Felicia J. Persaud is the publisher of NewsAmericasNow.com, a daily news outlet focusing on Black immigrant issues.*



## Extreme Clean

It feels good to be clean, to be fresh, smooth, smelling like a rose, awash in cologne or perfume. We were all taught that we must always be clean, although it wasn’t always possible while growing up. As young boys we were always romping outside, playing in the dirt and mud, digging up earthworms to go fishing, playing football, fixing bicycles and generally doing dirty things that boys indulge in, much unlike what boys do nowadays, who are glued to their electronic devices.



**TONY ROBINSON**

What are little boys made of? - Frogs and snails and puppy dog tails. We reveled in dirt. As opposed to girls who were made of sugar and spice and everything nice. Girls were prone to cleanliness. Ah girls, that’s when we started to pay attention to being clean. That’s when the frequent showers

cascaded down our backs, our hair washed regularly, teeth brushed until gleaming, and Old Spice cologne completed the ablutions.

But being clean wasn’t always in vogue. In fact, in medieval Europe people hardly ever took baths, and it’s reputed that Queen Victoria never ever bathed, until she eventually took one that led to her demise.

Back in the Wild West in the cowboy era, there were bath houses that were utilized from time to time, if ever at all, by some cowpokes.

Fast forward to the news about Iranian Amou Haji, who hadn’t had a bath in over sixty years. He died shortly after taking his first shower, suffering the same fate as Queen Victoria. Vagrants and homeless persons roaming the streets haven’t taken a bath in years, and yet they appear to be as healthy as horses, never getting sick even one day of their smelly lives.

Do some people take cleanliness too far, or are they on the right track? While discussing the topic recently, a lady told me that she showers three times a

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

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# Guyana Oil Royalties - Where's The Money?

BY CANDICE DORWISH

Analysts attempted to reconcile the 2020-2022 Guyana Natural Resource Fund royalties' balance. To their dismay, there is a significant shortage of royalty payments in the years 2020 and 2022, 23% and 13% respectively. The Natural Resource Fund appears to be missing an approximate GY\$5.6B (US\$27M) in royalties, payments that Exxon and its affiliates should have made.

Comparisons were made between Bank of Guyana publications on the Natural Resource Fund and Exxon, Hess, and CNOOC's audited financial statements. Inflows for royalties should match 2% of petroleum sales reported by the oil companies. Immaterial differences should be the result of timing; as seen by the 1% variance in 2021 (Exhibit 1). However, there are material differences in the years 2020 and 2022 that require immediate attention. The Government of Guyana needs to verify the financial information provided by Exxon.

If the government does not reconcile the Natural Resource Fund, there is an assumption that Exxon, Hess, and CNOOC have breached the PSA (Production Sharing Agreement).

	Royalties (GY\$)			
	2020	2021	2022	Total
Inflows to the Natural Resource Fund	2,694,223,078	10,841,066,804	32,349,868,088	45,885,157,971
Exxon, Hess, & CNOOC Revenue x 2%	3,521,765,379	10,901,723,342	37,080,902,177	51,504,390,899
Difference	(827,542,301)	(60,656,538)	(4,731,034,089)	(5,619,232,928)
Percentage Difference	-23%	-1%	-13%	-11%

**Exhibit 1**

Exhibit 1 reflects inflows to the Natural Resource Fund converted to GY\$, per the fund publications. There is no explanation as to why the exchange rate remained constant across all the years at \$208.50. Analysts sourced revenue from the audited financial statements of Exxon, Hess, and CNOOC, multiplied by the 2% royalty rate. Surprisingly, EEPGL (Esso Exploration & Production Guyana Limited) was the only company to footnote revenue of its tax expense in 2022. The company took a GY\$59B tax expense and included this expense as non-customer revenue. This inclusion of tax expense in revenue is a requirement by the PSA but does not abide by Guyana income tax laws or financial accounting rules. Exxon, Hess, and CNOOC all report Guyana income tax expenses in their financial statements, but do not pay this tax to the GoG (Government of Guyana). However, these same organizations received approximately US\$1.4B in tax-paid receipts from the GoG.

To further complicate matters, EEPGL was the only company that reported royalty expenses in its income statement, which it severely understated considering that the required royalty payment should be 2% of its revenue.

The integrity of the oil companies' financial statements is questionable. The audited financial statements for the years 2020-2022 limit the data that the public can analyze and therefore assumptions must be made: did Exxon short the Guyana Natural Resource Fund by US\$27M? Exxon, Hess, and CNOOC's business operations in Guyana, derive revenue from the sale of crude oil. Financial professionals analyze production data for the accuracy of revenue. Exxon's failure to disclose production data during the Guyana 2018-2020 US\$7.3B cost recovery audit, an audit report that the government failed to release, reemphasizes the continuous risks of the inability to trust or verify Exxon's information. This risk exposure is amplified when reconciling Guyana's profit oil. The 2020-2022 Natural Resource

Fund inflows relating to profit oil amounted to GY\$342B. Guyana's profit oil balance is seven times the royalty balance and is dependent on mechanisms of cost recovery, which are recoverable costs that remain undisclosed to the people of Guyana. If the cost recovery statements contain inaccuracies, such as those reported in the 2020 to 2022 revenue and royalty expense accounts, the potential for profit oil shortages in the Natural Resource Fund will be exponential and a US\$27M royalty shortage will pale in comparison.

Considering the GoG and the petroleum bloc of Exxon, Hess, and CNOOC, are contractually binding business partners, clarity to this opaque financial predicament can easily be resolved when the GoG reconciles the balances in the Natural Resource Fund. After all, the money belongs to the people of Guyana.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: The opinions here are of Ms. Candice Dorwish and in no way reflects that of Caribbean Today or NewsAmericasNow.**



## Extreme Clean

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

day and washes her hair every two days.

She wears her clothes only once before washing them, and changes her pillow cases and bed sheets every two days. Needless to say, her laundry bills are enormous. Do the math - seven days a week, thirty days a month, changing and washing clothes,

hair every day. Sometimes a man can smell too much like a woman though, too perfumed, too dainty, too much like a dandy.

That being said, a woman is supposed to be clean and smell good, and there is no greater turn off than a female who is dirty and smelly. That's why the cosmetic, hygiene and



plus household laundry. Is she taking cleanliness too far?

She admits that sometimes she gets up in the middle of the night to do housecleaning and dusting. Is she borderline OCD - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or full blown? After all, they do say that we should be exposed to a little dirt and grime to build up our immunity to all sorts of diseases.

I told her that she'd have a hard time living with a man, as her obsession with cleanliness would drive most men crazy. I was accurate with my assessment, for she confessed that her last boyfriend always complained, saying: "Every time I made a move, she had to go and take a bath first." There was no spontaneity.

At least she's clean - but manless - unless she can find a man of equal predisposition, who enjoys taking three or four showers a day and washing his

feminine products industry is a multi-billion dollar one. There are more than enough soaps and perfumes in the world to fulfill all the needs of women. So whereas a man can get away with being a little dirty sometimes, a woman dare not.

That's why some women make it a point of duty to advertise that they are clean by liberally sprinkling copious amounts of powder on their neck, chest and back before venturing out, just to let the world know that they had a bath and are fresh.

So it's good to be clean, but don't take it to the extreme.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Tony Robinson is an independent contributor to Caribbean Today and the views expressed here are his own. He can be reached at seido1yard@gmail.com for feedback.**



## Haitian Heritage Month

May is Haitian Heritage Month. Come with Caribbean Today as we celebrate this most exciting and eventful time of year, while we salute the wonderful people of Haiti. The Haitian culture is one filled with strength, beauty, and grace. Let us be the conduit for showcasing your tribute to Haitian Heritage Month in this special Issue of Caribbean Today. Have your ad message in front of over 112,000 esteemed readers eagerly awaiting this special edition.

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# Despite Harsh Reviews, Bob Marley One Love Is A Box Office Hit

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Amid a flurry of indifferent reviews, *Bob Marley: One Love*, the highly-anticipated biopic on the Jamaican reggae legend, returned strong opening-week figures in February. The movie's first-week gross domestically in the US and Canada was US \$51 million. Between Feb. 14 and Feb. 26, the film amassed US \$120,588,696 worldwide, with US \$71,188,696 of that total coming from domestic audiences alone. Produced to the tune of \$70 million by Paramount Pictures, it opened February 14, Valentine's Day, following premieres in Kingston, Jamaica, London, Paris and Los Angeles. In South Florida, enthusiastic crowds turned out at Regal cinemas in Plantation and Pembroke Pines to see the film, which stars British actors Kingsley Ben-Adir and Lashana Lynch in the lead roles as Marley and his wife Rita.

The Plantation event was sponsored by Blue Mahoe Capital Partners Inc., Jamaica's Consul General to Miami, Jamaican Men of Florida and the Jamaica Tourist Board. Patrons, generally, gave the flick the proverbial thumbs-up.

"The turnout this evening shows that the Diaspora is vibrant

and together. It really shows our spirit of One Love and unity," said CG Oliver Mair.

Aston Barrett Jr., son of legendary Wailers bassist Aston "Familyman" Barrett, plays his father in *Bob Marley: One Love*. It was his third time watching it, and each time he was even more impressed.

"It shows di people di truth an' it's going to win over people. When I look at di movie, I don't see myself, I see my father," he said.

Broadcaster John "John T" Hodgson of WAVS 1170 AM, was taken with Ben-Adir's portrayal of the reggae king, who died from cancer in May, 1981 at age 36.

"I think he did an excellent job, I never expected him to perform so well," said John T, who as a young police officer, was at the hospital in Kingston the night Marley was shot by gunmen in December, 1976. The professional reviews have not been as kind.

Writing for Vulture, Bilge Ebiri wrote: "A word salad of expository title cards describing Bob Marley's youth and the origins of political violence in Jamaica opens *Bob Marley: One Love*, offering a clue to the quandary in which the film finds itself. The picture gives us a small but pivotal slice of



L.-r: Siedah Jordan; Aston Barrett Jr., Oliver Mair, Jamaica's Consul General to Miami; Alison Smith, immediate past president of the Broward County Bar Association; and former Broward County Commissioner and Mayor, Dale Holness, at the opening of 'Bob Marley: One Love,' at Regal Cinema in Plantation, FL. (Contributed image)

Marley's career from the attempt on his life in 1976 to the period he spent abroad in its wake, recording *Exodus* in London and the subsequent world tour that saw reggae music become a major international phenomenon. But the filmmakers can't commit to their own conceit. They keep trying to contextualize, to present little glimpses of the past, and are instead left with a hollow biopic."

In her review for The Guardian newspaper, Wendy Ide was also not taken with the 90-minute drama.

"Even by the frequently low standards of the musician biopic genre, the box-ticking *Bob Marley: One Love*, directed by Reinaldo Marcus Green (King

Richard), seems a particularly uninspired and deferential plod around the life and legacy of the Jamaican reggae star."

Jamaicans familiar with the intricacies of Marley's personal life, had mixed feelings about the movie. They include Tanya Ragbeer, who lives in Southwest Ranches, South Florida. She was in high school in Kingston when Marley was rising during the 1970s.

She believes one of Bob Marley: *One Love*'s strongest moments come through Lynch's portrayal of Rita Marley as focused and strong, and not the victim often depicted in books and documentaries.

"The movie didn't even

touch half of his life, I just wanted to see more. It just wasn't enough. Of course, when I heard Cindy's comment, I thought, she needs to hold her corners, but to be real, it didn't even really show her at all in the movie, like she didn't exist and she did exist, so that's the only downside," she said.

"But I really love the fact that they showed the side of Rita that nobody wanted to acknowledge, that Rita played such a big role; it's good that Rita got her due and it's about time," she added.

Cindy is Cindy Breakespeare, the 1976 Miss World winner with whom Marley had a long affair that resulted in a child, future Grammy winner Damian "Junior Gong" Marley. She was a big part of the singer's life in 1977 when he was living in London, where he fled following the shooting incident at his home in late 1976.

In an interview with the Los Angeles Times, Ziggy Marley stated that not every detail of his father's life could make it into the movie. As co-producer of *Bob Marley: One Love*, he was aware of that.

"This is who Bob Marley is," Ziggy Marley said. "We don't need ... (to) tell a story from birth to death to know this."



## Tributes Pour In for Peetah Morgan

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

One of the most distinctive voices in contemporary reggae went silent on February 25th with the death of Peter "Peetah" Morgan, lead vocalist of Grammy-winning reggae group, Morgan Heritage. He was 46.

At press time, no cause of death was given. His family issued a statement through their publicist hailing his legacy as an artist and family man.

"With deep love in our hearts, the @morganheritage family is saddened to share that our cherished husband, father, son, brother, and the renowned lead singer of Morgan Heritage, Peter Morgan, passed on today, February 25th, 2024," the statement said. "May Jah beckon us towards redemption, for love remains our sole guiding light. In advance, the family extends heartfelt gratitude for the abundant love and support being offered. At this time they seek your unwavering prayers as they navigate this journey. Kindly honour their need for privacy as they heal."

The New York-born Morgan's distinctive vocals led his sister Una, and brothers Gramps, Lukes and Mr. Mojo on a number of hit songs including the defiant 'Don't Haffi Dread,' 'Down by The River,' 'Reggae Bring Back Love,' and 'She's



The late Peter "Peetah" Morgan passed suddenly on Feb. 25th at age 46. (Getty Image)

Still Loving Me."

His death is another blow to the reggae community, following the loss of bassist Aston "Familyman" Barrett and guitarist Donald Kinsey of The Wailers, also in February.

One of Peetah Morgan's last performances came in November at the Grace Jamaican Jerk Festival in South Florida.

Abdul Muhsin, a co-founder of that event, knew the siblings since the 1980s when he first met their father, singer Denroy Morgan. He described Peetah's death as a "huge loss."

"Peetah was a loving, joyful, always upbeat kind of guy. He always looked on the bright side of things. He had that unique voice, once you heard it, you knew it was Peetah Morgan,"

Muhsin reflected.

Producer Donovan Germain, best known as the manager of Buju Banton, compared Morgan's death to another promising reggae artist who died young.

"Some situations leave you scratching your head and speechless. I'm still trying to process the news of Peter Morgan's passing. I've worked with Peter over the years and it was always a pleasure to be in his presence," said Germain. "This is another colossal blow as it was with the passing of Garnet Silk. Condolences to the Morgan Heritage family. Walk good, Peter."

Jamaican Prime Minister, Andrew Holness, expressed his profound sorrow on X, remarking on the significant impact of Morgan's death on both Jamaica and the reggae music scene, describing it as a "colossal loss."

"I am shocked and deeply saddened by the passing today of Peter "Peetah" Morgan, lead singer of Morgan Heritage," tweeted Olivia Babsy Grange, Jamaica's minister of culture, gender and entertainment.

"Shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of Peetah Morgan, lead singer in Morgan Heritage. His voice was so special and his contribution to Reggae music globally was incredible. Heartfelt condolences to his family," David Rodigan, reggae

deejay and BBC1 host posted.

"Peetah has left us much too soon" said Randy Chin, President of VP Records, "we send heartfelt condolences to his family and fans."

Morgan Heritage followed their father's path into the music industry. The senior Morgan, who was from Clarendon parish in rural Jamaica, had a strong seller in the United States in 1981 with "I'll do Anything For You." He died in Atlanta in 2022 at 76.

While Morgan Heritage recorded one album for MCA Records in 1994, it was not until they relocated to Jamaica shortly after and worked with producers such as Bobby Digital that they gathered momentum.

Known for his work with Shabba Ranks, Bobby Digital

produced "Don't Haffi Dread," and the 1999 album of the same name, which contained several hit singles. It earned Morgan Heritage a following in Jamaica, Europe, the United States and Japan where they toured.

Peetah Morgan and his siblings won the Grammy Award for Best Reggae Album in 2016 for *Strictly Roots*.

His memorial will be held in Orlando, Florida on March 7th. There after, there will be an addition of the celebration of his life in Kingston, Jamaica at the beginning of April.

Peetah Morgan is survived by his loving wife Maria Gunabe-Morgan, 11 children and 2 grandchildren.



## Julian Marley & Alexx Antaeus Debut Thrilling 'Made For Your Love' Video Following GRAMMY Win

Following their GRAMMY win for Best Reggae Album, the celebrated Julian Marley and acclaimed producer and co-writer Antaeus have debuted an electrifying music video for their latest single "Made For Your Love," released under Monom Records. Julian Marley & Alexx Antaeus commemorated their GRAMMY victory in Jamaica on February 22, 2024.

The track, enriched with Dancehall elements, shines on the GRAMMY-awarded album, *Colors of Royal*. IceyJace, a visionary director, masterfully brings the song to life through the music video, highlighting its spirited essence with striking visuals and dynamic rhythms set against the picturesque Miami

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

## Remembering Aston “Familyman” Barrett

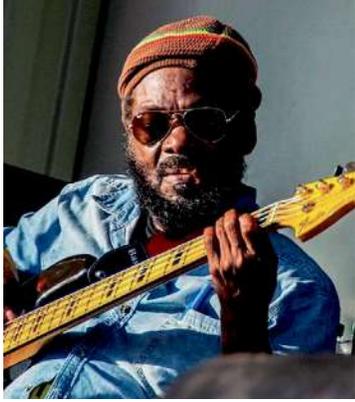
BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Of the musicians who shaped Bob Marley’s patented One drop sound, bass guitarist Aston “Familyman” Barrett was the most pivotal. The legendary member of The Wailers band died in Miami on February 2 at age 77.

Barrett died four days before what would have been Marley’s 79th birthday. The reggae king died in May, 1981 at age 36, also in Miami.

Ironically, guitarist Donald Kinsey, who also played with The Wailers, died on Marley’s birthday in his native Indiana at age 70. That date was the Los Angeles premiere of ‘Bob Marley: One Love,’ the highly-anticipated Paramount Pictures Marley biopic.

Barrett’s son, Aston Jr., plays his father in that movie. The elder Barrett retired from recording and touring six years ago due to declining health. When Marley died, he assumed leadership of The Wailers, leading the band through numerous personnel changes for over 30 years.



**Aston “Familyman” Barrett, who was the most pivotal and legendary member of The Wailers band, will be funeralized on March 5th in Jamaica. (Brady Cooling image/Wailers Facebook page)**

From east Kingston, Jamaica, Barrett first made his name with The Upsetters and The Hippy Boys bands before joining The Wailers with his brother, drummer Carlton Barrett.

In the early 1970s, they were the rhythm section for The Upsetters, house band for producer Lee “Scratch” Perry’s label of the

same name.

The brothers played on Marley and The Wailers’ albums for Island Records, including ‘Catch A Fire,’ ‘Natty Dread, Live!,’ ‘Exodus,’ and ‘Survival.’ Carlton Barrett was murdered in Kingston in 1987 at age 36.

During his time with The Hippy Boys in east Kingston, Barrett’s colleagues included a young bassist named Robbie Shakespeare, whom he mentored, and a vocalist named Audley Rollen.

The latter told Caribbean Today that he first met Barrett in 1967 when he was about to embark on a career as a session musician. He and Carlton later played on some of Rollen’s songs, such as Oh my Darling and Halilujah.

“Family was warm, friendly and soft-spoken. He was always rubbing his eyes, and he listened twice as much as he spoke,” Rollen recalled. “Even before they became part of The Wailers, Family and his brother were the most sought after musicians; they

did a lot of recordings at Randy’s, (recording studio in Kingston), with (keyboardist) Glen Adams and (guitarist Alva Lewis) ‘Reggie’ as The Upsetters.”

In 2020, Rolling Stone Magazine named Barrett and Shakespeare in its ‘The 50 Greatest Bassists of All Time’ list. Barrett is at number 28 and Shakespeare at 17.

Aston “Familyman” Barrett was awarded the Order of Distinction, Jamaica’s sixth-highest honor, by the Jamaican government in 2021.

### FUNERAL

A first funeral service was held on Feb. 24th in Miami Gardens at Holy Family Episcopal Church. Jamaica’s Minister of Culture Olivia Babsy Grange says the public will have an opportunity to pay respects to the late Jamaican musician at a second public funeral at the National Indoor Sports Centre on Tuesday, March 5th.

That funeral service will begin at 10 am. Mourners are being encouraged to wear white to the service.



## Julian Marley & Alexx Antaeus Debut Thrilling ‘Made For Your Love’ Video Following GRAMMY Win

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

Beach, Florida.

The single combines a seductive rhythm guitar with a dancehall beat, weaving together romantic lyrics that depict a deep sense of closeness and affinity. Phrases such as “Your love was made for my love, your feel was



**Julian Marley & Alexx Antaeus celebrating their GRAMMY win in Jamaica on February 22, 2024. (Contributed image)**

made for my touch” eloquently capture the intense bond and mutual attraction between lovers, making this song a rapidly popular track from the album.

“Made For Your Love” and the entire album celebrate the spirit of artistic liberty and innovation. We aimed to honor reggae’s roots while also broadening its horizons, and ‘Colors of Royal’ represents this fusion. It’s an exploration of sound and hue,” said Julian Marley.

“This endeavor showcases Julian’s vast talent and introduces him to new musical landscapes, blending Reggae, Dancehall, Reggaeton, and Afrobeats. This approach has not only been rewarding but has also led to a Grammy acknowledgment,” commented Antaeus.

Hailing from London, England, Julian “JuJu” Marley, son of reggae icon Bob Marley and Lucy Ponder, has embraced his rich musical heritage from a young age. As a GRAMMY-winning artist, Julian has developed into a multifaceted musician, proficient across several instruments and a dedicated humanitarian.

Grammy winner Alexx Antaeus, a distinguished music producer and record label executive with a solid background in music business, splits his time between New York, NY, and Kingston, Jamaica. His prolific career includes collaborations with iconic acts and a series of successful albums that blend diverse musical styles, earning him a respected place in the music industry.

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# Breadfruit Gets A New Life

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

Breadfruit, the fruit originally from the Polynesian islands - that was introduced to the Caribbean during the colonial era - has become a staple food source throughout the region. Now, the versatile fruit has been given a new lease on life, thanks to an innovative entrepreneur who saw the potential.

Marisol Villalobos, operator and CEO of Amasar LLC Farm, along with her husband Jesús Martes Cordero, (COO), own 20 acres of rich farmland in Jayuya, a mountainous region of Puerto Rico. As a mother of three young children at the time, she was searching for healthy, nutritious, organic foods for her family. But, she had limited choices.

"I was always concerned about what to feed my kids," Villalobos told Caribbean Today. "And I was always in this battle with them when I gave them pancakes and they would protest that they didn't taste like the ones they had at their friends' homes, or their Aunties. I was always looking for the gluten-free ones but they were very limited."

This was more than 20 years ago. But, the seed was planted, said Villalobos, as it was just a few years before that she and her husband, then newly-weds, decided to purchase part of her father-in-law's farm in Jayuya. And as she put it: "We always knew that we would do something with the farm, we just didn't know what."

It would seem agriculture was always in their blood, as both grew up on farms in their native Puerto Rico. But, the light bulb moment would reveal their future when Villalobos, a microbiologist, and her husband, a pharmaceutical industry executive, worked as expats in Italy.

"Living in Italy, we saw how conscious people were about what they were eating. They eat fresh, nutritious food. That definitely caught our attention," she said. "Added to that, my godmother sent us a breadfruit all the way from Puerto Rico - because she knew it was my favorite. I couldn't believe it! But, that started us thinking about bringing breadfruit to Europe."

## BREADFRUIT FLOUR

The next chapter of their lives was further confirmed when they visited Spain in 2016 and just



Marisol Villalobos

happened upon an agricultural festival. This was the beginning of their journey of bringing nutritional food to the table.

The name of the farm, Amasar, which means 'knead' in English, tells the story of Villalobos' love of breadfruit and how she repurposed it. The farm now has more than 500 organically grown trees producing breadfruit used in the production of breadfruit flour.

Because breadfruit is rich in fiber, potassium, amino acids, and naturally gluten free, Villalobos knew that anything she produced from it would be perfect for those pursuing healthy living. So, combining her agricultural and science background Villalobos produced her core product — breadfruit flour. Then she went further, creating pancake and waffle mixes and breakfast creams. The first to produce flour from breadfruit, the CEO is revolutionizing the agricultural market in Puerto Rico.

"When you harvest a breadfruit, it ripens very quickly. So, I asked myself what can I do with breadfruit to preserve it? The answer was making flour from it," Villalobos explained. "Then I thought about blends. Part of what I want to bring is convenience and great taste. Breadfruit has the great taste and the super nutrition. So, I spent a year and a half on creating the blends."

She incorporated ingredients like lentil flour, cassava flour, while rice flour to create these unique blends. And these products have been recognized by the Speciality Food Association, awarding Amasar with the prestigious Sofi Award in 2022 for the Best New Product in the Breakfast Category.

## SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Growing organically and utilizing sustainable practices and

working with like-minded local farmers has always underpinned Villalobos' farming practices.

"I purchase breadfruit from more than 50 small farmers on the entire island. And it's good because they have breadfruit trees on their farms that they weren't doing anything with, and they're selling now at a very good price," Villalobos said. "So, part of what we bring is that respect for the farmers. And importantly, it's a great food that is grown without chemicals or pesticides."

She added that Amasar is an eco-friendly agribusiness because it is not a monoculture. In other words, the farm also grows bananas, coffee, cocoa, and other crops, which enhances the farmland because of its biodiversity.

A growing culture of environmentally-friendly consumers is embracing Amasar's products. The products are available across the island and are now being exported to the United States.

"We are so thankful to the Bravo Family Foundation and their Rising Entrepreneurs Program. Even though we know we had something fabulous, it was thanks to our mentors in that program that we got that extra confidence to bring this to the tables of the United States," the entrepreneur revealed. "With their help, we can build this industry up strategically, step-by-step. That's what we're doing."

Villalobos is inspired. She sees Amasar rising fast, a company run by a woman with 60 percent of its staff being female. She is proud of what she and her husband have created. As COO, Cordero brings organization and other strengths to the company, while she focuses on the innovative products.

"We are united as a family. And, family is the first value of Amasar," Villalobos added. "My husband comes from a family of 13, I'm from a family of 4. My mom helps me a lot. And I am grateful that my father, who passed away, saw the beginnings of Amasar and so did my father-in-law who lived to 96 years. So, it is family that pushes us through the difficult moments and gives the momentum to help bring food sovereignty and food security to our island... We have the potential of disrupting the flour industry."



# Fun Easter Gifts Kids Will Love

While bunny- and egg-shaped candies are always crowd-pleasing favorites during Easter, you can make the holiday extra special for kids with some less sugary treats that can be enjoyed year-round. For a joy-filled celebration, get inspired with these fun and excellent ideas for Easter baskets:



## GREAT BOOKS

Books unlock new worlds and ideas, making them great gifts on any occasion. Easter is no exception. Use the opportunity to stock children's shelves with fiction by favorite and new-to-them authors, as well as non-fiction books on subjects of interest to them. With the thoughtful gift of brand-new titles to discover, they'll be well-prepared to stay engaged and entertained during the downtime of spring and summer vacation ahead. A few thematic ideas include, "The Good Egg: An Easter and Springtime Book for Kids" and "The Velveteen Rabbit."

## COOL TOYS

Make children's days tweet-tastic with VTech Gabbers, fluffy bird buddies that can be brought along on adventures by sliding a fabric-covered magnetic egg under one's shoulder sleeve and perching the bird on top. Three different colored Gabbers: Jay Blue, Finch Pink and Owl White, all sing, make funny sounds and will repeat and tweet the things kids say in a funny voice! Whether you gift one bird, or all three, this will be a beloved and adorable addition to any Easter basket. Another cool idea that puts a spin

on Easter eggs? Switch & Go Hatch & Roaaar Eggs. They open up to include all the pieces needed to build 2-in-1 dinosaur vehicles. The line-up includes a t-rex racer, pterodactyl chopper and more. For more toys that make great Easter gifts, visit [amazon.com/vtechtoys](http://amazon.com/vtechtoys).

## INSPIRATION AND GEAR

Another fun addition to Easter baskets is gear and tools that support kids' hobbies, passions and talents. For example, if you're shopping for a young artist, consider gifting them a watercolor set, crafting kit or kid-friendly knitting needles. For a child interested in the performing arts, you can get them started on their journey with a gift certificate for music, acting or dance lessons. Or, help get a budding athlete prepared for the spring and summer sports seasons ahead with a light-up baseball or softball, which will allow them to extend their game of catch into the evening, giving them a competitive edge.

With a few tweaks to your Easter basket routine, you can make the holiday fun and memorable for children.

- StatePoint



# Here's How You Can Make Breadfruit Pancakes

## Breadfruit Pancakes

Equipment: Pancake Pan

### Normal Gluten Free Version

- 1 Cup Amasar's Breadfruit Flour Mix
- 1/4 Cup Sugar
- 3/4 Cup Milk of preference
- 1 Egg or Substitute
- 2 tsp. Butter
- 1/4 tsp. Salt
- 1/4 tsp. Baking Powder (for fluffier pancakes)

### Vegan Option

- Just substitute 1 egg for 1/2 (half) mashed banana
- Milk with same quantity of your milk substitute

- Butter, same quantity, or olive oil or plant based butter.

## HOW TO COOK:

- Mix sugar, butter, (best if softened), and egg or substitute.
- Add milk and salt.
- Add breadfruit flour blend and baking powder.
- Mix well with wire whisk until lump free.
- Preheat pan, add proper quantity, and for the proper normal time.
- Flip after bubbles on surface appear.

For more visit [amasar.net](http://amasar.net).



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Peter A. Webley  
Publisher

# HEALTH NEWS



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## Florida Faces Growing Measles Crisis

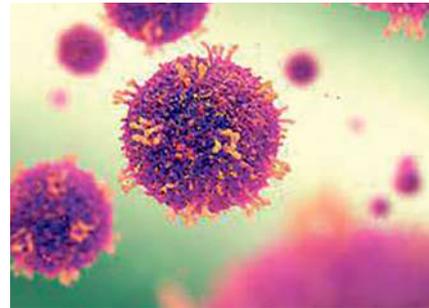
The measles outbreak in Florida is worsening, with health authorities in Broward County confirming a new case, raising the total to eight, including a child under five years old. The connection of the youngest patient to the outbreak centred at Manatee Bay Elementary School in Weston, near Fort Lauderdale,

remains unclear. With the virus's high contagiousness, experts anticipated its spread beyond just the school.

Dr. David Kimberlin of the University of Alabama at Birmingham emphasized the challenge of containing such a contagious virus to a single location. Nationally, the CDC

has reported 35 measles cases across 15 states in 2024, largely attributed to international travel. Notably, a recent case in Michigan marks its first since 2019, highlighting the widespread nature of the outbreak.

Florida currently faces the largest outbreak in the U.S., prompting scrutiny over the state health officials' response. The decision by Florida's Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo, allowing parents to choose whether to quarantine their children or continue school attendance, has sparked concern among disease experts. Given



measles' highly infectious nature and long incubation period, this approach may contribute to further spread.

Experts like Kimberlin and epidemiologist Katelyn Jetelina stress the importance of traditional public health measures like identifying and

isolating cases, especially for measles due to its exceptional contagion and the lengthy period during which infected individuals can transmit the virus.

Despite the high community immunity rate cited by Ladapo in a letter to parents, the lack of a strong push for vaccination and the emphasis on parental discretion over school attendance without a quarantine mandate raises questions about the effectiveness of Florida's strategy in curbing the outbreak.

- *Rewritten from NBC News*



## Final Expense Insurance

So many of us are unprepared financially when our Love One dies, or more unfortunate, when we die.

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## What Foot and Ankle Issues Warrant a Doctor's Visit

Most people have a foot or ankle problem at one time or another. So how do you know when to seek help?

Many symptoms - even those you can tolerate - require the professional attention of a foot and ankle surgeon to keep the underlying condition from worsening. According to Danielle Butto, DPM, FACFAS, a board-certified foot and ankle surgeon and a Fellow Member of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, (ACFAS),

"It's important to remember that foot health is an important part of your overall health. You need to take care of your feet, which includes going to the doctor when you have pain, sustain an injury or develop a condition needing professional evaluation and treatment."

Here are five examples of when you should make an appointment with your foot and ankle surgeon.

### 1. When You Have Diabetes

Living with diabetes means being more prone to a variety of conditions that affect the feet, including foot sores and ulcers. At the same time, diabetic nerve damage makes it harder to detect when there's a problem. Regular visits to a foot and ankle surgeon should be part of your holistic diabetes treatment plan. The doctor can screen for the loss of protective sensations in the feet, as well as diagnose and treat any structural issues leading to ulcers and wounds. Swelling, temperature and color changes in the feet, and calluses, are all telltale signs an ulcer may be around the corner and warrant a trip to a foot and ankle surgeon.

### 2. When Children Experience Pain

When it comes to paediatric foot problems, early intervention is key to long-term successful treatment. As a parent, you may find distinguishing between growing pains and injuries or deformities difficult. But foot and ankle surgeons stress that pain isn't normal and if it lasts more than a few days or is severe enough to limit your child's walking, it should be evaluated. Foot problems commonly experienced by children include flat feet, ingrown toenails, calcaneal apophysitis and plantar warts.

### 3. When You're At Risk For Falling

Falls have become the leading cause of injury deaths among Americans 65 and older, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While the reasons falls occur are numerous, painful foot

conditions are a contributing factor, as they make it difficult to maintain balance and coordination. Fortunately, many such conditions are treatable. See a foot and ankle surgeon to alleviate pain and reduce your risk of a life-changing fall.

### 4. When You Can Benefit From Medical Advances

A loss of cartilage once meant a loss of functionality. Today, joint reconstruction surgery with cartilage regeneration offers real hope for long-term functionality, nurturing the body's own ability to heal itself - with a little boost from technology and a knowledgeable surgeon.

Likewise, new surgical techniques for ankle arthritis, including arthroscopic ankle surgery, total ankle joint replacements and bone or cartilage replacement, are helping people stay active.

Finally, platelet-rich plasma therapy can promote the healing of bones, cartilage, blood vessels, tendons and tissue for many patients, and is associated with easier recovery than traditional treatments. If you suffer from a foot and ankle ailment, ask your healthcare provider about game-changing medical advances.

### 5. When Pain Is Sidelining You

It's important for athletes and fitness enthusiasts to rest and recover rather than push through foot and ankle pain caused by an overuse injury. If the pain doesn't improve in three to seven days however, it's time to see a foot and ankle surgeon for evaluation and treatment.

With the highest level of education, training and board certification, foot and ankle surgeons are the leaders in surgical and non-surgical foot and ankle care. For more information, or to find a foot and ankle surgeon near you, visit FootHealthFacts.org, the patient education website of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

- *StatePoint*



## SPRING HEALTH



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# Tragic End Presumed For American Couple Robbed In The Caribbean By Escaped Prisoners

American couple Ralph Hendry and Kathy Brandel, who were robbed of their yacht, *Simplicity*, on February 19th near Grand Anse Beach, Grenada by three prison escapees, are now presumed dead, St. Vincent and the Grenadines police say.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Superintendent Junior Simmons said: "Based on the investigation thus far, it is presumed that Ralph Hendry and Kathy Brandel are deceased."

The scene on the couple's boat was "consistent with signs of violence," Simmons in St. Vincent and the Grenadines said. "Several items were strewn on the deck and in the cabin, and a red substance that resembled blood was seen on board," he said. "There was no discovery of bodies on board the yacht."

Royal Grenada Police Commissioner Don McKenzie also said he's offering "condolences" to the family of the two American boaters, who were most likely "disposed of" at sea by escaped prisoners. McKenzie said there's a "low probability" Brandel and Henry might be alive.

Three accused criminals escaped from jail on Feb. 18 before they "commandeered" the couple's boat, called *Simplicity*, and headed north, McKenzie said. Police have said the escapees boarded the boat while it was docked in the St. George area of Grenada.

The escapees, identified as Ron Mitchell, Trevon Robertson, and Atiba Stanislaus from Grenada, were apprehended in St. Vincent and the Grenadines by local law enforcement and are in custody there. Prior to their escape, they faced charges including rape and robbery with violence.

Nick Buro, the son of Kathy Brandel and Bryan Hendry, the son of Ralph Hendry, released a statement that said they are "incredibly saddened to hear the news that our parents Kathy Brandel and Ralph Hendry are now presumed dead (but) remain optimistic in the on-going search led by the St. Vincent Coast Guard."

"We are coordinating with the United States Embassy, the governments of St. Vincent and Grenada, as well as other officials of the United States government, as they continue their work on this on-going investigation into the alleged crimes committed by these three suspects currently held in custody by Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force," the statement added. "In honor of Ralph and Kathy, we ask that everyone please take a moment to stop, pray and reflect on how lucky we were to have known them – hug your loved ones, spend time with your families, and console one another as we all collectively mourn."

A crowdfunding effort has now garnered over \$66,625 of their \$75,000



American couple Ralph Hendry and Kathy Brandel were robbed of their yacht in Grenada on Feb. 19, 2024. They are now presumed dead.

goal to support the search and memorial expenses for the American couple. The GoFundMe campaign aims to fund the retrieval of their yacht, *Simplicity*, along with the couple's personal effects, and to offer financial aid to their bereaved families during this challenging period.

"Our parents encompassed all those values and so much

more. If we have learned anything from this tragic event, it's that we know they left this world in a better place than it was before they were born. Ralph and Kathy lived a life that most of us can only dream of, sailing the eastern coast of the United States, living on their home *Simplicity*, making friends with everyone they encountered, singing, dancing

and laughing with friends and family – that's who Ralph and Kathy were and that's how they will be remembered in our hearts," Buro and Hendry added in their statement. "We are grateful to have been raised by the strongest people that we will ever know, and we hope that we can follow in their footsteps and strive to be even half as wonderful as them. So many people have reached out with love and encouragement, sharing stories and anecdotes of their memories of Ralph and Kathy, and those stories are what we want them to be remembered by. While the end of their life may have been dark, they brought light, and that light will never be extinguished from the hearts and minds of the people who knew, loved and cared so deeply about them.

We are ever hopeful that justice will be served."

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## Southwest Airlines Boosts Caribbean Presence With Five Route Relaunches

Southwest Airlines is gearing up for a significant expansion in the Caribbean this autumn, reintroducing five direct flights to sought-after locations across the region. This strategic move will commence in the fall with the return of seasonal weekend direct service from Nashville to Cancun, Mexico, starting October 5.

Simultaneously, the airline will also resume its seasonal direct flights from Phoenix to Cancun on the same day. Additional routes making a comeback include direct services from Atlanta and San Antonio to Cancun, further solidifying the airline's presence in the popular

Mexican Caribbean destination.

A highlight of this expansion is the weekly Saturday service resuming from Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport to Montego Bay, Jamaica, marking a significant relaunch. These flights are part of Southwest's updated flight schedule running through November 2024 and are now open for booking.

Both Cancun and Jamaica have experienced a boom in tourism, with Cancun leading the recovery post-pandemic and Jamaica witnessing a surge in growth starting in 2022. This resurgence has led to unprecedented levels of visitor

arrivals in Jamaica in 2023, as reported by the country's Ministry of Tourism.

Montego Bay, in particular, is experiencing a renaissance, highlighted by the opening of a new hotel on the famed "hip strip" and the recent enhancement of Sangster International Airport. This includes the introduction of the world's first Bob Marley-themed restaurant, further elevating Montego Bay's status as a premier tourist destination.

- Rewritten from Caribbean Journal



## Look Out For LIAT 2020 Airline

Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Gaston Browne has conveyed his positive outlook to the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) regarding the launch of LIAT 2020. This new airline, emerging in collaboration with Nigeria's Air Peace, is anticipated to commence operations in the Caribbean within the coming two months.

LIAT 2020 is set to succeed LIAT (1974) Limited, which ceased operations last month due to mounting debt and the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. The defunct airline was a collaborative venture of the governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Browne shared that the partner governments have consented for Antigua and

Barbuda to acquire three aircraft for the initiative, with an investment nearing US\$25 million. Air Peace is expected to contribute approximately US\$65 million, totaling an investment between US\$80 and US\$90 million. The operational launch of LIAT 2020 is projected within 60 days, pending the acquisition of the operating certificate.

Additionally, Air Peace is preparing to dispatch three Embraer 145 charter jets to Antigua and Barbuda in the forthcoming weeks. Antigua and Barbuda will also provide a headquarters for the new airline, marking a significant regional investment aimed at enhancing connectivity.

- Rewritten from CMC





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SCAN ME

# Becoming Rita - Lashana Lynch Gives Insight Into Her Powerful Onscreen Performance

BY CT STAFF WRITER

Lashana Lynch, the British born, Jamaican roots actress who has won global kudos for her role as Rita Marley in the Box Office breaking movie, "Bob Marley: One Love," is giving clear insight into what it took to become "Rita."

Lynch, 36, who was born to Jamaican parents who moved to the UK from Kingston, Jamaica, was previously known for her exciting recent turns in 'No Time to Die,' 'The Woman King,' 'Matilda the Musical,' and 'The Marvels,' joined the cast as Rita not long after screening, and without a moment's hesitation. For her, the movie was personal. "When I spoke to my agent about the project, I thought, All of my life steps, all of my career steps, have amounted to this moment," she told Vogue UK. "Even if I was playing a palm tree in the background, I would need to be connected to this movie."

Lynch also told Digital Spy that she opted for a different approach to portray Rita Marley. "I realised with my breaking down of that (strong Black Woman) trope, that there's not only a vulnerability in her, but there's almost this childlike innocence when it comes to her love for Bob," she told the site. "I think that's one thing that Black women don't often get to do in cinema, just be soft. I encouraged that a lot and hope that we could find the balance in every single scene."

Lynch also revealed that getting the role was: "Mad, mad, mad, mad. So mad. And I'll probably say that for ever," according to the UK Guardian.

"I never imagined, ever, ever, ever imagined, playing Rita. I just ... as you can tell, I'm still trying to put my finger on how I feel, beyond honoured and grateful."

As soon as Lynch got the part, she told the Guardian: "My first question was: where is Rita and when can I fly to her? I had to make that happen."

Rita Marley welcomed Lynch into her home, twice, joined at points by Cedella, and Rita's daughter Sharon (Bob was her adoptive father), who brokered the meeting.

"And when I came in, it was like – I don't know, this is very dramatic but – a version of heaven," Lynch revealed. "Where there's a god-like, queen-like ethereal figure sitting way in the distance, with their back to you."

Lynch put down her things, and went to freshen up before going to greet Rita, "and Sharon said, 'Mum said she can already see that you have the energy. She's so glad that you're here.'" Lynch said she put her hand to her throat, and recreated her

stage-whispered, wide-eyed "Thank you" in response.

They ate home-cooked meals and talked for hours," she said.

"We laughed about young love and reminisced about memories that seemed to be incredibly vivid and visceral," Lynch says. "There are obviously a lot of interviews with her. There's her book, which I've read, but there's nothing like feeling the connection with her."

Lynch wasn't so much sitting down and taking notes on, say, the way Rita speaks or sits; she was looking for something a bit looser on which to build her interpretation. In the film, the Marley matriarch is the backbone of the story, Lynch tells me. "Against all odds, she was able to withstand while remaining graceful. Not an easy thing to do," Lynch told the Guardian.

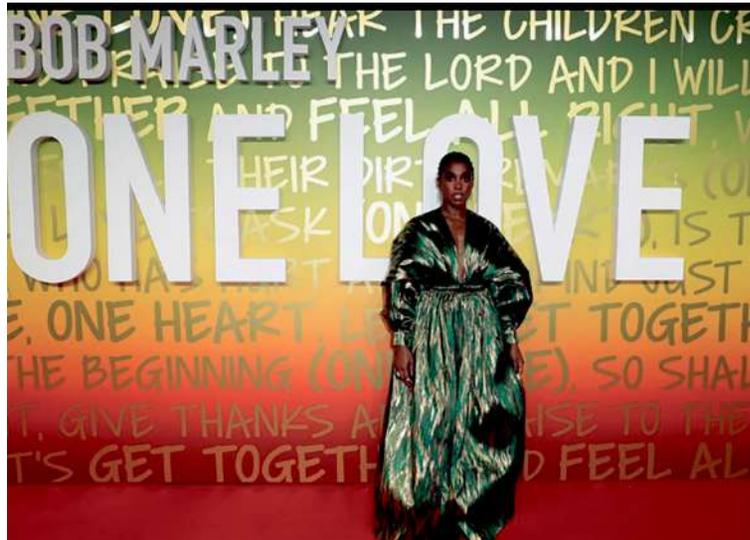
"I went in with a lot of questions in my mind. I had them all written down and then I just threw it away because her energy is so powerful and infectious and you just want to be close to it," she added to Screen Rant. "That's what you do when you see that kind of energy. You gravitate towards feeling it. So I just sat and soaked it in to be honest."

"I was a sponge," she added. "And also very grateful to be able to bottle that and bring it to set because you can research all you want, but there's always something that tips you past the edge of, I know this person intellectually. I wanted to know her emotionally and meeting her and getting her energy was my way of doing that."

Later, when shooting, Lynch said she used their time together to dig into her character; Ziggy and Cedella were also on hand to give her and the cast on-set advice. "I'm so glad that they were by our sides to answer all our questions. Things like, 'What should her bangle look like?' and, 'Is the head-wrap OK?' All of those things. But also whenever I questioned myself, I just tapped into Rita's energy that I'd been able to sit with for hours at a time. Sometimes I don't even know if I made the right decision, but I know that it felt like the right decision," she added.

She also insists she is very much "Jamaican." Her comments to Screenrant.com comes as many Jamaicans have slammed the movie, saying the actors are not Jamaicans and the movie lacks authenticity.

"It was personally important to me because I'm Jamaican and I really, whenever I see Jamaica run anything, I'm like, 'It's not that. It's really



Lashana Lynch attends the UK premiere of 'Bob Marley: One Love' at BFI IMAX Waterloo in London, United Kingdom on January 30, 2024. (Photo credit: Wiktor Szymanowicz/Future Publishing via Getty Images)

not that,' and it was important that we ended the shoot in Jamaica to be able to show the vibration, the light, the people, the feeling," she told Screenrant. "I want to say that Jamaica is the number one character in this film, Mark Kingsley, because it's them. It's their core, it's their heart. So yeah, Jamaica and getting to see its vibrancy was really special and I hope that people who have been and haven't been to Jamaica get to learn a different version through this movie."

Lynch also told Collider that it was important that accents were not watered down. "There's no other way to tell this story outside of being as authentic as possible to every inch of who Bob is right now, what he was, what he represents. Jamaica, especially Jamaica in the '70s, it's just a special time, and a really important time in my culture's history," she is quoted as saying. "So to have accents that were watered down, I mean, that's one thing that I wouldn't have signed up for at all. I'm of Jamaican heritage and it would have been against everything that I believed in if we just had a quote-unquote understandable Jamaican accent. I just think that's wrong in every way. And I think it's important for audiences to lean in with understanding narratives, understanding cultures and accents. It's important, and it really doesn't underestimate what audiences do. We shouldn't be spoon-feeding them in any way, and the accents being as true as they can be was one way of doing it."

## WHO IS LYNCH

Lynch is the youngest of three siblings born in West London to Jamaican parents. Her mum was a senior housing officer, and her dad was a social worker. Lashana told Vogue UK that growing up, she "only felt British outside the house." The rest of the time, it was "Jamaican language, food and discipline, which

is direct but calm". While in school, she enjoyed sport and was quite feisty on the netball court. Lashana attributes her direct attitude to life to her no-nonsense mother and grandmother. Lynch grew up in the London areas of Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush, and has said that her class identity inspired her work ethic. She realised there were differences between her and some of her friends at primary school: they had au pairs and their families went on the sort of regular weekend excursions she thought were reserved for proper holidays.

While in primary school, Lashana discovered her passion for acting. Lynch's family was happy for her to explore singing and acting when she was a child without necessarily lining up a plan-B career. There she participated in all of her school's productions before enrolling in the Arts Educational Schools. She attended Sylvia Young theatre school at weekends and later the Arts Educational Schools in Chiswick. She noticed then that being of Jamaican descent shaped her sense of home in particular ways. "A lovely, plush kitchen with a Dutch pot in it," she says chuckling, or a bowl filled with plantain on the counter at all times.

And, of course, Bob Marley's music was present; his global success personally significant.

Lynch's earliest memories of the Marleys are of her doing chores while listening to Bob Marley and the Wailers on full blast. "Which is why I like cleaning now. Literally," she says, laughing. "Cleaning is not a chore to me. Because on the weekends, playing their music – along with many other reggae legends, of course – was a spiritual experience."

She made her feature film debut in 2012 with Fast Girls, a British feel-good film about a female sprint relay team preparing for the World

Championships. Lynch's love of singing found her writing her own songs by the time she was 12, and later becoming a finalist in England's "Urban Voice" and "UK Unsigned" competitions. Meanwhile, Lynch's burgeoning love of acting motivated her to attend London's Arts Educational Schools. After graduating in 2010, she began appearing in plays and eventually landed her first film role, playing an Olympic athlete in "Fast Girls" (2012). The role required her to train for four hours a day, five days a week, but Lynch was excited to meet the challenge. She next appeared in "Powder Room" (2013) the following year, before starring in a production of "Educating Rita" at the Minerva Theatre in Chichester. Lynch then landed a starring role on the series "Criminals" (BBC, 2015) which unfortunately only ran for six episodes. Another break came in 2016 when she was cast as Ashanti in the crime drama "Brotherhood" (2016), shortly before being cast in the starring role on mega-hit writer and producer Shonda Rhimes' first period series, "Still Star-Crossed."

In 2021, Lynch played Nomi, the new 007 agent, alongside Daniel Craig as the retired 007 agent James Bond, in the James Bond film franchise entry No Time to Die; the change to a woman holding the 007 designation in the franchise drew international headlines.

In 2022, Lynch portrayed an Earth-838 variant of her Maria Rambeau character from Captain Marvel in Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness. On this Earth, Rambeau became Captain Marvel. The same year, Lynch also played veteran warrior, Izogie, in the historical epic, The Woman King, about the Agojie, the all-female military unit of the Kingdom of Dahomey, one of the most powerful states of Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries.

## WHAT'S NEXT

Lynch has been cast in upcoming sci-fi thriller 'Optimize' from director Lindsey Anderson Beer. The Captain Marvel star is set to play the lead in the new movie. The character is described as an "average woman" who resorts to an AI assistant "to optimise all facets of her life, but soon finds that the AI's pursuit of perfection comes at too high a cost."

Developed by Beer (Pet Sematary: Bloodlines), who studied artificial intelligence and robotics at Stanford, 'Optimized' is produced by Paramount together with the filmmaker's company Lab Brew.



www.caribbeantoday.com



**SPORTS NEWS**

# Antigua And Barbuda Unveils 'Beach 366' In Celebration Of Leap Year And Cricket World Cup

Antigua and Barbuda are excited to introduce 'Beach 366', the world's inaugural Leap Year beach, coinciding with the cricket World Cup celebrations this June at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium. This groundbreaking initiative not only honors those born on February 29 but also showcases the nation's deep roots in cricket and its status as a leading cricket destination worldwide.

With the realization that leap year babies were missing a dedicated beach in the country's claim of having a beach for every day of the year, Antigua and Barbuda have creatively linked the opening of 'Beach 366' with the cricket World Cup excitement. This approach emphasizes the islands' dedication to sports and festivities, providing a novel spot for both leap year celebrants and cricket

aficionados to create memorable experiences.

Colin C. James, CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, remarked, "The inauguration of Beach 366 amidst the cricket World Cup festivities goes beyond adding to our vast beach collection; it symbolizes a fusion of community, sports, and the peculiarities of our calendar. We warmly invite everyone, especially cricket fans and leap year babies, to partake in this unparalleled celebration in 2024. Prepare to be enthralled by top-notch cricket and the unique allure of Beach 366."

As Antigua and Barbuda welcome the cricket World Cup, the nation is set to display its famed hospitality and the excitement of global cricket. Beach 366 will act as a central spot for cricket-related events, providing a distinctive setting for fans to unwind, celebrate,

and connect with the game on a beautiful beachfront.

The inauguration year of Beach 366 promises visitors special highlights, including cricket-themed activities, exclusive privileges for leap year babies such as priority airport services\*, and a vibrant celebration of Antiguan and Barbudan culture through food, music, and shared camaraderie.

With the cricket World Cup serving as a perfect backdrop, Beach 366 aims to be a new beacon for sports and festivity in the Caribbean. This leap year, immerse yourself in the ultimate cricket, cultural, and community experience in Antigua and Barbuda.

For further details on Antigua and Barbuda and exclusive offers for those born on February 29, visit [visitantiguabarbuda.com](http://visitantiguabarbuda.com).



# United Boxing Promotions Signs Two-Time Caribbean Champion Jerone Ennis



Jerone Ennis, a two-time Caribbean amateur champion, has been signed to a multi-year deal.

United Boxing Promotions has announced the signing of Jerone Ennis, a two-time Caribbean amateur champion, to a multi-year deal. Hailing from Denham Town in Kingston, Ennis is set to compete in the light heavyweight division and is poised for his professional debut in Canada later this year.

Tyler Buxton, President of United Promotions, emphasized the signing as part of their mission to elevate Jamaican boxing by securing the nation's top talent. "Jerone is a top-tier boxer, adding to our roster of Jamaica's finest athletes," Buxton stated.

At 24, Ennis has ambitious aspirations for his professional career, aiming to climb to the pinnacle of the light heavyweight

category. Inspired by fellow Jamaican fighters Kemahl "The Hitman" Russell and Ricardo "Big 12" Brown, Ennis is determined to make his mark on the world stage. "I aim to ascend the ranks and, with God's grace, become the world's leading light heavyweight boxer," Ennis shared. His track record includes not only his Caribbean championships but also a bronze medal at the 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games. Ennis expressed his enthusiasm about joining United Promotions, viewing it as an opportunity to grow alongside his inspirational stablemates.

- *Rewritten from the Jamaica Observer*



# Caribbean Athletes Shine at World Indoor Championships



St. Lucian Julien Alfred celebrates following her capture of 60 metres gold at the World Indoors Championships.

Over the weekend, Caribbean athletes left an indelible mark at the World Indoor Championships held at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow, showcasing their exceptional talent and making history on the global stage.

## Devynne Charlton Breaks World Record

Bahamian athlete Devynne Charlton stunned spectators by breaking her own world record in the women's 60 meters hurdles, solidifying her status as one of the world's premier hurdlers. Clocking an astonishing 7.65 seconds, Charlton secured the gold medal with remarkable finesse. Reflecting on her outstanding performance, Charlton expressed her focus on flawless execution and her joy at executing the perfect race.

Charlton's victory not only earned her the gold but also shaved two hundredths of

a second off the world record she had set just last month in New York. This exceptional feat brings immense pride to her home country of The Bahamas, as Charlton prepares to share her victory with fellow Bahamians.

## Thea LaFond Secures Dominica's First Medal

In the triple jump event, Dominica's Thea LaFond soared to victory, securing her country's first-ever medal in a global track and field competition. LaFond's monumental leap of 15.01 meters not only secured the gold but also established her as the world leader in the event, marking a historic moment for Dominica and inspiring athletes across the Caribbean.

## Jamaican Sprinters Achieve Bronze

Jamaican sprinter Ackeem Blake clinched bronze in the

men's 60 meters dash, marking the Caribbean's first medal of the championships. Clocking 6.46 seconds, Blake's stellar performance earned him a spot on the podium alongside world-class sprinters Christian Coleman and Noah Lyles.

Meanwhile, in the men's 400 meters, Jamaican Rusheen McDonald captured bronze with a personal best time of 45.65 seconds, showcasing the Caribbean's prowess in track and field.

## Julien Alfred Makes St. Lucia Proud

St. Lucian athlete Julien Alfred made history by clinching gold in the women's 60 meters final, delivering St. Lucia's first-ever medal at a World Indoor Championships. Alfred's world-leading time of 6.98 seconds and her remarkable surge over the last 20 meters secured her a memorable victory and sparked celebrations in her homeland.

Despite challenges and disappointments, Caribbean athletes demonstrated resilience, determination, and excellence on the world stage, inspiring pride and admiration across the region. As the championships conclude, their remarkable achievements will be celebrated and remembered as a testament to the talent and spirit of Caribbean athletics.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



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# SPORTS NEWS



## Cricket Icon Chris Gayle Rallies Behind West Indies for Third T20 World Cup Triumph



Chris Gayle at the Barbados kick-off of the ICC T20 World Cup in Barbados. (Cricket West Indies image)

Cricket luminary Chris Gayle, renowned for his explosive T20 cricket performances, has voiced his enthusiastic support for the West Indies as they gear up for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. The celebrated batsman is confident in Rovman Powell's squad, believing they possess the potential to clinch their third World Cup title, which he views as a significant boost for fans globally.

"The team's composition and spirit are commendable, and I'm optimistic about our

chances for a third victory. Our past triumphs in 2012 and 2016 set a high standard, and I see the current team emulating that success," Gayle remarked.

Highlighting the team's recent achievements and individual talents, Gayle praised the squad's unity and performance, particularly against England. He spotlighted Nicholas Pooran as a key player for the upcoming tournament and welcomed Andre Russell's return, citing his invaluable experience and skill set.

Gayle's remarks came during the '100 Days To Go' event in Barbados, celebrating the countdown to the World Cup. As the event's Ambassador, Gayle engaged with fans, showcasing his enthusiasm for cricket and the upcoming tournament, which will see a significant expansion, hosting 20 teams across nine cities in the West Indies and the United States.

"I'm thrilled to be part of this celebration in Barbados and look forward to witnessing the West Indies' pursuit of another World Cup victory at Kensington Oval," Gayle shared, reflecting on his fond memories of Barbados and anticipation for the tournament.

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, co-hosted by the West Indies and the USA from June 1-29, marks a historic collaboration, with matches played across key venues in both regions, underscoring the growing global footprint of T20 cricket.



## Reggae Girlz Khadija Shaw Leads Manchester City To Victory With 15th Goal Of The Season



Manchester City's Khadija "Bunny" Shaw showcased her goal-scoring prowess once again, securing her league-leading 15th goal of the season in a crucial victory against Everton in the Women's Super League.

Manchester City's Khadija "Bunny" Shaw showcased her goal-scoring prowess once again, securing her league-leading 15th goal of the season in a crucial victory against Everton in the Women's Super League.

The 27-year-old Reggae Girlz striker made her mark early in the game at Joie Stadium on March 2nd, finding the back of the net in the 15th minute to

give Manchester City the lead. Shaw's goal set the tone for the match, demonstrating her clinical finishing ability.

Following Shaw's opener, Lauren Hemp extended Manchester City's advantage with a goal ten minutes into the second half. Despite Everton's efforts to mount a comeback, Hanna Bennisson's long-range (CONTINUED ON PAGE 19)

## West Indies Championship Continues

Rounds 4 through 7 of the West Indies Championship continues in the region. The revised West Indies Championship schedule is as follows:

**ROUND 4 (March 13 - 16):** CCC vs. Leeward Island Hurricanes at Sir Frank Worrell Cricket Ground (UWISPEC), Trinidad.

Trinidad & Tobago Red Force vs. Windward Islands Volcanoes at Queen's Park Oval (QPO), Trinidad.

Guyana Harpy Eagles vs. Barbados Pride at Coolidge Cricket Ground (CCG), Antigua.

Jamaica Scorpions vs. West Indies Academy at Sabina Park,

Jamaica.

**ROUND 5 (March 20 - 23):** Jamaica Scorpions vs. Leeward Island Hurricanes at Sabina Park, Jamaica.

Guyana Harpy Eagles vs. Windward Volcanoes at CCG, Antigua.

CCC vs. West Indies Academy at UWI SPEC, Trinidad.

Trinidad & Tobago Red Force vs. Barbados Pride at QPO, Trinidad.

**ROUND 6 (April 10 - 13):** CCC vs. Trinidad and Tobago Red Force at UWI SPEC, Trinidad.

Jamaica Scorpions vs. Guyana Harpy Eagles at Sabina Park, Jamaica.

Leeward Hurricanes vs. Barbados Pride at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium (SVRS), Antigua.

West Indies Academy vs. Windward Islands Volcanoes at CCG, Antigua.

**ROUND 7 (April 17 - 20):** CCC vs. Guyana Harpy Eagles at UWI SPEC, Trinidad.

Jamaica Scorpions vs. Trinidad & Tobago Red Force at Sabina Park, Jamaica.

Leeward Islands Hurricanes vs. Windward Islands Volcanoes at SVRS, Antigua.

West Indies Academy vs. Barbados Pride at CCG, Antigua.





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# Greater Lauderdale Starts Counting Down To ICC Cricket Action

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

South Florida, without top-flight cricket since 2018, is in line for international action when the International Cricket Council, (ICC), T20 World Cup comes to the Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium in Lauderdale in June.

This is the first time that the world's second most watched sport will be holding World Cup matches in the United States, and the matches are expected to bring over 45,000 visitors to the Greater Fort Lauderdale area.

That venue will host four matches in the tournament which is being co-hosted by the West Indies and United States. In February, ground was broken by City of Lauderdale officials for the Broward County Parks and Recreation Division to start an \$8.4 million renovation of the ground which officially opened in 2007.

Sri Lanka versus Nepal is the first match scheduled for Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium on June 11th. The US against Ireland on June 14th, India versus Canada the following day, and Pakistan versus Ireland are the other matches to be held at the venue which has capacity seating for 8,000 spectators. On Saturday, June 15, 2024 it will be India vs. Canada while on Sunday, June 16, 2024, Pakistan



L.-R: Lauderdale Vice Mayor Lawrence Martin; Lauderdale Commissioner Melissa Dunn; Broward County Commissioner Hazelle Rogers; USA Cricket Vice Captain Aaron Jones USA; Lauderdale Commissioner Denise Grant and Lauderdale Mayor Ken Thurston at the Feb. 23, 2024 unveiling of a 400-pound, 8-foot tall replica of the ICC T20 World Cup cricket ball at Las Olas Oceanside Park, 3000 E. Las Olas Blvd., Fort Lauderdale. (Visit Lauderdale image)

will face Ireland.

The Grand Prairie Cricket Stadium in Dallas hosts the opening match between the United States and Canada on June 1st. Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York is the other US venue hosting matches. Kensington Oval in Barbados is the venue for the June 29th final.

Lauderhill mayor Ken Thurston led the officials at the recent launch ceremony. He noted that although Lauderdale does not have many hotels, his city has a lot of attractions for visitors who come for the ICC

T20 World Cup.

"The cricket stadium improvements play a large part in the development of the city of Lauderdale; it is important to the county. Tourism is global, and there are people who play cricket all over the world and with these improvements, it's going to encourage more cricket matches to come to Lauderdale," said Thurston.

Thurston was elected mayor in 2020. A football player while at Morehouse College, he admits his knowledge of cricket was limited until the mid-1990s, when he moved to Lauderdale,

which has a large West Indian community.

"It's an interesting sport, and nice to watch," he said.

Hazelle Rogers, a veteran Jamaican legislator and Broward County commissioner, said the fact that matches will also be played in Dallas and New York shows the ICC is serious about breaking cricket in the US.

She also recalled the poor attendance at Caribbean Premier League (CPL) matches at Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium in 2018.

"We need to show the world that the USA and Broward County are ready to put on a show," said Rogers. "We have to do better, and that also takes the cricket groups to know that they have a stake in this being successful. New seating, everything is first-class, world-class and we need to put bodies in those seats."

To show how serious Fort Lauderdale is taking the matches, Visit Lauderdale, the official destination marketing organization for Greater Fort Lauderdale, recently celebrated the countdown to the start of the cricket season with a 400-pound, 8-foot tall replica of the ICC T20 World Cup cricket ball at Las Olas Oceanside Park, 3000 E. Las Olas Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, on February 23, 2024.

The cricket ball will stop at various locations throughout Greater Fort Lauderdale before it heads to its home at the Broward County Stadium, 3700 NW 11th Place, Lauderdale, where the cricket matches will be played in June. As the giant cricket ball tours the city, people are encouraged to interact with the cricket ball's augmented reality.

"I am so excited to see the ICC T20 Cricket World Cup come to Broward County," said Broward County Mayor Nan Rich. "I am so proud that our cricket stadium will host an event of this size and importance, the first of its kind in the United States."

There was great excitement in South Florida cricket circles when the Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium opened 17 years ago. In addition to the CPL, international matches featuring the West Indies, India, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have been played there.

England are the defending ICC T20 World Cup champions, having defeated Pakistan in the 2022 final at Melbourne Cricket Ground in Australia. First held in 2007, the tournament has been won twice by England and the West Indies; and once by India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Australia.



# Bajan Racing Star Secures Maiden Formula 2 Victory

Barbadian motor racing driver Zane Maloney secured his first-ever victory in Formula 2, dominating the competition at the Sakhir circuit in Bahrain on March 1st.

Maloney, competing for the Hitech Grand Prix team, put on a stellar performance, showcasing his skill and determination on the track.

Speaking after the race, Maloney expressed his joy at clinching the win, stating, "It's an incredible feeling to secure my maiden victory in Formula 2. The hard work and dedication of the team have truly paid off, and I'm grateful



Barbadian race car driver Zane Maloney celebrates after winning his maiden F2 race on Friday, March 1, in Bahrain. (F2 Image)

for the opportunity to represent Barbados on the international stage."

The victory marks a significant milestone in Maloney's racing career, signaling his potential as a rising star in the world of motor racing.

Team principal at Hitech Grand Prix, Oliver Oakes, praised Maloney's performance, saying, "Zane delivered an outstanding drive today, demonstrating his talent and composure under pressure. We

are thrilled to see him achieve his first win in Formula 2, and we look forward to supporting him as he continues to excel in his career."

Maloney's victory has garnered attention and acclaim from fans and fellow competitors alike, solidifying his position as a force to be reckoned with in the competitive world of motor racing.

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# Reggae Girlz Khadija Shaw Leads Manchester City To Victory With 15th Goal Of The Season

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18)

strike in the 60th minute was not enough to prevent City from securing the win.

Reflecting on the match, Manchester City manager Gareth Taylor expressed satisfaction with his team's performance, emphasizing the importance of securing the three points early in the game. Taylor praised his players for their resilience against a challenging Everton side.

Throughout the match,

Manchester City dominated possession and kept the Everton defense under constant pressure. Shaw's early goal was a result of her opportunistic play, capitalizing on a defensive error to give her team the lead.

While Everton managed to pull one goal back through Bennison's strike, Manchester City maintained control of the game until the final whistle, securing their 12th consecutive victory across all competitions.

With this important win,

Manchester City moved three points clear at the top of the Women's Super League table, with reigning champions Chelsea trailing closely behind. As the title race intensifies, Shaw's impressive goal-scoring form continues to play a crucial role in Manchester City's pursuit of silverware.

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*at 62*

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