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REGIONAL NEWS



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

REGIONAL

The Caribbean Community, (CARICOM), has issued one of its strongest diplomatic statements yet, calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and urging de-escalation of rising tensions across the Middle East.

In a statement, CARICOM expressed deep concern over the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, condemning the killing of civilians and the destruction of vital infrastructure, including homes, schools, and hospitals. The 15-member regional bloc also called on all parties, including Israel and Iran, to exercise restraint and engage in dialogue to prevent further escalation.

“The loss of life and human suffering is unacceptable,” the statement read, as CARICOM reiterated its support for international law, human rights, and a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Thousands have been killed in the ongoing fighting, while Israel’s military operations and Iran’s backing of Palestinian groups have fueled fears of a wider regional war.

Though geographically distant, Caribbean leaders emphasized their solidarity with global struggles for justice and self-determination, noting their own history of colonialism and foreign intervention.

The bloc reaffirmed its

support for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, in line with previous United Nations votes by member states.

The timing of CARICOM’s message reflects a growing global chorus demanding peace, as the situation in Gaza draws international outrage. It also signals the Caribbean’s shifting role on the world stage - beyond trade and disaster response, the region is becoming more vocal on pressing international issues. As the crisis continues, CARICOM’s unified call for peace adds a small but significant voice to global efforts seeking an end to the violence.

GUYANA

Guyana’s President Irfaan Ali has urged voters to protect Guyana’s international partnerships and national security as the country heads toward its September 1 general and regional elections. Ali warned against “sacrificing the safety and security of the country for self-interest,” referencing recent U.S. concerns over “individuals” in Guyana - a remark widely seen as directed at billionaire businessman Azruddin Mohamed. Mohamed, the presidential candidate of the new WIN party, remains under U.S. sanctions for alleged tax evasion and underreporting gold exports.

Ali stressed that Guyana’s partnership with the United States is critical, especially amid ongoing tensions with Venezuela.

“We can’t risk our relationship with the United States, one of our greatest partners,” he said. “Our transformation is fragile, but strong if we make the right choices.” Mohamed has dismissed allegations against him as politically motivated attacks by the ruling PPP/C.

Ali, meanwhile, highlighted his government’s investments in security, border protection, and economic growth. He criticized opposition parties for lacking clear policies, urging voters to reject empty promises and stay focused on safeguarding Guyana’s future.

HAITI

The United Nations has raised alarm over the worsening humanitarian crisis in Haiti, warning that its US\$908 million Humanitarian Appeal and Response Plan remains critically underfunded, with only eight percent of the required funds secured to date.



CARICOM has called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and has urged de-escalation of rising tensions across the Middle East.

Speaking at a recent daily briefing, UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric revealed that just US\$75 million has been received so far, leaving millions of vulnerable Haitians, particularly women and children, at heightened risk.

Dujarric highlighted a disturbing surge in gender-based violence across the country, driven by escalating insecurity and mass displacement.

“From January to May, over 3,800 incidents of gender-based violence were reported, the vast majority perpetrated by armed men,” Dujarric said. “Worryingly, there has been a 41 percent increase between April and May alone.”

The UN reports that women and girls account for most

victims, with displaced persons making up over 60 percent of survivors. Rape remains the most common violation, with nearly half of reported cases involving collective assault.

Despite humanitarian partners providing medical and psychosocial support, Dujarric warned that essential protection services remain underfunded and access to care severely limited as violence and displacement continue to rise.

SURINAME

Five political parties in Suriname signed a formal coalition agreement are moving closer to forming a new government following last month’s general elections. However, uncertainty remains over whether Vice President Ronnie Brunswijk’s ABOP party will join the alliance.

Jennifer Geerlings-Simons, chair of the National Democratic Party, (NDP) and presidential candidate to succeed outgoing leader Chandrikapersad Santokhi, confirmed that ABOP has yet to sign. “ABOP has reserved its options. The other parties will continue. If Brunswijk wants to sign later, he can,” she told reporters.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



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FANM Condemns U.S. Decision To Revoke TPS For Haitians

The Florida-based Family Action Network Movement, (FANM) has strongly condemned the United States government's decision to revoke Temporary Protected Status, (TPS) for Haitian immigrants.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, (DHS), Secretary Kristi Noem announced the termination of TPS on June 27th, leaving over 500,000 Haitians without work permits and facing deportation. The temporary parole program for Haitians will expire on August 3, and the termination will take effect on Tuesday, September 2.

Noem stated that the decision to end TPS for Haiti "restores integrity in our immigration system and ensures that Temporary Protected Status is actually temporary."

A DHS spokesperson, in a statement, said, "The environmental situation in Haiti has improved enough that it is safe for Haitian citizens to return home."

"We encourage these individuals to take advantage of the department's resources in returning to Haiti, which can be arranged through the CBP (Customs and Border Protection) Home app," the spokesperson continued. "Haitian nationals may pursue lawful status through other immigration benefit



correct caption to Haitians protesting against President Donald Trump administration's cut-off of Temporary Protected Status (TPS). (Photo via Haiti Liberte)

requests, if eligible."

After consulting with interagency partners, the spokesperson noted that "Noem determined that conditions in Haiti no longer meet the TPS statutory requirements."

"This is a cruel, unjust and politically motivated decision that blatantly ignores Haiti's devastating and worsening condition," said FANM political director, Paul Christian Namphy. "Haiti is currently enduring a catastrophic humanitarian crisis marked by rampant gang violence, political instability, hunger, and a total collapse of public services. Forcibly returning people under these circumstances is not only

reckless - it is inhumane."

FANM, a leading social justice organization advocating for the rights of immigrants, women, and marginalized communities, pointed out that despite the Department of Homeland Security's claim that conditions in Haiti have improved, the U.S. State Department continues to advise against travel to the country due to extreme levels of crime, kidnappings, and civil unrest.

According to the United Nations' International Organization for Migration, (IOM), over 1.3 million people in Haiti are internally displaced as of May 2025, many fleeing armed gangs that now control

over 80 percent of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

FANM's social justice organizer, Rachel Descollines, stated that the Trump administration's decision reflects a troubling pattern of targeting Black and immigrant communities.

"It is especially unconscionable to revoke TPS while simultaneously acknowledging the complete breakdown of governance and security in Haiti," Descollines

said.

FANM is "urgently" calling on Congress, the White House, and the international community to take immediate action to protect Haitian TPS holders from deportation. The organization is also encouraging "peaceful mobilization and legal action to resist this dangerous policy."

- *Rewritten from CMC*



Six Jamaicans, Including Three Children, Killed In Fiery Crash In Florida

Tragedy struck in Central Florida on June 2nd as six people, reportedly of Jamaican descent, were killed in a devastating crash in Osceola County.

According to Fox35, the deadly collision involved a 2024 Hyundai Tucson traveling westbound and a 2011 semi-truck with a trailer heading eastbound.

Reports indicate that the driver of the Hyundai was attempting to overtake several vehicles when they lost control of the car, colliding head-on with the semi-truck. The impact

sparked a massive fire, engulfing both vehicles in flames.

All six occupants of the Hyundai, including three children, were trapped inside the burning vehicle and pronounced dead at the scene.

The driver of the semi-truck sustained minor injuries and was transported to Indian River Hospital for treatment.

Authorities have not yet released the identities of the victims as investigations continue.



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Hundreds Protest Florida's Controversial 'Alligator Alcatraz' Detention Center Plan In Everglades

By the hundreds, demonstrators lined U.S. 41 through Big Cypress National Preserve recently to protest Florida's controversial proposal to build a new Immigration and Customs Enforcement, (ICE) detention center in the heart of the Everglades.

Dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz" by Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier, the plan would convert the abandoned Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport into a detention facility capable of holding up to 5,000 undocumented immigrants with criminal records. The remote location, Uthmeier claims, would prevent escapes: "Nowhere to go, nowhere to hide — only alligators and pythons are waiting."

Protesters, however, see it differently.

"This is sacred land," said Peter Graves of Chokoloskee Island. "Our ancestors fought to protect this place, and we'll do it again."

The site has long been a battleground. In the 1970s, a

proposed massive jetport for Miami International Airport was halted after public outcry led to President Nixon declaring Big Cypress a national preserve — the first of its kind in the U.S. Now, environmental groups, Indigenous leaders, and local residents have mobilized once again. Sunday's demonstration was led by Betty Osceola of the Love the Everglades Movement, along with Friends of the Everglades.

"This proposal disrespects everything this land represents," said biologist and activist Garrett Stuart. "It was here that America's environmental movement took root, yet now they want to turn it into a prison."

In a video posted to X (formerly Twitter), Uthmeier called the detention center essential to executing former President Trump's mass deportation agenda. He claims the facility could be operational within 60 days of construction starting.

But protesters remain



Several conservation groups as well as others lined U.S. 41 near the abandoned Everglades Jetport to protest a proposed immigrant detention center inside Big Cypress National Preserve. Protesters lined the road to try and stop "Alligator Alcatraz." (WLRN screengrab)

defiant. "Failure isn't in my DNA," Stuart declared. "We'll fight — for the Everglades, for our communities, for what's right."

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

The Trump administration has, however, greenlit the construction. Florida Attorney

General Uthmeier confirmed last week that work is already underway at the remote 30-square-mile site known as the Miami-Dade/Collier Training Facility. The facility is expected to be operational within two months.

In a promotional video posted to X, Uthmeier touted the location's natural isolation as a deterrent to escape attempts. "If somebody were to get out, there's nowhere to run, nowhere to hide—only the alligators and pythons are waiting," Uthmeier remarked. "That's why I like to call it 'Alligator Alcatraz.'"

Despite the controversy, Uthmeier defended the initiative, calling it the state's best option to support Trump's immigration enforcement efforts. "The governor tasked state leaders to identify locations for new detention facilities. This site checks every box," Uthmeier said.

The announcement adds fuel to Florida's role as a central player in Trump's mass deportation strategy and reignites debate over immigration, detention policies, and environmental preservation in one of the nation's most sensitive ecosystems.

- *Rewritten from WLRN.com*



Caribbean-Americans Win Big In NYC Democratic Primaries As Mamdani Ousts Cuomo

Several Caribbean-American candidates secured decisive victories on June 24th in New York City's Democratic Primary Elections, as voters braved scorching heat to cast ballots.

Among the winners was Grenadian American Jumaane Williams, re-elected as New York City Public Advocate with a commanding 71.3% of

the vote. Williams defeated Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar and insurance executive Marty Dolan. In his victory speech, Williams thanked supporters and praised Assemblyman Zohran Mamdani for his upset win over former Governor Andrew Cuomo in the race for the Democratic mayoral nomination.

"I'll keep showing up for New Yorkers and standing up in the face of injustice," Williams pledged.

In Brooklyn's 46th Council District, Haitian-born Council Member Mercedes Narcisse soundly defeated Guyanese challenger Dimple Willabus, winning nearly 83% of the vote. Narcisse called the victory



Grenadian American Jumaane Williams was re-elected as New York City Public Advocate

"a clear message that our community values hard work, truth, and real results."

In the 35th District, Crystal Hudson, whose grandmother was Jamaican, won re-election with nearly 85% support, defeating three challengers. Hudson, one of the first openly LGBTQ+ Black women on the City Council, pledged to continue delivering for working families, tenants, and seniors.

Meanwhile, Jamaican educator Lawman Lynch fell short in a crowded eight-way race in Brooklyn's 41st District, with incumbent Darlene Mealy securing re-election.

The night also brought a major political upset, as Mamdani defeated Cuomo in the Democratic mayoral

primary, earning 43.5% of the vote to Cuomo's 36.4%. Haitian American Brooklyn Democratic Chair Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn, a Cuomo supporter, acknowledged Mamdani's victory and urged unity heading into November's general election.

The results highlight both the political strength and diversity of New York's Caribbean community, with candidates of Grenadian, Haitian, Jamaican, and Guyanese descent making their mark on the city's political landscape.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



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Antigua And Barbuda Reaffirms Support For Ukraine

Antigua and Barbuda has reaffirmed its support for Ukraine amid the ongoing war with Russia and is calling for increased global efforts to broker peace.

During a courtesy visit by Ukraine's Ambassador to the United States, Oksana Markarova, Prime Minister Gaston Browne emphasized that small nations like Antigua and Barbuda bear the brunt of global conflicts.

"We stand with you and will continue to do so. Conflicts like these have no winners.

As one of the world's smallest and most vulnerable nations, global crises disproportionately affect us," Browne said.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has been described as Europe's largest military assault since World War II, driven largely by Moscow's opposition to NATO expansion and efforts to limit Russian influence in Eastern Europe.

Browne noted that although Antigua and Barbuda is geographically distant, the war's economic consequences have been felt at home, especially



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has appealed to Donald Trump again for assistance in the war. (Libkos/AP Image)

through inflation and increased living costs that impacted political stability during the 2023 general election.

He proposed enhancing bilateral cooperation, especially in agriculture, noting that Antigua and Barbuda imports up to 80% of its food weekly, making it highly vulnerable.

"Ukraine is a global agricultural leader. We are eager to partner with you to build local capacity and reduce our dependence on imports," Browne said.

Ambassador Markarova thanked Antigua and

Barbuda for its "principled stance" supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"Your voice and values resonate globally, despite your size," she stated.

The Ambassador also offered cooperation in advanced digital technologies, highlighting Ukraine's "DIA" program in sectors like agriculture, health, education, and fintech. Ukraine will assist Antigua and Barbuda with smart farming and water-efficient technologies, aligning with the country's goals for climate resilience and food

security.

An invitation was also extended to Antigua and Barbuda's First Lady to attend Ukraine's upcoming First Ladies Summit focusing on

global partnerships in health and education.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



Bahamas Hikes Boating Fees

As the Bahamas moves to mark its 52nd independence anniversary this month, the Bahamas Parliament has passed the Port Authorities (Amendment) Bill, introducing higher fees and stricter regulations for visiting vessels effective July 1, 2025.

Under the new amendments to the Port Authorities Act, boat owners will face increased costs for temporary cruising permits and new equipment requirements. All vessels over 50 feet in length will now be required to have AIS (Automatic Identification System) technology installed, according to official government documents.

The updated fee structure for temporary cruising permits is as follows:

- Boats up to 34 feet: \$500 for a permit valid up to 12 months.
- Boats over 34 feet but under 100 feet: \$1,000.
- Boats over 100 feet: \$3,000.

The amended law also outlines additional charges for mooring and fishing permits.

A new Frequent Digital Cruising Card (FDCC) is also being introduced for boaters who visit The Bahamas regularly. The FDCC will be valid for two years but comes with restrictions, including mandatory customs check-ins and payment of applicable additional fees.

The FDCC fee schedule is:

- Boats up to 34 feet: \$1,500.
- Boats between 34 and 100 feet: \$2,500.
- Boats over 100 feet: \$8,000.

The Bahamian government says the changes are designed to modernize maritime oversight, enhance safety, and increase revenue from the growing boating and yachting sector. Penalties for non-compliance with the new rules will apply.

- *Rewritten from TradeOnlyToday.com*



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Guyana-Born Pre-Teen Finally Laid To Rest

Nearly two months after her tragic and mysterious death, 11-year-old Guyanese-pre-teen, Adriana Sueria Younge, was finally laid to rest on June 22nd at the Vergenoegen Burial Ground, East Bank Essequibo, Guyana, bringing an emotional chapter of national mourning to a close.

Adriana, a bright and ambitious Grade 6 student from Hyde Park, Parika, was discovered lifeless in the pool of the Double Day Hotel in Tuschen on April 24, almost 20 hours after she was reported missing. Her death sparked nationwide outrage and demands for justice, fueled by lingering questions over the circumstances and a prolonged investigation.

The final farewell began at Sandy's Funeral Parlour in the presence of hundreds of

mourners, many wearing red shirts with Adriana's image. Overwhelmed with grief, her mother, Amecia Simon, collapsed beside her daughter's casket, unwilling to let go. The father, Subrian Younge, and Adriana's grandmother were notably absent from the early proceedings.

The body was then taken home to Parika, followed by an emotional public service at the Vergenoegen tarmac, adorned in pink, Adriana's favorite color. Her classmates from Parika Salem Primary School presented poems and tributes, and the crowd repeatedly chanted, "Justice for Adriana."

Tensions flared briefly when Adriana's grandmother was confronted by mourners accusing her of withholding information. Despite the disturbance, the



11-year-old Guyanese-pre-teen, Adriana Sueria Younge, was laid to rest finally on June 22, 2025. (Kaieteur News image)

service continued, with powerful moments including readings from Adriana's diary expressing

her dream to excel at the National Grade Six Assessment and attend Queen's College.

Opposition figures, including Aubrey Norton and Nigel Hughes, attended, while no government representatives were present. Calls for justice echoed throughout, amplified by hymns and emotional tributes.

At the burial site, as Adriana's casket was lowered, her grieving mother collapsed once more, while her father sat silently in heartbreak. The nation now turns its attention to the ongoing investigation, with many vowing that justice for Adriana must prevail.

Her memory, marked by ambition, innocence, and an outpouring of public love, leaves a lasting imprint across Guyana.

- *Rewritten from Kaieteur News*



Indian PM For Trinidad & Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad Bissessar has confirmed that India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, will make an official state visit to Trinidad and Tobago this month. "On behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, I extended an invitation to Prime Minister

Modi, and we are pleased to announce that he will make a state visit during the first week of July," Persad Bissessar told the Trinidad Express. The visit follows her United National Congress (UNC)-led coalition's victory in the April 28 general elections.

The upcoming trip will mark Modi's first official visit to Trinidad and Tobago as Prime Minister. Several Memorandums of Understanding, (MOUs) are expected to be signed during the visit to deepen bilateral cooperation. Discussions are ongoing between the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs and the Indian High Commission to finalize the agreements. Prime Minister Modi, re-elected to a third term in June 2024, was among the first world leaders to congratulate Persad Bissessar on her electoral win, expressing hope for strengthened ties between the two nations. Modi last visited Trinidad and Tobago in 2002 as part of an Indian delegation attending the World Hindu Conference. His July visit will also include stops in



India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, will make an official state visit to Trinidad and Tobago this month.

Argentina and Brazil for the BRICS Summit.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



Jamaica Urges Nationals To Avoid Non-Essential Travel To Middle East Amid Escalating Tensions

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade is advising Jamaican nationals to refrain from non-essential travel to the Middle East due to rising instability and ongoing conflicts across the region.

In a travel advisory issued on June 24th, the ministry highlighted that Jamaicans should avoid travel, particularly to countries experiencing armed conflict or civil unrest, including Israel, Palestine, Iran, and Qatar.

"The Government acknowledges that the situation remains unpredictable, with the potential for other countries in the region to be affected with little or no prior warning," the advisory stated.

Jamaican nationals currently residing or traveling in the

broader region are being urged to exercise extreme caution and stay informed through official channels. While the ministry has no confirmed reports of Jamaicans currently in Israel, Palestine, or Iran, it acknowledged the presence of Jamaicans living in Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

The government confirmed that it is actively monitoring the developments and stands ready to provide consular support to affected nationals if necessary. Family members or individuals with information regarding Jamaicans currently in the affected areas are encouraged to contact the Ministry of Foreign



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Two Caribbean Immigrant Women Seek To Make Big Impact In Local Real Estate And Investment Growth

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

Two Caribbean-born women are seeking to make a big impact in the local real estate market, including affordable housing projects, as new executive additions to a local firm.

Alexander Goshen, a Fort Lauderdale-based real estate development and investment firm, has tapped Jamaican born Kayon Henderson as its new chief operating officer, and Trinidad and Tobago-born Verlyn Foley, as vice president of Affordable Housing for its AG Urban division.

Alexander Goshen has developed nearly \$400 million in commercial and residential real estate projects and currently has active projects in South Florida, Fort Myers, and St. Petersburg.

Both Henderson and Foley have a combined 47 years of experience in affordable housing development, which is the focus of Alexander Goshen's upcoming plans in Florida and beyond. The two women will also oversee other residential, retail and hotel development projects in the company's pipeline.

Henderson and Foley say it's a golden opportunity to do something beyond imaginable: leading an executive team in one of the biggest real estate growth and investment markets in the U.S.

Previously, for 12 years, Henderson headed the housing and community development department for the city of Tampa, managing a budget exceeding \$100 million of strategic investments to stabilize neighborhoods and promote sustainable growth. Now, she has been thrust into a larger role and is excited about starting a new chapter in her life where she can make an even bigger impact.

Henderson, 42, said building affordable housing was the cornerstone for Tampa City Mayor Jane Castro era, but Henderson's new position allows her to execute her own ideas. "I can't say enough about the mayor's innovation on affordable housing but being with Alexander Goshen allows me to broaden my impact like projects in Cincinnati and other places outside Florida," she said.

When Alexander Goshen was seeking a candidate to help run its AG Urban division, the company didn't have to look too far to find that person. Foley, who has over 25 years of experience in Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, (LIHTC), public-private partnerships and HUD programs, previously partnered with Alexander Goshen on several development projects in Georgia.

Miles Alexander III, principal and managing partner of Alexander Goshen, marveled at Foley's leadership and passion that he offered her the Vice President of Affordable Housing for its AG Urban division.

But there was one problem: Foley didn't want to yield her own Atlanta-based real estate firm and relocate to Florida. Foley, 48, is the founder of VOB Development, which developed thousands of affordable homes for governments and private sectors.

But Alexander Goshen made her decision that much easier. She can work remotely from Georgia and continue to run her own firm simultaneously.

"Miles recommended me for the position because of the work I did for a foundation in Atlanta which partnered with Miles' company," Goshen said. "I did have to think about it because of my location but Miles came and visited me because he thought I would be a good fit for affordable housing."

Both women know what it takes to build affordable housing as they took similar paths to achieve their marks.

Under her leadership, Henderson said in Tampa, officials, with partnerships with developers, built a rash of apartment units, reserving at least 26 of those for affordable housing.

She said Florida's affordable housing crisis is troublesome and Alexander Goshen wants to its part to tackle the issue. "Joining the firm felt like the right step for me," she said. "Its approach was what real estate development looks like, some with mixed-use income projects. It's not only looking at the financial impact but what they can do for the community in the long term."

In addition, no more running into red tape like the public sector to advance housing development projects, a pet peeve when she worked in Tampa. "It's a big difference where in government everything is scrutinized and you have to make sure all steps of red tape are met," she said. "To move forward with a project, it has to go through 10 hands before being approved. Here at Alexander Goshen, it's more refreshing."

Henderson also served on local and national boards advocating for programs and funding to improve access to safe, quality housing for vulnerable populations.

Foley moved to Mississippi from Trinidad to break into the real estate business.

She purchased her first apartment building but found it more difficult to purchase others because lenders decided to scale back on multi-family units for several reasons, including frequent construction delays, higher interest costs and lower occupancy, and a cycle of refinancing.

Foley said she was advised to venture into low-income housing, which qualified her for the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. "You get the land, put in the application and seek funding, get approved and get paid up front," she said. "That's how I started to process."

She made history as the first African American woman to develop properties in Jackson, MS, using the LIHTC model.

Foley followed the same game plan when she moved to New Orleans and Georgia, and developed affordable housing projects in Tennessee, Florida, Alabama, North Carolina, Georgia, and Connecticut, totaling over \$500 million in development costs.



Alexander Goshen, a Fort Lauderdale-based real estate development and investment firm, has tapped Jamaican born Kayon Henderson, I., as its new chief operating officer, and Trinidad and Tobago-born Verlyn Foley, r. as vice president of its Affordable Housing for its AG Urban division.



Affordable housing has been the cornerstone of her real estate career but Foley acknowledged some tough challenges pushing her projects through.

The affordable housing crisis has gripped Florida and other U.S. states, leaving thousands of people homeless. According to a University of Florida study, the median single family home price in the first half of 2024 was \$411,600, while median rent in July 2024 was \$1,555.

Median home prices ranged from below \$250,000 in rural areas to above \$500,000 in pricey coastal communities. The shortage of affordable rental housing is acute for renters with incomes below 80% of area median income (AMI), especially for those with incomes below 60 percent AMI.

Statewide, an estimated

883,863 renter households with incomes below 60 percent AMI pay more than 40 percent of their income in rent.

In Miami-Dade County, a 2 bedroom two bath apartment runs as high as \$2,780 in underserved areas.

Foley said some U.S. cities and communities embrace affordable housing developments but others push back. She said the reason being is some people from well-to-do areas think of affordable housing as low income which might bring down the property values. "They think of poverty, crime and other negativity," Foley said, adding that education can help overcome their fears.

"You have to meet with the communities to make them feel comfortable about what you are bringing to the areas," she said.

"You show them renderings, address their concerns early so developments can move smoothly."

Teaching was Henderson's first career choice but she said she left the profession to make a bigger impact in the community.

After earning his master's degree in public administration from the University of South Florida, Henderson landed an interview for a housing specialist position for a non-profit in St. Petersburg. But there was one problem: Her babysitter had canceled out at the last minute and Henderson brought her infant daughter with her to the interview.

It proved to be a prudent choice. "When I showed up with my daughter, the man hired me because he said you would do anything it takes to get the job," Henderson said. "If it wasn't for that interview, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing and not flourish in my career. That allowed me to be driven because someone gave me a chance."

Alexander III said Henderson is a welcome addition to an "excellent" team. "Kayon's expertise in housing and community development, along with her proven track record in operational excellence and strategic leadership, makes her an invaluable addition to our team," he said.



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FEATURE



This Girl From Montego Bay Is The UK's First Black Woman Bishop

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

It took The Rt Revd. Rose Hudson-Wilkin, CD, MBE, three years to write her memoir: "The Girl From Montego Bay."

In it, this little Black girl from Jamaica who grew up to become the first Black Woman Bishop in the Church of England, tells the story of Bishop Rose's humble and challenging beginnings to her triumphant life breaking the glass ceiling in a field that once forbade women leadership in its male-dominated 'club.'

This outspoken advocate for justice was ordained a deacon in the Church of England in 1991. In 1994, when the ban on female priests was lifted, she was appointed to the priesthood. Recognized for her outstanding faith and work, she went on to become the Chaplain to the late Majesty Queen Elizabeth 2nd. Then making a stir in 2010, she was appointed the 79th Chaplain to the Speaker to the House of Commons - the first Black woman in the post.

In another historical first, she was consecrated Bishop in the Church of England in 2019 and installed in Canterbury Cathedral as Bishop of Dover responsible for the diocese of Canterbury on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury. To act on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury is a big deal!

Founded in 597 AD Canterbury is the oldest diocese in England, and perhaps the most important as the first organized Christian church in the land, serving the Anglican community.

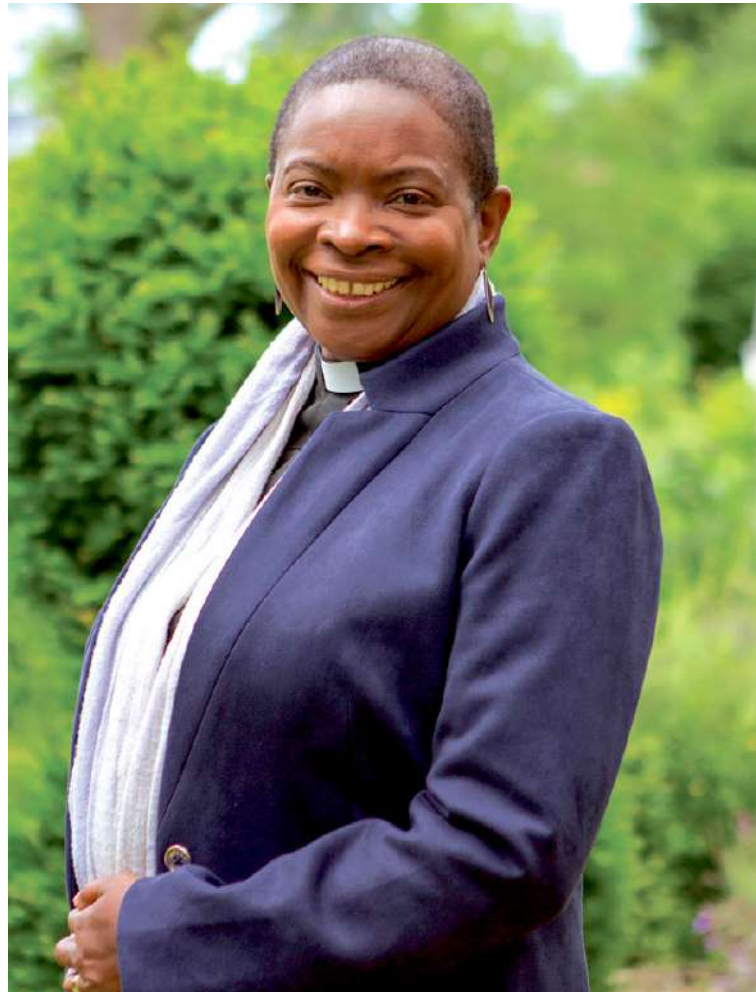
No Emotional Bond

So, how did young Rose Hudson get here? Born and raised in Jamaica, her mother left the island for England when she was only two years old, leaving her in the care of her father and aunt. Bishop Rose's mother would eventually return to the island, going back to the role of mom to the two girls she left behind.

"There was no emotional bonding because, she was a stranger, really," Bishop Rose told Caribbean Today in a recent interview. "When she came back, we found in our experience with her, she was always angry, and that anger was taken out on my sister and I. I was with my mother for less than two years, and she sent me back to Montego Bay. And so, I became separated from my sister, who I was very close to, and that was hard. But by the grace of God, I survived that."

It was her upbringing in the church that helped bring balance to her life. She was baptized at Saint James Parish Church in Montego Bay and at a young age became actively involved in church life reading lessons and intercessions, singing. Young Rose preached her first sermon at age 14, and that's how it all began. She would later train with the Church Army, commissioned an Evangelist in 1982, then on to the Queens Theological College before being ordained a deacon in 1991 and priest in 1994.

"One of the things that I say as I go to schools and speak to children, and in particular in areas where there is a lot of poverty - what has happened in your past or what is happening to you now does not need to



Jamaican-Born, The Rt Revd. Rose Hudson-Wilkin, CD, MBE, was consecrated Bishop In The Church Of England in 2019 and installed in Canterbury Cathedral as Bishop Of Dover, responsible for the Diocese Of Canterbury on behalf of the Archbishop Of Canterbury.

define you for the rest of your life," said Bishop Rose. "I tell them that I used to sleep on the floor, but this little girl who slept on the floor has ended up being invited to stay over at Windsor Castle and to have dinner with the late Majesty the Queen."

Politically Correct

Indeed, Bishop Rose's story needs to be told. The title for her book emerged out of the furor that erupted when she was appointed chaplain to Speaker of the House of Commons. "The press got a hold of it, and so they accused the Speaker of the House of Commons of being politically correct, employing a woman, and not just any woman, but a black woman," the Bishop revealed. "The job was split. The colleague who got the other half of the job at the Abbey, they referred to him in a column as the Oxford graduate, and then in the column describing me, they referred to me as the girl from Montego Bay. No mention of the fact that I too had a degree... as if to say how could the speaker not have an Oxford graduate who is a Hebrew scholar and what he's done is chosen this girl from Montego Bay. I was angry when I saw that. But almost as soon as I was angry, I remembered thinking, one of these days I'm going to write my autobiography, and when I do, I'm going to entitle it to 'The Girl From Montego Bay.'"

Although Bishop Rose has broken many barriers and helped open the door for others

to follow, she doesn't believe the emphasis should be on being the first; instead, it should be the norm.

"When we have to emphasize the first, it means that it's not normal, and I want it to be Normal," she said. "So, I hope by being there, in that space, by inhabiting that space, I'm hoping that there will be others to come."

Shepherd

Bishop Rose is legally in charge of the Diocese as the de facto diocesan Bishop. She is responsible for ordaining new deacons and priests as well as licensing them. She also conducts baptisms, and later, confirmations. And of course, evangelism and serving the community is also part of her role.

"A major part of the role of the bishop is to be a shepherd to the people, and this is not just the people who worship, but to be a shepherd to all the people in the Diocese of Canterbury," she revealed. "So, whether they regard themselves as Christians or not, my responsibility is to pray for them and to care for them and to speak for them."

She emphasized that Christianity is not about religiosity or about being in a building where one makes the sign of the cross or genuflects. It is about going out into the world and doing the work.

"Being holy is about feeding those who are hungry,"

Bishop Rose said. "Being holy is about speaking up when we see injustice."

She has walked through life self-assured and always with compassion. This the Bishop says comes from her faith and her 'Caribbean-ness.'

"When I introduce myself before I do a speaking engagement, I always say to them that I was lucky to have been born and brought up in Jamaica," she told CT. "And then I go on to say that I grew up seeing images of myself in all walks of life, so I knew that I could become anything in life."

Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin is happy and contented with where life has led her - a fascinating life filled with pitfalls, firsts and triumphs. She is married to Ken Wilkin, a prison Chaplain. They have three adult children pursuing their own successful careers, who have blessed them with six grandchildren.

Read about it in 'The Girl From Montego Bay' on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.



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Is Trump's Immigration Policy Quietly Killing U.S. Tourism?

I recently returned from Barbados, landing at Miami International Airport during what should have been a peak evening hour. But something was missing: people. The usually buzzing airport felt eerily quiet. Even the visitors' immigration line - once a choke point of international arrivals - was noticeably sparse.

The scene coincides with a new travel ban rolled out under former President Donald Trump's renewed immigration enforcement push. The policy, which took effect this week, bars entry to citizens from more than a dozen predominantly African, Middle Eastern, and Caribbean nations - including Haiti, Eritrea, Sudan, and Somalia - while also placing heightened restrictions on others, such as Cuba, Venezuela, and Sierra Leone.

Though this version of the ban is more legally refined than its chaotic 2017 predecessor, its real-world effects are unmistakable. Travelers from affected countries - even those holding valid visas - are experiencing increased scrutiny, long delays, and in some cases, denied entry. One Guatemalan couple, for instance, was subjected to three separate interviews at Miami Airport before finally being allowed to visit their son - after 22 years apart.

Even global celebrities aren't immune. Khaby Lame, the world's most-followed African-born TikTok star, was recently detained by ICE and forced to leave the U.S. for allegedly overstaying his visa. With over 162 million followers and partnerships with brands like Boss, Binance, and UNICEF, Lame's story has drawn international headlines - and unearthed fresh concerns about how the U.S. treats foreign

visitors.

The White House defends the policy as a national security measure, officially calling it a Presidential Action to:

"Restrict the entry of foreign nationals to protect the United States from foreign terrorists and other national security and public safety threats."

Critics, however, say the ban fosters division under the guise of safety. "This policy is not about national security," says Abby Maxman of Oxfam America. "It's about sowing division and vilifying communities."

Meanwhile, the economic cost is mounting.

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, the U.S. is projected to lose \$12.5 billion in international visitor spending this year - making it the only one of 184 countries expected to see a decline in inbound tourism in 2025.

Let that sink in: while other nations are rolling out welcome mats post-pandemic, the U.S. seems to be hanging a "closed" sign.

- UK travel is down 15%.
- Germany, down 28%.
- South Korea, down 15%.
- Even Canada - the U.S.'s closest ally and tourism partner - is seeing early summer bookings fall over 20%.

And these aren't just numbers. They represent empty hotels, canceled tours, quiet restaurants, and lost jobs. In 2019, international visitors brought in

\$217 billion and supported nearly 18 million American jobs. That legacy is now at risk - not because the world no longer wants to visit, but because the U.S. is making it harder and less appealing to do so.

The Khaby Lame incident only amplifies the message. If the U.S. can't make room for a silent comedian beloved around the world, what message does that send to students, entrepreneurs, or families planning a visit?

This is more than a visa issue - it's a perception crisis. And

in global tourism, perception is currency.

Yes, domestic travel has helped the industry rebound post-COVID. But long-term growth lies in international arrivals - the very group now being discouraged, scrutinized, or shut out.

Now, as Trump-era immigration policies slam the door on entire nations and subject legitimate visitors to suspicion and harassment, no marketing campaign can mask the fallout. If America keeps signaling "you're

not welcome," it's only a matter of time before the world stops showing up - and the U.S. tourism industry collapses under the weight of its own exclusion.

Felicia J. Persaud is the publisher of NewsAmericasNow.com, a daily news outlet focused on positive news about Black immigrant communities from the Caribbean and Latin America.



FELICIA J. PERSAUD

Mothers Can't Father

Mothers are special, and children hold them near and dear to their hearts as that love is deep, lasting and unconditional. Mothers often have to raise children all by themselves, and the plight of the single mother is well known among many societies.

It's a difficult task, yet many mothers do it with grace, dignity, strength and love for the child.

And yet, in many cases somehow it doesn't turn out well for the child, especially if it's a boy, for strong though she may be, a mother cannot be a father, and boys need fathers.



TONY ROBINSON

Raising a child can be extremely challenging, extremely difficult and is no walk in the park. Having both parents is preferred, but even with that there is no guarantee. So, even when the ideal situation does not work, you can just imagine what can happen

in a less-than-ideal environment.

What happens though, when a mother takes on the role of being a father in a boy's life? Well, in a lot of situations, it turns out very badly for the son, and subsequently the mother too. Admittedly, many of these women have no choice, for many fathers become absent for various reasons.

Some mothers do not want the fathers to have any input or influence over the sons, apart from fulfilling financial obligations. And they take on the mantle of being not only a mother, but also a father.

Her influence on the boy is pervasive and as a result, because that's all that he's exposed to, it's all that he knows. He only sees things from his mother's perspective and has no testosterone feeding into him to fuel his masculinity.

I have seen young boys of age four sitting down on the toilet to pee, for that is what they were exposed to. The mother sees nothing wrong with it and accepts, if not encourages this practice, until the boy goes to the outside

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

What Every Adult and Minor Should Know About Cannabis Related Arrests and Legal Risks

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VIEWPOINT



Echoes Of Fragile Peace In A Fractured World

BY DR. ISAAC NEWTON

The world stands nauseatingly close to the edge of uncertainty. With the United States now drawn into open conflict and global powers such as China, Russia, Turkey, Pakistan, and India denouncing Israel's unprovoked strike on Iran, the delicate balance of international relations is unravelling. The Strait of Hormuz, lifeblood of global oil transport, hangs precariously as a flashpoint capable of triggering economic devastation. Iran's defiant pledge to defend its sovereign territory signals a new form of warfare shaped not only by military might but by mineral leverage, technological supremacy, shifting global mindsets, and the declining influence of the West amid the growing expansion of BRICS. Was this the mother of all miscalculations or a swift yet misguided attempt to secure peace? Only time will reveal the truths that intelligence and strategy often fail to foresee.

In the Caribbean, our collective voice has long upheld the cause of sustainable peace. We remember the wounds of colonialism and honour every nation's sacred right to exist in full sovereignty. From Antigua to Trinidad, from St. Lucia to Guyana, our shared memory resists the machinery of bloodshed and the politics of permanent conflict. We understand that when small nations are ignored, global tensions deepen. But when territorial integrity and mutual respect are protected, hope begins to flourish.

The reverberations of this conflict do not end at

missile ranges or global headlines. They reach our Caribbean shores with quiet intensity. Tourism, our economic backbone, trembles under the shadow of rising instability. Food supply chains strain beneath the weight of global uncertainty. Fuel prices flirt with dangerous volatility. Our fragile economies teeter on the brink as distant warfare ignites local vulnerabilities. This is more than a Middle Eastern crisis. It is a global reckoning. The Caribbean must respond with moral clarity, strategic unity, and regional resolve.

In this uncertain hour, we turn to the timeless wisdom of those who transformed resistance into redemption. Martin Luther King Jr. taught that peace is not merely the absence of tension but the presence of justice. Bob Marley sang of one love and liberation, reminding us that even in oppression, a people can rise with song. Desmond Tutu believed that forgiveness is a path to freedom and that peace without truth is no peace at all. Walter Rodney exposed how true liberation is born through education, consciousness, and resistance to systemic exploitation. Together, their voices remind us that waging peace means upholding justice, compassion, and dignity.

Here is our collective call to action. First, CARICOM must convene a People's Peace Table, gathering leaders, youth, scholars, and civil society to reimagine global diplomacy



Anti-war protesters in the US. (Getty Images)

through the lens of small-state wisdom and ethical dialogue. Second, we must accelerate investments in food sovereignty and energy security through intra-Caribbean innovation, reducing our vulnerability to global disruption. Third, we must empower our youth to carry the torch of nonviolence and truth through transformative education, digital diplomacy, and cultural exchange that celebrates our shared humanity over fractured histories.

May the Caribbean arise not only as a region of sun and song but as a sanctuary of moral imagination. Surely our palm trees can whisper both lullabies and principles rooted in justice. Our waves can do more than kiss the shore. They can carry the rhythm of peace into the corridors of power. As our poets, pastors, and policymakers become instruments of healing in a world aching with division, they carry our collective resolve. We must convert our shared

pain into shared purpose. Our ancestral wisdom can illuminate a path where politics have faltered. Ours is not a powerless voice. It is a prophetic one. Born of struggle. Raised in resistance. Shaped by hope. And in this moment, as the world leans toward the abyss, we can become the chorus that composes a new dawn and the movement that transforms its melody into lasting peace.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Isaac Newton, a Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia-trained change management expert and development consultant, has spent over 30 years working with leaders across the Global South to align moral vision with practical transformation. He is the author of over five books and recently coauthored Steps to Good Governance, a timely guide for ethical and effective public leadership.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



Mothers Can't Father

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

world and observes how other boys and men pee standing up.

The issue of 'sissyfying' and marginalizing our boys has been a burning one for many years now. One area that contributes to this is the spoiling of the boys - spoilt rotten is the term. Many mothers spoil their sons and allow them to get away with everything. When he becomes out of control, the usual response is: "Oh, I just can't manage him."

That boy grows up with a feeling of entitlement, as the mother keeps on giving him everything that he wants, everything that he asks for, and she never says no to his unquenchable demands. If the father dares to step in to offer any influence or advice, he is cursed and chased away.

There is the story of the criminal who was about to be hanged, and his last request was that his mother come near so that he could tell her something. When she did so, he bit off her ear and said: "If you had brought me up the proper way I would not be in this situation."

So, many of those boys grow up with a warped view of reality, thinking that the world owes them



and should always give them what they want. They take this attitude way up into adulthood, still expecting to be pampered and facilitated by their mother.

It manifests itself in the boy's attitude towards life. He jumps from one school to the next, always blaming the institutions for his behavior. He tries everything, never settling down on anyone, always changing jobs and blaming

the boss, for the world is to blame and not his mother who keeps on defending his behavior.

Many mothers treat their sons differently than they do with their daughters, resulting in the girls being more rounded and ambitious than the boys. Our tertiary institutions reflect this, as the ratio of girls to boys in our universities is three to one.

Why do so many women treat their sons differently than they do their daughters? Sometimes they treat their sons almost like lovers, to fill the gap of the absent father. But mothers can't father.

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 seidoIyard@gmail.com for feedback.



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JAMAICA FAST FACTS

ORIGINS

The first known inhabitants of Jamaica were the Arawaks (Tainos), who arrived from South America over 2,500 years ago. They named the island "Xaymaca," meaning "Land of Wood and Water." The Arawaks lived off fishing, farming, and hunting until their population was wiped out following Spanish colonization.

COLUMBUS ARRIVES

In 1494, Christopher Columbus landed in Jamaica during his second voyage to the Americas. Hoping to find gold, Columbus encountered resistance from the Arawaks but eventually claimed the island for Spain.

SPANISH RULE

Spain established Jamaica as a colony in 1509, with settlements such as Sevilla La Nueva and later Spanish Town. The island remained underdeveloped, serving mostly as a supply base. Diseases and mistreatment led to the extinction of the Arawaks.

ENGLISH CONQUEST

In 1655, the British captured Jamaica from Spain. Freed Spanish slaves and their descendants, known as the Maroons, settled in the island's mountains and resisted British control.

PIRATES & PORT ROYAL

Jamaica became a pirate haven, with Port Royal dubbed the "richest and wickedest city in the world" before being destroyed by a major earthquake in 1692.

SLAVERY & THE SUGAR BOOM

Jamaica's economy thrived on sugar plantations powered by enslaved Africans. The harsh system sparked frequent rebellions, including the 1831 Christmas Rebellion led by National Hero Sam Sharpe.

THE MAROONS & FREEDOM

After Maroon Wars, peace treaties were signed, granting the Maroons land and rights as free men. Slavery was abolished in 1838, following decades of activism.

THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

Jamaica faced economic and social struggles post-slavery. Leaders like Sir Alexander Bustamante (JLP) and Norman Manley (PNP) fought for political reform. Jamaica gained independence on August 6, 1962.

TODAY

Jamaica's 1962 Constitution guarantees freedom, rights, and justice for all, shaping the nation's vibrant identity rooted in resilience, culture, and unity.

Emancipation In Jamaica: A Complex Legacy

When full Emancipation came to Jamaica in 1838, it marked the legal end of slavery, but not true freedom for many. The plantation system, social hierarchy, and racial inequalities remained firmly in place. Planters, though forced to free enslaved Africans, received £20 million in compensation for their "lost



Abolition of slavery proclaimed from the steps of Old King's House, Spanish Town by Governor Sir Lionel Smith on August 1, 1838. This contemporary lithograph was used on the 6d stamp in the Jamaica Tercentenary Commemoratives, 1955. (Photo of the Jamaica Tourist Board in collection of the Institute of Jamaica.)

property," while the newly freed had little support to build independent lives.

Ex-slaves recognized that Emancipation in 1834 - the start of the apprenticeship period - did not mean true freedom. Their skepticism lingered until 1838 when full legal freedom was granted - but even then, opportunities were limited by high land prices, low wages, and discriminatory laws.

The planter class, backed by British authorities, aimed to keep ex-slaves as a plantation labor force. Racism, once veiled by slavery, became an open tool of social control. Freedom was interpreted differently: for the elite, it meant the right to maintain order; for the masses, it symbolized the struggle for land, rights, and dignity.

Over time, religion and education offered some avenues for advancement. Churches played a dual role, providing education while subtly reinforcing social

order. Some saw education as spoiling labor; others saw it as a pathway to a black middle class.

By the late 19th century, debates about Emancipation continued. Black leaders like Theophilus Scholes highlighted how economic hardship, landlessness, and racial barriers undermined the promise of freedom. Meanwhile, "creole nationalism," dominated by mixed-race elites, often excluded the black majority's aspirations.

For many, true Emancipation remained incomplete - a legal milestone overshadowed by ongoing inequality. Yet, resistance endured. Whether through migration to upland areas, cultural expression like Bruckins dances, or political organizing, Jamaicans have continually challenged the unfinished legacy of Emancipation.

The Birth of a Nation – Jamaica's Independence

In February 1962, Jamaica's

Legislature approved a new Constitution, setting the stage for the island's journey to full independence. Premier Norman Manley called for General Elections, which were held in April of that year.

Alexander Bustamante emerged victorious and became Jamaica's first Prime Minister, leading the nation into a new era. On August 6, 1962, Jamaica officially gained Independence and joined the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Independence meant that Britain no longer governed Jamaica's internal affairs. That responsibility now rested with the Jamaican people, led by their elected Prime Minister and Cabinet. As a sovereign nation, Jamaica established its own Constitution, national symbols, emblems, military, currency, and passports.

Jamaica's independence also gave the country the authority to appoint Ambassadors and participate fully in global affairs. Jamaican representatives can now sign treaties and engage in international organizations, ensuring the country has an equal voice in global trade, policies, and agreements.

Each year on August 6, Jamaicans proudly celebrate Independence Day, marking the island's freedom from British rule and recognizing those who contributed to the nation's self-governance.

- *Rewritten from JIS News*



Jamaica's National Heritage: Historic Sites

Jamaica's rich heritage is a vibrant tapestry woven from the many cultures that have shaped the island throughout its history. Preserving this legacy for current and future generations is the responsibility of the Jamaica

National Heritage Trust, (JNHT). The Trust safeguards historic sites, monuments, and structures that bear witness to significant milestones in the nation's story. Here is a selection of Jamaica's national heritage sites, organized

by parish, highlighting places of historical importance, including landmarks connected to National Heroes, historic churches, and educational institutions that have contributed to Jamaica's development:

Heritage Sites By Parish

- Clarendon
- Hanover
- Kingston
- Manchester
- Portland
- St. Andrew
- St. Ann
- St. Catherine
- St. Elizabeth
- St. James
- St. Mary
- St. Thomas
- Trelawny
- Westmoreland

Heritage Sites Associated With National Heroes

- Blenheim, Hanover – Birthplace of National Hero Sir Alexander Bustamante
- Gordon House, St. Andrew – Seat of Jamaica's Parliament
- Roxborough, Manchester – Birthplace of National Hero Norman Manley
- Moore Town, Portland – Historic Maroon community
- 32 Market Street, St. Ann – Birthplace of National Hero Marcus Garvey
- Sam Sharpe Square, St. James – Honoring National Hero Sam



The Ward Theatre in Kingston. (JIS News)

Sharpe
• Accompong, St. Elizabeth – Historic Maroon settlement

Historic Churches

- St. Peter's Church, Clarendon
- Coke Methodist Church, Kingston
- St. Mark's Anglican Church, Manchester
- St. George's Anglican Church, Portland
- St. Andrew Parish Church, St. Andrew
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Ann
- Mount Nebo Baptist Church, St. Catherine

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The Jamaican American Population In The US Diaspora

Jamaican Americans represent a vibrant and growing segment of the U.S. Diaspora population, with over 1.5 million people of Jamaican descent living across the country. The community's significant expansion began in the mid-20th century, particularly after the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which eliminated restrictive quotas and opened new opportunities for migration.

Many Jamaican immigrants have settled along the Eastern Seaboard, with the largest populations concentrated in New York and Florida.

Fast Facts on Jamaican Americans:

Population:
The 2020 U.S. Census reported over 1 million Jamaican Americans residing in the United States.



Top States:

New York and Florida hold the largest Jamaican populations, followed by New Jersey, Georgia, and Connecticut.

Migration History:

Jamaican migration to the U.S. dates back over a century, with early waves following the Spanish-American War. Many Jamaicans also worked on the Panama Canal project before relocating to the U.S.

New York Connection:

New York City, especially Brooklyn, is home to one of the

largest West Indian communities in the country, with Jamaicans making up a significant portion.

Recent Immigration Trends:

In 2023 alone, 20,200 Jamaicans became naturalized U.S. citizens, according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

The Jamaican American community continues to play an integral role in American society, contributing to culture, business, education, and public service across the nation.



Did You Know? ~ Returning To Live Permanently In Jamaica

The Government of Jamaica values its people as its most important asset and encourages Jamaicans abroad to return home to live, work, invest, retire, and raise families. To ease this transition, special provisions exist for Returning Residents who have lived overseas for at least three consecutive years.

Returning Residents can bring personal and household items, along with tools of trade, duty-free. Motor vehicles, however, are subject to different importation rules. Eligible students and deported individuals may also qualify for these concessions. It's important to note that these benefits can only be accessed once per person.

Additional support is available through the Returning Residents Programme, which offers guidance on resettlement, safety, and available government services. Returning Residents are encouraged to consult the Returning Citizens Information Guide and Safety Handbook, available online at mfaft.gov.jm. To qualify, you must:

- Be a Jamaican national aged 18 or older
- Have lived abroad for at least three consecutive years

- Be returning to reside permanently in Jamaica
- Special cases include:
- Non-Jamaican spouses of eligible Returning Residents
 - Students aged 18+ who studied abroad for over one year
 - Former Jamaican citizens who can prove their previous status

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Consular Affairs Department provides key support to Returning Residents, assisting with resettlement, liaising with other ministries, and offering vital information on procedures such as customs, investment opportunities, and motor vehicle policies.

Jamaican citizenship offers numerous advantages, including access to a Jamaican passport, the ability to work without a permit, vote, receive social benefits, and register a non-Jamaican spouse as a citizen. Jamaica accepts dual nationality, though individuals should check their home country's policies.

For more information on Returning Resident status, benefits, and required documentation, visit: <https://mfaft.gov.jm/ja/returning-to-permanently-reside-jamaica/>



Jamaica's National Heritage: Historic Sites

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2B)

- Salter's Hill Baptist Church, St. James
- Annotto Bay Baptist Church, St. Mary
- St. Thomas Parish Church, St. Thomas
- Falmouth Parish Church, Trelawny

- Savanna-la-Mar Baptist Church, Westmoreland

Historic Schools

- Northern Caribbean University, Manchester
- Jamaica College, St. Andrew
- Mico College, St. Andrew
- Munro College, St. Elizabeth
- Hampton School, St. Elizabeth

- Manning's High School, Westmoreland

These sites represent just a glimpse into Jamaica's enduring heritage, safeguarded by the JNHT to educate, inspire, and preserve the nation's cultural legacy.



American Airlines Partners With Glasswing International



Jamaica's Deputy Director of Tourism, Philip Rose (center) poses with American Airlines and Glasswing International volunteers at St. James High School in Montego Bay on June 25, 2025.

In collaboration with non-profit Glasswing International, more than 40 American Airlines team members recently worked to restore the school's sports fields to enhance the holistic learning experience for the school's 1,785 students and 118 teachers – boosting morale, promoting academic achievement, and creating a more dynamic and supportive environment for growth.

"This collaboration between American Airlines and Glasswing International

exemplifies the power of partnership in uplifting our communities," said Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett. "By investing in our youth and educational spaces, we are not only enhancing school life but also nurturing the next generation of Jamaican leaders and athletes. We are deeply grateful for this meaningful contribution to St. James High School and the broader Montego Bay community."

"At American Airlines

we have a strong commitment with Jamaica, a country that we have proudly called home for almost 50 years," said José A. Freig, Vice President of International and Inflight Dining Operations. Beyond its physical impact, the revitalized sports area is also expected to help improve student engagement, reduce dropout rates, and enhance overall school attendance - providing a home advantage for student-athletes and a renewed sense of school spirit.

"At Glasswing, we believe in the transformative power of community partnerships. This project in Jamaica is a meaningful opportunity to strengthen educational and wellness spaces, while working hand in hand with volunteers, partners, and communities committed to creating change. We are honored to collaborate with American Airlines in this effort to generate lasting impact in the lives of children

and youth across the region," said Chris Martínez, Regional Projects Director, Glasswing International.

This summer, American is operating 15 peak daily

flights from three destinations in Jamaica – Kingston, (KIN), Montego Bay, (MBJ) and Ocho Rios, (OCJ) - increasing to 20 peak daily flights in winter.



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Celebrating Jamaica at 63

Jamaica Targets Global Investment Leadership With Garmex Free Zone Expansion

Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness says the Jamaican government is committed to positioning the country as a global leader in logistics, manufacturing, and investment.

Speaking at the official opening of the first phase of the Garmex Free Zone Redevelopment and Expansion project, Holness emphasized Jamaica's growing role in the industrial and investment sectors.

"Nearly five decades ago, the Garmex Free Zone was established, and since then, it has been a cornerstone of Jamaica's industrial development," Holness said. "It has created thousands of jobs, particularly in the 1980s and early 1990s, when it employed over 12,000 Jamaicans at its peak."

The redevelopment project,

fully funded by the Factories Corporation of Jamaica (FCJ), is designed to expand Jamaica's capacity for manufacturing, logistics, warehousing, and other commercial activities.

Phase one, completed at a cost of J\$1.1 billion (US\$7 million), features 31 new units, including 22 mini warehouses for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, six mixed-use spaces, and three large warehouses, occupying 126,000 square feet.

Holness described the project as a signal of Jamaica's ambition to become a preferred destination for investment. "This complex has evolved into the most diverse free zone in Jamaica and the largest commercial industrial complex on the island," he noted.



Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness.

FCJ Chairman Lyttleton Shirley reported that the upgraded facilities have

generated nearly J\$200 million in annual revenue over two years. Work has already begun

on phase two, which will develop 5.7 acres of land for further expansion.

Phases three and four will include additional warehouses, commercial buildings, and modernization of older structures, incorporating sustainable practices such as solar energy and water harvesting.

Local Government Minister Desmond McKenzie welcomed the project, highlighting its economic and social benefits for Kingston Western residents. "This development will have a lasting impact on the community and surrounding areas," he said.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



Former Jamaican Ambassador Unveils 8-Point Plan For Stronger Jamaica-Diaspora Engagement

Former Jamaican born, US-based ambassador, Curtis Ward, has called for sweeping reforms to Jamaica's diaspora engagement strategy, presenting an eight-point action plan during the Jamaica Diaspora United Kingdom, (JDUK), 8th Biennial Conference in London on June 14th.

Speaking virtually to an audience eager for change, Ambassador Ward criticized the current Global Jamaica Diaspora Council, (GJDC), labelling it a government-controlled body lacking genuine consultation with the diaspora. "The GJDC,

chaired by the foreign minister, by its very nature, cannot be an appropriate entity for effective engagement," he declared.

Reflecting on the first Jamaica Diaspora Conference held in 2004, Ward noted that the original event was rooted in a consultative partnership between the government and diaspora members, unlike what he described as today's trade-show-style conferences that prioritize private sector interests over diaspora voices.

"The time for recognizing the true economic impact of diaspora remittances on

Jamaica's survival - and giving the diaspora the respect it deserves - must drive the policies of both major political parties," Ambassador Ward asserted. He urged the JDUK and wider Diaspora to lead the charge for change, especially with Jamaica's general election approaching. His eight-point plan calls for:

- Real Representation in Governance: Diaspora members must play a genuine role in shaping Jamaica's future, rejecting the status quo of symbolic involvement.



Former Jamaican born, US-based ambassador, Curtis Ward. (Contributed image)

- End Border Discrimination: Jamaicans in the diaspora, regardless of their travel documents, must be treated as citizens, not foreigners, upon entry.
- Diaspora Voices in the Senate: Both political parties should commit to appointing diaspora representatives to the Jamaican Senate to advocate for overseas Jamaicans.
- Board Representation: Jamaicans abroad should serve on statutory boards, with technology enabling virtual participation in governance.
- Tapping Diaspora Expertise: Government agencies like JAMPRO and the Jamaica Tourist Board should prioritize diaspora talent for contracts and services abroad.
- Full Ministry of Diaspora Affairs: Jamaica needs a dedicated ministry with strong representation at embassies and consulates globally, reflecting the diaspora's economic contribution through remittances.
- Diaspora Investment Bond: Establish a long-promised bond to mobilize diaspora capital

- for critical sectors like health, education, agriculture, and small business development.
- Utilize Specialized Diaspora Talent: Engage diaspora experts in areas such as national security, intelligence, and other specialized fields.

Ambassador Ward cautioned the diaspora not to rely on the government to voluntarily enact these reforms, stating: "The changes required for effective engagement will only happen if the diaspora takes charge of its own destiny."

He emphasized that many of these proposals are not new but have been stalled by government inaction and insufficient diaspora advocacy. "A new level of diaspora leadership and advocacy is urgently needed," Ward concluded.

The conference theme, "Continuity and Change," reflected the growing call for a reset in how Jamaica engages with its global diaspora, which contributes significantly through remittances but remains underrepresented in national decision-making.



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Celebrating Jamaica at 63

Famous Jamaicans In US History

Jamaican immigrants have played pivotal roles in history, culture, politics, and activism, leaving an enduring legacy in the United States and beyond. Here are some of the most influential historical figures of Jamaican descent:

Marcus Mosiah Garvey
Marcus Garvey, born in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica,



was a visionary political activist and founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Through the UNIA, Garvey championed Black pride, economic empowerment, and unity. He also declared himself the Provisional President of Africa and led the global "Back to

Africa" movement, inspiring generations of Pan-Africanists and civil rights leaders.

John Brown Russwurm
Born in Jamaica in 1799 to an English father and an enslaved mother, Russwurm



migrated to the U.S. as a child, becoming the first Black graduate of Bowdoin College. He co-founded Freedom's Journal, the first African American-owned newspaper, advocating for abolition and Black rights. Later, he moved to Liberia, where he served as Governor of the Maryland Colony in Africa, promoting self-governance for freed Black people.

Claude McKay
A towering figure in the Harlem Renaissance, Claude McKay was born in Clarendon, Jamaica, in 1890. His poetry and novels, including *If*



We Must Die and *Home to Harlem*, challenged racism and highlighted the Black struggle for dignity and equality. McKay's political journey included encounters with socialism, Pan-Africanism, and civil rights movements. His literary works remain central to Black literature and resistance.

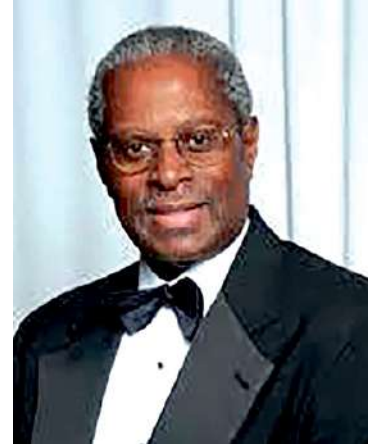
Joel Augustus Rogers
J.A. Rogers, born in Negril, Jamaica, in 1880, was a pioneering historian, author, and journalist. Through extensive research, Rogers



challenged racist ideologies and celebrated the achievements of Africans and people of African descent worldwide. His books, including *World's Great Men of Color*, helped popularize African and African American history, influencing scholars and activists alike.

Walt W. Braithwaite
Walt W. Braithwaite was born in Kingston, Jamaica, in January 1945, is a Jamaican American engineer who became one of Boeing's most influential executives. Best known for his leadership in advancing computer-aided design (CAD), computer-aided manufacturing (CAM), and IGES technology,

Braithwaite played a critical role in transforming Boeing's engineering processes. In 2000, he made history as Boeing's President for Africa. His achievements earned him the Black Engineer of the Year and Pathfinder Awards. Today, the Walt W. Braithwaite Legacy



Award recognizes his lasting impact on STEM innovation and diversity.

These trailblazers exemplify the enduring impact of Jamaican Americans in shaping social justice, literature, and global Black identity. Their legacies continue to inspire future generations.



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Celebrating Jamaica at 63

Jamaica's New OAS Ambassador Presents Credentials In Washington



Jamaica's new Permanent Representative, Antony Anderson, has officially presented his credentials to OAS Secretary General Albert Ramdin. (OAS image)

The Organization of American States, (OAS) has announced that Jamaica's new Permanent Representative, Antony Anderson, has officially presented his credentials to OAS Secretary General Albert Ramdin.

Speaking during a ceremony at OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C., Ambassador Anderson emphasized Jamaica's commitment to regional collaboration. "I look forward to working with you, Secretary

General, in achieving our shared development goals for a peaceful, stable, and prosperous hemisphere," Anderson stated.

He underscored Jamaica's belief in the importance of multilateral cooperation, particularly in areas such as socio-economic development, security, democracy, and human rights.

The OAS noted that Ambassador Anderson reaffirmed Jamaica's strong commitment to the principles

of the OAS Charter and its active engagement in advancing sustainable development, democracy, human rights protection, and citizen security across the region.

Secretary General Ramdin praised Jamaica's longstanding contributions to the Inter-American system, noting that Jamaican diplomats and legal experts have helped shape its foundations and vision for inclusive, sustainable development.

"Jamaica has consistently amplified the concerns of small island developing states, especially in matters of security, sustainable growth, and climate resilience," Ramdin said. He welcomed Anderson's leadership, expressing confidence that his experience would greatly benefit the organization.

Jamaica has been an OAS member since 1969, among the first Caribbean nations to join the hemispheric body.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



Jamaican Company Completes Landmark Psilocybin Export

Rose Hill Apothecary, a Jamaican pioneer in psychedelic cultivation and research, has completed its first major international export - 18 kilograms of dried psilocybin mushrooms shipped to Brazil.

The historic agreement with Biocase Brasil Importação e Comércio de Medicamentos marks a significant milestone for Jamaica's legal psilocybin industry. While magic mushrooms are permitted in Jamaica, they remain strictly prohibited in most countries, classified similarly to hard drugs.

The shipment underwent comprehensive testing by ACS Laboratory in Florida, ensuring it met stringent international standards for safety, potency, and quality — requirements that are increasingly critical as global interest in psychedelics grows.

"This achievement reflects the expertise Rose Hill brings to the global psychedelics space," said

Charles Lazarus, CEO of Rose Hill Apothecary. "From advanced cultivation to rigorous testing and navigating complex international regulations, we are setting new benchmarks for the industry."

Rose Hill's partnership with Biocase aligns with Brazil's evolving regulatory approach to psychedelics, strengthening Jamaica's position as a leader in legal psychedelic innovation. The company operates facilities in Jamaica, the US, and Canada, providing both therapeutic retreats and clinical-grade research material.

"This milestone reflects our operational excellence and commitment to advancing safe, high-quality psychedelic therapies worldwide," added Rose Hill COO Domenic Suppa.

- *Rewritten from Loop Caribbean*



South Florida Teen Launches 9th Annual "Gift An Education" Campaign To Support Youth In Jamaica

At just 17 years old, Miami Palmetto Senior High student-athlete Kingston Marley is proving that youth can drive real change. The South Florida teen and proud Jamaican descendant has officially kicked off the 9th annual Gift an Education fundraiser through his youth-led nonprofit, Children for Change, aimed at breaking down barriers to education for underserved students in Jamaica.

Marley first launched the initiative at just nine years old, after visiting Jamaica and witnessing firsthand the challenges students face due to the high cost of textbooks—essential for learning but not provided for free in Jamaica's public schools. Deeply impacted by the experience, Marley returned home determined to help.

"Every kid deserves a fair shot," said Marley. "It starts with having the basics - like the books you need to actually learn." Since its inception, Children for Change has provided thousands of workbooks (commonly called textbooks in Jamaica) to students in need, ensuring access to critical learning materials. This year's Gift an Education campaign is part of a growing slate of initiatives from the organization, which also includes its signature "Giveback Getaway" - a voluntourism trip that combines cultural exploration with hands-on service projects like painting schools, planting food gardens, and community cleanups. "It's a vacation with purpose," Marley explained. "You're not just going to Jamaica - you're connecting with the people and



Miami Palmetto Senior High student-athlete and Children for Change is a youth-led non-profit organization founder, Kingston Marley.

giving back while you're there."

New this summer, Children for Change is also launching a high school internship program, giving local students the opportunity to earn community service hours, gain nonprofit experience, and enhance their college applications. As a student balancing academics, sports, and service himself, Marley hopes to inspire other teens to lead by example.

"You're never too young or too busy to make a difference," he emphasized.

Community members are encouraged to support the campaign by donating, joining the Giveback Getaway, or volunteering. Founded in 2016 by Kingston Marley, Children for Change is a youth-led non-profit organization focused on educating, elevating, and empowering the youth of Jamaica. Through textbook distributions, community service programs, and cultural exchanges like the Giveback Getaway, the organization works to create equal access to education and opportunities for Jamaican students.

To learn more, visit: children4change.com.



Georgia Honors Heaped On Veteran Jamaican Actor Glen Campbell

BY DERRICK SCOTT

"Glen Campbell Day" and the man himself were the toast of DeKalb County in Atlanta Georgia in May, to honor renowned Jamaican actor and comedian Glen Campbell, O.D.

A second proclamation - compliments of the Georgia State Senate - recognized Campbell's exceptional artistic achievements and cultural impact. The accolades heaped on the veteran Jamaican actor marked a moment of pride for the Caribbean Diaspora and supporters of Jamaican theatre and coincided with Campbell's jubilant recent visit to the Peach State recently.

Campbell was in Atlanta to lead the cast of the acclaimed stage play "Room 513" on Sunday, May 25, at Shiloh High School in Lithonia. The performances were met with enthusiastic acclaim, highlighting Campbell's enduring appeal and the strong support for Jamaican theatre abroad.

With an illustrious career spanning over four decades, Campbell was presented with the official DeKalb County Proclamation at a private reception in Atlanta, hosted in his honor by Gail Dunwell. The event was attended by close friends, patrons of the arts, and members of the Jamaican American community. The proclamation was formally presented by fellow Jamaican,



Veteran Jamaican Actor Glen Campbell right listens attentively as Jamaica's forma honorary council to Atlanta and Georgia Superior Court Judge, Hon. Jewell Scott, Esq reads Georgia State Senate proclamation recognizing Mr. Campbell's exceptional cultural impact during a presentation after his performance of his acclaimed stage play "Room 513" on Sunday, May 25, at Shiloh High School in Lithonia. Looking on are members of the cast.

Professor Dr. Conrad Ingram, on behalf of DeKalb County Commissioner Dr. Ladena Bolton, acknowledging Campbell's outstanding contributions to the performing arts and his role as a cultural ambassador for Jamaica.

Meanwhile, the Georgia State Senate proclamation recognizing Mr. Campbell's exceptional cultural impact was presented by fellow Jamaican and Georgia Superior Court Judge, Jewell Scott, Esq., underscoring the significance of Campbell's work beyond entertainment - as a figure of inspiration and cultural preservation.

The celebrations continued with a special award presented by the Jamaican Museum and Cultural Center, (JMCC) in Atlanta. The award recognized Campbell's 44 years of excellence in Jamaican theatre

and comedy. The presentation was made by Dr. Apolone Reid, President of the JMCC, who praised Campbell for his lifelong dedication to enriching Jamaican culture and uplifting audiences around the world.

Campbell, best known for his comedic genius and dynamic stage presence, expressed deep gratitude for the honors, noting the importance of cultural legacy and the continued support of the Jamaican diaspora. "It's heartwarming to see the love for Jamaican theatre alive and well so far from home," he said.

As the curtains closed on a weekend of celebration, Glen Campbell's impact was made unmistakably clear - not just as a talented performer, but as a beloved cultural icon whose influence continues to resonate across generations and borders.



Celebrating Jamaica at 63

DIASPORA EVENTS TO HONOR THE 63rd INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY

Jamaica Independence Festival Set For Wynwood

South Florida's Jamaican community and lovers of Caribbean culture will come together to celebrate Jamaica's 63rd year of independence during the Jamaica Independence Festival, set for Sunday, August 3, 2025, in the heart of Wynwood.

Presented by Mix Media Entertainment, the vibrant celebration will run from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM at 2129 NW 1st Court, transforming the popular Wynwood neighborhood into a hub of Jamaican culture, music, and cuisine.

The festival invites attendees to experience the rich traditions and flavors of the island, with a lively evening of island-inspired food, live entertainment, and cultural festivities.

Held in recognition of Jamaica's 63rd Independence anniversary, the event promises an authentic celebration of national pride, music, and community spirit.

Additional details, including the entertainment lineup and special programming, will be announced closer to the date. Organizers encourage attendees to save the date and prepare for an unforgettable celebration of Jamaican heritage in Miami's cultural district.

Palm Beach Jamaica Independence Festival Returns

Get ready for a full day of Caribbean culture, music, food, and family fun at the Palm Beach Jamaica Independence Festival, happening Saturday, August 2, from noon to 10 p.m. at John Prince Park in Lake Worth, Florida.

The highly anticipated annual festival will celebrate Jamaica's 63rd year of independence with an action-packed lineup of entertainment for all ages, headlined by international music stars, vibrant cultural displays, and traditional Caribbean games and competitions.

This year's concert experience features reggae royalty and global talent, including R&B-Reggae fusion singer Da'Ville, iconic dancehall hitmaker Wayne Wonder, and the legendary reggae group Inner Circle, known as the "Bad Boys of Reggae." Festivalgoers will also enjoy performances by steelpan ensemble Chambah and The Silver Birds Orchestra, Jamaican poet Amazyah the Great, gospel reggae artist Brother Gary, and DJ Scorpion spinning classic Jamaican festival anthems.

Beyond the music, the festival showcases the rich diversity of Caribbean culture with the Miss Palm Beach Cultural Pageant, powered by Osborne & Francis Law Firm. Six cultural ambassadors representing various nations will compete for the title of Cultural

Queen in categories including swimwear, traditional attire, talent, and a question-and-answer segment.

Dominoes fans can cheer on players from five South Florida cities and beyond as they compete in the Dominoes Tournament, battling for the coveted Palm Beach Independence Trophy and bragging rights.

For food lovers, the highly anticipated Celebrity Jerk Chicken Cook-Off will see two local personalities go head-to-head in a fiery culinary showdown, with attendees and a guest panel deciding the winner.

Families are encouraged to bring the kids and enjoy classic outdoor games like sack races, lime and spoon relays, and a bun-eating contest. The Kids Zone will feature bounce houses, games, and a special Tech Tent, offering interactive virtual experiences, digital explorations of Jamaica, and music-based activities for young attendees.

Pre-sale general admission tickets are \$40 (\$50 at the gate), with pre-sale VIP access at \$80 (\$100 at the gate). Children under 12 enter free. For tickets and more information, visit pbjamminfest.com or get tickets directly at Eventbrite.

Jamaica Organization Of New Jersey To Host 2025 Awards Of Excellence And Independence Gala

The Jamaica Organization of New Jersey, (JON-J) is set to host its highly anticipated Annual Awards of Excellence and Independence Gala, marking Jamaica's 63rd year of independence with an evening of cultural pride, recognition, and community unity.

The gala will take place on Saturday, July 19, 2025, from 7 PM to midnight at The Hanover Manor, located at 16 Eagle Rock Avenue in East Hanover, New Jersey. The event promises an unforgettable celebration for Jamaicans and friends of Jamaica, featuring live cultural performances, exciting door prizes, a Tricky Tray auction, and music by the renowned Massive B Sound System, ensuring an atmosphere of energy and Caribbean joy.

This year's gala will honour outstanding individuals whose work embodies service, leadership, and the enduring spirit of the Jamaican Diaspora. Among the honourees is Dr. Karren Dunkley, OD, an esteemed educator and visionary, who will also deliver the keynote address for the evening. Dr. Dunkley will be recognized alongside Lynval James, Jacqueline Lewis, and



Elaine Matthews, each celebrated for their advocacy, mentorship, humanitarian contributions, and unwavering dedication to uplifting communities both in the United States and Jamaica.

"We are thrilled to shine a spotlight on these outstanding individuals who exemplify the very best of our culture and our values, as we raise funds for our charitable efforts," said Valerie Bailey, Esq., President of the JON-J Board of Trustees. "Their dedication to service, both here and in Jamaica, reminds us that wherever we are in the world, we carry the heart of our homeland with us and can make a difference."

The gala is more than just a night of festivities - it serves as a critical fundraising event for JON-J's ongoing charitable initiatives, which include disaster relief

efforts in both the Caribbean and New Jersey, scholarships for local youth, support for food pantries, and providing aid to underserved schools across Jamaica.

The wider community is warmly invited to attend, celebrate Jamaican heritage, and contribute to programs that foster opportunity, resilience, and unity. Tickets are now available, and early reservations are encouraged as space is limited. For tickets and more information, visit jonj.org.

New York To Celebrate Jamaica's Independence With Gala And People's Ball

New York's vibrant Jamaican community will come together this August for two major events commemorating Jamaica's 63rd year of independence.

The annual Jamaica Independence Gala, a prestigious black-tie affair, is set for Saturday, August 23, 2025, at the New York Marriott Marquis in Times Square. Hosted by the Consulate General of Jamaica in New York, the gala honors distinguished individuals for their contributions to Jamaica's heritage, culture, and progress.

In addition to recognizing outstanding achievers, the gala supports vital charitable

initiatives in Jamaica, including scholarships, healthcare, and youth development programs. The evening will feature live entertainment, fine dining, and cultural tributes, drawing dignitaries, business leaders, and members of the Jamaican diaspora from across the United States.

Ahead of the formal gala, the community will celebrate with The Official People's Ball, organized by the Jamaica Independence Foundation, Inc. This lively event, scheduled for Saturday, August 9, 2025, in Queens, New York, offers an opportunity for Jamaicans of all ages to unite in pride and festivity.

The People's Ball is known for its dynamic live performances, awards presentations, and a silent auction supporting community programs, according to organizers at jifnyc.org.

Both events serve as highlights for Jamaicans in the Tri-State area, showcasing the island's rich culture, musical talent, and community spirit while raising funds for impactful causes. Together, they reflect the resilience, unity, and achievements of Jamaicans at home and abroad.



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Celebrating Jamaica at 63

Jamaica's Ambassador Lauds Atlanta-Based Integrity Children's

Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States, Major General (Ret'd) Antony Anderson, has lauded the Atlanta-based Integrity Children's Fund for its contribution to the education and development of at-risk children.

He delivered a compelling keynote address at the Integrity Children's Fund Gala on June 21st, hosted at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis under the theme "an evening of glamour for education" – celebrating more than 20 years of diaspora-driven impact, positioning Jamaica as a regional leader in education reform and innovation.

Ambassador Anderson praised the Integrity Children's Fund for its enduring commitment to education, describing it as a case where "conviction meets compassion and action follows intention." Since its establishment in 2002, the Atlanta-based nonprofit has disbursed approximately USD1.2 million, supporting up to 600 students annually and impacting more than 8,000 lives across Jamaica and among immigrant families in metropolitan Atlanta.

Strategic Partnership In Action
The Integrity Children's Fund was founded by a team of visionary Jamaicans led by

Major (Ret'd) Karl Chambers. Through strategic partnerships with schools and community organizations - from Kingston's Jones Town Learning Center to Operation Restoration Christian School in Trench Town, and innovative programs in Trelawny and Montego Bay - the Fund has cultivated a robust network of educational excellence.

The Integrity Children's Fund serves as a model of how focused Diaspora engagement can drive sustainable national progress. Its annual contribution of over USD70,000 does more than fund programs - it builds capacity, creates opportunity, and fosters systemic change.

From its humble beginnings supporting a single school, the organization has grown into a sophisticated educational network studied by other Caribbean nations seeking to replicate its success.

The Gala marked not only a celebration of two decades of achievement but also a recommitment to a shared vision of a Jamaica where every child has the opportunity to succeed - fuelled by global partnerships, national pride, and transformative education.

One significant feature of the gala was the recognition of outstanding Jamaicans for



Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States, Major General (Ret'd) Antony Anderson (third from left), shares a light moment with from left-r: President of the Integrity Children's Fund Major (Ret'd), Karl Chambers, Marcia Chambers, 2025 honourees Executive Director of International Affairs at Atlanta Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Alrene Richards Barr, Dr. Sharon Harley, Jamaica's Consul General in Miami Oliver Mair, and Vice President of the Integrity Children's Fund, Dr Christopher Parker at the Integrity Children's Fund Gala on June 21st at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. (Photo: Derrick Scott)

their contribution in the fields of medicine, aviation and leadership. The awards were presented by Ambassador Anderson to Jamaica's Consul General in Miami, Mr. Oliver Mair, Dr. Sharon Harley

and Executive Director of International Affairs at Atlanta Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Mrs. Alrene Richards Barr. In the true spirit of commitment to this cause, patrons contributed

just over USD 35,000 at the event. The proceeds will go towards the continued funding of education projects in Jamaica and Atlanta.



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From Blasphemy To Glory: Vybz Kartel's Sudden Shift To Gospel Sparks Debate

Just weeks after being condemned for what many called blasphemous lyrics, Jamaican dancehall star Vybz Kartel has stunned fans and critics alike with the release of a gospel track titled *Glory of Jesus* - a dramatic turn from the explicit content that drew widespread backlash last month.

The former convict and newly freed artist - who once rapped about sex, violence, and even compared women's bodies to Jesus - now opens his new gospel single with a solemn prayer: "Dear Lord, I want you to use me as a vessel... to spread your word and your gospel to the ends of the world."

'*Glory of Jesus*,' a cover of a classic by the legendary Grace Thrillers, marks a bold new chapter for Kartel, born Adidja Palmer, whose life has played out like a modern-

day redemption saga. After spending 13 years behind bars for a murder conviction that was eventually overturned by the UK Privy Council in 2024, Kartel has returned to the spotlight — but not without controversy.

In May, Kartel was condemned by Guyana's Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) for the sexually explicit content in his track 'Good Like Jesus.' The ERC called the song "blasphemous and deeply offensive," urging Guyanese authorities to ban his music and demanding a public apology. The backlash also came during a storm of criticism after Kartel withdrew from a festival in Trinidad and Tobago at the last minute, despite receiving nearly US\$1 million in performance fees.

Now, Kartel's sudden shift to gospel is raising eyebrows. Is



Vybz Kartel will perform in the UK on July 13, 2025.

it a genuine spiritual awakening or a calculated pivot to rehab his image?

Speaking to the Jamaica Observer, Kartel claims his faith is real - and long-standing: "When I was in prison, I prayed

every day... I said, 'Father God, if you get me out of this situation, I'll never stop praising you.' I even have 'love God' tattooed on my face, twice."

Still, critics point to the whiplash-like shift—from

songs banned for disrespecting Christianity to full-blown gospel worship - as a confusing contradiction. Fans, however, appear more forgiving. Many have welcomed the new direction and praised Kartel's post-prison output.

As he prepares to co-headline the Wireless Festival in the UK on July 13th, alongside Drake and Burna Boy, and with a 2025 Grammy nomination under his belt for *Party With Me*, Vybz Kartel is proving once again that he can't be boxed in - whether by the justice system, public opinion, or even genre.

But for a man long defined by scandal and reinvention, the biggest question remains: Has Vybz Kartel truly found God or just another headline?

- NewsAmericasNow



'The Cool Ruler: The Musical' Eyes U.S. Tour

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

A show on the life of singer Gregory Isaacs may be 'touring' some major American cities this year. The legendary singer died 15 years ago, but his music lives on through projects like 'The Cool Ruler: The Musical,' which completed a six-show run in the United Kingdom in May and June.

The stage production — which stars Terrence Wallen as Isaacs — opened May 25th at Hackney Empire in London. It was followed by shows at Fairfield Halls in Croydon, the O2 Academy in Birmingham, and two shows at the Broadway Theatre in Catford.

June Isaacs, the artist's widow, says the next stop for 'The Cool Ruler' may be the US. "Plans are in place for it to be taken to North America, everywhere else is requesting that we come, but we can only do so many places at a time. Copeland Forbes, who is in charge of production, is negotiating right now so I will



Terrence Wallen, who plays Gregory Isaacs in *The Cool Ruler The Musical*, introduces the singer's widow June onstage during one of the production's shows in the UK. (Contributed image)

leave it to him," she said. Forbes, a veteran music industry insider who managed Peter Tosh and Jimmy Cliff, was Isaacs' manager at the time of his death

in October 2010. He passed away in London from cancer aged 60.

He told Caribbean Today that the UK shows were "an

overwhelming success" and proved that there is still a market for "authentic reggae music."

Forbes added that, "Everybody who left the venues spoke positively about the production because it brought back a lot of great memories. They love Gregory's music and that era of music."

Wallen, who was born in the UK to Jamaican parents, performed many of the songs that made Isaacs one of reggae's biggest acts in the 1970s and 1980s. They include *Slavemaster*, *Soon Forward*, *Night Nurse* and *Rumours*.

He was accompanied by a

cast of five actors and dancers and backed by the Delroy Murray Band.

The Cool Ruler: The Musical is written by Anton Phillips, a Jamaican who lives in the UK.

Gregory Isaacs was one of the most popular reggae acts in the UK during the 1980s, along with Dennis Brown and Freddie McGregor. His 1984 live album at The Academy in Brixton is rated as one of the biggest concerts by a Jamaican artist in that country.



Kingston College Choir Director And Community Leader Dies At 96

Rev. Dr. Barry Davies, the former Kingston College Chapel Choir director and a respected figure in both Jamaica and the U.S., passed away peacefully at his home in Palm Coast, Florida, on June 1, just days after celebrating his 96th birthday.

Born in Dudley, England, Davies made a lasting impact in Jamaica beginning in the 1950s, transforming the Kingston College Chapel Choir into one of the island's premier school choirs and leading them to national recognition. He also co-hosted Jamaica's beloved "Children's Corner" TV show, directed the Jamaica School of Music, and worked as a teacher, radio host, and music critic.

Davies' years in Jamaica not only built his musical legacy but led to his marriage to Jamaican-born Laodice Dooley, with whom he shared over 40 years. After leaving Jamaica in 1976, Davies continued serving Caribbean communities in the Bahamas, Atlanta, and later Florida.



Rev. Dr. Barry Davies passed away peacefully at his home in Palm Coast, Florida.

Ordained as a Presbyterian minister in the U.S., he remained active in the Jamaican diaspora, offering spiritual guidance and officiating at key events.

Honouring his wishes, there will be no formal memorial service, but friends are invited to celebrate his life informally with music and shared memories.



Legends, Global Stars And Dancehall Royalty Set For Sumfest 2025

The countdown is on to Reggae Sumfest 2025 - the Caribbean's biggest music festival. The event returns to Montego Bay, Jamaica from July 13 to 19 with a week-long celebration of Jamaican music, culture, and global talent.

Marking its 32nd year, this year's Sumfest will pay special tribute to four icons of reggae: Dennis Brown, Gregory Isaacs, Jimmy Riley, and the recently departed Cocoa Tea. The "Tribute to the Legends" segment is set for July 19th at Catherine Hall Stadium, where

the festival culminates with two massive concert nights.

The lineup is stacked with global and regional stars. Grammy-winner Toni Braxton, Ghanaian sensation Moliy, and Caribbean hitmakers Masicka, Vybz Kartel, Tarrus Riley, Protoje, Lila Ike, I Wayne, and more are confirmed. Vybz Kartel will be officially crowned "King of the Dancehall."

The festivities kick off July 13th with Family Funday, followed by the Free Street Dance, the iconic All White

Party, Blitz, and Global Fete. Expect electrifying performances, authentic Jamaican food, fashion, and high-energy entertainment all week.

Downsound Entertainment CEO Joseph Bogdanovich hinted another international act will soon be announced, promising Sumfest 2025 will be "the ultimate fusion of music, culture, and celebration."

For tickets, visit reggaesumfest.com.



New Music You Should Know

A powerful line-up of new Caribbean music has recently been released, that's sure to uplift spirits and honour Caribbean musical heritage.

From reggae and soulful rub-a-dub to high-energy dancehall, Afrobeats-infused anthems, and genre-bending innovations, Caribbean artists are bringing the heat this summer.

Leroy Sibbles Returns With A Star-Studded Reggae Compilation

Legendary reggae icon Leroy Sibbles showcases his lesser-known talent as a producer with Presenting Leroy Sibbles, a new compilation from Tad's International Record. The album features standout tracks from various artists, including "Cool Natty" by Young Garvey, the song that sparked the project. Known for his pivotal role in The Heptones and as a bass player on classics like "Skylarking" and "Door Peep," Sibbles continues to leave his mark on reggae history.

Christopher Martin's "Wife & Sweetheart" Turns Heads

Christopher Martin is back with a bold and cheeky new single, "Wife & Sweetheart,"

imagining harmony between a wife and a side partner. Produced by Chad "Mr. G" Simpson and Andrew "Buccaneer" Bradford, the song blends humour and fantasy with signature smooth vocals.

Richie Stephens Delivers Love Anthem "A Woman's Touch"

Veteran reggae singer Richie Stephens touches hearts with "A Woman's Touch," a soul-stirring rub-a-dub ballad produced by Jazzwad. It's a dedication to the women who have supported him throughout his career and a celebration of love in its purest form.

Soul-Rebel Marley Releases Second Single "Holy Father"

Carrying forward his spiritual and musical legacy, Soul-Rebel Marley follows up his debut single "Loving Jah" with the newly released "Holy Father." Out now via Tek Time Productions and Tuff Gong International, this Afrobeats-inspired track is a heartfelt prayer of gratitude and guidance. Produced by Soul-Rebel himself, the track features harmonies by his Grammy-winning mother Cedella Marley. The lyric video, now live on his YouTube channel, visually amplifies the



Veteran reggae singer Richie Stephens touches hearts with "A Woman's Touch."

song's message of faith and thankfulness. Soul-Rebel, who recently performed alongside his brother Skip Marley and has produced for Jo Mersa and Sharon Marley, continues to forge his unique path in music.

Frankie Paul Drops Only You

Also making a soulful return is Frankie Paul's 1988 Lovers Rock gem "Only You," from his album Sizzling. Backed

by reggae legends like Sly & Robbie and Jackie Mittoo, the track showcases the heartfelt vocals and lyrical charm that earned him the nickname 'Jamaica's Stevie Wonder.'

2025 Vincy Soca Comes Alive With Oxygen Riddim

Boss Raw Records presents the Oxygen Riddim, a high-energy soca juggling from producers Jayorn "Krooshal"

Richards and Rajiv "Suh Raw" Sutherland. The riddim is pure Vincy soca magic, promising to ignite parties and festivals throughout the season.

International Dancehall Juggling on "Bad Intention Riddim"

Liondub International's Bad Intention Riddim brings together a global lineup of dancehall talent, from Jamaica to the UK, US, and Canada. Highlights include tracks from Steamaz, Blakkamoore, Badda General, J Kinggz, and Capital D. This riddim proves dancehall's global reach and timeless appeal.

J8's "Turn n Twist" Celebrates Caribbean Roots and UK Fusion

UK-based J8, also known as Jacob Dwain Johnson, fuses dancehall rhythms with British energy in "Turn n Twist." Inspired by his Jamaican grandfather's reggae legacy, J8's single is gaining viral traction and stands as a testament to cultural resilience and musical fusion.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



Black Brilliance Illuminates Miami

The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau celebrates the important impact of Miami's Black-owned businesses on our community year-round. From restaurants, attractions, hotels, and more, they are essential in enriching the culture of our destination. This August, join us in celebrating how this range enhances tourist experiences, fuels economic growth, and fosters diversity and inclusion. We're proud supporters of these businesses that make our destination unique and contribute to its vibrance.

Learn more about how you can get involved this Black Business Month at MiamiBlackBusiness.com

Guyana-Born Entrepreneur Celebrates 20 Years Golden Krust Franchisee

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

Zorida Pritipal might be an entrepreneur, but she embraces philanthropy even more. Besides running four Golden Krust Caribbean Bakery restaurants in Orlando, Pritipal has donated over \$60,000 to the United Foundation of Central Florida's Scholarship program to help low-income students, especially in the Caribbean community, enroll in college.

Last month, Pritipal donated \$10,000 alone to the foundation for graduating seniors, as being a member of the organization has allowed her to make an impact on children's lives. She also runs Hero for Kids, a non-profit which raises money for school supplies and equipment for underserved kids and food during the holidays. The organization also empowers kids in the classroom, where they strive to achieve a bright future.

"Kids are near and dear to my heart," Pritipal told Caribbean Today. "Young people are the future and anything I can do to enrich their lives, I'm there."

Pritipla, 48, said the United Foundation of Central

Florida recently came through for several kids who were financially strapped for college. She said one Morehouse College student was \$500 short of earning his bachelor's degree and so she helped provide financial relief. Pritipal said he graduated with honors and is currently pursuing his master's degree.

The Guyanese immigrant said a nursing student at John Hopkins University had the same experience but now he's a few credits from earning his degree thanks to the foundation. "It's something the foundation is proud of, students going on to universities and earning their degrees," she said. "These kids are doing amazing things and without business leaders like me, this wouldn't be possible. (the) little help we give, helps the kids a lot."

Like students flourishing, Pritipal, as a Golden Krust franchisee is thriving as well. She and her husband are celebrating 20 years of ownership of the Caribbean restaurant in Orlando. The couple started out with one restaurant and now has expanded to four, serving the



Zorida Pritipal, the Guyanese-born owner of four Golden Krust restaurants and a donor to the United Foundation of Central Florida's Scholarship program.

best Caribbean cuisine including Jamaican food, Jamaican patty, and other baked goods.

Pritipla, who was born in Guyana and migrated to New York, attended college in the Big Apple to study nursing when she and her husband ate lunch at a local Golden Krust restaurant. They frequented the restaurant over the years which sparked an idea.

Pritipal said she had other plans than being a registered nurse and she and her husband decided to open up a Golden Krust franchise. But they wanted to run the franchise in Orlando. "I reached a point in my life that I wanted to be an entrepreneur and since I love Caribbean food, Golden Krust was the one," she said. "We love the brand."

Pritipal said her Golden

Krust restaurant was the first to open in Central Florida when the parent company, owned by the Hawthorne family, first started the business in 1986.

She said the Hawthorne family, which runs over 100 Golden Krust restaurants in the U.S. and beyond, made it all possible for the couple.

"They gave us a golden opportunity and it's just so amazing," she said. "We are forever indebted to them. My husband and I didn't know anything about running a restaurant, but we learned everything from them."

According to Golden Krust, Pritipal has been a dedicated community advocate, consistently providing scholarships, mentoring students, and donating meals during the annual celebration.

"Her work exemplifies the mission of Golden Krust franchisees across the country: to give back to the neighborhoods they serve in a meaningful and lasting way and bring a taste of the Caribbean to the world," the company said in a statement.



Bahamian Scorched Conch Salad

As a tribute to the people of The Bahamas as they mark their 52nd year of independence on July 10th, we feature a Saturday favorite – Bahamian Scorched Conch Salad. Here's how to make it.



INGREDIENTS

- 6 large conchs
- 1 medium tomato
- 1 medium onion
- 1 sweet pepper
- 1 chili pepper (optional)
- 2 oranges
- 1 cucumber
- 10 limes
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

- Slice the thin side of the conch meat from the fatter trunk and cut it into ¼-inch dice. Slice the trunk into strips, cut the strips in half, and cut into ¼-inch dice. Place the conch in a large glass bowl.
- Chop tomato, onion, sweet pepper, cucumber and set aside.
- Dice chili pepper and set aside.
- Peel and dice one orange and set aside.
- Juice limes
- Juice orange.
- Add all chopped and diced ingredients to bowl with conch.
- Pour in the lime and orange juice.
- Add salt and pepper to taste.
- Cover with a plastic wrap placed flush against the surface and chill for 1 hour before serving.

Bon Appetite.

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Jamaican Coco Bread

With Jamaicans set to mark their 63rd year of independence on August 6th, we feature a simple but unique Jamaican dish that is often served with the Jamaican patty. It's the unique coco bread and here's how you can easily make it and bring a taste of Jamaica to you menu this month.



INGREDIENTS

- 4½ cups all-purpose flour, divided
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2½ teaspoons quick-rise yeast
- 14 oz. coconut milk
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted

METHOD

- Mix 4 cups (500g) flour, sugar, salt and yeast together and set aside.
- Warm coconut milk until it is more than lukewarm but not too hot. You can test it on the back of your hand or use a thermometer to reach 114F/45C.
- Add 2 tablespoons (30g) of melted butter to the warm coconut milk and stir.
- Add the liquid to the dry ingredients and combine to make a soft, sticky dough.
- Flour working surface and place the dough on top.
- Knead dough, flouring the surface as needed, until dough is smooth and soft (about 10 minutes).
- Brush bowl with melted butter and place dough inside. Cover with plastic wrap or parchment paper and a damp tea towel.
- Place bowl in warm spot for 60

to 90 minutes or until it doubles in size.

- Preheat oven to 375F/180C. Roll dough and cut into smaller squares to make individual coco breads.
- Roll each square until ¼ inch (3mm) thick; brush dough with melted butter and fold over. Use a medium bowl to cut in a semi-circle.
- Repeat last step to make more; place each on parchment-lined baking sheets and brush the tops of the dough with melted butter.
- Place baking sheets in warm spot for 10 minutes so dough can rise; place sheets in oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown.

Bon Appetite.

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Trump's 'Big Beautiful Bill' Could Devastate Florida's Health Care Gains, Advocates Warn

Donald Trump's proposed "One Big Beautiful Bill" is raising alarm among Florida health care advocates, who say the sweeping legislation could quietly unravel hard-fought health care gains under the Affordable Care Act, (ACA), particularly in the Sunshine State.

While public attention has largely focused on proposed cuts to Medicaid and SNAP, (food assistance), health experts warn the bill's changes to ACA marketplace coverage could have devastating consequences for millions of Floridians.

Florida currently leads the nation in ACA I, with 4.7 million residents relying on marketplace health insurance—most with the help of advanced premium tax credits. Those subsidies make coverage affordable, with more than half of enrollees paying less than \$10 a month for health insurance, according to the latest

federal data.

But under the proposed legislation, those enhanced tax credits—expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic—would expire at year's end, and new restrictions could make ACA coverage more difficult to access.

"This time, Congress might not be calling it an outright repeal of the ACA, as it did in 2017, but a program that is inaccessible or unaffordable is as good as repeal," said Lynn Hearn, legal director for the Florida Health Justice Project.

Among the concerning changes in Trump's bill:

- Shorter open-enrollment periods
- Elimination of special enrollment for low-income individuals
- Tougher documentation requirements, including proof of citizenship and income



The Florida Health Justice Project, alongside 76 organizations across the state, sent a letter to Florida Sens. Rick Scott and Ashley Moody urging them to reject the proposed cuts to ACA coverage, Medicaid, and SNAP benefits.

"Floridians in every county across the state will experience a devastating loss of essential health care coverage and food assistance if Congress follows

through with the current proposal," the letter states.

SEIU Florida State Council President Martha Baker, a longtime nurse, emphasized that the cuts would ultimately cost more in the long run by reducing access to preventative care. "This is only going to be penny wise and dollar foolish," Baker warned.

If the enhanced tax credits expire, middle-income families

earning just above \$126,000 annually could see health insurance premiums jump by as much as \$9,000 per year, Hearn explained.

The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that while the bill has strong support among Trump's MAGA base, it faces overwhelming opposition from independents and Democrats.

Florida's health care advocates say with the state leading the nation in ACA enrollment, the impact of Trump's proposed rollback would hit Florida residents hardest - and could jeopardize affordable coverage for millions.

**Story adapted from reporting by Christine Sexton, Florida Phoenix, via Orlando Weekly.*



Confronting Caribbean Obesity With Healing And Hope

BY SUZETTE A. HENRY

Along the sun-kissed shores of the Eastern Caribbean, a silent epidemic is growing. It threatens the future of our youth and the strength of our communities. Obesity, particularly among adolescents, has surged at alarming rates. Nevis, a small but vibrant island, now bears the unfortunate distinction of having the highest per capita adolescent obesity rate in the region. According to the World Health Organization, (WHO, 2023), nearly one in three Caribbean adolescents is either overweight or obese, with Nevis reaching over 35 percent. This is a public health emergency unfolding in plain sight.

As I have journeyed across

Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Montserrat, Guyana, and the twin-island federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, my heart has been both refreshed by our cultural richness and heavy with concern. Vending stalls overflow with sugary drinks and ultra-processed snacks. Schoolyards once alive with play now show signs of inactivity. The data confirms what the eye cannot ignore. A 2022 Pan American Health Organization, (PAHO), study revealed that more than 60 percent of Caribbean adults are overweight or obese, many from as early as adolescence. This trend increases the risk for type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, infertility, and even early death.

A broader regional snapshot

further underscores the scale of this health crisis. Based on a 2019 PAHO comparative analysis, WHO Global Health Observatory data (2022), and Caribbean Public Health Agency, (CARPHA) reports, adult obesity prevalence in the Eastern Caribbean remains among the highest worldwide:

- Saint Kitts and Nevis: 45.6%
- Antigua and Barbuda: 33.3%
- Barbados: 38.0%
- Jamaica: 33.8%
- Dominica: 31.3%
- Saint Lucia: 33.5%
- Saint Vincent & the Grenadines: 33.2%

While the general Caribbean average is around 25%, several Eastern Caribbean nations now exceed 30%, and in the case of Saint Kitts and Nevis, nearly 46%. Antigua and Barbuda's prevalence of 33.3% places it in step with this concerning regional trend.

In Saint Kitts and Nevis specifically, the Global Nutrition Report 2025 reveals that 33.6% of adult women and 18.1% of adult men are living with obesity—higher than the regional average for women (30.7%) and slightly below for men (22.8%). According to the World Health Organization's Global Health Observatory, approximately 23.1% of adults in Saint Kitts and Nevis have obesity (BMI \geq 30, age-standardized), confirming a national burden in line with regional trends. Alarming, diabetes is estimated to affect 19.3% of adult women and 15.3% of adult men. Despite the growing burden of non-communicable diseases, there is still inadequate data on obesity prevalence among children under five, and no clear sign the nation is reversing these trends.

What is driving this growing health crisis? It is not only the food but the full plate of modern life. Our diets have shifted from vibrant local produce to heavily

processed imports. Physical activity has declined, replaced by screen time and sedentary habits. Aggressive marketing of unhealthy products to children and economic barriers to healthy eating further compound the problem. In Nevis, the shift from farm-fresh ground provisions to convenient processed foods, combined with the loss of active communal living, paints a picture of lifestyle disconnection and cultural drift.

Yet the roots of our healing are still present in our soil, our traditions, and our kitchens. Alternative and integrative approaches, rooted in Caribbean heritage, offer hope. Herbal remedies like moringa for metabolism, neem for blood sugar regulation, cerasee for detoxification, and turmeric for inflammation have long been used in our communities. When paired with plant-based diets rich in callaloo, breadfruit, sweet potatoes, and guava, these natural interventions can significantly improve health outcomes. A clinical trial in Barbados by Best et al. (2020) demonstrated that culturally tailored lifestyle interventions led to measurable weight loss and improved insulin sensitivity within just six months. Healing does not always come in a capsule; it often comes in a calabash.

Medically appropriate strategies must support these lifestyle shifts. School-based screening and early intervention programs, community nutrition education, regular BMI tracking, and multidisciplinary wellness clinics should be prioritized. Paediatricians, dietitians, behavioural therapists, and exercise coaches must work together with families to support sustainable change. For young people already facing obesity, early referrals and ongoing support are critical. The earlier

the intervention, the greater the chance of recovery and resilience.

The cost of inaction is far too great. Obesity burdens our healthcare systems, weakens our workforce, and shortens life expectancy. It disrupts families, fuels absenteeism in schools, and contributes to emotional distress and mental health challenges among our youth. A 2021 CARPHA report linked adolescent obesity to increased depression, social isolation, and early-onset non-communicable diseases. If left unchecked, this crisis will not only shorten lives but diminish the Caribbean's collective future.

We do not need a temporary fix. We need a movement. A movement of parents who cook from the garden, teachers who inspire active learning, churches that preach wholeness, and leaders who legislate for health equity. We must return to homegrown habits, traditional knowledge, and faith-fuelled purpose. The Caribbean's healing lies not in imported pills but in the power of our people to reclaim their health, their heritage, and their hope. Acting now, with courage and compassion, to ensure our children carry dreams and not disease is a high priority.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Suzette A. Henry, MBA, MD, PhD, is a physician, public health advocate, and long-term health executive with over 27 years of experience in clinical care, education, and leadership. She holds degrees in nursing, biomedical sciences, business administration, and medicine from SUNY Downstate, Kaplan University, and the University of Science, Arts, and Technology.

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The October issue of Caribbean Today will feature a comprehensive examination of how the healthcare industry serves the Caribbean community. With a proven track record now in our 33rd year of service to readers in the United States and the Caribbean Basin, Caribbean Today reaches an audience of over 112,000 highly qualified readers.

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US Embassy In Barbados Now Requires Social Media Disclosure For Visa Applicants

The US Embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados, has announced stricter screening rules for visa applicants, including mandatory disclosure of social media information and adjusted privacy settings.

Effective immediately, all visa applicants must list usernames or handles for every

social media platform they have used in the last five years on the DS-160 visa application form. The embassy warned that omitting this information could result in visa denial or even future ineligibility.

Additionally, individuals applying for F, M, or J non-immigrant visas - including

student and exchange visas - are now required to set all social media accounts to "public" to allow US officials to verify their identity and eligibility.

This move aligns with the US State Department's recent resumption of its previously suspended policy requiring foreign student visa applicants to

unlock social media accounts for government review.

Officials say posts or messages deemed hostile to the United States, its government, culture, or founding principles could impact an applicant's eligibility.

The embassy emphasized that these measures have been part of US policy since 2019, stating, "We use all available information in our screening to identify applicants who are inadmissible to the United States, including those posing national security risks."

The consular exchange rate is reviewed and updated periodically to align with currency market conditions and internal accounting practices. Although this rate may differ from those offered by commercial banks or the Bank of Jamaica, it establishes the official local cost for US-dollar denominated services at the embassy.

The adjustment follows continued volatility in Jamaica's foreign exchange market, with the Jamaican dollar recently trading near the newly established benchmark.

The embassy is urging individuals with appointments on or after July 1 to take the revised rate into account when preparing for payment. Applicants are encouraged to consult the embassy's official website or verified social media pages for the latest updates on fees and consular services.

- *Rewritten from Loop Caribbean*

Hyatt's First Andaz Caribbean Hotel Is Coming To This Caribbean Island



The Andaz Turks & Caicos is set to open in early 2026 on Grace Bay.

South Caicos Island. The Caribbean destination is also preparing for the Waldorf Astoria Turks & Caicos, expected to open in 2028 on Dellis Cay, accessible by a 25-minute boat transfer from Providenciales.

The Andaz Turks & Caicos' smaller scale and beachfront location may give it a

competitive edge among the growing luxury hotel market in the islands. Travelers and industry watchers alike are eager to see if the property can deliver on Hyatt's promise of modern luxury and standout experiences in one of the region's most desirable locations. Reservations for the Andaz Turks & Caicos are expected to open later this year.

- *NewsAmericasNow*



After years of delays, the highly anticipated Andaz Turks & Caicos is finally inching closer to its debut, marking Hyatt's first foray into the Turks & Caicos market - and the brand's very first Andaz property in the Caribbean.

The boutique luxury resort, located on the world-renowned Grace Bay Beach, is now targeting an early 2026 opening, nearly five years later than initially announced. Originally slated for 2021, construction was hampered by the pandemic and other common development setbacks in the region.

Spread across 5.5 acres of prime beachfront real estate, the Andaz Turks & Caicos promises to deliver a boutique experience with just 59 hotel rooms and 74 branded residences, offering exclusivity and intimate luxury for guests and homeowners alike.

The property will feature three restaurants and bars, a spa, kids club, fitness centre, and direct access to Grace Bay's pristine white sands - widely regarded as one of the most beautiful beaches in the Caribbean.

Though specific design and service details remain under wraps, early renderings of the pool, lobby, and guest rooms suggest a modern, stylish aesthetic aimed at delivering a more personalized and upscale stay compared to larger resorts.

Turks & Caicos, known for its turquoise waters and proximity to the U.S., has historically offered limited options for travellers looking to earn or redeem hotel loyalty points. However, that trend is shifting. The Andaz will join other recent high-profile openings such as the Ritz-Carlton Turks & Caicos, located on Grace Bay, and Salterra Turks & Caicos, part of Marriott's Luxury Collection on



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Summer 2025: What's New In Greater Miami & Miami Beach

This summer, Greater Miami & Miami Beach is buzzing with fresh hotels, bold restaurants, world-class sports, and unforgettable experiences.

New Hotels & Resorts

• The Shelborne by Proper has reopened after a \$100 million makeover. This Collins Avenue icon blends historic Miami Beach charm with modern flair, complete with oceanfront views, chic rooms, poolside cabanas, and Caribbean-Latin dining at Pauline, debuting this summer.

• Donatella Boutique Hotel & Restaurant, sister to The Villa Casa Casuarina, offers an ultra-exclusive stay with just six Mediterranean-inspired rooms, beach access, butler service, and refined Southern Italian cuisine.

• Andaz Miami Beach, a sleek

newcomer in Mid-Beach, delivers stunning Atlantic views, two pools, Ondara Spa, and upcoming José Andrés Group restaurants, including The Bazaar and Aguasal.

New Attractions

• AI: More than Human runs through September 1 at the Frost Museum of Science, offering an interactive journey through the evolution of artificial intelligence.

• Broadway's legendary Chicago musical sizzles at the Arsht Center, July 15–20.

Dining & Drinks

• Maple & Ash, Chicago's fiery steakhouse, ignites Downtown Miami with wood-fired cuisine and bold flavors.



• Amara at Paraiso serves an indulgent Sunday brunch buffet with waterfront views and bottomless drinks.

• In Little River, Bar Bucco brings pizza, Italian wines, and market goods.

• Bored Cuban, known for its art-driven Cuban bites, opens a Brickell pop-up.

• BH Prime, opening July at St. Regis Bal Harbour, promises theatrical steakhouse dining and global cocktails.

Major Sports & Cruises

• Miami hosts the FIFA Club World Cup 2025 at Hard Rock Stadium with group matches June 14–25 and knockout rounds June 29–July 1.

• PortMiami welcomes MSC World America with 19 restaurants and the ocean's first overwater swing ride. Norwegian Aqua and Royal Caribbean's Wonder of the Seas also offer new Caribbean sailings.

New Flights

• Avelo Airlines adds seasonal non-stop service from Wilmington, Delaware. American Airlines now connects Miami to Rome, Italy, with nonstop flight.



JetBlue To Exit Miami Airport Amid Profitability Challenges

JetBlue Airways has announced plans to exit Miami International Airport, (MIA) as part of a broader effort to cut unprofitable routes and streamline operations in the face of intense competition. The New York-based carrier, which launched service at MIA in 2021, will complete its withdrawal by September 2025.



JetBlue is leaving MIA.

According to aviation outlet One Mile At A Time, JetBlue initially expanded into Miami with the hope of capitalizing on the post-pandemic travel boom, particularly increased demand for leisure travel to South Florida. At its peak, JetBlue operated flights from Miami to several major hubs, including Boston Logan International, (BOS), Newark Liberty, (EWR), Bradley International, (BDL), New York's John F. Kennedy, (JFK), and Los Angeles International, (LAX).

However, amid ongoing

financial pressures and aggressive competition from other carriers at MIA, JetBlue has steadily reduced its presence, leaving only its Boston-Miami route in operation. That final route will be discontinued in September, marking the airline's complete exit from the airport.

JetBlue's decision is part of a broader strategy to focus on more profitable routes and markets, especially as the airline navigates increased competitive pressures and works to improve overall financial performance.

- *Rewritten from Miami Herald*



Countdown On: Less Than One Year Until FIFA World Cup 26 Hits Miami

Greater Miami & Miami Beach is officially one year away from welcoming the world to FIFA World Cup 26™. From June 15 to July 18, 2026, the destination will host seven matches, including group stage games, a quarterfinal, and the Bronze Final - all taking place at Miami Stadium (currently Hard Rock Stadium) in Miami Gardens.

The countdown comes as Greater Miami cements its status as a global sports capital, with a packed calendar of elite events. This summer alone, the FIFA Club World Cup (June 14–July 13) brings soccer giants like Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Boca Juniors, and Inter Miami CF to town, building excitement for World Cup 2026.

"From soccer to football, hockey, and motorsports, no other destination combines world-class competition with vibrant culture like Miami," said David Whitaker, CEO of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau.

In the year ahead, the region will host:



The Miami Host Committee recently revealed the Official FIFA World Cup 2026 Host City Poster, a striking design that captures the city's vibrant culture and deep-rooted passion for fútbol.

• FIFA Club World Cup - through July 13, 2025.

• College Football Playoff National Championship - January 2026.

• Florida's first NHL Winter Classic - January 2, 2026.

• World Baseball Classic - March 2026.

• FIFA World Cup 26™ matches - June–July 2026.

• NASCAR Cup Series Championship - November 2026.

With its strong Latin

American and Caribbean influence, Miami promises more than just matches - it offers lively street celebrations, beaches, nightlife, and an unmatched cultural atmosphere. Combined with proven hosting success, including 11 Super Bowls and decades of marquee sporting events, Miami is ready to shine on the global stage.

For travel details and updates, visit MiamiandMiamiBeach.com.



American Airlines Expanding VIP Lounge Experience At Miami Airport

American Airlines has announced plans to significantly enhance its lounge offerings at Miami International Airport (MIA), aiming to elevate the travel experience for its frequent flyers and premium customers. The expansion will include building a brand-new Flagship Lounge - American's most exclusive airport space - and enlarging the existing Admirals Club lounge.

Once completed, the airline says it will nearly double its total lounge space at MIA. "The lounge experience plays a key role in enhancing the travel journey, offering a quiet

and comfortable escape from the busy terminal," said Juan Carlos Liscano, American's vice president of MIA operations. He promised "new and improved spaces to relax, work, and play."

This will be American's sixth Flagship Lounge, following the recent opening at Philadelphia International Airport's Terminal A West. Currently, American operates three lounges at MIA: an Admirals Club at Gate D15 and both Admirals Club and Flagship Lounge options at Gate D30. Under the new plan, the existing Flagship Lounge at D30 will be transformed into an

expanded Admirals Club, while a new Flagship Lounge will be constructed elsewhere in the terminal.

The new Flagship Lounge will offer premium amenities, including champagne on arrival, locally inspired cuisine, a la carte dining, spa-like showers, family-friendly areas, dedicated workspaces, and high-speed Wi-Fi. Eligible travelers include those with



American Airlines lounge at Miami Int. Airport.

lounge memberships, qualifying one world status, or holders of the Citi AAdvantage Executive

credit card. Day passes are available for \$79 (Admirals Club) or \$150 (Flagship Lounge).

The expansion comes as American operates its largest summer schedule ever from MIA, with over 400 daily flights serving more than 30 million passengers annually. The airline, which employs more than 14,500 people in the region, has not yet disclosed the timeline for construction or the location of the new Flagship Lounge.

- *Rewritten from Miami Herald*



Jamaica Stunned As Four Top Athletes Switch Allegiance To Turkey

BY HORACE CAMPBELL

Just two weeks before the June 26-29 National Championships to select Jamaica's team to the World Athletics Championships in Japan, the country was jolted by news that four of its athletes had switched allegiance to Turkey.

The revelation came as the Jamaica Athletics Administrative Association, (JAAA) ran television and radio ads promoting that Kingston meet with the athletes who decided to shed the black, green and gold of their homeland, featured in the promos.

They include three medalists from the Paris 2024 Olympic Games - discus champion Roje Stona, long jump silver medalist Wayne Pinnock, shot put bronze medalist Rajindra Campbell. Triple jumper Jaydon Hibbert completes the disgruntled group. They were expected to be part of a formidable Jamaica team for the September 13-21 World Athletics Championships in Tokyo.

Campbell has been the most vocal of the quartet. In an interview with the Coach's Desk TV YouTube channel, he blamed the JAAA for not looking out for their welfare.

He claimed that the organization turned down an eight-year, \$40 million contract with Adidas in 2024 for an extension of their agreement with longtime sponsors Puma.

"I don't believe that they



Among those shedding the black, green and gold is Paris 2024 Olympic Games discus champion, Roje Stona.

really understand that it is challenging. For one, track and field, we are not sprinters, obviously, and as you can see, I am still unsponsored," he said. "There were bonuses that would have benefited the athlete, not the federation. Certain things they wouldn't have control over because it would have been directed to the athlete, based on my understanding."

The JAAA have not responded to Campbell's claims, but its president Garth Gayle told a press conference in Kingston that their actions may be influenced by "a particular group of stakeholders."

Jamaica's prime minister, Andrew Holness, weighed in on the controversy, saying he sympathized with Campbell, Pinnock, Stona and Hibbert.

"A few of our athletes have indicated their intent to or are

in the process of transferring allegiance to other countries and some say it is for financial incentives. This development, understandably, has stirred concern and emotions across our country," said Holness at an event honoring sprinter Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce. "Our athletes do not just wear the black, green and gold, they carry our hopes, they ignite our passions, they form a prominent part of our collective identity and so when they choose to compete under a different flag, it feels personal."

He noted that, "The career of a professional athlete is short and often financially precarious. Athletes, like all of us, must make decisions, not only for themselves, but for their families and their future. And that is the truth, that should be understood."

Holness disclosed that he has instructed sports minister Olivia Grange to have discussions with sports federations, the private sector and former national representatives to discuss implementation of a retention policy.

There is a history of Jamaican athletes choosing to compete for other countries. Sprinter Merlene Ottey began representing Slovenia late in her career, while 400-meter runner Sanya Richards competed in three Olympics for the United States where she migrated at age 12.



Jamaica Pledges Stronger Support For Athletes Amid Rising Transfer Concerns

Jamaica's Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Olivia Grange, has pledged renewed government action to strengthen support systems for Jamaican athletes, following recent high-profile cases of athletes transferring allegiance to other countries.

The announcement came during Grange's Sectoral Debate presentation in Parliament on Tuesday, in line with directives from Prime Minister Andrew Holness, amid growing concerns about athlete retention.

The issue has gained national attention following the transfer of four top athletes—Olympic medalists Roje Stona, Wayne Pinnock, Rajindra Campbell, and Jaydon Hibbert—who have opted to represent Türkiye on the international stage.

"I am committed to working with all stakeholders to establish a national athlete support and retention strategy, as directed by the Prime Minister," Grange stated. "We will explore expanding partnerships with the private sector to provide greater financial incentives and sponsorship opportunities."

The Minister outlined several key initiatives, including:

- Enhancing training and recovery infrastructure to meet

global standards

- Expanding long-term career planning and transition services for athletes
- Improving financial and health coverage with private sector collaboration
- Introducing further incentives for national representation, particularly for elite performers
- Strengthening partnerships with sporting federations to ensure holistic athlete development

Grange stressed that the government is not only focused on immediate solutions but is also committed to building a sustainable framework to develop and retain top Jamaican talent.

She also addressed the recent remarks by former 100m world record holder Asafa Powell, who criticized the current support system and expressed reluctance for his Jamaican-born children to compete for Jamaica.

Grange said Powell's comments should be viewed as constructive criticism. "His words reflect genuine concerns and firsthand experience. They must be acknowledged, not dismissed," she emphasized.

- *Rewritten from JIS News*



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SPORTS NEWS



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CPL 2025 Draft Complete: Big Trades, New Talent And Star-Studded Squads Finalized

The stage is set for an electrifying 2025 Caribbean Premier League, (CPL) season following the player draft held on June 18. With the tournament scheduled from August 14 to September 21, all six franchises have finalized their squads, promising a competitive and star-studded edition of the CPL.

The six franchises - Antigua & Barbuda Falcons, Barbados Royals, Guyana Amazon Warriors, St Kitts & Nevis Patriots, Saint Lucia Kings, and Trinbago Knight Riders - locked in their rosters through a combination of high-profile trades and fresh talent picks.

One of the biggest moves ahead of the draft saw Jason Holder and Alick Athanaze traded from the Barbados Royals to the St Kitts & Nevis Patriots, with power-hitter Sherfane Rutherford heading to the Royals in return.

This year's draft also marked the introduction of the West Indies Breakout League—a development tournament designed to promote emerging talent. Teams were required to select players from this pool in the final three rounds, with at least one breakout player featuring in every match. Among the notable squad

announcements, Trinbago Knight Riders retained heavyweights like Kieron Pollard, Andre Russell, and Nicholas Pooran, while adding Alex Hales and Mohammad Amir to bolster their firepower.

The defending champions Guyana Amazon Warriors look strong with the likes of Imran Tahir, Shimron Hetmyer, and Moeen Ali, while the Antigua & Barbuda Falcons have injected experience with Shakib Al Hasan, Imad Wasim, and Fabian Allen.

With stacked squads and fresh faces ready to make their mark, CPL 2025 promises thrilling cricket across the Caribbean. Fans can expect fireworks as the region's biggest T20 spectacle returns.

CPL 2025 Draft: Full Squads of all 6 teams

Saint Lucia Kings: Tim David, Alzarri Joseph, Johnson Charles, Tim Seifert, Roston Chase, Tabraiz Shamsi, David Wiese, Delano Potgieter, Matthew Forde, Aaron Jones, Khary Pierre, Javelle Glen, Micah McKenzie, Shadrack Descarte, Johann Jeremiah, Keon Gaston, Ackeem Augustine

Guyana Amazon Warriors: Imran Tahir, Shimron Hetmyer,



Romario Shephard, Shai Hope, Glenn Phillips, Gudakesh Motie, Moeen Ali, Shamar Joseph, Keemo Paul, Dwaine Pretorius, Shamarh Brooks, Kemol Savory, Hassan Khan, Jediah Blades, Kevlon Anderson, Quentin Sampson, Riyad Latif

Trinbago Knight Riders:

Kieron Pollard, Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Nicholas Pooran, Alex Hales, Akeal Hosein,

Mohammad Amir, Colin Munro, Usman Tariq, Ali Khan, Darren Bravo, Yannic Cariah, Keacy Carty, Terrance Hinds, McKenny Clarke, Joshua Da Silva, Nathan Edward

Barbados Royals:

Rovman Powell, Brandon King, Sherfane Rutherford, Quinton de Kock, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Azmatullah Omarzai, Jomel Warrican, Kadeem Alleyne, Shaqkere

Parris, Kofi James, Nyeem Young, Rivaldo Clarke, Zishan Motara, Johann Layne, Ramon Simmonds

Antigua & Barbuda Falcons:

Imad Wasim, Shakib Al Hasan, Fabian Allen, Naveen-ul-Haq, Obed McCoy, Justin Greaves, Allah Ghazanfar, Rahkeem Cornwall, Odean Smith, Jewel Andrew, Shamar Springer, Amir Jangoo, Karima Gore, Kevin Wickham, Joshua James

St Kitts & Nevis Patriots:

Kyle Mayers, Jason Holder, Rilee Rossouw, Evin Lewis, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Corbin Bosch, Waqar Salamkheil, Andre Fletcher, Alick Athanaze, Mohammad Nawaz, Dominic Drakes, Mikyle Louis, Ashmead Nedd, Jeremiah Louis, Jyd Goolie, Navin Bidaisee, Leniko Boucher.



Reggae Boyz Crash Out Of Gold Cup After 4-1 Defeat To Panama

Jamaica's Reggae Boyz have been eliminated from the 2025 Concacaf Gold Cup after a crushing 4-1 loss to Panama at Q2 Stadium in Texas on June 24th.

It marks the first time since 2009 that Jamaica has failed to advance beyond the group stage of the tournament.

Needing a decisive victory to keep their hopes alive, the Reggae Boyz were undone by a first-half hat-trick from Panama's Ismael Diaz, who found the net in the 4th, 17th, and 45th minutes. Tomás Rodríguez added a fourth goal for Panama in the 89th minute to seal the emphatic result.

Amari'i Bell scored the lone goal for Jamaica in the 27th minute, but it proved only a consolation in an otherwise one-sided contest.

The loss, coupled with Guatemala's thrilling 3-2 win



Panama beat the Reggae Boyz 4-1 in the June 24th match-up in Texas.

over Guadeloupe, means Jamaica finished third in Group C and will not progress to the knockout rounds.

Panama and Guatemala secured the top two spots in the group and will advance to the quarterfinals.

The disappointing exit adds to growing concerns about the Reggae Boyz's form on the regional stage as they turn their attention to upcoming World Cup qualifiers.





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Jamaican Boxing Legend Mike 'The Bodysnatcher' McCallum Dead

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

After playing second fiddle to their heavyweight counterparts, the middleweight became boxing's marquee division during the 1980s, thanks to fighters like Jamaican Mike McCallum. The renowned Bodysnatcher, who won titles in three weight classes, died in Las Vegas, Nevada on May 31st.

Initial reports say McCallum, 68, was driving to the gym where he worked as a trainer when he fell ill. Shortly

after pulling off the road, he was found unresponsive by police and pronounced dead.

At press time, there was no funeral for McCallum as his family awaited results of an autopsy.

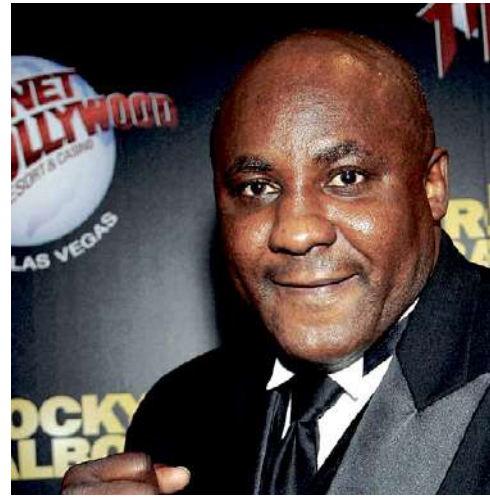
Leroy Brown, former president of the Jamaica Boxing Board, told Caribbean Today that he is in "absolute shock" at news of McCallum's passing. He said they spoke to each other regularly by phone, their most recent conversation being two weeks before the fighter's death.

Brown rates the Kingston-born McCallum as one of the top 10 middleweights in boxing history. "When he was on his up, Mike could beat anybody. Boxing politics hurt him from achieving even more," he said.

Mike Fennell, former president of the Jamaica Boxing Board and Jamaica Olympic Association, mentored McCallum early in his career. He also paid tribute. "He was a very clever fighter in a competitive era. A great talent and an amazing boxer," said Fennell.

McCallum was among a group of amateur boxers who emerged in Jamaica during the early 1970s. His contemporaries included future heavyweight champion Trevor Berbick and flyweight Richard "Shrimpy" Clarke.

McCallum fought as



The late Mike McCallum. (Photo Credit: Ethan Miller/Getty)

beating Irishman Sean Mannon. He went on to win the WBA middleweight and WBC light heavyweight titles.

At different stages, McCallum was trained by Americans Lou Duva and Emmanuel Steward. He defeated several highly rated opponents in the 1980s such as Julian Jackson of the United States Virgin Islands, and Americans Milt McCrory and Donald Currie.

It is believed that big-name middleweights such as Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvin Hagler, Tommy Hearns and Roberto Duran avoided him.

McCallum retired from boxing in 1997 with a record of 49 wins, five losses and one draw. Two of his losses were to light heavyweight James Toney who considered him the best fighter he faced.

In 2003, Mike McCallum was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame.



Fraser-Pryce Confirms Final Race At National Stadium As Retirement Nears



Jamaica's sprint legend, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, has bid her goodbye to fans at the Jamaica National Championships.

Jamaica's sprint legend, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, has bid her goodbye to fans at the Jamaica National Championships - her final competitive appearance at Kingston's National Stadium, as she prepares to retire at the close of the 2025 season.

The five-time World 100-m champion made the heartfelt announcement during a special cocktail reception hosted in her honor by Nike at the AC Hotel in Kingston on June 23rd.

The event celebrated Fraser-Pryce's remarkable career, with Prime Minister Andrew Holness, GraceKennedy CEO Frank James, Nike executives, MVP Track Club President Bruce James, and her family - husband Jason Pryce and son Zyion - in attendance.

Fraser-Pryce's illustrious career began in 2007 when she captured her first global medal as part of Jamaica's 4x100-m relay team at the World Championships in Osaka. Since then, she has earned three Olympic gold medals, including consecutive 100m titles in 2008 and 2012, five World Championship 100-m golds, and a World Indoor 60-m title, solidifying her status as the third-fastest woman in history.

Proudly reflecting on her Jamaican roots, she credited her success to the unwavering support of her homeland: "I've always said I'm a daughter of the soil. You've shown me love

through every high and low, and it's your support that's fueled my pride and determination."

- Rewritten from CMC



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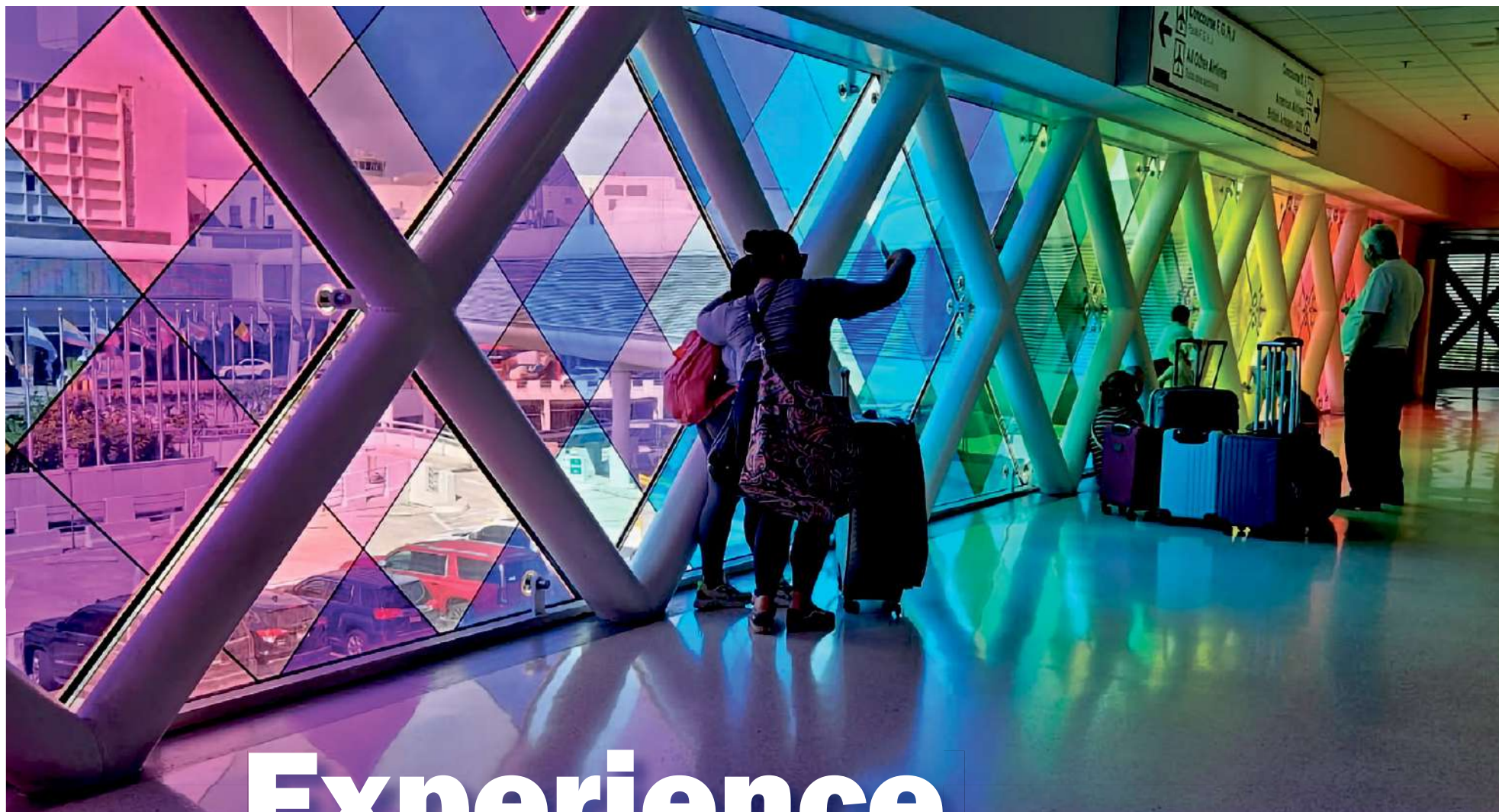


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