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Vol. 36 No. 4

THE MULTI-AWARD WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE WITH THE LARGEST PROVEN CIRCULATION IN FLORIDA GUARANTEED



Haitians Scared ... Page 4  
(NBC 4 News screengrab)



Biggie's Jamaican Mom  
Joins Him On The Other  
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/ Invision / Associated Press  
image)



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# WARNING



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Joy Reid on the final airing  
of The ReidOut (MSNBC  
screengrab image)

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

## REGIONAL

The United States, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Commonwealth have all strongly condemned Venezuela's alleged naval incursion into Guyana's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), calling it a serious threat to regional stability and a violation of international law.

The U.S. State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs denounced the approach of a Venezuelan naval vessel toward ExxonMobil's floating production, storage, and offloading (FPSO) unit in Guyana's oil-rich Stabroek Block. In a firm statement, the U.S. warned that "further provocation will result in consequences for the Maduro regime" and reaffirmed its support for Guyana's sovereignty under the 1899 arbitral award.

Guyana's President Dr. Irfaan Ali condemned the violation, emphasizing that Guyana's maritime boundaries are recognized under international law. He revealed that the Venezuelan coast guard vessel transmitted a radio message claiming it was in 'disputed international waters' before advancing toward offshore facilities. "Let me be unequivocal: this is a matter of grave concern," Ali stated, assuring the nation that his administration is addressing the situation with urgency.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland KC echoed Ali's alarm, expressing

deep concern over Venezuela's provocative actions and reaffirming the Commonwealth's unwavering support for Guyana's territorial integrity.

Meanwhile, CARICOM and the OAS strongly condemned the incursion, citing violations of international law and the 2023 Argyle Declaration, which promotes peaceful resolutions to disputes. The OAS further warned that such acts of intimidation undermine regional stability and peaceful coexistence between nations.

In response, Venezuela accused President Ali of inciting conflict, comparing him to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. A government communiqué, published on the Telegram channel of Venezuelan Foreign Minister Ivan Gil Pinto, alleged that Ali was "posing as Zelensky in the Caribbean" to create regional instability through "dangerous provocations."

The document categorically rejected Ali's claims that Venezuelan naval forces had violated Guyana's territorial waters, stating that the area in question remains subject to maritime delimitation under international law. Venezuela further accused Ali of serving the interests of U.S. oil giant



Martinique is now a part of CARICOM. Chairman of CARICOM and Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley (left), and Serge Letchimy, President of the Executive Council of the Territorial Collectivity of Martinique, signed the accession agreement in Bridgetown.

ExxonMobil, stating that his "inaccurate and contradictory statements" were aimed at escalating tensions and undermining peace in the region.

Additionally, Venezuela reiterated that it considers any concessions granted for energy exploration and exploitation in the disputed maritime zone as a violation of international law.

Meanwhile, Caribbean leaders are inviting former U.S. President Donald Trump to visit the region and are working to secure a high-level meeting with his senior officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne confirmed.

Browne emphasized the importance of U.S.-Caribbean relations, citing concerns over trade policies, foreign aid cuts, and immigration decisions, particularly affecting Haitian

migrants. He warned that mass deportations to Haiti could worsen instability and urged the U.S. to reconsider.

At a three-day CARICOM summit in Barbados, leaders also discussed U.S. tariffs, economic uncertainty, climate change, and regional security. Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness stressed the need for trade policy reviews, while Barbados' Prime Minister Mia Mottley reaffirmed support for Haiti's democratic process.

The summit concluded with a farewell tribute to Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Keith Rowley, who announced his retirement after 45 years in politics.

## HAITI

Haitian authorities have issued over a dozen arrest warrants for individuals accused of aiding gangs behind deadly attacks in Kenscoff, near Port-au-Prince. Among those charged with plotting against the government are former Senator Nene Cassy and ex-legislator Alfredo Antoine.

The violence, ongoing for three weeks, has killed dozens, including police officers and a soldier. Gangs now control 85% of the capital, displacing over a million people. A local rights group is urging an international tribunal to address the crisis, as Haiti's police struggle to reclaim gang-controlled areas amid escalating violence that has killed thousands, including children. Since late January, more than 6,000 people have been forced to flee their homes, including over 2,000 in Delmas, Port-au-Prince, and Pétion-Ville, and 4,100 in Kenscoff.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Chérizier, alias "Barbecue," has denied reports that he was injured during a large-scale security operation targeting gangs in Bas-Delmas last weekend.

Haitian Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé confirmed the operation, stating that the government's Task Force and the

Presidential Transitional Council (CPT) have already neutralized several gang members. The operation, which included drones capable of dropping explosives, was launched to combat escalating gang violence.

In a video, Chérizier dismissed reports of his injury and warned that he, too, could acquire explosive drones. Since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021, Port-au-Prince has been paralyzed by gang violence. The Kenya-led Multinational Security Support (MSS) Mission, approved by the UN Security Council, remains underfunded, with the U.S. recently freezing funding, limiting its ability to restore stability.

## GRENADA

Dr. Keith Mitchell, leader of Grenada's opposition New National Party (NNP), has officially stepped down, effective February 21, 2025. Mitchell, who served as Leader of the Opposition since 2022 after the NNP's electoral defeat, informed Governor General Dame Cecile La Grenade of his resignation.

Emmalin Pierre, the NNP's first female Political Leader, will now assume the role, becoming Grenada's second female Opposition Leader after Winnifred Strachan (1991-1995). Pierre expressed gratitude for Mitchell's leadership, pledging to advocate for Grenadians' needs with integrity and dedication. Mitchell remains committed to serving as MP for St. George Northwest.

## MARTINIQUE

At the 48th CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in Barbados, Martinique officially signed an agreement to become an Associate Member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The agreement was signed by Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley, as CARICOM Chair, and Serge Letchimy, President of the Territorial Collectivity of Martinique, (CTM).

This milestone strengthens Martinique's regional integration, enhancing cooperation in key sectors such as healthcare, education, trade, and disaster management. While final ratification by the French National Assembly is pending, Martinique's new status positions it as a strategic bridge between the Caribbean and Europe, expanding opportunities for economic and cultural collaboration.

- Compiled from CMC News, Loop Caribbean and NewsAmericasnow.com



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# Guyanese Roots Journalist Joy Reid Issues Dire Warning As The ReidOut Is Axed

BY CT STAFF WRITER

With a powerful and emotional farewell, Joy-Ann M. Lomena-Reid, the Guyanese-roots, MSNBC host of *The ReidOut*, delivered a stark warning to her viewers as she signed off for the last time. The longtime journalist, who once called South Florida home, used her final broadcast to urge Americans to remain vigilant in the face of what she described as a growing threat to democracy.

“Fascism is already here,” Reid declared, calling on her audience to resist authoritarianism and protect hard-won rights. “Do not fall asleep. Do not get comfortable. Stay engaged, stay aware, and keep fighting for democracy.”

## AN IMMIGRANTS ROOTS VOICE IN JOURNALISM

Reid, 56, whose parents immigrated to the United States - her mother was a college professor and nutritionist from Guyana and her father from the Democratic Republic of Congo - has been a vocal advocate for immigrant communities, racial justice, and press freedom throughout her career. During her final episode, the Brooklyn-born, New Yorker and Harvard graduate, she made it clear that she had no regrets about using her platform to speak out on issues affecting marginalized groups.

“I am not sorry that I stood up for those things because those things are of God,” she said. “Whether it was fighting for Black lives, defending immigrants like my parents, or speaking out against book bans and constitutional violations, I have no regrets.”

## The Post Reid Era Begins

Eugene Daniels, a White House correspondent for Politico, is set to join MSNBC full-time as a host.

MSNBC announced that Daniels, 36, will co-host the morning edition of *The Weekend*, a three-hour program airing on Saturdays and Sundays. He will be joined by Washington Post journalist Jonathan Capehart and an additional co-host yet to be named.

This shift comes as the current hosts - Michael Steele, Alicia Menendez, and Symone Sanders-Townsend - move to the 7 p.m. weekday slot previously held by Joy Reid. The new line-up is set to debut in late April.

Daniels will also serve as MSNBC’s senior Washington correspondent as the network expands its independent news operation. He is the first external



Joy Reid, the Guyanese roots host of MSNBC ‘The ReidOut,’ cries on Zoom as she reacted to the news of her firing on Feb. 23, 2025. (Screengrab/the Win With Black Women podcast)

## MSNBC’S SHAKEUP AND VIEWER BACKLASH

MSNBC’s decision to cancel *The ReidOut* comes amid a major restructuring at the network under its new president, Rebecca Kutler. Reid’s show, which launched in 2020, had been a primetime staple known for its sharp political analysis and progressive stance. However, declining ratings and financial challenges contributed to the decision to replace her 7 p.m. slot with a new panel show co-hosted by Symone Sanders-Townsend, Alicia Menendez, and Michael Steele.

The timing of her cancellation - announced on the same day Guyana celebrated its 55th Republic anniversary - struck a nerve with some viewers. Many activists and supporters have accused the network of sidelining a strong Black female voice at a critical political moment.

Groups such as ‘Win With Black Women’ and ‘We Win

hire under MSNBC President Rebecca Kutler, who is leading the network under its new corporate structure following Comcast’s recent reorganization.

A contributor to MSNBC since 2021, Daniels has been a regular on *Morning Joe*. He will depart Politico, where he joined in 2018 and co-authored the influential Politico Playbook newsletter. Currently serving as president of the White House Correspondents’ Association, Daniels is a Texas native and a graduate of Colorado State University. He came out as gay in 2016. On October 29, 2022, he married Nathan Thomas Stephens in the Evergreen Museum & Library in Baltimore, Maryland.



With Black Men’ have led calls for a boycott of MSNBC in protest.

## WHAT’S NEXT?

Reid, a best-selling author and veteran political commentator who formerly worked at South Florida’s WSVN and the Miami Herald,

has not yet revealed her next move. However, she remains a significant voice in media and politics. She owns a \$4 million penthouse in Manhattan and multiple investment properties while also teaching a Syracuse University class in Manhattan exploring race, gender, and the media.

Despite her departure from MSNBC, Reid assured her audience that her work is far from over. “The fight continues,” she said. “I am grateful for every moment on this show, but this is not the end.”

As MSNBC undergoes transformation, Reid’s influence as a fearless journalist and advocate for justice will undoubtedly endure. Her final warning - delivered with urgency and conviction - will resonate now *The ReidOut* has left the airwaves.



# Spring Health

The April issue of Caribbean Today will feature a comprehensive examination of how the healthcare industry serves the Caribbean community.

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# Haitian Migrants Desperate Cry For Help Amid Revocation Of TPS

BY DAVID L. SNELLING  
Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

In five months, 500,000 Haitian migrants living in the US under month's Temporary Protection Status, (TPS), could face deportation to a Caribbean nation in turmoil. That fear is so great that they are running scared and in hiding after President Donald Trump administration vacated a decision by the previous administration to extend Haiti's Temporary Protect Status by 18 months.

As part of this move by the Department of Homeland Security, Haiti's TPS will end on August 3, 2025, unless extended. TPS has allowed many Haitians to live, work and attend college in the U.S. until the conditions in Haiti improve.

But the crisis has worsened as the escalating gang violence in Haiti puts Haitians in harm's way if they are forced to return. The death toll reached 5,600 in 2024, according to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Restoring law and order has been a challenge, as gang members refuse to back down and allegedly were responsible for the death of a police officer. A Kenyan police officer was shot and killed in Haiti on February

23rd in an operation that was part of the international effort to help combat gang violence and bring peace to the Caribbean nation.

South Florida is home to one of the largest Haitian populations in the U.S., where migrants are agonizing over the possibility of being deported in August 2025. Haitian Americans were recently seen in tears, embracing loved ones and friends and feeling helpless after learning of the termination of the TPS extension granted by the President Biden administration shortly before he left office.

Haitian migrants could now be forced out of the United States in five months but are hoping someone will come to their aid. Trump's decree has sparked outrage in the Haitian American community.

Carline Toussaint, a Haitian immigrant who lives in Miami, told the Caribbean Today that terminating the TPS extension affects her aunt.

Toussaint, a social worker, said her relative was granted TPS to live and work in the U.S. for an extended period but may get deported. "She's scared," said Toussaint. "She has been working hard and saving money to buy a car and rent an



The Family Action Network Movement, (FANM), held a press conference on February 21st in Miami to address the termination of the TPS extension for Haitians. (NBC News screengrab)

apartment."

Emmanuel Guy, who could be deported under Trump's executive order, said he's working with an immigration attorney to see what his options are to stay in the U.S.

Guy, who also lives in Miami, said he was giving permission to work in South Florida and felt relieved when Biden extended TPS for migrants. "But now everything is up in the air," he said. "I don't want to go back and my family here doesn't want to go back. Haiti is really a danger zone."

Guy said being deported would break up his family in Miami. He said they want him

to flee to another state to avoid being deported. "They are scared for me," he said. "If I go back to Haiti, they will scream."

The Family Action Network Movement, (FANM), held a press conference on February 21st in Miami to address the termination of the TPS extension for Haitians. Elected officials, community activists, attorneys and Haitian American citizens attended the event to discuss the next step to prevent deportation.

They are calling on the Trump administration to reverse its decision and allow Haitians to stay in the U.S. longer. "To send them back to a country still grappling with the aftermath of a devastating hurricane, political unrest, and economic hardship is both inhumane and unjust," Miami-Dade Commissioner Marleine Bastien, whose district covers Little Haiti, said during the press conference.

Haitian migrants would like to see someone step in and go to bat for them since they are on the brink of deportation.

Toussaint said she would like to see American Civil Liberties Union, (ACLU), get involved after the group filed a lawsuit in 2011 to stop resuming deportation of Haitian migrants after the devastating 2010 earthquake. In addition, the ACLU filed a federal lawsuit in 2019 that delayed deportation proceedings for a Haitian immigrant who was detained in Dover, Delaware.

A judge at that time granted the ACLU's emergency motion to stop the deportation of Jeff Benson Beaubrun pending a court motion to reopen his immigration case.

According to published reports, Beaubrun fled Haiti after he was attacked by members of an opposing political party who allegedly killed his young son and threatened him and his sister. Despite his life being threatened, he was ordered to return to Haiti in 2019. His case is still pending.

Beatriz Lopez, co-executive director of the Immigration Hub, an immigrant advocacy organization, said the Trump administration is ripping stability away from half a million Haitians who have built their lives here.

"Deporting people to a country plagued by violence and political turmoil is unconscionable and stripping them of legal status will only force working families into the shadows, inflicting fear in children and their loved ones and leaving industries like healthcare, construction, and hospitality scrambling for workers," Lopez said in a statement.

U.S. Rep. Fredrica Wilson, (D-Miami) said she planning to take immediate action to stop the deportation of Haitian migrants.

Wilson, whose district constitutes a large Haitian population, said their lives are in peril if they are deported and break up family members in the U.S.

"Sending Haitians back to Haiti right now is a kiss of death," Wilson said on social media. "It's not just wrong, it's inhumane. This decision is completely outrageous and part of this administration's reign of terror."

Wilson said the United States has long been a beacon of hope for those seeking refuge from danger and the United States shouldn't turn their backs on Haitians during a critical time. "We cannot abandon that responsibility now," she said. "We cannot be in the business of deporting over 500,000 Haitian people, many of whom I represent, back to a country that is still riddled with gang violence and instability."

U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, the only Haitian American Democrat in the House, denounced Trump's order to deport Haitians. "Rescinding TPS protections for Haitians will cause America to lose over 500,000 essential workers in critical industries," she said on social media. "This only serves to hurt Americans, not help them."

DHS Secretary Krisit Noem, meanwhile, said for decades, the TPS system has been exploited and abused.

For example, she said Haiti has been designated for TPS since 2010 and data shows each extension of the country's TPS designation allowed more Haitian nationals, even those who entered the U.S. illegally, to qualify for legal protected status.

Noem said in May of 2011, DHS estimated that 57,000 Haitian migrants were eligible to register for TPS, and in 2021, about 155,000 Haitians were eligible under the new designation. And by July 2024, the estimate soared to 520,694.

"We are returning integrity to the TPS system, which has been abused and exploited by illegal aliens for decades," the DHS said in a statement. "President Trump and Secretary Noem are returning TPS to its original status: temporary."



## Haitian Heritage Month



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

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# Grenada Rejects U.S. Request To Accept Deported Non-Nationals

Grenada's government has firmly rejected a request from the Trump administration to accept deported individuals from third countries, emphasizing that the island has no intention of complying.

Foreign Minister Joseph Andall, speaking during a public radio program while attending the regional leaders' summit in Barbados, confirmed that the U.S. formally made the request in late January. However, Grenada has since communicated its refusal to Washington.

"There was a request for us to host nationals of third countries who may be deported. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to do that, and we have communicated that to the U.S. authorities," Andall stated.

He clarified that while

Grenada will not accept non-nationals, it remains committed to receiving its own citizens deported from the U.S. or any other country.

"Grenada is home to all Grenadians, and we are prepared to welcome back any Grenadian who is repatriated," he added. Grenada and the Turks and Caicos Islands were among the Caribbean nations approached by the U.S., but both have rejected the request.

Meanwhile, Guyanese President Irfaan Ali also denied speculation that Guyana is in talks with the U.S. about accepting deportees, stating that discussions focus only on broader partnerships.

- *Rewritten from Caribbean Life*



# Miami Jury Convicts Founder Of Haitian Orphanage For Sexual Abuse Of Minors

A jury in Miami has convicted the founder of a Haitian orphanage on charges of sexually abusing boys at the facility in Port-au-Prince.

Court records confirm that 73-year-old Michael Geilenfeld was found guilty on Thursday night of six counts of engaging in illicit sexual contact with minors in a foreign country, along with one count of traveling from Miami to Haiti for the purpose of

committing these crimes.

Geilenfeld now faces up to 30 years in prison for each charge, with sentencing set for May 5 before U.S. District Judge David Leibowitz.

During the trial, six Haitian men testified that they had been abused while living at Geilenfeld's St. Joseph's Home for Boys between 2005 and 2010. The victims, now in their 20s, were between the ages of 9

and 13 at the time of the alleged abuse.

Geilenfeld, who founded the orphanage in 1985, had pleaded not guilty. The facility, one of several he operated in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, was closed in 2014.

- *Rewritten from the Associated Press*



# Jamaican Drug Kingpin 'Dudus' Coke Gets Sentence Reduced

Christopher 'Dudus' Coke, the infamous Jamaican drug kingpin, has had 17 months shaved off his 23-year U.S. prison sentence, with further reductions possible for good behavior, U.S. authorities confirm.

Coke, 56, is now set for release on January 25, 2029, instead of July 4, 2030,

according to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons, (FBOP). The reduction falls under the First Step Act, (FSA), a 2018 criminal justice reform law allowing sentence reductions for good conduct and participation in rehabilitation programs.

A former leader of the Shower Posse, Coke was

extradited in 2010 after a violent standoff in Tivoli Gardens, Kingston, that left 73 civilians dead. He pleaded guilty to racketeering and weapons charges in 2012.

As his potential early release nears, questions remain about his future role in Jamaica.



The advertisement features a pair of hands holding a white sign against a teal background. The sign reads "EVERY GAME GIVES BACK BILLIONS TO EDUCATION" in large, bold, black letters. The Florida Lottery logo, which includes a pink and red parrot, is visible in the top right corner of the sign and in the background. The text "it's good fun" is written in a white, lowercase font in the bottom right corner of the background. The Florida Lottery website URL, "floridalottery.com", is repeated vertically on the left side of the sign.

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**NEWS**



# Probe Reveals Usain Bolt's Missing Millions Were Stolen Before Reaching SSL

A high-level probe into the missing \$12 million investment of Jamaican sprint legend Usain Bolt has revealed that a significant portion of his funds never made it into his account at Stocks and Securities Limited, (SSL).

Jamaican Olympic sprinter Usain Bolt, seen here during a photo session as he launches a new brand of electric scooters named "Bolt" in



Usain Bolt has voiced his frustration with the slow progress of the investigation, urging the Jamaican Government to take greater action in facilitating the return of his missing funds.

Paris, on May 15, 2019, has lost millions to fraud in Jamaica. According to Nationwide News Network (NNN), forensic investigators – including UK-based Kroll Associates – discovered that Bolt's principal investment was stolen before ever reaching SSL, exposing a deeper level of fraud than previously suspected.

Reports indicate that Bolt's management team was deceived with falsified invoices and account statements, allegedly sent by Jean-Ann Panton, the former SSL employee now facing multiple fraud charges. These fabricated documents misled Bolt's team into believing that his investment was secure

and growing, when in reality, the funds had been siphoned off before being deposited into an SSL account.

The revelation casts doubt on Bolt's chances of recovering his money, as investigators now question the full extent of the scheme and the likelihood of restitution.

Meanwhile, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) is still awaiting further documentation from the Financial Investigations Division (FID) to determine whether additional individuals from SSL will face criminal charges. These documents are expected to provide crucial evidence in assessing the depth of the fraud and identifying other possible

perpetrators.

Jean-Ann Panton, who has allegedly confessed to orchestrating fraudulent activities at SSL for years, remains before the court. Following the scandal, Bolt dismissed a member of his management team who was responsible for overseeing his SSL investments.

In a recent appearance on the podcast 'The Fix', Bolt voiced his frustration with the slow progress of the investigation, urging the Jamaican Government to take greater action in facilitating the return of his missing funds.

With these latest findings, Bolt's fight to reclaim his stolen millions remains uncertain, as authorities and investigators continue to unravel the full scope of the fraud.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



# Caribbean-Roots Former US VP Honored At NAACP Image Awards

U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, whose roots trace back to Jamaica, received a hero's welcome at the NAACP Image Awards on Feb. 22nd, where she was honored with the prestigious Chairman's Award.

Harris, the 2024 Democratic presidential nominee, used her speech to warn about the challenges ahead, emphasizing that the future of American democracy lies in the hands of the people, not just those in power or the wealthy elite. Quoting W.E.B. Du Bois, she urged action today, not in some distant future.

Her remarks subtly



U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris speaks at the NAACP Image Awards. (Getty image)

addressed concerns over Donald Trump's administration, civil rights, and climate-related crises. She stressed that despite political uncertainty, the people—not institutions or authoritarian figures - hold the power to shape the nation's future.



# USAID Cuts Hit Florida Based Haitian Non-Profit

BY DAVID L. SNELLING  
Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

Dr. Barth Green fell in love with Haiti when he first paid a visit to the Caribbean nation during a medical mission 30 years ago. The neurologist was part of a team of Florida doctors to treat Haitians who were living in small villages without access to healthcare and food.

"I fell in love with the country.... I love the spirituality of (the) people," Green told the Caribbean Today recently. "It's something that affects you like a virus. You fall in love with people with good work ethics and all they want is an opportunity to be educated."

Green's fondness of Haiti spurred him to launch Project Medishare for Haiti, a non-profit organization that provides clinics in Haiti and employs 150 Haitian healthcare workers to care for their fellow country people.

He founded the non-profit 20 years ago and since then, it has grown from a skeleton staff to one of the biggest organizations rendering aid to the Caribbean island. "They make sure they are taking their medication, exercising regularly and eating healthy foods," Green explained.

Green frequently traveled to Haiti to perform pediatric surgery and treat other patients for head and spinal cord injuries but gangs destroyed the hospital in Port-au-Prince. "They destroyed the resource for life saving treatment," Green said. "Though they are gang members, they still need healthcare."

But Project Medishare for Haiti faces another problem:

federal funding has been suddenly cut off due to the Trump administration's dismantling of the United States Agency for International Development, (USAID) and freezing of funds.

Green said his non-profit has lost 25 percent of its operating budget after the U.S. government froze federal international relief. He said USAID supports 90 percent of non-profit's health programs, not only in Haiti, but in South Florida as well, which constitutes a large population of Haitian Americans.

Green said his organization provides mental health and medical treatment locally, especially during a difficult time for Haitians, who fear deportation under Trump's illegal immigration enforcement law.

"The impact is being felt, so we wonder what's going to be the next step to keep people alive and healthy in Haiti," he said.

Trump recently also ended the Temporary Protection Status, (TPS) for thousands of Haitians who were allowed to work and live in the U.S. until the conditions in Haiti improve.

Green said Haiti previously experienced a high rate of birth mortality for 10 years, but it has been reduced. "We give birth to death care for 100,000 people every year," said Green. Haitians are also trapped in a cycle of despair over the ongoing gang



A nurse at Project Medishare serves a young child. The organization is among many globally feeling the sting of the Trump fund freeze and dismantling of USAID. (Contributed image)

violence that is responsible for thousands and thousands of deaths since 2021.

Green said the uprising is making it difficult for his organization to get healthcare to Haitians who have taken refuge in isolated areas where they can't be reached.

"The underserved population is not making a living to sustain a family and no access to health care and education because of the gangs," he said. "Those are some things we take for granted in the U.S."

Secretary of State Marco Rubio is now the acting administrator of USAID and has only given a waiver to military relief, but not humanitarian aid, for which the group, with an office in Miami, falls under.



# Haitian American Psychiatrist & Civil Rights Advocate Dead At 90

Alvin F. Poussaint, a renowned Haitian American psychiatrist, civil rights advocate, and expert on Black mental health, passed away at 90 at his home in Massachusetts.

A Harvard Medical School professor and former civil rights movement physician, Poussaint gained prominence for his research on racism's psychological impact and his influential work in Black culture and politics. He co-authored books like Why Blacks Kill Blacks and consulted for The

Cosby Show to ensure authentic representation.

Poussaint championed Black self-empowerment while acknowledging systemic racism. His work on mental health, family structures, and racial disparities shaped discussions on Black progress. A lifelong advocate for equality, he believed racism was deeply embedded in American society.

He is survived by his wife, Dr. Tina Young Poussaint, and two children.



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# Caribbean Diaspora Leaders To Drive Change At Disruptive Leadership Conference

Caribbean diaspora leaders will take center stage at the Disruptive Leadership Conference, set for March 12-14 at the Sheraton Miami Airport Hotel & Executive Meeting Center in Miami, Florida. Themed “The Future of Leadership: Opportunities | Risks | Rewards,” the event aims to inspire innovative leadership and foster collaboration among industry professionals.

This year’s conference will be hosted by Dr. Terri-Karelle Johnson, a dynamic media personality and advocate for transformative leadership. Featured speakers include influential Caribbean and Caribbean American leaders such as Rochelle Cameron, David Mullings, Marlon Hill, Naomi Garrick, and Dr. Nicole Grimes, among others. These experts bring insights from diverse fields, including finance, law, technology, education, and entrepreneurship.

Among the featured speakers, Marlon Hill, a corporate and intellectual property attorney, highlighted the importance of embracing change and innovation. As



This year’s conference will be hosted by Dr. Terri-Karelle Johnson, a dynamic media personality and advocate for transformative leadership. (Contributed Image)

he celebrates 30 years in law, Hill believes that leadership is about unleashing the power of the human spirit, both in professional spaces and the wider community. He encourages leaders to embrace their unique talents and disrupt spaces with positive energy.

Hill also stressed that Caribbean American leaders must unapologetically embrace their authenticity and share their stories to drive innovation

and open doors for new opportunities. He believes that Caribbean history and culture embody resilience and innovation - qualities that should be leveraged for global impact.

For entrepreneurs, Hill emphasized the importance of building legacy businesses by thinking beyond limitations. He encouraged business owners to challenge norms, develop long-term strategic goals, and surround themselves with trusted

advisors to support their growth.

The Disruptive Leadership Conference will offer engaging workshops and networking opportunities, providing attendees with actionable strategies for effective leadership in a rapidly evolving world.

Dr. Johnson echoed these sentiments, emphasizing that Caribbean leaders must redefine leadership models to stay competitive in a rapidly evolving world. She pointed out

the risks of outdated leadership practices, brain drain, and systemic barriers but highlighted the immense rewards of bold, innovative leadership. “The Caribbean diaspora has the potential to be at the forefront of global innovation, sustainability, and cultural influence - but only if we seize the moment and take calculated risks,” she said.

**A Call To Action**

Dr. Reid, who has hosted the conference for six years, assured attendees that this is not just a discussion but a call to action. “We are the change we want to see in the region. Collaboration trumps competition, and it’s never too late to experiment, start fresh, and remove outdated practices,” she emphasized.

With engaging workshops, networking opportunities, and thought-provoking discussions, the Disruptive Leadership Conference promises to equip attendees with actionable strategies for leadership success. For more information, visit [disruptiveleadershipconference.com](http://disruptiveleadershipconference.com).



# Haitian American Congresswoman Draws Two Challengers In Primary Amid Scrutiny

BY DAVID L. SNELLING  
Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

The first Haitian American Democratic congresswoman from South Florida, Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, who is currently under a House Ethics Committee investigation for allegedly violating campaign finance laws, has drawn two challengers for her seat.

Community organizer Elijan Manley and former U.S. Senate candidate Rodenay Joseph have filed paperwork to run against Cherfilus-McCormick, who represents Florida’s 20th Congressional district, in the 2026 Democratic Primary. The Congressional district covers most of the Black-majority areas in and around Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach.

Manley announced his candidacy on February 4th on social media. “I announced my candidacy for Florida’s 20th Congressional District today,” he said. “I know, I know! Washington? Yes. We need strong voices in Washington yesterday to fight this radical MAGA Extremist agenda. Our constitution needs your help.”

Manley, 26, later released a press release saying the people in the Congressional district need a representative who can understand their struggles and needs.

He was born and raised in Fort Lauderdale’s historic



Haitian American Democratic congresswoman Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, I., is facing a challenge from Haitian born former U.S. Senate candidate Rodenay Joseph and Broward community leader and Fort Lauderdale-born, Elijan Manley.

Sistrunk community and raised by a hardworking single mother in deep poverty. He says he experienced homelessness, food insecurity, and the challenges of living paycheck to paycheck and understands firsthand what it’s like to go to school hungry and live without necessities like electricity. At just nine years old, Elijah Manley was inspired by Barack Obama’s historic election, sparking his passion for public service. He began writing to elected officials, speaking at city and school board meetings, and advocating for his community. At Fort Lauderdale High, he joined the criminal justice magnet program, Navy JROTC, and dedicated hundreds of hours to

volunteer work.

The Parkland shooting pushed Elijah to act, leading him to run for the Broward County School Board at just 19, earning over 43,000 votes. He later ran for the Florida State House, gaining endorsements and strong community support.

“From tackling the cost-of-living crisis to ending gun violence and ensuring healthcare for all, we need leadership focused on solutions, not scandals,” he stated.

Manley added that he’s also focused on climate change as the district is plagued by the threat of rising sea levels that cause massive flooding after torrential downpours. He said climate change is worsened

by fossil fuel and sugarcane industries prioritizing profit over the environment, leading to pollution that harms ecosystems like the Everglades. “To address this, stricter runoff regulations, sustainable farming, and improved water management are needed,” he said.

Manley said Cherfilus-McCormick can’t lead because she’s embroiled in legal issues and the House Ethics Committee’s investigation. “She can’t really represent this district that way,” Manley said. “This is a big congressional district, and we need a lot of help. We’re going to need a lot of help going into this administration, especially when we talk about immigration.”

Joseph, a Haitian immigrant, unsuccessfully ran for the U.S. Senate in 2024 in the Democratic Primary. According to his bio, he migrated to the U.S. at a young age and later joined the military, dedicating his life to serving the nation. A combat war veteran and Purple Heart recipient, he is also a historian, entrepreneur, and community leader. He currently works for a political consultant firm and was unavailable for an interview.

Congresswoman Cherfilus-McCormick has come under scrutiny following reports that she used an estimated \$6 million in accidental

overpayments from the state to her former healthcare company to run for Congress in 2022.

According to the Sun Sentinel, in 2021, the state accidentally overpaid Trinity Health Care Services, whose then-CEO was Cherfilus-McCormick, nearly \$6 million while contracting with the company to register people for COVID-19 vaccines. The news article said records show the South Florida congresswoman used more than \$5 million to run for Congress.

Cherfilus-McCormick could be reached for comments and didn’t release a statement on her opponents.

According to his professional profile, Manley was a candidate for the Florida House of Representatives for District 94 and the Broward County School Board but lost both races. Manley held down several jobs in the hospitality industry and was a substitute teacher in Broward County.

Cherfilus-McCormick won a special election in 2022 for Congressional District 20 to replace Alcee Hastings, who died of cancer in 2021. She won re-election in the regular election in 2022 and ran unopposed in 2024.

The primary election is in August of 2026 while the general election is set for Nov. 3, 2026.



## Tributes Pour In As Biggie's Jamaican Mom Passes At 78

Voletta Wallace, the Caribbean immigrant and Jamaican born mother of the late rap icon The Notorious B.I.G., has passed away at the age of 78. Wallace, who was in hospice care at her home in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, died of natural causes, according to the Monroe County Coroner's Office.

Born in Trelawney, Jamaica, the hometown also of Olympian Usain St. Leo Bolt, Wallace was a devoted mother who played a central role in shaping the life of her son, Christopher Wallace, known later to the world as Biggie Smalls. A former pre-school teacher, she raised him as a single parent in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood, keeping a close watch on him even as he pursued his passion for music. Biggie referenced his mother in many of his songs, including the 1994 classic 'Juicy' and 'Things Done Changed.'

A Legacy of Strength and Dedication

Following Biggie's tragic murder in 1997, Wallace

became the guardian of his legacy, overseeing his estate and ensuring that his impact on music and culture remained alive. Just six months after his passing, she took the stage at the MTV Video Music Awards, accepting his award for Best Rap Video with grace and resilience. With her voice briefly breaking, she honored her son's roots: "If my son was here tonight, the first thing he would have done is say... big up to Brooklyn."

Determined to share Biggie's story, she authored the 2005 memoir, 'Biggie: Voletta Wallace Remembers Her Son, Christopher Wallace, aka Notorious B.I.G.,' where she reflected on the immense love people still had for him. "That cannot take my pain away... He was my baby. I am a mother and I will always be a mother," she said in an emotional NPR interview.

In 2009, she served as a producer for the biopic 'Notorious,' where Angela Bassett portrayed her. Wallace frequently visited the set and



Voletta Wallace stands in front of a wax likeness of her late son, Christopher Wallace, known professionally as the rapper "The Notorious B.I.G." or "Biggie Smalls," at Madame Tussauds in New York, Thursday, Oct. 25, 2007. (AP Photo/Madame Tussauds New York, Albert Ferreira)

admitted the experience was deeply emotional. "It made me angry, made me sad. I learned a lot about my son – a lot that I never knew. But I still love him because he was from here," she said, placing a hand over her heart.

### Honoring Biggie's Legacy

Wallace remained active in celebrating her son's contributions to hip-hop. In 2022, she joined Biggie's children, Lil' Kim, and Lil' Cease to light up the Empire State Building in red and white in honor of what would have

been his 50th birthday. The tribute was part of a series of commemorations, including a MetroCard featuring Biggie's image and an orchestral tribute at Lincoln Center.

### Tributes Pour In

Congressman and Democratic House Minority Leader, Hakeem Jeffries, who represents Biggie's home borough of Brooklyn, paid tribute to Wallace, calling her an "intelligent, strong, and dignified Queen Mother who raised a legend."

"We mourn her loss, but celebrate her life and take comfort from the fact that she is now reunited with her beloved Notorious B.I.G. in heaven. May she forever rest in peace," he said.

Voletta Wallace's unwavering love and dedication to her son ensured that his legacy endured long after his passing. Now, she rests alongside him, forever remembered as the matriarch of one of hip-hop's greatest icons.



## Mayor Alix Desulme Born For Public Service

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

From the first Black and youngest Haitian American city clerk to city council member, vice mayor, and now mayor, Alix Desulme has witnessed many changes in the city where he grew up. His 15 years in public service to the city of North Miami has ushered in political, social and demographic changes. Once an Anglo-American stronghold, today North Miami is predominantly home to Haitian American and Latino communities.

Change is indeed constant, but some things remain the same because they are meant to be.

"At six years old, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. I used to play school. I knew I wanted to be a leader, but as I think about it, public service is about serving," Mayor Desulme told Caribbean Today in a recent interview. "So, all my life I always wanted to serve people."

### THREATS

And in light of the threats to immigrant populations across the US, serving the people means fighting for the rights of the many immigrants who reside in North Miami, particularly in the Haitian American community. Asked how his constituents are affected by the Trump administration's sweeping immigration policies, Desulme noted: "Even prior to the incoming administration taking office, there were some very, very disparaging comments that the now President made about Haitian people. It has been very, very nerve racking. It's

everything you could possibly think of. It's scary. People are terrified to live their lives."

Mayor Desulme added that all immigrants are under attack, not just Haitians. But he was quick to point out that he agrees that criminal migrants should indeed be deported.

"But there are the other bucket of folks who are under Temporary Protective Status who are under legal protection status, and those are people that we are fighting for and we are advocating for because they don't have a voice," he stressed.

"Our community is built on resilience, hard work, and a deep sense of belonging," added the mayor. "And for many of those who face fears and uncertainty, this is something new. But we just have to keep praying and keep it going. Because as a people who were enslaved from Africa, we've gone through a lot. We can't take much more. But the fear is real."

### HOUSING

These drastic immigration issues are additional burdens for a community that has been facing a shortage of affordable housing and median household income below the county average. To help alleviate these problems, North Miami's Community Redevelopment Agency has been working with developers giving them Tax increment Financing, (TIF) as



Haitian American and first Black Mayor of North Miami, Alix Desulme says the purpose of the role is to take care of people. (Contributed image)

incentives to build affordable housing for those in need.

Mayor Desulme explained that one such project, which was recently completed, saw the developer get \$8 million cash and another \$8 million in TIF rebate. Renters would now be eligible for affordable housing lotteries based on their median income, calculated as 70 percent below the Area Median Income, (AMI), the area being the county with an AMI of \$70,000+. However, with North Miami's median household income at about \$50,000, this could create an uneven playing field some potential renters.

Another Florida law that is meant to encourage the building of affordable housing is the Live Local Act. But Desulme is not convinced it has enough impact.

"The Republicans in Tallahassee have given developers a lot of leeway, and they have taken a lot of control away from local government,"

he said. "A developer who's building a development that meets certain requirement can bypass the city council. So that's one way that we don't have much control."

### TRAINING

In addition to shoring up the city's economy and finances, Mayor Desulme is actively working to support his constituents by creating as many jobs as possible and training them so they can fight and survive the issues facing them.

One of his initiatives, dubbed Leaders in Training, (LIT), gives youth 12 weeks of robust training in local government and civic organizations. Upon graduation they are given the opportunity to work in a local government department over the summer at \$15 per hour gaining the skills they need to succeed in the real world. Desulme has partnered with New York City's Brooklyn College to bring his LIT initiative to their city.

Now in his third year as Mayor of North Miami, Desulme reflected on his role and future.

"There is this sense you have to stay grounded," he said. "You have got people around you that will keep you humble. The purpose of this role is to take care of people. God gives you an opportunity to do what you need to do, so you need to seize that opportunity. Whether it is through mentorship, advocacy, policy, or empowering others, I'm all about stepping up to create a change for our community."



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# Where Is 'Haitians For Trump Now' That He's Ending TPS For Their Compatriots?

A day after Donald Trump's administration announced the end of Temporary Protected Status, (TPS), for Haitians - just as it did for Venezuelans - I checked the X account for the so-called "Official Haitians for Trump Coalition of Donald J. Trump for President."

Silence!  
Just as they were when Trump claimed Haitians in Ohio were eating dogs and cats. Just as they were when he allegedly called Haiti a "shithole country." Instead, the only statement on their bio reads: "POTUS appreciates the Haitian American community across America."

I wish I were making this up. But the mental chains run deep.

## The Hypocrisy Of Haitians For Trump

Ironically, this same group once loudly proclaimed their support for TPS. In 2017, when Trump first attempted to revoke it, they declared: "We have always stood for #TPS." They even acknowledged that Haiti wasn't ready to take back 58,000 people and vowed to push for permanent residency solutions. But now, as Haiti descends into chaos, gang rule, mass killings, they are nowhere to be found.

Where is Madgie Nicolas,

the group's purported leader? Her X account is suspended, and she's now using the Haitians for Trump account to beg Elon Musk to



FELICIA J. PERSAUD

reinststate her profile - as if that's the real crisis at hand.

Meanwhile, Haitian organizations like Haitian Bridge Alliance are fighting back against the Trump administration's cruel policy, calling out the absurdity of deporting 520,000 Haitians back to a country where gangs control 85% percent of the capital, and massacres, kidnappings, and rapes are at an all-time high. More than 5,600 people were killed last year, and many of the displaced are now crammed into abandoned government buildings, where violence - especially against women - is rampant.

## Selling Out For The 'New King'

Haiti cannot take back half a million people. It is dangerous, inhumane, and the U.S. is doing nothing to help - including cutting USAID funding. But Haitians For Trump obviously

does not care. They won't speak out because their allegiance is not to their people but to the man they see as their ticket to economic empowerment - their "new King" and God.

Malcolm X once described the House Negro as someone who loves his master, will pay three times the price to live near him, and brags about being "the only one" in a white space.

And when asked if he wants to separate, he recoils in horror, exclaiming: "Separate? From America, this good white man?"

The modern-day House Negro today isn't just on the plantation - he's on X, wearing a MAGA hat, and defending a man who is actively working to destroy, terrorize and humiliate his people while attempting to send them into a situation where

they could be history. And that, my friends, is the saddest part of all.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** 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.



## Hell Hath No Fury

A woman scorned or spurned, if you prefer, can bring down hell and damnation and a fury that only mother nature can match in the form of a tempest or volcanic eruption.

And that fury comes in all forms too, not always in a blaze of fire, but can be insidious and sneaky as a slow poison, a toxic venom from a viper, or a silent plague of epic proportions.



TONY ROBINSON

A woman spurned is a danger, not only to the person who spurned her, but to almost anyone who is in her proximity. A hurricane that does not discriminate in its path of destruction. Plus, the weapons that she uses may even be her own flesh and blood, her children or other family members. That's the intent to which she'll go to inflict damage on the object of her rage.

They say that when a woman loves she loves deeply, therefore when that love is not returned or is cast away like the chaff from wheat, or the husk from corn, then the pain can be devastating. A man can be superficial when dealing with a woman, conflating love with lust, and can love 'em and leave 'em without even a cursory glance in his rear-view mirror. That's why men can move on so easily.

But when a woman gives

her precious body and even more precious, her heart and soul to a man, and he embraces them all, then decides to spurn her after, expect a backlash of fire and brimstone.

That can have a devastating effect on a woman, as she feels as if her heart has been ripped from her chest. Some will go gently into the night, but others will lash out with the fury of a banshee just released from the depths of Hades.

Sometimes she will go after the man who spurned her, inflicting injury to his person, raining blows on him or even worse, mutilating him. Many times, that fury is directed at the man and his possessions, as she'll inflict great damage on his vehicle, destroying it by breaking every glass that she can, or she'll cut up his clothes and throw them out the window like so much confetti from a ticker tape parade.

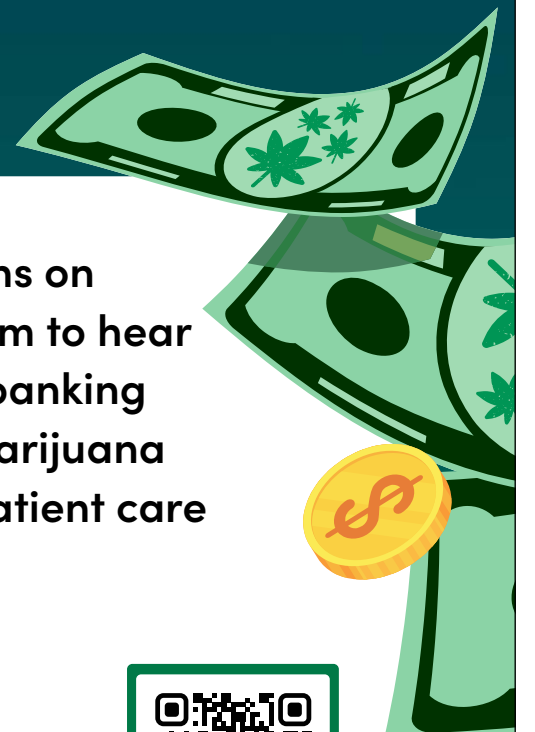
She'll even go after his prized flat screen TV or stereo set or mash up his apartment. At times though, this fury can be insidious, like a stealth bomber, as she uses the children of the union as pawns in her chess game of destruction.

There's this case about this woman who tried her best to keep her daughter from seeing the father because the relationship soured. Every effort that the man made to connect with his child, she would block it, preventing the man from taking his child to father/daughter bonding activities, always making alternative plans to thwart his efforts.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

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# VIEWPOINT



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## From Elon, With Love: “You’re Fired”

BY BEN JEALOUS

It was February 14th, Valentine’s Day. But what nearly 400 Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA), employees got that day were not Valentine’s notes but pink slips.

The firings touched critical roles in EPA offices across the country, including dozens of scientists at the agency’s Chicago office. The American people did not vote for toxic air and poisoned water. But that will be the consequence as Donald Trump and Elon Musk move not only to dismantle the programs that keep our families healthy and safe, but to fire, recklessly, the dedicated civil servants who have devoted their careers to doing the same.

That same wave of civil servant layoffs ensnared about 3,400 US Forest Service employees and roughly 1,000 employees of the National Park Service, (NPS). You might be struggling to make sense of a decision to institute big cuts at an agency tasked with managing forests and preventing and fighting wildfires immediately following some of the most destructive wildfires this country has ever seen.

But an examination of these mass firings also shows that senselessness and sloppiness – and utter inefficiency – are hallmarks of Trump and Musk’s so-called Department of Government Efficiency, (DOGE). Further illustrating that sloppiness across agencies, some of the most egregious terminations of vital workers had to be rescinded days later. Imagine vacationing with your family at one of America’s beloved national parks and getting stuck in a bathroom for



Dr Evil? Elon Musk holds a chainsaw that was gifted to him at the Conservative Political Action Conference at the Gaylord National Resort Hotel And Convention Center in Oxon Hill, Md. (Andrew Harnik/Getty Images)

hours because something is wrong with the lock, but the park doesn’t have a locksmith. Nate Vince, Yosemite National Park’s locksmith, was also fired on Valentine’s Day. He explained in a post on Instagram that he was just three weeks shy of the end of his one-year probationary period, after apprenticing for four years under the park’s previous locksmith.

He also noted Yosemite is the size of Rhode Island with “more locks than a small city” for everything, from a federal court to administrative buildings, gun safes, and more.

“Without a locksmith I’m deeply concerned for the safety and security of the park and people in it,” Vince said. “The people that fired me don’t know who I am, or what I do. They simply don’t understand this park and how big and complex it is.”

Park Ranger Alex Wild,

also fired on Valentine’s Day, was the only emergency medical technician at Devils Postpile National Monument, a rock formation and waterfall along California’s Pacific Crest Trail.

And the layoffs hit other popular sites like Grand Canyon National Park, which prompted the Association of National Park Rangers to warn of slower rescue efforts, as well as reduced programs and more litter. Following layoffs that gutted the team managing rentals within Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania, visitors received notice their reservations had been indefinitely” cancelled.”

The list of examples goes on. And again, this is not what the American people voted for. Three quarters of Americans see the National Park Service in a positive light and 88% of Americans - including 85% of Republicans - want National Park wildlife better protected.

The financial wrongheadedness of the Trump-Musk slash-and-burn project also jumps out. Their supposed efforts to save taxpayers money by laying off thousands of hardworking civil servants and cutting food aid, science, education, medical research and more are going to end up costing Americans more out of their own pockets. In some cases, the programs and agencies being gutted will cost taxpayers far more in economic growth and direct government revenue than the amount of the “cuts.”

For 2025 and the past few years, the National Parks Services budget hovers at just over \$3 billion per year. In 2023 alone, that budget - a relatively high \$3.75 billion that year - supported 415,000 jobs and \$55.6 billion in economic output. To put it another way, for every \$1 invested, American taxpayers see a nearly \$15 boost to our national economy.

This is part-in-parcel with the sloppiness – and also dishonesty – with which DOGE is operating. The total personnel costs for the federal civilian workforce are only 4.4% of our federal budget. Foreign aid – which has been at the top of the headlines since Trump and Musk decided to decimate USAID – has only ranged between 0.7% and 1.4% of the budget since 2001.

As they gut key agencies and the federal workforce, what are some examples of where this administration is focusing our tax dollars? Well, there is the \$200 million international ad campaign by the Homeland Security Department, personally requested by Trump, “thanking” the president for his immigration and border policies. And, of course, there are the massive tax cuts for America’s very wealthiest, that are really the crown jewel of the Trump-Musk agenda.

The great John Lewis, who

would have turned 85 this past Friday, wrote: “When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself.”

That act of democracy must not happen only in election years. It is up to all of us to hold power accountable, keep sounding the alarm, and keep speaking out for justice for all. Because, as Rep. Lewis also reminded us, “A democracy cannot thrive where power remains unchecked, and justice is reserved for a select few.”

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** Ben Jealous is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.



## Hell Hath No Fury



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

“You can’t take her to the movies today, she has to wash her hair.” This continued until she eventually left the country to live overseas with the child without even informing the dad and eventually cut off all communication with the man who has no idea where his daughter is or what she’s doing.

A spurned woman’s fury has no boundaries. Yes, they’ll use the children against the man, wielding them like battering rams to get to him. I have known women who carry grudges, fury and rage against men who have spurned them for many years, spanning decades. I have this friend who lives in the USA whose wife is still raging mad at him for spurning her. She hasn’t spoken to him for over thirty years and refuses to be in the same space as him.

Just like the fires of Hell, that fury can last for eternity. How can someone remain bitter and angry for so long? But Hell is forever they say, and so is the fury of a spurned woman. The irony is, the men have moved on, started new lives and never looked back, even as the woman is stewing in her bitterness and anger.

You can spurn a woman yes, but don’t turn your back on her and let down your guard, but keep looking over your shoulder or stay as far away as possible, for that fury can come in many ways.

**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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## PBS Honors Late Trinidadian Jazz Icon And Activist Hazel Scott

PBS last month paid tribute to the late, Hazel Scott, the Trinidadian-born jazz virtuoso, actress and civil rights activist, with the premiere of 'American Masters – The Disappearance of Miss Scott.' The documentary aired on February 21 at 9 p.m. ET in honor of Black History Month and featured archival footage, interviews, and excerpts from her unpublished autobiography. It was voiced by Jamaican American Sheryl Lee Ralph.



The late Hazel Scott. (PBS image)

The documentary highlighted Scott's musical brilliance, activism, and legacy. Scott, a musical prodigy from Port of Spain, Trinidad, became a trailblazer in jazz and Hollywood, making history as the first Black American to host a national TV show. However, her rising career was cut short when she was blacklisted during the 1950s 'Red Scare,' after testifying before the House Un-

American Activities Committee. She was married to former Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., but divorced him after her move to Paris and amid rumors of infidelity and fights in the marriage. She is survived by her son, Adam Clayton Powell, III.



## Reggae Mourns The Loss Of Determine, Prilly Hamilton And Ken Parker

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Last month was also a somber time, with the deaths of three stalwart artists. Determine, Prilly Hamilton and Ken Parker died in the United States. Each made their mark in the music industry.

Best known for the 1995 hit song Kette Drum with Beenie Man, Determine passed away in Baltimore, Maryland from stomach cancer at age 52.

Determine, whose real name was Rohan Bennett, was synonymous with Kette Drum which was produced by Bobby Digital. While he never had another big hit, the song remains a staple on reggae radio.

Hamilton, original lead singer of the Third World band, died in Florida on February 17 at age 74 from kidney complications. He sang lead on Third World's self-titled debut album which was released in



Ken Parker, Determine and Prilly Hamilton all passed away last month in the United States.

1976 by Island Records. That eclectic set included a cover of The Abyssinians' Satta Massagana, Kumina, Slavery Days and Freedom Song.

Shortly after the album's

release, he left Third World and was replaced by Bunny Rugs. Hamilton continued to record,

Shenseea, Vybz Kartel and Spice took center stage at the recent 2025 MOBO Awards. Shenseea secured her second 'Best Caribbean Music Act' award while Kartel made a surprise appearance to accept the MOBO Impact Award in person.

He also performed a short set while dancehall queen Spice, made her MOBO Awards performance debut with the high-energy "So Mi Like It."

The awards ceremony, held in Newcastle, UK, saw Shenseea triumph over Skillibeng, Popcaan, Spice, YG Marley, and last year's winner Valiant in the Caribbean music category. This marks her second win, following her 2021 victory.

However, the highlight of the evening was the moment dancehall legend Kartel appeared on stage to accept his MOBO Impact Award, accompanied by his son, Likkle Vybz, and fiancée, Sidem. The award was presented by Spice.



Vybz Kartel performs a short opening set at the 2025 MOBOs. (MOBO image/screengrab)



Spice made her debut as a performer at the MOBOs. (MOBO image/screengrab)

MOBO Founder & CEO Kanya King CBE praised Kartel's influence, stating, "Vybz

Kartel's impact on music is immeasurable. His influence extends beyond the world of dancehall, in which he is a musical giant."

Founded in 1996, the MOBO Awards celebrate Black-origin music across genres including Hip Hop, Grime, R&B, Reggae, Jazz, Gospel, and Afrobeats. Over the years, MOBO has played a key role in recognizing and supporting exceptional talent, both in the UK and internationally.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## Machel Montano Denied Back-To-Back Calypso Monarch Title



Helon Francis is T&T's National Calypso Monarch 2025. (Photo via: TTT Live)

Helon Francis was crowned Calypso Monarch on Sunday night, March 2nd, defeating reigning champion Machel Montano and securing the TT\$700,000 grand prize and a new vehicle.

Francis outperformed fierce competition, including Kurt Allen, who placed second with his song "Your Turn Now," and Yung Bredda (Akhenaton Lewis), who finished third with "We Rise." Montano, competing against six other former monarchs, placed fifth with his tune "Bet Meh."

Despite his loss in the Calypso Monarch competition, Montano secured another major

title on Saturday night, winning King of Chutney Soca, defeating past champions Neval Chatelal and Rikki Jai. Reshma "Warrior Princess" Ramlal claimed the Queen of Chutney title.

Blaka Dan Wins Inaugural Ultimate Soca Champion Grenadian artist Blaka Dan (Wrenroy Ogiste) won the TT\$1 million first prize in the first-ever Ultimate Soca Champion competition with his song "Blessings." Yung Bredda finished second, winning TT\$300,000 and an additional TT\$10,000 as the People's Champion, along with one year

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



# Wayne Wonder's 'No Letting Go' Goes Platinum In The UK After 22 Years

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Twenty-two years after it was released, 'No Letting Go' by Wayne Wonder continues to win accolades. In February, the singer was presented with a platinum plaque by the British Phonographic Industry, (BPI), for sales of over 600,000 units in the United Kingdom.

The BPI officially announced the certification last October along with gold recognition (400,000 units) for Sean Paul's 'We Be Burning' and silver certification (200,000 units) for Jimmy Cliff's 'I Can See Clearly Now.'

Produced by Steven "Lenky" Marsden on the catchy Diwali beat, No Letting Go was a strong global seller. It peaked at number three on the British national chart and number 11 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart in the United States.

Prior to No Letting Go, Wayne Wonder flirted with the pop mainstream on dancehall songs like Saddest Day of My Life and Joyride, but neither cracked the major pop charts. The Diwali was a monster seller that yielded other hits such as Sean Paul's Get Busy, Galang Gal by TOK and Sufferer by Bounty Killer.

The BPI award was presented during a fruitful period for Wayne Wonder, who hails from east Kingston in Jamaica. On February 2, he received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Reggae Genealogy show in Plantation, South Florida.

On March 30th, he will receive a similar award from organizers of the International Reggae And World Music Awards, (IRAWMA), at the Coral Springs Center For The Arts.

"For my career, this recognition speaks volumes. It highlights the longevity, consistency, and significance of my contributions to music and culture," said Wayne Wonder. "It's proof that hard work, resilience, and staying true to my craft, even when some doubted me and my vision, will always be acknowledged in due time. This award is not just about past achievements but also a reminder that, God willing, the journey continues, and there's still more to give and accomplish."

Wayne Wonder's career took during the early 1990s when he was a member of Penthouse



Singer Wayne Wonder with a platinum plaque from the British Phonographic Industry, signifying sales of over 600,000 units for his song No Letting Go in the United Kingdom. (Contributed image)

Records, a Kingston-based company operated by producer Donovan Germain. That camp also included Beres Hammond, Buju Banton, Marcia Griffiths and Cutty Ranks.

'Saddest Day of My Life' and 'Bonafide Love' (with Buju Banton), were two of his hits at Penthouse. In the late 1990s, Wonder formed a formidable partnership with Dave Kelly who produced 'Joyride,' 'Bashment Girl' and 'Keep Them Coming.'



# Joanna Marie Robinson Balances Business And Music With Reggae Global Radio

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

While she has been a singer/musician for most of her life, Joanna Marie Robinson always considered herself a businesswoman. Known in music circles as Joanna Marie, she put recording on hold six years ago to start a digital radio station with her husband, fellow singer Ed Robinson.

Based in South Florida, Reggae Global Radio (RGR) began broadcasting on October 4, 2020. Its mandate - "to bring authentic reggae music and culture to a global audience." Approaching its fifth anniversary, Joanna Marie says while managing a digital radio station is exciting, competing for market share is not easy.

"Operating in the competitive digital radio space presents several challenges, including keeping up with evolving technology, maintaining audience engagement, and distinguishing ourselves from other platforms offering reggae and Caribbean music," she told Caribbean Today. "One major challenge is securing advertising and sponsorship in an industry where larger media companies dominate the market. Additionally, managing streaming costs, licensing, and marketing while ensuring high-quality programming requires constant innovation and dedication."

The Marley-owned Tuff Gong Radio which streams on SiriusXM is arguably the most successful digital reggae format. It plays the music of Bob Marley throughout the day; Shaggy's Boombastic Radio, which plays contemporary music, also airs on SiriusXM.

RGR has a global base of Disc Jockeys who have an

"unwavering commitment to showcasing reggae music in its purest form." That means, unlike many stations, the playlist is not



Joanna Marie Robinson, (third from left), and her husband Ed Robinson, (fifth from left), with staff at Reggae Global Radio. (Contributed image)

strong on hardcore dancehall music.

Born in Kingston, Joanna Marie was raised in a middle-class family with strong commercial ties. They operated companies in Kingston, Ocho Rios and Montego Bay that catered for parties and lifestyle events.

Her mother, a baker, provided products for outlets such as the Harbour View Drive-In in Kingston. Inspired by that business acumen, Joanna Marie ran several ventures while pursuing a music career. RGR is her most ambitious project to date.

"Our team consists of a dedicated group of DJs, hosts, producers, and support staff from various parts of the world. While the core team is small, we collaborate with a larger network of contributors who are dedicated to keep the station running smoothly and ensure that reggae music continues to reach and inspire fans worldwide," she said.



# Machel Montano Denied Back-To-Back Calypso Monarch Title

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11) of free bMobile service. Akeem "Preedy" Chance took third place with "Blaze Fire," earning TT\$150,000.

Exodus Wins National Panorama Title After 20-Year Drought

Republic Bank Exodus made history on Saturday night, winning the 2025 National Panorama Large Band competition with its rendition of "Too Own Way," scoring 288 points. The Tunapuna-based band ended a 20-year title

drought, denying bp Renegades a historic three-peat.

Renegades placed second with 285 points, performing Montano's "Bet Meh." Heritage Petroleum Skiffle Steel Orchestra finished third with 283 points, playing Voice's "Retro." The 2024 joint winners, Renegades and Massy Trinidad All Stars, placed second and eighth, respectively.

- Rewritten from CMC



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# Caribbean Born Celebrity Chef To Head Rumhouse In Maryland

A new upscale Caribbean dining experience is arriving in Annapolis, Maryland, with the opening of Rumhouse in the city's Eastport neighborhood. The restaurant is helmed by acclaimed Trinidadian chef Natasha de Bourg, known for her role on Bravo TV's Below Deck Sailing Yacht and her work in some of the world's top kitchens, including the three-Michelin-starred Mirazur in France.

Blending Caribbean flavors with global influences, the menu features dishes such as doubles, a Trinidadian favorite with fried flatbreads and curried chickpeas, and a Venezuelan-inspired crab cake served with guasacaca, a vibrant avocado-based sauce. Guests can also enjoy a six-course tasting menu on Fridays and Saturdays, which changes weekly and is available by reservation.

Rumhouse offers an extensive selection of premium rums from Jamaica, Barbados,



Famed Trinidadian chef Natasha de Bourg to head Rumhouse

Mexico, and Trinidad, alongside handcrafted cocktails like the Madame Coco, made with clarified milk punch and housemade lemongrass rum.

The restaurant is the vision of Dr. Coryse Brathwaite Zebovitz, a Trinidadian-born OB-GYN, and her husband, Dr. Edward Zebovitz, an oral surgeon. Their goal is to create a warm and welcoming space that celebrates Caribbean culture and cuisine. Their son, Jonathan Dean, will serve as director of hospitality.

Located at 422 6th St. near the Eastport side of the Spa Creek Bridge, Rumhouse will be open Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday for brunch from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Reservations are recommended and can be made at rumhouseannapolis.com. Guests can also follow @rumhouseannapolis on Instagram and Facebook for updates.

Chef Natasha's exceptional work has earned her the opportunity to cook for dignitaries, celebrities,

and monarchs. She gained international recognition as the chef on Season 2 of Bravo TV's Below Deck Sailing Yacht, streaming on Peacock and Bravo, and has appeared four times on Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen.

A trailblazer in Caribbean culinary history, she was the first Caribbean and first female Caribbean student at César Ritz Colleges Switzerland to simultaneously serve as culinary president, health ambassador, and resident ambassador. Chef Natasha holds degrees in Culinary Arts from Derby University,

International Business from César Ritz College, and Hospitality & Tourism from Tobago Hospitality & Tourism Institute. Furthering her expertise, she studied mixology under Colin Peter Field, named the world's best bartender by Forbes, at the Ritz Paris. Currently, Chef Natasha is pursuing Culinary Psychology at Harvard Extension School while serving as the Founder and President of the Trinidad Culinary Association.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## Stock Your Fridge And Pantry Right With These Tips

With a growing number of products lining grocery store shelves, feeding your household can often feel like solving a complicated puzzle.

Fortunately, shopping doesn't have to be complex. Guiding consumers to the best products in the market is Product of the Year, the largest consumer-voted award for product innovation. Product of the Year winners are backed by the votes of 40,000 consumers in a national representative study conducted by Kantar, and have demonstrated meaningful consumer innovation in one of the following areas: function, design, packaging or ingredients.

"Seeking out Product of the Year's red seal of approval is an easy shortcut for savvy shoppers in a hurry," says Mike Nolan, global CEO of Product of the Year Management. "Knowing that the red seal means the product has been tested and approved by thousands of other shoppers can give you confidence that you're spending your grocery dollars wisely."

To simplify your grocery shopping in the year ahead, consider these 17 Product of the Year food and beverage winners of 2025, listed by category:

- Bakery Side Dish: Texas Roadhouse Mini Rolls
- Better-For-You Snack: ALDI-Exclusive Savoritz Cheese Crisps
- Breakfast: Veggies Made Great Loaded Breakfast Potato Bakes
- Cheese: Organic Valley Flavor Favorites Spicy Cheddar
- Coffee: Folgers Coffee Instant Flavored Latte Mix
- Convenience Meal: Minute Rice Cups

- Dessert: ALDI-Exclusive Specially Selected Premium Cookie Dough
- Dip Snack: Castello Whipped Dips
- Frozen Entrée: ALDI-Exclusive Kirkwood Chicken Nuggets
- Fruit Snack: ALDI-Exclusive Simply Nature Chocolate Covered Freeze Dried Fruit
- Gluten Free: New York Bakery Gluten Free Texas Toast
- Healthy Beverage: ALDI-Exclusive Summit Popz Prebiotic Sodas
- Meal Ingredient: ALDI-Exclusive Park Street Deli Pickle Chips
- Seafood: ALDI-Exclusive Specially Selected Snow Crab Legs
- Spirits: Bulleit American Single Malt Whiskey
- Sweet Snack: Nutella B-Ready
- Wine: ALDI-Exclusive Specially Selected Sparkling Brut Rose

For a chance to win a selection of this year's award-winning products, visit [productoftheyearusa.com/sweepstakes](http://productoftheyearusa.com/sweepstakes). For more information and the complete list of this year's forty-two winners, visit [productoftheyearusa.com](http://productoftheyearusa.com), and follow along on social media with #POYUSA2025 on Instagram, Facebook, X and LinkedIn. A well-stocked kitchen is not only about quantity, it's also about quality. Trusted resources can help you sort through the many options available and shop with ease.

- StatePoint



## Why This Flavor Should Be On Your Plate In 2025

Aji Amarillo, which translates to "yellow chile pepper," is grown in Peru and is native to South America. Long considered a staple ingredient in Peruvian cuisine, this moderate-heat pepper with fruity notes reminiscent of passionfruit and mango is going to spice things up in kitchens worldwide in the year ahead.

That's according to the McCormick Flavor Forecast 25th edition, a well-researched annual report exploring the culinary trends shaping the future of flavor in homes, restaurants and grocery stores.

"Our Flavor of the Year, Aji Amarillo, lends itself to amplifying both sweet and tangy flavors and adds dimension to smoked or charred items," says Hadar Cohen Aviram, executive chef and senior manager, Culinary Development, U.S. Consumer at McCormick. "The Aji Amarillo Seasoning is a delicious, sweet and spicy blend that enhances any dish including seafood, poultry, sauces, salsas and more."

With foodies today increasingly craving flavors that offer both sweet and spicy elements - nearly one-tenth of U.S. restaurants have "sweet and spicy" menu items, according to Datassential - the predicted

popularity of Aji Amarillo aligns perfectly with the "swicy" trend.

To bring this delicious complexity into your own kitchen, try this recipe for Queso Fundido from McCormick - a rich, molten blend of melty cheese, it's the perfect match for the tropical flavors, smoke, and moderate heat of Aji Amarillo Seasoning:



### Queso Fundido Recipe

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Makes 4 Servings

#### Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 teaspoons McCormick Aji Amarillo Seasoning, divided
- 1/2 cup cooked and crumbled Mexican chorizo
- 2 cups shredded Oaxaca cheese, divided
- 1 cup crumbled Cotija cheese,

divided

- 1 1/2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 1 1/2 tablespoons sliced green onions

#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Heat oil in medium-cast-iron skillet on medium high heat. Add onion and garlic, cook and stir until deep golden brown and slightly charred, about 5 minutes. Remove from skillet; mix with 3 teaspoons of the Aji Amarillo Seasoning.

2. Place 1 1/2 cups Oaxaca cheese and 1/2 cup Cotija cheese in skillet. Layer with the onion mixture and cooked chorizo, top with remaining cheese.

3. Bake until the cheese is bubbling, for about 5 to 7 minutes.

4. Remove from oven and garnish with cilantro, sliced green onions and 1 teaspoon Aji Amarillo seasoning. Serve hot with tortilla chips.

"Americans are adventurous eaters and that's reflected in our Flavor of the Year, Aji Amarillo, a true embodiment of flavors that pack a punch," says Cohen Aviram.

- StatePoint



Can We Talk?

Most of us try to attract other people by the friends we keep and the way we carry ourselves.  
If you are going to a party or a formal function, don't you dress well?  
We all want to promote a favorable impression of ourselves to other people we meet and talk to.  
If we agree on that, then think of this. Why should it be any different for your business?  
If you want to project a favorable image of your company, in order to win customers, you should keep your company with good friends and...dress your company well in...

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Peter A. Webley  
Publisher

## How About Scheduling A Mammogram This Month?

It is Women's History Month and while Breast Cancer Awareness month is still months away, March is a good time to practice self-care and schedule a mammogram.

As the American Cancer Society says, finding breast cancer early and receiving advanced treatment are crucial in reducing deaths from the disease. Regular mammograms remain the most effective way to detect breast cancer in its early stages when it is easier to treat.

### Screening For women at average risk - no personal or strong family history, genetic mutations, or prior chest radiation:

- Ages 40-44: Optional annual mammograms.
- Ages 45-54: Yearly mammograms recommended.
- Ages 55+: Mammograms every two years or yearly if preferred.
- For high-risk women (e.g., BRCA gene mutations, prior

chest radiation, or strong family history):

- Annual MRI and mammogram starting at age 30.

### 2D vs. 3D Mammograms

- 3D mammography improves detection, especially for dense breasts, but may have higher costs.
- Women should have the option to choose between 2D and 3D mammograms without financial barriers.

### Clinical Breast Exams & Self-Exams

Routine clinical breast exams (CBE) and self-exams are not strongly recommended, as research shows limited benefits. Women should be familiar with their breasts and report any unusual changes to a doctor.

### Risk Assessment Tools

- Several tools help estimate breast cancer risk based on family history and other factors.



Black Women are more likely to get inferior breast cancer screening says the African American Wellness Project. (AAWP image)

- Women at higher risk should discuss screening options with their doctor.

A recent study published in the Journal of the American College of Radiology (JACR) has found significant racial disparities in mammography

screening, particularly in access to digital breast tomosynthesis (DBT), the advanced 3D mammography technology.

The study analysed over 800,000 screening exams from 385,504 Asian, Black, and Caucasian women at 63 U.S.

breast imaging centres between 2015 and 2019. While DBT improved cancer detection and recall rates for all women, Black women were less likely to receive a DBT mammogram and had fewer screenings over the five-year period than white women.

Given that Black women are nearly 40% more likely to die from breast cancer despite similar incidence rates, researchers emphasize the urgent need to improve access to DBT and promote educational initiatives to increase screening frequency.

### Early Detection Saves Lives

Remember regular screenings increase survival rates, reduce the need for aggressive treatments, and improve outcomes. Talk to your doctor about the best screening plan for you.



## Preventing Overdose Deaths In Black Communities

BY TRACIE GARDNER AND DALIAH HELLER

On Dec. 8, 2024, the air was crisp as Kimberly Douglas made her way to her son Bryce's gravestone in National Harmony Memorial Park in Landover. It's been nearly 18 months since she lost the 17-year-old to a fentanyl overdose. On this day each year, known as Worldwide Candle Lighting Day, families' light candles honouring loved ones gone too soon, like Bryce. This day of remembrance is a stark reminder of the urgent need to prevent similar tragedies.

The pain of the day Kimberly lost her son is seared into her soul. She worked at her home office in Bowie in the early afternoon. Bryce was home early from school and napped in his bedroom, just one room away. When Kimberly found him unresponsive, she frantically searched her home for naloxone, a medicine that reverses an overdose and prevents death. In her panic, she couldn't find it. It wasn't until later, through tears of grief and disbelief, that she discovered the naloxone - in Bryce's pocket. He had it all along.

This country's overdose epidemic has generated a large and active ecosystem of advocacy groups, support organizations, and grieving parents. But Kimberly finds she is often the only Black parent engaged. She has started her own Facebook group, Black Moms Against Overdose, seeking a safe place for Black families whose loved one's overdose. She prays more Black parents will step forward, join



the fight, and be part of the solution.

Over the past five years, a staggering half million people overdosed in the United States. But recent reports suggest a steady upward trend over two decades is reversing. The latest data from the CDC shows a 17% decline in deaths from September 2023 through August 2024.

Over the past decade, however, deaths have skyrocketed in Black and Indigenous populations, and now overdose rates have begun to diverge by race. A recent analysis of CDC data from the O'Neill Institute shows that through 2023, in many states, while deaths were levelling off and even declining among white populations, they were still rising in Black and Indigenous populations.

Why have Black communities not experienced the same decrease in overdose deaths? Through our work

nationwide, we found that critical preventive information and resources often don't reach Black communities. We see two main problems: first, information and resources are not promoted or distributed effectively in Black communities, and second, fallout from America's destructive war on drugs still affects Black communities.

For example, access to the lifesaving medication, naloxone, can reduce overdose deaths. But efforts to expand naloxone distribution have not sufficiently reached Black and Indigenous communities. A modelling study shows overdose deaths among Blacks and Hispanics would dramatically decrease if their access to naloxone were at the same level as whites. Intentional collaboration with community leaders by local and state governments and local health providers can ensure access to naloxone is equitable and will save lives.

Despite the reality that

levels of drug use are relatively uniform across racial groups, the opioid-driven overdose crisis has been widely represented as predominantly impacting white communities, leaving Blacks less informed. Drugs popularized in hip-hop culture, like Percocets and lean (codeine), aren't cast as opioids. Many people are unaware that ingredients such as fentanyl are widespread in the drug supply, increasing risk across the board.

The legacy of the racist war on drugs, which subjected Blacks to community-level criminalization, unequal sentencing, and mass incarceration, wields a lasting influence. Services and public health messages directed at people who use drugs are less impactful for those who fear being stigmatized by a connection to drug use. Messages that can save lives are not being heard. We need to address the stigma of drug use to improve health for all communities, and especially for those historically targeted for drug-related harm.

As a visible advocate, Kimberly fights stigma by providing Black families a space to grieve and take action. Rallying Black voices into this work is crucial to turning back the tide on overdoses and pushing against calls for harsher penalties. The misguided drug policies of decades past have created lingering damage that Black communities still struggle to overcome.

The time for action is now, and community leaders play a vital role. Local governments should establish and support

partnerships with Black community leaders to share overdose prevention information and naloxone resources with local communities. Engagement is especially critical now, to ensure equitable access to naloxone and reduce disparities and overdose deaths for everyone.

Naloxone is easy to use and available for free from most local health departments and from a growing number of community partners in cities and towns across the country. It is also available for purchase over the counter at any pharmacy.

The key to saving a life with naloxone is administering it as soon as you recognize any sign of an overdose. Anyone who is in community with someone who uses drugs - family, friends, local businesses, neighbours, and associates - can be activated and prepared to help.

With community partners, we are launching a seven-city "Naloxone in Black" media campaign in late March to promote access to the lifesaving medication.

Every overdose death is a preventable tragedy. With naloxone in hand, you can save a life.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Tracie Gardner is the executive director of the National Black Harm Reduction Network. Daliah Heller is VP of Overdose Prevention Initiatives for Vital Strategies. This article was first published exclusively by the Washington Informer.



# Dominican Republic Arajet Airlines Set To Expand Miami Operation

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

Arajjet Airlines, one of the largest airlines of the Dominican Republic, is expanding its flight operation in Miami.

Victor Pacheco, co-owner of Arajjet, told the Caribbean Today that flights from Miami to the Caribbean will start on April 11th, with four scheduled flights a week, and expand to seven in June.

Each jet has a capacity of 189 passengers. Arajjet is backed by Griffin Global Asset Management and Bain Capital.

Bain Capital is one of the world's largest private multi-asset alternative investment firms and Global is a commercial aircraft leasing and alternative



asset management company which also operates the Boeing's Miami Flight Training Campus.

Headquartered in Santo Domingo, Pacheco said Arajjet was launched in 2022 to provide low-cost flights to North Central and South America including places like Mexico, Guatemala, San Salvador, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Argentina.

Pacheco, who lives in Santo Domingo, said Arajjet has transported 2.4 million passengers since its debut and a record 1.2 million travelers last year alone.

"This year, we're aiming for 1.7 million passengers, which would be another record," Pacheco said.

Bred in a family of

entrepreneurs, Pacheco said travel expenses in the Caribbean were high, driven by flight rates as high as \$900.

He said other entrepreneurs doing business in the Caribbean and Central America were also impacted by the high fares and Pacheco focused on an airline offering cheaper rates. He also wanted to address the lack of commercial airlines in those countries at the time.

Pacheco said it took 10 years and a lot of money to raise to start the commercial airline business, operating in 18 markets in the first 90 days including Mexico, Columbia, Costa Rica, Peru, Aruba and Canada.

Arajjet now operates ten brand new fleets of aircraft with

640 staff members including pilots, stewardesses, technicians and administrative staff Pacheco said Arajjet acquired the open skies agreement and license six months ago to operate flights in Miami.

He said Arajjet, which won Best Start up airline in 2023, is now seeking to expand flights to New York and Puerto Rico. Pacheco said the airline is affordable and offers more flights for people who frequently visit their home countries.

"Passengers can see more connections to Argentina, Brazil and other Latin American countries," he said. "They can go back home through our networks."



## The Bahamas Makes History With First-Ever SpaceX Rocket Landing



The reusable rocket from SpaceX successfully lifting off at Port Canaveral.

Elon Musk may fast be becoming one of the most disliked men in the world among liberals, but The Bahamas is celebrating Musk's company SpaceX as it officially allowed them to make history as the first international destination to welcome a SpaceX Falcon 9 booster landing.

At approximately 6:29 PM ET on February 18, the reusable rocket from SpaceX successfully touched down on an autonomous drone ship off the coast of The Exumas, marking a monumental moment for both space exploration and Bahamian tourism.

This historic achievement is just the beginning. SpaceX reportedly will make 19 more landings in The Bahamas, solidifying the country's role in the future of space tourism and STEM education.

A New Era for The Bahamas

A delegation of Bahamian officials, led by Prime Minister Phillip E. Davis and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Investments & Aviation Chester Cooper, gathered at Cape Eleuthera Resort and Marina to witness the event firsthand. The successful landing not only highlights the growing global interest in space travel but also

showcases The Bahamas as a hub for innovation, tourism, and scientific advancement.

"This historic feat positions our nation as a global leader in space tourism and technological progress," said Prime Minister Davis. "Yesterday's rocket landing reaffirmed that The Bahamas is not just a destination of beauty, but also of limitless possibilities in exploration and discovery."

Deputy Prime Minister Cooper echoed the sentiment, calling the event a "launchpad for Bahamian tourism, economic growth, and education." He added, "Space tourism is here. Innovation is here. The future is here in The Bahamas."

International Collaboration & STEM Advancement The event was also attended by former NASA scientist and STEMBoard Founder & CEO Aisha Bowe, whose work has been instrumental in establishing space protocols in The Bahamas. SpaceX has committed to donating \$1 million to the University of The Bahamas to advance STEM education, inspiring young Bahamians to pursue careers in science and technology.



## Second US Airline Launches Nonstop Flights To This Caribbean Island

Dominica has welcomed its second nonstop U.S. carrier with the launch of United Airlines' direct service from Newark Liberty International Airport to Douglas-Charles Airport. The new route, which began on February 15, enhances accessibility to the Caribbean destination known as the "Nature Island."

The weekly Saturday flight departs Newark at 9:10 a.m., arriving in Dominica at 2:39 p.m. local time. Return flights leave Dominica at 3:45 p.m., landing in Newark at 7:51 p.m. The route is operated using a Boeing 737-

700 aircraft.

To mark the inaugural flight, celebrations were held at both airports, including a gate event in Newark and a ceremonial water cannon salute upon arrival in Dominica.

The launch follows recent upgrades at Douglas-Charles Airport, including a runway expansion, grooving, and terminal improvements to support increased capacity and operational efficiency.

Denise Charles-Pemberton, Dominica's tourism minister, highlighted the significance of the new service, emphasizing the

island's appeal as a premier ecotourism and wellness destination featuring volcanic landscapes, lush forests, waterfalls, and world-class diving.

With its rich cultural heritage, vibrant festivals, and adventure opportunities like hiking and sea kayaking, Dominica continues to position itself as a must-visit destination in the Caribbean.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## Caribbean Travel & Tours Launches First All-in-One Booking Platform

Breeze Travel Solutions, a leading innovator in tech-driven travel, has launched, Caribbean Travel & Tours, (CTT), the region's first all-in-one booking platform. Designed to revolutionize Caribbean travel, CTT seamlessly integrates flights, accommodations, and curated local experiences into a single portal, eliminating the hassle of booking each component separately while providing expert recommendations and AI-powered tools.

CTT invites travelers to immerse themselves in the authentic heart of the Caribbean through exclusive local experiences. Whether it's connecting with private chefs, learning from knowledgeable historians, or taking a steel pan lesson, users can engage with the region's rich culture on a deeper level.

For those unsure of their next Caribbean destination, CTT's AI-powered travel



assistant offers personalized recommendations, including ideal trip durations and seamless inter-island flight connections. Travelers seeking a more hands-on approach can also access CTT's travel concierge for expert guidance and customized trip planning.

Recognizing the influence of social media, CTT enables content creators to monetize their platforms by designing personalized itineraries, allowing travelers to book and experience the same trips as their favorite

influencers. Travel agents can also utilize CTT to craft seamless, full-service destination itineraries for their clients.

Leveraging cutting-edge technology, CTT provides real-time flight and accommodation availability - from international and regional airlines to luxury resorts and cozy bed-and-breakfasts - ensuring users can book with confidence and ease.

For more details, visit [www.caribbeantravellandtours.com](http://www.caribbeantravellandtours.com).



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## 4 Ways Financial Professionals Recommend You Spend Your Tax Refund

Receiving a tax refund this year? While it can be tempting to impulse spend, if you want to really treat yourself, financial professionals recommend using the payout for practical expenses. According to CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNING® professionals, here are smart ways to spend your tax refund that will improve your life:

### 1. Build An Emergency Fund

Unexpected circumstances, such as illness or job loss, can leave you with more bills and less income. Not having an emergency fund puts you at risk of having to take on high-interest debt to meet expenses. Use your tax refund to create some

peace of mind for yourself and your family. And now that you've started the emergency fund, consider using direct deposit to funnel a portion of each pay check into this account.

### 2. Reduce Debt

Paying down debt can feel like an insurmountable challenge. And if it's a challenge you've been avoiding, you can use your tax refund to kick-start your journey. Not sure where to start? A CFP® professional can help you identify which debt to prioritize



first, as well as help you craft a repayment strategy moving forward.

### 3. Save For Retirement

No matter your age or stage in life, a tax refund offers a great opportunity to give your

retirement account a boost. Thanks to compounding, the money you set aside today in an investment account, such as a 401(k) or Roth IRA, will exponentially grow between now and when it's time to tap your nest egg.

### 4. Set Financial Goals

From planning a vacation or wedding to becoming a homeowner, your goals are worth investing in. Put your tax refund toward something that matters to you.

The best thing you can do may be avoiding future refunds. While it feels great to receive a big check during tax time, a tax refund is effectively an interest-

free loan you have made to the government. You're much better off keeping more of your money throughout the year so you can invest it or use it on things you need. Consult a CFP® professional on how to adjust your withholdings to get closer to breaking even next year. For more tax season tips and to find your CFP® professional, visit LetsMakeAPlan.org. With an actionable plan and the help of a qualified financial professional, you can ensure your tax refund is put to good use.

- StatePoint



## Strengthen Your Relationship With These Financial Tips

Issues around money can put a strain on any couple. However, financial experts say that a strong relationship can be cultivated with financial habits that prioritize communication and shared values.

To help you and your

partner get a handle on your financial health and happiness, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professionals are sharing their best money tips for couples.

### Be open, honest and respectful

Whether discussing debt or other financial commitments, credit scores or shared goals for the future, being transparent with one another is absolutely essential to building trust. At the same time, it's important that

conversations are conducted with respect and empathy. Understanding each other's financial histories, starting with lessons taught in childhood, can lead to more productive discussions.

### Communicate regularly

Having one conversation about money is not enough. Keeping the dialogue open helps ensure you remain on the same page over time. You may find it helpful to schedule a weekly appointment to touch base on issues such as cash flow, savings and goal setting.

### Build a shared budget

Collaborating on a budget is a great way to identify your individual and shared financial priorities and can help you avoid spending surprises down the line. A CFP® professional can review your finances and help you select a budgeting strategy that you both can live with. Once in place, consider using budgeting software to seamlessly share updates.

### Prepare for rainy days

Too many Americans have zero savings, leaving them unprepared for financial emergencies such as job loss, unexpected home repairs and long-term illness. Give your relationship the gift of a robust emergency fund. This will offer you everyday peace of mind, and help you avoid some stress and heartache in the face of unexpected circumstances. Make a holistic financial plan. Work together to create an overarching financial plan that helps you meet your short- and long-term financial goals, such as buying a home, saving for your children's education or preparing for retirement. Specially trained to provide guidance on all aspects of financial planning, including estate planning, retirement planning, investing and insurance, a CFP® professional can take a holistic look at your overall financial picture to help you fine tune your strategy.

For more financial tips and to find a CFP® professional, visit LetsMakeAPlan.org.

- StatePoint



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## Bahamas' Hield Leads Warriors To 3,000th Franchise Win



Bahamas-born, Golden State Warriors star Buddy Hield. (NBA.com image)

Bahamas-born Buddy Hield led a balanced scoring effort for the Golden State Warriors, finishing with 16 points as they cruised to a 128-92 victory over the Charlotte Hornets in their 3,000th franchise win in NBA history.

### Dominant Team Performance

Hield was one of seven Warriors to score in double figures. Stephen Curry and Draymond Green each added 15 points, while Gary Payton II chipped in 14. Moses Moody (13), Kevin Knox II (12), and Brandin Podziemski (10) also contributed to Golden State's most dominant win since a 41-point rout of Utah in October.

### Hield Shines From Deep

Hield did most of his damage from beyond the arc, hitting four three-pointers on 4-of-9 shooting. Moody (3-for-

3) and Payton (2-for-2) also contributed from long range, as Golden State outscored Charlotte 45-33 from deep while shooting 35.7% from three-point territory.

The Warriors' defense was equally impressive, racking up 16 steals and holding Charlotte to just 41 first-half points. Golden State built a commanding 56-41 halftime lead and extended the margin to 33 points in the third quarter before emptying the bench.

With momentum on their side, Golden State continues to push for a strong finish in the Western Conference, while Hield - now six games into his Warriors tenure - continues to make an impact with his perimeter shooting.

- *Rewritten from NBA.com*



## Calabar Shines With Record-Breaking Performance At Gibson McCook Relays

Calabar High School stole the spotlight at the 48th Gibson McCook Relays on Saturday, Feb. 22nd, setting the only relay meet record at the event. Their Boys' Class Three 4x200m team clocked an impressive 1:31.30 at the National Stadium, surpassing the previous record of 1:31.39.

Calabar edged out defending champions St Jago High (1:31.44) and Kingston College (1:32.90), with all three teams recording personal bests.

### Calabar and JC Share Top Honors

The Red Hills Road-based school secured two additional victories, sharing the top-performing school title with Jamaica College (JC).

Boys' Class Two 4x200m - Calabar won in 1:27.19, followed by:

Wolmer's Boys (1:27.69)

Petersfield High (1:27.83) - both schools set personal bests.

Boys' Class One 4x100m - Calabar clocked a personal best

of 39.60, ahead of:

JC (39.88)

Excelsior High (39.99)

Defending champions St Jago High were disqualified in the preliminary round due to an out-of-zone baton exchange.

### Jamaica College Matches Last Year's Success

Mirroring their 2024 performance, JC also won three events, including two sprint relays and the Boys' Class Four 4x200m relay. However, they failed to defend their titles in the 4x800m relay and the Sprint Medley Relay Open.

With record-breaking performances and fierce competition, this year's Gibson McCook Relays reaffirmed Jamaica's dominance in youth athletics, setting the stage for an exciting Boys' and Girls' Championships later this season.

- *Rewritten from Loopnew.com*



## Messi Set To Play In Jamaica



Lionel Messi is likely to play in Jamaica this month as Inter Miami takes on Jamaica's Cavalier SC. (SportsMax image)

Jamaican football fans could witness Lionel Messi playing on the island for the first time, as Inter Miami CF is set to face Jamaica's Cavalier SC in the Round of 16 of the 2025 Concacaf Champions Cup.

The first leg is scheduled for March 6th, while the highly anticipated return leg will take place in Jamaica on March 13th - a potential historic moment for local football fans.

### Inter Miami's Path To The Round Of 16

Inter Miami secured their place in the next round with

an impressive 3-1 victory over Sporting Kansas City in the second leg of their Round One series at Chase Stadium in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Tuesday. The result gave them a 4-1 aggregate win.

Messi opened the scoring in the 19th minute, executing a stunning left-footed volley from the edge of the box after expertly controlling a pinpoint cross from Luis Suárez. The assist marked a major milestone for the legendary duo—their 100th goal combination across all competitions, with Suárez assisting Messi for the 55th time.

Inter Miami then took full control with two quick goals in first-half stoppage time.

- Tadeo Allende scored in the 45'+1

- Luis Suárez found the back of the net in the 45'+3

Sporting Kansas City pulled one back in the 63rd minute through Memo Rodríguez, who unleashed a long-range strike, but Miami held firm to advance.

### Jamaican Football Set For A Historic Moment

With the victory, Inter Miami CF moves on to face Cavalier SC, winners of the Concacaf Caribbean Cup. The clash marks a historic opportunity for Jamaican fans, who could see Messi play on Jamaican soil for the first time.

The March 13th showdown promises to be a major football spectacle, as Cavalier SC prepares to host Messi and Inter Miami's star-studded lineup. Expectations are high, with local supporters eager to witness one of football's greatest players in action on their home turf.

- *Rewritten from SportsMax*



## Reggae Girlz Complete Peru Series Sweep With 3-2 Victory

Jamaica's Reggae Girlz wrapped up their two-match friendly series against Peru with a hard-fought 3-2 win at Estadio Miguel Grau on Wednesday, Feb. 26th

Building on their 2-0 victory on Sunday, Feb. 23rd, the Jamaicans dominated early, with Naya Cardoza (6'), Reanna Blades (19'), and Tiffany Cameron (23') all finding the net. However, Peru fought back with goals from Birka Ruiz (35') and Alondra Vilchez (54'), forcing Jamaica to dig deep for the win.

Goalkeeper Liya Brooks was a standout, producing a



The winning Reggae Girlz team will next face Mexico in April. (SportsMax image)

brilliant penalty save just before halftime to keep Jamaica in control. Despite late pressure from Peru, the Reggae Girlz held

- *Rewritten from SportsMax*



## Jamaican Sprinters Tia Clayton & Rohan Watson Shine At World Indoor Qualifier

Jamaican sprinters Tia Clayton and Rohan Watson delivered standout performances to claim victories in the 60-metre events at the World Indoor Qualifier held at G.C. Foster College on Saturday. Clayton, 20, took full advantage of pre-race favorite Jodean Williams' withdrawal from the final, clocking a personal best 7.08 seconds to take the women's title. Her MVP Track Club teammate Natasha Morrison placed second in 7.09 seconds, followed by Barbadian Kishawna Niles (7.12s) and Shericka Jackson (7.14s). "This win is a confidence booster," said an elated Clayton, who missed most of last season due to injury.



Tia Clayton won the women's 60-metre dash at the World Indoor Qualifier. (CMC image)

In the men's race, former Jamaican 100m champion Rohan Watson stormed to victory in a season's best 6.50 seconds, leading an MVP sweep, with Nishion Ebanks (6.57s) second

firm to secure their fourth consecutive victory.

This win extends Jamaica's impressive form ahead of their upcoming fixtures against Mexico in April, as they continue their preparations for major international competitions.

and Michael Campbell (6.60s) third.

Other Notable Performances Barbados' Sada Williams won the women's 200m in 23.44s.

Adrian Kerr took the men's 200m in a personal best 20.47s, narrowly beating Ackeem Blake (20.49s).

The meet served as a key qualifier for upcoming international indoor competitions.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



# SPORTS NEWS



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## Caribbean Leaders Back \$100M Plan To Fund West Indies Cricket

In a major boost for West Indies cricket, prime ministers across the Caribbean are uniting behind a groundbreaking initiative set to generate nearly US\$100 million for the sport over the next decade.

The initiative, unveiled by Robert Washington, CEO of Caribbean CAGE, during an interview on Barbados' Mason and Guest cricket show, stems from a historic 10-year partnership between Cricket West Indies (CWI) and Caribbean CAGE, a leading gaming and sports betting operator. Signed in December 2024, the agreement takes effect on April 1, 2025, and is also expected to generate US\$158 million for Caribbean governments.

### A Sustainable Future For West Indies Cricket

Washington stressed that sustainable revenue is essential for West Indies cricket to remain competitive globally. He highlighted that Caribbean governments are following a model similar to U.S. states that fund education and sports through lottery systems.

"What the Caribbean is doing now is very significant, much like the South Carolina

Educational Lottery and the Georgia Education Lottery in the U.S.," he said. "Without resources, how does Cricket West Indies compete with India, South Africa, Pakistan, and England?"

### CARICOM's Role In Mobilizing Support

Washington credited the CARICOM Prime Ministerial Subcommittee on Cricket, chaired by Dr. Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, for rallying regional governments behind the initiative.

Several regional leaders have played key roles in supporting this initiative, including:

- President Irfaan Ali (Guyana)
- Prime Minister Mia Mottley (Barbados)
- Prime Minister Gaston Browne (Antigua & Barbuda)
- Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre (St. Lucia)
- Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell (Grenada)
- Gaming as a Revenue Source for Cricket

The funds will be generated through regulated gaming operations, including sports betting and virtual



Robert Washington, CEO of Caribbean CAGE, signing the agreement with the WICB. (SportsMax image)

sports, conducted within a controlled, geo-fenced environment.

"These games will allow

people to bet on sporting events—cricket, baseball, football, tennis, soccer—any game in the world,"

Washington explained. "You can bet from your home, office, a bus stop, or a restaurant."

Caribbean CAGE has partnered with global gaming leaders like FanDuel (part of Flutter Entertainment) and Sportradar, ensuring secure and transparent operations.

Washington, who has deep personal ties to the Caribbean, emphasized his passion for reviving West Indies cricket. "I've been part of the Caribbean community for over 30 years. My children grew up here, my son's wife is from St. Kitts, my youngest son was born in Barbados. This is home for me," he shared. "Cricket is a vehicle to help grow the sport and uplift the region."

- Rewritten from SportsMax



## Antigua & Barbuda Aims For Historic Fourth Title As Hosts Of 2025 World Domino Championship

Antigua and Barbuda is set to make history as it hosts the 2025 World Council of Domino Federation (WCDF), tournament later this year. The defending champions will be competing for a record-breaking fourth title, having previously secured victories in 2016, 2018, and 2023.

The prestigious tournament, organized by the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association (ABNDA), will take place from August 10 to 18, bringing together 12 countries to battle for domino supremacy. Participating teams include Anguilla, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, the USA, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and Montserrat, alongside hosts Antigua and Barbuda.

Players will compete across several categories, including

Four-Hand Team, Three-Hand Male Team, Three-Hand Female Team, Male Pairs, Mixed Pairs, King of Domino, and Queen of Domino.

### A Historic Rivalry

ABNDA President Carol-Faye Bynoe emphasized the significance of this year's championship, noting that Barbados remains Antigua's biggest rival.

"Before our three consecutive wins, Barbados had dominated the tournament. Right now, we are tied with them at three titles each," Bynoe explained. "Winning this year would not only make us the first four-time champions, but it would also be extra special as this marks the 20th anniversary



President of the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association, Carol-Faye Bynoe. (CMC image)

of the WCDF."

With the home-court advantage and history on the line, Antigua and Barbuda is determined to make 2025 a milestone year in the world of domino.

-Rewritten from CMC





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## Powell Slams Potential Demotion Of West Indies

Former West Indies cricketer Ricardo Powell has strongly opposed the potential demotion of the West Indies cricket team by the International Cricket Council, (ICC), warning that such a move would hurt both the players and the sport in the Caribbean.

Powell, known for his explosive batting, believes the West Indies still have the talent to compete at the highest level. However, he emphasized that systemic issues within regional cricket must be addressed to ensure the best players are consistently available for selection. Speaking on Face of Sports on WESN TV, Powell criticized the rumoured ICC decision, suggesting it is financially driven rather than based on team performance.

“I don’t think West Indies should be demoted. It would dampen the spirit of players and the region,” Powell said. “West Indies cricket has fluctuated because we haven’t always allowed the best players to represent the team. That needs to change.”

Now running a cricket academy in the U.S., Powell called for better collaboration between Cricket West Indies, (CWI) and top regional players. He also urged fans to support new all-format coach and selector Darren Sammy, encouraging patience as he implements his vision for West Indies cricket’s revival.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



## Countdown Begins For Team Jamaica Bickle’s 31st Year At Penn Relays

As Team Jamaica Bickle, (TJB) approaches its 31st year of service at the Penn Relays, preparations are in full swing for another successful year of supporting Caribbean athletes. Founded by Jamaican immigrant advocate Irwine Clare, O.D., the non-profit continues its mission of providing vital assistance to athletes and coaches competing in Philadelphia.

To support its efforts, TJB will host the 2025 “Black Tie Gowns & Sneakers” 3.1 Labor of Love Gala Fundraising Luncheon on Sunday, April 13, at Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury, New York, starting at 11:30 a.m. Tickets

are \$200 per seat, with early bird tickets available for \$175 until February 28.

The gala promises entertainment, awards, special guests, and surprises, all under the theme “Our Athletes, Our Ambassadors.” Clare emphasized TJB’s ongoing commitment to athlete welfare, ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all delegations.

For tickets and updates, visit [teamjamaicabickle.com](http://teamjamaicabickle.com). The 2025 Penn Relays will take place from April 24-26 in Philadelphia.



## Daren Sammy Eyes White-Ball Stars To Strengthen West Indies Test Team

West Indies all-format head coach Daren Sammy believes that some of the region’s top T20 and ODI players could strengthen the Test team.

However, Sammy has emphasized that he will not pressure any player into playing Test cricket if it is not their preference.

Speaking during a virtual media session organized by Cricket West Indies (CWI) on Monday, Sammy highlighted that many of the Caribbean’s most seasoned cricketers currently represent the West Indies only in white-ball formats.

“We are in a situation where our most experienced players—those with the most exposure to different conditions and the most success—are playing white-ball cricket,” Sammy noted.

While acknowledging the achievements of Test captain Kraigg Brathwaite and his team, Sammy stressed the importance of consistency across all formats. “My philosophy is that a



West Indies all-format head coach Daren Sammy

batsman’s job is to score runs in different conditions,” he explained. “I’m not looking to turn the Test team into a white-ball side, but I do believe some of our consistent white-ball players can contribute to the style and brand of cricket I want to develop as head coach.”

Sammy remains focused on building a balanced and competitive Test squad while respecting individual player choices.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



## Sir Vivian Richards Frustrated By West Indies’ Decline

Cricket legend Sir Vivian Richards has voiced his frustration over the West Indies’ failure to qualify for the ICC Champions Trophy, urging the team to take inspiration from Afghanistan, a rising force in international cricket.

While West Indies and Sri Lanka, both former world champions, failed to make the 2025 Champions Trophy, Afghanistan has continued its rapid rise, not only qualifying but also defeating defending champions England in a high-scoring encounter.

Speaking to Indian Express, Richards lamented the state of West Indies cricket, emphasizing the need for a collective effort from players and administrators to restore past glory.

“I’m hoping my West Indies team can take a leaf out of Afghanistan’s book. They bring passion, energy, and

fighting spirit. Seeing them in the Champions Trophy while West Indies is absent means they’re doing something right,” Richards said.

Afghanistan has become a dominant force in Asian cricket, reaching the 2024 T20 World Cup semi-finals. In contrast, West Indies’ decline has been evident, failing to qualify for both the 2023 ODI World Cup and now the Champions Trophy.

Richards criticized Cricket West Indies (CWI) for the team’s struggles, insisting that fixing the decline requires action beyond just the players.

“It’s not just about the players; the board must take responsibility. It hurts to see West Indies, with such a great legacy, absent from the Champions Trophy. We are better than this,” he stated.

His call for reform underscores the urgent need

for better administration, structured talent development, and a renewed commitment to excellence.

“In order for us to get ourselves back where we once were, it is going to take maybe not just the players, but individuals from the board, people who are in responsible positions,” Richards insisted. “For them to believe that this is not just about the players—it takes people from the board to identify the things that may be missing, as to why we are not there. I feel very annoyed with the fact that the West Indies team, with such a huge legacy, is not in the Champions Trophy. It hurts. It makes me feel very, very sad because we are much better than that.”

- *Rewritten from Indian Express*



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