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# Caribbean Today



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



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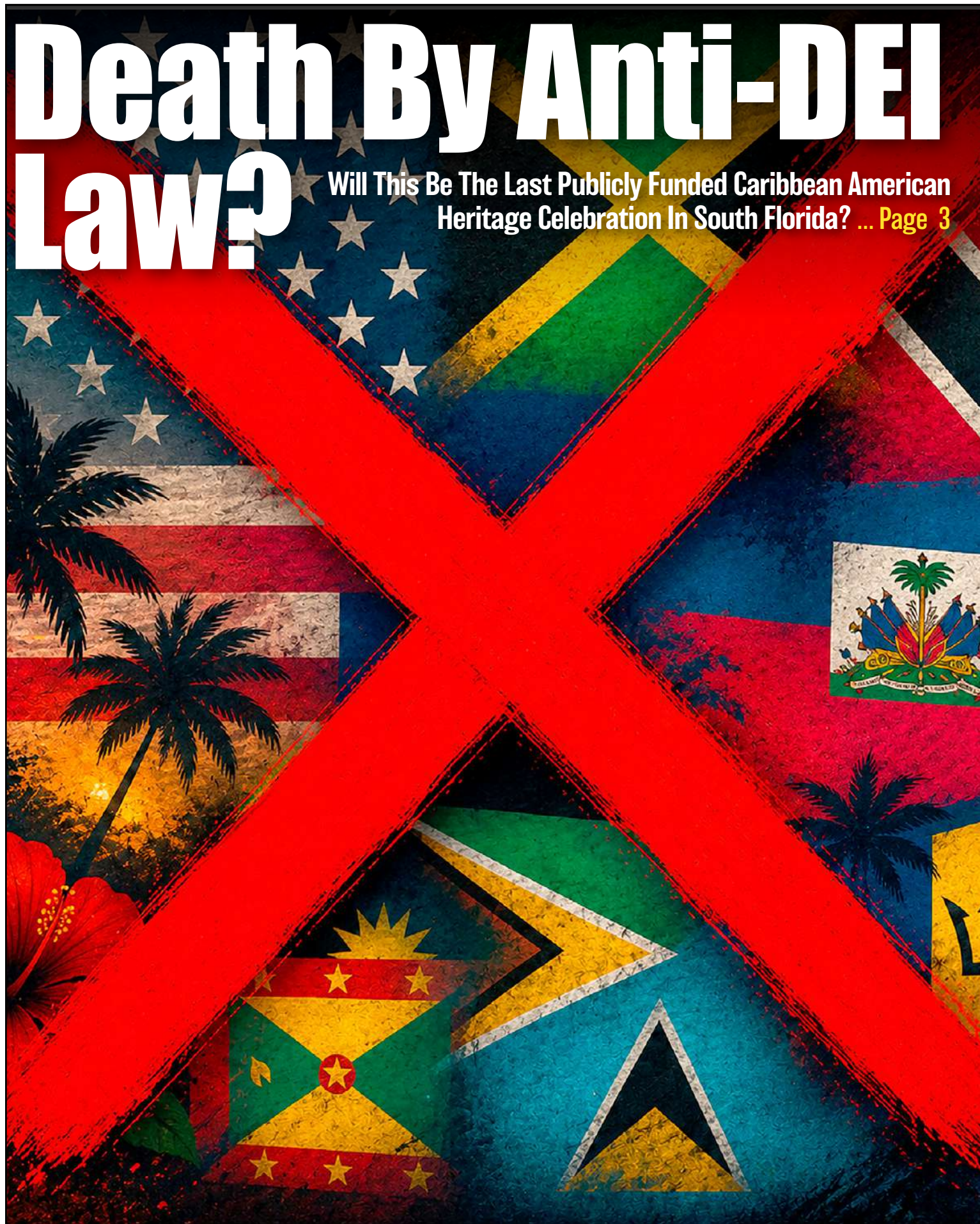
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# REGIONAL NEWS



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

### REGIONAL

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) foreign ministers have expressed “profound concern” over escalating United States sanctions and pressure on Cuba, warning that the growing crisis could have serious implications for the wider Caribbean region.

In a statement, the CARICOM Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) said worsening economic and financial measures against Cuba are also affecting Caribbean nationals studying and living there. However, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago reportedly reserved their positions from the regional statement.

The tensions come amid heightened geopolitical strain between Washington and Havana, including the deployment of the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier and accompanying warships to the southern Caribbean.

Cuba’s Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla accused the United States of increasing pressure on the island and called on the international community to prevent what he described as a possible humanitarian catastrophe.

The latest developments have placed Caribbean nations at the center of growing diplomatic, military, and economic tensions between the United States and Cuba.

### JAMAICA

On Monday June 1st, the USS Nimitz dropped anchor at the Port of Kingston, Jamaica, ninety miles away from Cuba. The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier’s arrival in Kingston Harbor marks the final stop of Southern Seas 2026 – an 11th iteration multinational goodwill deployment announced by US Naval Forces Southern Command that has taken the carrier throughout South America and the Caribbean. The United States Embassy in Jamaica has framed the June 1st to June 5th visit as an exercise in maritime cooperation and people-to-people connections.

But the timing, the context, and the fractures it has exposed within the Caribbean Community tell a far more complicated story. The USS Nimitz is not a goodwill vessel in the conventional sense. It is a Nimitz-class nuclear-powered supercarrier – one of the largest warships ever built, capable of carrying dozens of combat aircraft and projecting overwhelming military force across an entire ocean.

The United States Embassy in Jamaica was careful in its framing of the visit. Chargé d’Affaires Scott Renner described it as underscoring “the depth of the US-Jamaica bilateral relationship and the importance the United States places on its enduring partnership with Jamaica.” As questions swirled about the timing and implications



On Monday June 1st, the USS Nimitz - one of the largest and most powerful naval vessels on the planet - dropped anchor at the Port of Kingston, Jamaica, ninety miles away, Cuba.

of the USS Nimitz’s arrival, Jamaica House – the Office of the Prime Minister -moved swiftly on May 29th to frame the visit in decidedly civilian terms. The carefully calibrated statement made no mention of Cuba, the escalating US-Cuba crisis, or the broader geopolitical context in which the carrier’s Caribbean deployment has taken place.

### HAITI

The United Nations says the humanitarian situation in Haiti continues to worsen following a surge in gang violence in Port-au-Prince earlier this month. Deputy UN spokesman Farhan Haq said conditions are particularly deteriorating in the Cité Soleil area, where armed clashes have forced thousands to flee their

homes.

According to the International Organization for Migration, an estimated 17,500 people, representing more than 4,200 households, have been displaced over the past two weeks. More than 80 percent of those displaced are sheltering in 33 temporary sites, while others are staying with already vulnerable families.

UN officials say urgent needs include food, clean water, healthcare, and hygiene supplies. Poor lighting and unsafe conditions at displacement sites are also raising safety concerns, especially for children separated from their families, pregnant women, and people with disabilities.

### BAHAMAS

The Securities Commission of The Bahamas has banned former Bahamian ambassador to Bahrain Taran Mackey from participating in any regulated financial activity for 20 years.

In a statement signed by chairman retired, Justice K. Neville Adderley, the commission said Mackey was also deemed not “fit and proper” to serve in any position requiring the commission’s approval or consent.

The ruling follows a November 2025 settlement agreement between Mackey and IPG Family Office, in which he agreed to repay client funds he acknowledged had been misappropriated.

The commission said Mackey did not deny the allegations during proceedings but disputed the amount allegedly taken while employed at the wealth management firm.

Authorities said the ban takes immediate effect under the Securities Industry Act 2024.

No details about the amount of funds involved were disclosed. Mackey resigned suddenly from his diplomatic post and his position on the Bank of The Bahamas board in late 2025, saying at the time he needed to focus on resolving “a private matter.”

- *Rewritten from CMC News & NewsAmericasnow.com*



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**Alina Garcia**  
Supervisor of Elections



# Will This Be The Last Time Cities In Florida Can Celebrate CAHM?

BY DAVID L. SNELLING  
 Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

A new Florida law signed by Ron DeSantis is set to take effect on January 1, 2027, banning local governments from funding and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion-related programs and initiatives. The law threatens the future of officially sponsored cultural observances, including Caribbean American Heritage Month, Haitian Heritage Month, Jamaican Independence celebrations, and Hispanic Heritage events across the state.

Under the law, local officials who “commit” DEI malfeasance could be removed from office or be sued and have to pay damages to a citizen who feels the official violated the rules. In signing the bill, DeSantis said DEI initiatives discriminated against groups like white men.

“I would think with DEI the disfavored groups, number one obviously, would be white males and I think they’ve been discriminated against,” DeSantis said.

As thousands gathered in North Miami in May to celebrate Haitian Flag Day during Haitian Heritage Month, many may not have realized they were witnessing what could also be the final government-supported celebrations of Haitian American Heritage Month and Caribbean American Heritage Month in South Florida.

The cities of Miami, North

Miami, and Broward County are expected to feel the impact most heavily because of their long-standing support for Haitian and Caribbean Heritage Month activities, which annually attract massive crowds and celebrate the contributions of Caribbean communities throughout South Florida.

Both cities have also partnered with private organizations to support the Haitian Compas Festival, a major event tied to Haiti’s Independence celebrations that features Caribbean music, food, and culture. Beginning in 2027, however, only private organizations and community groups will be able to finance and promote such events.

The legislation is part of a broader effort by Florida Republican leaders to roll back DEI initiatives statewide. Since 2022, Florida has enacted measures limiting discussions of race and gender in schools, workplaces, and public institutions.

For many Caribbean-American elected officials, the issue is deeply personal.

North Miami Mayor Alix Desulme, a Haitian American, said the law strikes at the heart of his identity and the city’s cultural fabric. The new law effectively ends a 25-year tradition of city-supported Haitian Heritage



Haitian Flag Day celebration in the cities of Miami and North Miami last month may be the last the city can sponsor.

Month celebrations in North Miami, which included music and dance festivals, food events, and recognition ceremonies honoring contributors to South Florida’s Caribbean community.

While celebrating Haitian Flag Day with hundreds of residents this year, Desulme acknowledged it would likely be his last time participating in an official government capacity.

“As mayor and as a government, we can’t take part in this event next year,” he said. “It really affects us as a culture since we are the most diverse city in Florida. This is a travesty.”

Despite opposition to Senate Bill 1134, North Miami officials say they will comply with state law.

“In the interim, we remain as dedicated as ever to celebrating our community through our regularly scheduled events programming,” North Miami Communications Director Katie Murphy said. “The city of North Miami is incredibly

proud to be one of the most diverse municipalities in Florida.”

Officials in the City of Miami have expressed similar frustration over the restrictions. Miami Commission Chairwoman Christine King, whose district includes Little Haiti, has long partnered with the Little Haiti Cultural Center to organize month-long Haitian Heritage Month celebrations.

The events culminate each year with Haitian Flag Day on May 18th and highlight the history, culture, and contributions of Haitians in Miami and throughout the Caribbean diaspora.

King, who attended this year’s Sak Pase celebration in Little Haiti, said it may also be her final official participation.

“Seeing the Haitian flag proudly displayed throughout the celebration was a beautiful reminder of the strength, pride, and cultural impact of the Haitian community in Miami,” she shared on social media. “From the music and art to the free family art workshop presented in partnership with Oolite Arts, the evening brought our community together in such a meaningful way.”

The City of Miami has also partnered with non-profits and community organizations on events such as Community Markets & Food Experiences, Caribbean Market Days, and Creole Culinary Classics Cook-Offs, showcasing authentic Haitian cuisine and award-winning chefs.

Without municipal funding

and promotional support, organizers fear many heritage celebrations could struggle to survive.

Broward County officials are also evaluating how the law could impact cultural events that help unite communities and drive tourism and local economic activity.

“But as of yet, no decisions have been made as to impacted events that occur after January 1st, 2027,” Broward County Communications Specialist Gregory Meyer said in a statement. In the meantime, Broward plans to continue previously scheduled cultural events through September 30, 2026.

The City of Miramar, another South Florida municipality with a large Caribbean population, may also be forced to discontinue official support for Jamaican Independence and Caribbean Heritage Month events.

Miramar Commissioner Carson Edwards, a Jamaican American, criticized the move, saying it distances cities from the very communities they represent.

“I celebrate my Caribbean heritage every day, and no one can take that away from me personally,” Edwards said. “I share food and music so people can learn more about the tradition of the Caribbean. I don’t choose one month to celebrate Caribbean Heritage. I celebrate it 24 hours and seven days a week.”



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**NEWS**



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# 20 Years Later, Caribbean-American Heritage Month Still Seeking Greater Impact

**BY HOWARD CAMPBELL**  
 Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

This June marks the 20th anniversary of Caribbean-American Heritage Month, which was officially declared in the United States by President George W. Bush on June 5, 2006. But Irwine Clare, a leading figure in the Jamaican Diaspora, says it has not adequately acknowledged the achievements of West Indian people.

The month-long festivities were advocated by the Institute of Caribbean Studies in Washington, D.C and former Democratic Congressmember Barbara Lee of California, now Mayor of Oakland, CA, was its biggest sponsor and supporter in the House.

“We have celebrated it, acknowledged it, and in pockets, institutionalized it. But we have not yet fully captured nor strategically leveraged the true power of Caribbean-American Heritage Month in the United States,” said Clare in an interview with Caribbean Today.

He added that after 20 years, Caribbean-American Heritage Month is still limited

to cultural showcases, flag raisings, food festivals, concerts, awards ceremonies, and political proclamations.

“Those are important. Culture matters. Visibility matters. But heritage without strategy can become symbolic rather than transformational,” Clare noted. “We have too many unexplored and non-leveraged opportunities to wield our political and economic power.”

According to the US Census data from 2020, the first Census when Caribbean people were able to write in their ancestry thanks to CARIBID, the movement to get Caribbean nationals accurately counted, some 5.3 million of Caribbean descent live in the US. That is 10.2 percent of the country’s immigrant population. Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Haiti account for most of that number.

Some prominent figures in US public life have Caribbean roots. They include former US Vice President Kamala Harris; the US’ first Secretary of the Treasury and a founding father, Alexander Hamilton; Muslim leaders Malcolm X (Grenada) and Louis Farrakhan (Jamaica/



**Clarence 'Krueshef' Joseph**

St. Kitts); former Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Susan Rice (Jamaica); actor Sidney Poitier (The Bahamas); and singer/actor Harry Belafonte (Jamaica).

**CARIBBEAN AMERICAN IDENTITY IN MUSIC**

Clarence Joseph of St. Croix lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado. A cybersecurity engineer, he represented the US in boxing as a super-middleweight at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece.

While honored to fight for the Stars and Stripes, he took the pride of his homeland into the ring.

“When I was fighting in the Olympics, I was an ambassador for St. Croix. Always representing when I started boxing at age 12 as an amateur, all the way up to the Olympics and as a professional boxer,” said Joseph. “St. Croix helped me to become one of the best boxers from the territory with so many accolades under my belt.”

Known as Krueshef, a dancehall deejay who has released an album, an EP, and many singles, Joseph projects Caribbean identity in his music. “Moving into the music industry,

it’s been that way from day one, showcasing where I’m from and knowing that dancehall and reggae music is part of West Indian culture,” he noted. “I have friends from Jamaica, Grenada, Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Kitts, and so many more places. What makes us similar and one is our West Indian heritage.”

Kevin Lyttle of St. Vincent and The Grenadines is a longtime South Florida resident. The singer is best known for ‘Turn Me On,’ a global hit in 2004.

As a youth in St. Vincent, he embraced soca from the Eastern Caribbean and dancehall music from Jamaica. Those sounds are consistent in his songs.

“It’s actually very automatic for me as a person born in the Caribbean to express my music with influences of my roots. I also believe that evidence shows from as far back as artists like Born Jamericans, Little Vicious to Busta Rhymes and Shaggy. The Caribbean roots in their music is very clear,” said Lyttle.

On June 1st, 20 people were honored at the Official Caribbean American Heritage Month Launch & Summer Magazine Release Event at Kilimandjaro Restaurant in Philadelphia.



## No Caribbean American Heritage Month Proclamation From Trump White House

Caribbean American Heritage Month officially began on June 1, but as of that date, the Trump administration had not issued a proclamation recognizing the observance, marking a break from a tradition maintained by both Democratic and Republican administrations. Traditionally, White House proclamations recognizing Caribbean American Heritage Month are released on or before May 31.

The silence follows a similar omission in May, when the administration did not issue a proclamation recognizing Haitian Heritage Month, which honors the contributions of Haitian Americans to the United States. Many observers view the back-to-back omissions as consistent with the administration’s broader efforts to roll back diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

The absence of a proclamation comes amid growing concerns in Caribbean communities over several policy developments, including expanded sanctions against Cuba, proposed immigration

changes affecting Green Card applicants, ongoing deportation operations, and the pending Senate confirmation of Kari Lake as U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica.

Caribbean American Heritage Month was established by Congress in 2006 following advocacy by the Institute of Caribbean Studies and former Congresswoman Barbara Lee, and was signed into law by President George W. Bush.

According to U.S. Census data, approximately 13 million people of Caribbean descent live in the United States, accounting for 10.2 percent of the nation’s immigrant population. The largest groups trace their roots to Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Haiti.

Caribbean Americans have made significant contributions to American life, from founding father Alexander Hamilton, who was born in St. Kitts and Nevis, to generations of leaders in business, education, medicine, public service, and the arts.



# JAMAICA at 64

On August 6, 2026, the island of Jamaica marks the 64th Anniversary of its independence as a sovereign nation. Caribbean Today invites the business community in Jamaica and the United States to celebrate this significant milestone.

## Our Independence Supplement! Jamaica at 64

to be published in July 2026, will pay tribute to Jamaica’s history, culture, growth and development including the achievements and global contributions of a remarkable people. Promote your products and services in this 28-page keepsake edition, to be distributed widely throughout Florida, New York, Atlanta, and the Caribbean.

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# Who Will Represent Broward's Caribbean Communities In Congress?

A political battle is brewing in South Florida over who will represent one of Broward County's most heavily Black and Caribbean-American congressional districts following dramatic redistricting changes pushed by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis.

The controversy intensified after longtime Democratic Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz announced she would seek re-election in the newly drawn 20th Congressional District, a safely Democratic, Broward-based seat with a population of approximately 42 percent Black and 20 percent Hispanic. District 23 was redrawn under Gov. Ron DeSantis' aggressively partisan new map on May 4, setting off a musical-chairs-style scramble among South Florida Democrats. Wasserman Schultz could have run in Florida's new 25th Congressional District, which extends along the coast from Miami-Dade to Palm Beach Counties. But that district is Republican leaning, while the 20th District is safely Democratic.

The district includes several cities with large Caribbean-American populations, including Lauderhill, Lauderdale Lakes,

North Lauderdale, Tamarac, Plantation, Pompano Beach, and Wilton Manors. Haitian American, Jamaican American, and broader Caribbean communities are expected to play a major role in determining the district's next representative.

But Wasserman Schultz's decision to enter the race has sparked sharp criticism from Black political leaders and candidates who argue the district should continue to be represented by a Black lawmaker.

"This is not about white or Jewish or this and that," Corey Shearer, president of the Broward Black Democratic Caucus, was quoted by the Sun Sentinel as saying. "This is just about Black folks standing up and saying, 'Hey, we don't want to lose a seat at the table.'"

The seat has historically been represented by Black members of Congress, including the late Alcee Hastings and former Congresswoman and first Haitian American Florida representative, Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, whose recent resignation triggered a scramble among Democratic hopefuls.

Several Black candidates



**Democratic Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz's decision to enter the race in a majority-minority district comes after her seat was redrawn under Gov. Ron DeSantis' aggressively partisan new map on May 4th.**

are already in the race, including Cherfilus-McCormick, Elijah Manley, Jamaican Dale Holness, and Luther Campbell, Maisha Williams and Mark Douglas. Moise has endorsed Former Broward County Mayor Holness and businessman Luther Campbell in the race as Cherfilus-McCormick, despite legal challenges, is seeking the seat again.

"This fight between Democrats is something that the Republicans have set up to do. They set this up perfectly,"

she said. "This fight between communities is something they set up to do. For us to get past this moment, we have to demand that our representatives dig in their heels and fight."

"The Black community has been the most loyal to the Democratic Party. In fact, we vote 90-plus percent every election as Democrats," said Holness. "We're the most loyal. And to not see the importance of our vote and our voice is really sad, and it makes a lot of people angry too, and rightly so."

Manley sharply criticized Wasserman Schultz's move, accusing her of "carpetbagging to a Black opportunity district."

The fight reflects broader concerns across the South as Republican-led redistricting efforts reshape districts originally designed to preserve Black political representation under the Voting Rights Act.

Wasserman Schultz resides in the new FL-22, which stretches from Western Broward and Palm Beach Counties to Naples. Her colleague, U.S. Rep. Jared Moskowitz (D- Parkland), is also now located in FL-22 as is the seat held by gubernatorial candidate

and U.S. Rep. Byron Donalds (R-Naples).

Wasserman Schultz defended her candidacy, pointing to her longstanding relationships with African American and Caribbean communities and her advocacy on issues affecting Haitians and immigrants.

"I think my candidacy is an opportunity for unity, not divisiveness," she was quoted by the Sun Sentinel as saying. "I know how to represent diverse communities."

Political observers say the race could become one of the most closely watched Democratic primaries in Florida, particularly as Caribbean-American voters increasingly emerge as a major political force in Broward County. Candidates for the House of Representatives do not need to live in the district they represent, just be a resident of the state their district is located in.

The Primary is Aug. 18th, followed by the General Election on Nov. 3rd.

- *Rewritten from the Sun Sentinel*



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**NEWS**



# Florida Braces For 2026 Hurricane Season Despite Below-Normal Forecast

Florida residents are being urged not to let their guard down as the 2026 Atlantic hurricane season officially begins June 1, even though forecasters are predicting slightly below-average storm activity this year.

Researchers at Colorado State University are forecasting 13 named storms during the 2026 season, including six hurricanes and two major hurricanes with sustained winds exceeding 111 miles per hour. An average Atlantic hurricane season typically produces 14 named storms, seven hurricanes, and three major hurricanes.

The peak of hurricane season historically occurs around Sept. 10, with the majority of storms forming between mid-August and mid-October. Forecasters estimate the East Coast faces a 15 percent probability of a hurricane landfall this season, slightly below the long-term average.

## 2026 Atlantic Hurricane Names

The National Hurricane Center has released the official list of names for the 2026 Atlantic hurricane season. The names include Arthur, Bertha, Cristobal, Dolly, Edouard, Fay, Gonzalo, Hanna, Isaias,



**Emergency management officials are encouraging Floridians to begin hurricane preparations before any storm threatens the state.**

Josephine, Kyle, Leah, Marco, Nana, Omar, Paulette, Rene, Sally, Teddy, Vicky, and Wilfred.

## Residents Urged To Prepare Early

Emergency management officials are encouraging Floridians to begin hurricane preparations before any storm threatens the state. Residents are advised to stock emergency kits with at least seven days of nonperishable food, one gallon of water per person daily, medications, flashlights, batteries, first-aid supplies,

radios, cash, and pet supplies.

Homeowners are also encouraged to inspect roofs, shutters, fences, and trees, review insurance policies, and confirm evacuation zones and routes ahead of the season.

## Tax-Free Hurricane Supplies Available Year-Round

Florida lawmakers have eliminated temporary hurricane tax holidays and instead made several emergency preparedness items permanently sales tax-free. Those items include batteries, portable generators, fire

extinguishers, smoke detectors, insect repellent, sunscreen, life jackets, waterproof tarps, fuel cans, and tie-down kits.

## Insurance Market Showing Signs Of Stabilization

Insurance experts say legislative reforms passed in 2022 and 2023, combined with a relatively quiet storm season last year, have helped stabilize Florida's troubled property

insurance market. According to Patricia Born of Florida State University, the state is becoming "more resilient" heading into future hurricane seasons.

Still, experts warn that insurance premiums remain significantly higher than they were a decade ago, and one major storm could quickly reverse recent progress.



# South Florida Political Leaders Eye Congressional Seat As Frederica Wilson Opts Against Re-Election



**Congresswoman Frederica Wilson is stepping away from Congress after deciding not to seek re-election.**

Political maneuvering is intensifying in South Florida after longtime Congresswoman Frederica Wilson confirmed she will not seek re-election, ending a congressional career that has spanned more than 15 years representing one of Florida's most influential Democratic districts.

Wilson, 83, confirmed on May 29 that she would not seek another term, just days after denying an Axios report that she had told allies she planned to step aside. Her decision has already triggered a wave of potential candidates preparing for what could become one of the state's most closely watched Democratic races.

The congresswoman, known for her signature hats and strong advocacy for education and youth mentorship, recently faced questions after missing dozens of congressional votes this spring while recovering from eye surgery.

Wilson was honored in Miami Gardens on May 29 with a ceremonial street naming recognizing her decades of public service and dedication

to education. NW 206 Terrace, adjacent to Dr. Frederica S. Wilson/Skyway Elementary School, will officially bear her name following a ceremony attended by elected officials, educators, students, and community leaders.

Among those reportedly considering a run for the seat are State Senator Shevrin Jones, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Oliver Gilbert, County Commissioner Marleine Bastien, and physician Rudolph Moise, who has already announced his candidacy. Jones recently announced he would not seek re-election to the state legislature, fueling speculation about a congressional bid.

Wilson's district, which includes Miami Gardens, North Miami, and parts of Miami Beach, remains one of the few Black-majority congressional districts in the South.

Her legacy is closely tied to the nationally recognized 5,000 Role Models of Excellence Project, which has mentored thousands of young people across South Florida for decades.



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# South Florida Cities To Celebrate What Could Be Last Caribbean American Heritage Month

BY CARIBBEAN TODAY STAFF

Given new state rules, this could be the last year cities celebrate cultural and heritage events. But despite the dark clouds hovering, cities across South Florida are marking Caribbean American Heritage Month this June with festivals, concerts, food showcases, cultural performances, comedy events, and family-friendly celebrations highlighting the rich traditions and influence of Caribbean communities throughout the region.

## Fort Lauderdale

Fort Lauderdale Beach will host Caribbean American Heritage Weekend at The LOOP on June 13 and 14, offering live music, artisan vendors, island-inspired experiences, family activities, and Caribbean culture along the beachfront. The free event runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is open to all ages. The celebration will include Caribbean-inspired artisan vendors, live performances showcasing island rhythms, and hands-on creative activities for families and children.

## Sunrise

The City of Sunrise will host its Caribbean American Heritage Festival on Saturday, June 6, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at City Park, located at 6600 Sunset

Strip. Organizers say the free event is designed to celebrate Caribbean culture while promoting unity and community pride.

Entertainment will feature emcee Tanto Irie from Hot 105 and DJ SheJ Hercules from 99 JAMZ, along with performances by Vincentian soca star Kevin Lyttle and the Code Red Band, Rosaly Rubio, Sizwe C, Gr8ness, the Salsa Ninjas, Bahamas Junkanoo Revue, Lauderdale Steel Ensemble, and the Chic In Print Fashion Show.

The festival will also include a Kids Zone presented by Coolture, featuring steelpan workshops, Caribbean dance experiences, storytelling sessions, carnival crafts, gaming activities, and exhibits honoring Caribbean cultural icons and pioneers.

Food vendors will offer a wide variety of Caribbean cuisine, including Singh's Roti Delight, 3Island BBQ, Popo's Seafood, Flava Crush Cuisine, Tropical Silver, and Jackie's Home Bakes.

## Pembroke Pines

The City of Pembroke Pines will host its Caribbean American Heritage Festival on June 27



The month's events include Comedian Majah Hype & Friends Caribbean Comedy Festival on June 28th at the Miramar Cultural Center.

from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Charles F. Dodge City Center. Admission is free.

The event will feature live music, dance performances, Caribbean cuisine, dry goods vendors, cultural exhibits, and family-friendly activities presented in partnership with the Island SPACE Caribbean Museum.

Entertainment includes Jamaican singer Wayne Wonder as the headline act performing with his full band, along with soca artist Tricia Kelshall, Devine Songz, MC Niki Crosby, DJ T-Rex, the USVI Moko Jumbies, and the Lauderdale Steel Ensemble.

## Lauderhill

The City of Lauderdale is hosting several Caribbean

American Heritage Month events throughout June. The Lauderdale Central Park Library will host a Caribbean celebration on June 6 at noon featuring food samples, cultural programming, and Summer Library Program sign-ups.

Another celebration is planned for June 23 at 6 p.m. at the Lauderdale Towne Centre Library, highlighting Caribbean culture and heritage.

The Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce will also host its Caribbean-American Night on June 25 at the Chateau Mar Golf Resort in Fort Lauderdale. The event begins at 6 p.m., with tickets starting at \$75.

## Miramar

Comedian Majah Hype will headline Caribbean American Heritage Month festivities in Miramar with the Majah Hype & Friends Caribbean Comedy Festival on June 28 at the Miramar Cultural Center. Doors open at 3:30 p.m.

## Lauderdale Lakes

The City of Lauderdale Lakes will host its Caribbean American Unity Fest on Friday, June 5, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Vincent Torres Memorial Park. The free event will feature Caribbean cuisine, cultural showcases, live entertainment, and performances celebrating Caribbean heritage and unity.

## Miami

Events in Miami to celebrate the month includes:

**The Art of Impact:** Celebrate Caribbean culture and street art at the Museum of Graffiti on June 5, featuring live painting, DJ sets, Caribbean cocktails, and community storytelling.

**PAMMSonic with Foreigner:** The Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) hosts an Afro-Caribbean and electronic music experience on June 11 with DJ Foreigner spinning global diasporic sounds.

**The Age of Revolutions and Its Lasting Impacts:** A June 27 panel at the Museum of Miami will examine how Caribbean and Latin American revolutionary movements helped shape South Florida's cultural and political landscape.

## Florida Blue Center

**Celebration:** Families can celebrate Caribbean heritage on June 27 at the Florida Blue Center in North Miami with a community focused "Celebrate Your Culture!" event.

Across South Florida, Caribbean American Heritage Month celebrations continue to showcase the music, food, traditions, and enduring cultural influence of Caribbean communities that have shaped the region for generations.



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## Little Haiti Celebrates Caribbean Writers

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

Caribbean people carry their culture, voices, and values wherever they settle in the world, creating vibrant communities that contribute to the growth and rhythm of the spaces they inhabit. Little Haiti, in the heart of Miami, is one such neighborhood.

This colorful locale is home to a majority Haitian population with a generous sprinkling of other Caribbean nationals. Considered the hub of the community's cultural expression, the Little Haiti Cultural Complex showcases and strives to preserve African-Caribbean customs and traditions, with special focus on cultural forms rooted in Haitian history.

It is here that new and accomplished Caribbean authors gathered on May 17, 2026, to present their latest work at The Little Haiti Book Festival. Under the topic: Cross Currents: Haiti, Jamaica & the Caribbean Imagination, a panel of authors focused on the themes and characters in their work and their motivation for writing.

### Internal Struggle

Jamaican-born writer Dwight Thompson's novel, 'My Own Dear People,' looks at the internal struggle of a teenage boy in an all-boys school in Montego Bay, Jamaica, who must learn to maneuver through societal pressures that expect him, and boys in general, to conform to well-defined toxic masculinity roles. Thompson is indeed writing about his own experience.

"All the role models that

we have in society project this kind of hyper masculinity that you are expected to emulate, and it's there in the school system," Thompson explained. "In my case, it was an all-boys school. You were really not allowed to be self-expressive, because if you were self-expressive, then you could be targeted as being sensitive or gay. So the narrative is always leaning towards being as hyper masculine as possible in order to avoid being scrutinized."

He added, "I think that when you write something, if it's not making you uncomfortable, then you're not asking the real question of yourself. So, it wasn't really a matter of writing about uncomfortable things for me; it was just writing what I felt was urgent to my experience growing up in Jamaica."

Also focusing on society, identity, and belonging - but from a totally different perspective - is Haitian writer Fabienne Josaphat, in her historical novel 'Kingdom of No Tomorrow,' which explores the Black Panther Party and the often-overlooked role of women in the movement. It's a love story following the journey of a young Haitian student in the 60s who ends up in Oakland, California, and gets caught up in the revolutionary spirit.

Speaking about her concept for the novel, Josaphat noted, "When we think about the Black Panther Party, we see the men in their berets and their leather jackets and the guns they carried. But we don't talk enough, in my opinion, about the women in the Black Panther Party... They also carried weapons, they ran the organizations, they ran the



Jamaican writer Diana McCaulay discussed her new book, 'A House For Miss Pauline.'

survival programs. So I felt that if I was going to write a book about the Panthers, I had to make it a young woman because I needed to put her in the middle of the movement and show the role that the women played was central to the movement."

### Powerful History

Josaphat told the audience that the rich and powerful history of the Black Panther Party has been distorted, rewritten, and erased. So, it's important for writers of color to step in and take our voices back, she said. Josaphat reminded all gathered of the social service programs initiated by the Party, such as the free busing, breakfast, lunch, and dinner programs in schools they created. Some of these initiatives continue today because of that legacy.

Jamaican writer Diana McCaulay also writes about a strong woman, but in her novel 'A House For Miss Pauline,' the main character, Miss Pauline, is a ninety-nine-year-old woman living in rural Jamaica who rebuilds her home from the ruins of an old slave owner's

plantation house. It is a story of identity, colonialism, secrets, and reckoning, highlighting the legacy of plantation slavery in Jamaica, and indeed across the Caribbean. The author draws inspiration from her elderly great-aunt, a strong, independent, feisty old woman telling her story with humor, passion, and beauty.

"I wanted to write about an old woman who was fearless and who had a difficult life in rural Jamaica and had triumphed over all of the trials of her life, and at the end of it was reckoning with some things she had done and some things she knew she had to make right," McCaulay remarked. "The challenge really was making you believe it, because you have to believe that



Edwidge Danticat's latest book is a picture book for children but with deep meaning.

she had a lass under her bed."

On the other hand, Haitian writer Edwidge Danticat's latest book is a picture book for children. The author writes about the life of iguanas in South Florida through the eyes of a

little girl, modeled on her own daughter, Leila, who discovers this fascinating world while walking through the park with her grandmother.

But reading more deeply between the lines, it is a book about the vibrant culture and people of Little Haiti. It's about migrating to a new place and somehow influencing the culture and spirit of that place, much like iguanas, which are not native to Florida. It's also about looking at diverse cultures, and with care observing how they weave together to form a multicultural community. The book is also about generational exchange and legacy, as expressed through the relationship between Leila and her grandmother.

In Caribbean literary fiction, the authors have managed to weave the subtle nuances that define and thread through the entire region: cultural expression, identity, migration, and community.

This Caribbean American Heritage Month, take a breath, read, and feel the rhythm, the culture, and the Caribbean-ness.



## Many African Americans May Have Caribbean Roots - Historian

While many Americans today are categorized as "Black" or "African Americans" in the U.S. Census, a significant number may descend from Afro-Caribbean immigrants who arrived in the United States during the early 20th century - long before multicultural identity was formally recognized in federal data.

According to historian and archivist Damani Davis, tens of thousands of Afro-Caribbean, or "West Indian," immigrants migrated to the U.S. between the 1910s and 1930s, and in some cases, even earlier. In his publication *Ancestors from the West Indies: A Historical and Genealogical Overview of Afro-Caribbean Immigration, 1900-1930s*, Davis documents how these immigrants primarily settled in northeastern port cities - particularly New York City, which became the epicenter of West Indian cultural life in the U.S. At the same time, South Florida attracted a substantial number of Bahamian migrants, who established vibrant



Damani Davis, Reference Archivist, left, and Steven Loew (cq), Conservator, discuss the conservation and historical significance of the Book of Negroes in 2015. (André Chung/NBC News)

communities in areas like Broward County and Miami.

Some Caribbean immigrants maintained distinct national identities or a pan-West Indian ethnic identity, while others integrated into Black American life, often through intermarriage or shared social experiences. Regardless of the path, Davis notes, the majority of their descendants are now officially recorded as African American - effectively blending Caribbean ancestry into the broader Black American narrative.

"These early Afro-Caribbean immigrants brought with them unique cultural traditions and helped shape the evolution of Black American identity," writes Davis. He emphasizes the role of federal naturalization and citizenship records - available through the U.S. National Archives - as a powerful genealogical resource for Black Americans tracing their roots to the Caribbean.

Davis, an archivist in the Research Support Branch of the Customer Services Division

at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., has lectured widely on African American history and genealogy. A graduate of Coppin State College in Baltimore, he earned his M.A. in history from The Ohio State University. His extensive research has helped uncover the complex migration patterns and cultural exchanges that continue to shape the African diaspora in America.

"These records follow standard immigration research methods and are crucial in reconstructing a fuller, more inclusive historical narrative," he explains in the book.

As Caribbean American Heritage Month is observed, Davis's work offers a timely reminder that the African American experience is layered and transnational - and that the contributions of early Afro-Caribbean immigrants are both foundational and enduring in U.S. history.

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# When Immigration Judges Become “Deportation Judges”

Something profound is happening inside America’s immigration courts - and most Americans have no idea. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice are no longer openly recruiting “immigration judges.”

The job listings now reportedly refer to them as “deportation judges,” and the government recruitment ad reportedly even features Judge Dredd - the fictional comic book character known for acting as judge, jury, and executioner.



**FELICIA J. PERSAUD**

That may sound symbolic. But symbols matter; words matter; titles matter. And in a legal system built on the principle of impartial justice, the language used to describe judges says a great deal about what the system expects from them.

That may sound like semantics; it is not. Because words matter. Titles matter. And in a legal system built on the principle of impartial justice, the language used to describe judges says a great deal about what the system expects from them.

Immigration judges are supposed to weigh evidence, hear testimony, and determine whether someone qualifies for relief under the law. They are not supposed to begin with a predetermined outcome. Yet even former immigration judges are sounding the alarm.

“To call an immigration judge a deportation judge kind of suggests that the outcome has already been pre-determined,” former immigration judge Jeremiah Johnson said during last week’s “Speak Up for Justice” forum. “When in fact, there’s a lot of weighing of evidence, and the judge has to also and does grant relief at times.”

His comments come amid an unprecedented upheaval inside the immigration court system itself. According to judges and union officials who spoke publicly on May 21st, more than 200 immigration judges have been fired, pushed out, or forced to resign over

the past year.

Some reportedly received termination emails without explanation. Others were escorted out of courtrooms mid-hearing. Entire courts have been gutted. San Francisco, once one of the busiest immigration courts in the country, reportedly went from 21 judges to just two before closing entirely, leaving roughly 120,000 pending cases in limbo.

Mimi Tsankov, former President, National Association of Immigration Judges stated: “One of the things I think people are very concerned about is the manner in which judges were fired, because it speaks to a broader concern about the institution and how much we can really trust the outcomes of that institution. When judges are being fired with no notice and given no reason.”

At the same time, the immigration court backlog continues to explode. More than 3.5 million cases are now pending nationwide, and the judges who remain describe overwhelming pressure. Some are reportedly scheduled for up to 100 master calendar hearings a day, plus individual hearings that function like bench trials.

That is not just overwork; it is a system under strain. The consequences extend far beyond the judges themselves.

Immigrants are increasingly afraid to appear in court because of arrests taking place at courthouses. Former judges described a “chilling effect,” with immigrants skipping hearings out of fear they could be detained immediately afterward. Others described hearing tasers going off in courthouse hallways while trying to conduct hearings. This is not what most Americans imagine when they think of a courtroom dedicated to due process. And perhaps most troubling is the growing concern that immigration judges are being pressured to follow executive policy over independent legal judgment.

“There’s this additional pressure that’s being put on judges now to follow policy... over even the law sometimes,” said Holly D’Andrea, president of the National Association of Immigration Judges. “However, our ultimate job is to follow the law.”

That distinction matters because immigration courts may

be administrative courts, but for millions of people, they still determine life-changing outcomes: deportation, asylum, detention, family separation, or safety.

And once public confidence in judicial independence begins to erode, the damage spreads far beyond immigration. This is no longer just about border policy. It is about whether America’s immigration courts are still functioning as courts - or becoming

something else entirely.

Because when judges themselves begin warning that due process is under attack, the country should be paying attention.

As Paul R. Kiesel, founder of Speak Up for Justice and partner at Kiesel Law, warned: “What is happening to immigration judges is not isolated. It’s a bellwether. If it can happen in one corner of the executive branch, it can spread to others. It can spread to judges

who work in Social Security, labor, and other agencies, and they’re all watching very closely and asking a simple question: Are we next?”

*Felicia J. Persaud is the founder and publisher of NewsAmericasNow.com, the only daily syndicated newswire and digital platform dedicated exclusively to Caribbean Diaspora and Black immigrant news across the Americas.*



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# Mistrust

As the old saying goes, trust no shadow after dark. Remember what Julius Caesar said as he was stabbed multiple times by those around him: ‘Et tu, Brutus?’ You too, Brutus, referring to his closest ally and friend, Brutus, who applied the death blow.



**TONY ROBINSON**

‘Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none,’ is a quote from Shakespeare, and the Bible says: ‘Put not thy faith in man,’ and ‘The heart of man is desperately wicked.’ That may seem to be an indictment of all men and women, but it’s not. Sadly, it has proven

true often.

Now, when people say that they don’t trust, it doesn’t mean that they think that everyone is up to no good, but they do think that everyone has their own self-interest at heart and looks out for themselves first, and that’s where the mistrust comes into play. The law says that you’re innocent until proven guilty, but some say that you’re guilty until proven innocent. It’s a sort of protection against getting hurt.

So often, we may have heard of people going abroad, working hard for many years in the freezing cold, sending money back home to construct a house, only to have all that money spent by the trusted partner, who frittered it away on their own self-interest.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

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**VIEWPOINT**



# Guyana At 60: The Oil Is Flowing. So Why Are Guyanese Buying Tennis Rolls On Credit?

BY FELICIA J. PERSAUD

Guyana turned 60 on May 26th, 60 years since its independence from Britain in 1966.

At a flag-raising ceremony for the nation's 60th Independence Anniversary at Fort Island along the Essequibo River, President Irfaan Ali declared that Guyana is now "one of the world's fastest-growing economies worth more than US\$75 billion."

"We are today, the fastest growing economy on earth," he was quoted as saying. "Not in this hemisphere, not in the Caribbean – but on an entire planet."

On paper, the numbers are staggering. The International Monetary Fund has confirmed that Guyana led the world in average real GDP growth at 47 percent per year between 2022 and 2024, recording double-digit growth for six consecutive years. Oil production from the offshore Stabroek Block now surpasses 915,000 barrels per day, making Guyana South America's third-largest oil producer. The national budget crossed one trillion Guyanese dollars for the first time in 2024. Per capita income, once recorded at around \$340, is projected to approach \$38,000 by 2028.

Impressive numbers. But numbers, as any Guyanese on the ground will tell you, don't buy tennis rolls.

## The Other Guyana

This week, ahead of the pomp and ceremony surrounding the 60th, the Guyana Kaieteur News reported something that should stop everyone mid-applause: the cost of living in Guyana – the globally promoted oil-rich capital of the Caribbean – has become so high that many Guyanese are now buying single tennis rolls, butter flaps, and small pastries on credit just to survive the week.

Let that sink in. The fastest-growing economy on earth. And its people are eating on credit. According to Numbeo data, the estimated monthly costs for a family of four in Guyana run approximately GY\$708,000 – roughly US\$2,500 – excluding rent. The average gross salary ranges from G\$100,000 to G\$174,000 per month – between \$480 and \$835 USD. The median individual income is between G\$50,000 and

G\$60,000 – or between \$240 and \$290 USD – meaning half of the country's workforce earns less than this.

A standard senior citizen receives a non-contributory Old Age Pension of G\$46,000 per month – approximately \$220 USD. Compare that to the Numbeo cost-of-living estimate, and you see the disparity in stark relief.

As the war in Iran sends gas prices soaring, Guyanese are being forced to pay more for kerosene to cook and for transportation. Kerosene – the cheapest fuel – now runs \$3.17 to \$3.40 USD per gallon. Cooking gas costs roughly \$22 to \$27 USD. A meal at an inexpensive restaurant costs approximately \$12 USD. A gallon of milk runs about \$13. A dozen eggs, \$4.50.

## Who Is Actually Benefiting?

The salary data tells the real story. According to Paylab's Guyana Salary Survey:

- Expat and oil and gas engineers earn \$3,000 to \$6,000+ per month
- Senior finance and IT managers earn \$1,500 to \$2,500+
- Public school teachers and nurses earn \$500 to \$750
- Administrative assistants earn \$350 to \$500
- Retail, security, and service workers earn \$290 to \$350

The hospitals the government has built are understaffed and lack basic drugs in their pharmacies, forcing nationals to pay far more at private pharmacies. The many roads and bridges President Ali cited as "the clearest evidence" of transformation are real. But roads do not pay rent. Bridges do not fill a prescription.

The data clearly shows who is benefiting from the wealth the President is celebrating. Expats and foreign workers, while nationals struggle.

## Corruption And The Brain Drain

On the Corruption Perceptions Index, Transparency International gives Guyana a score of 40 as of 2025 – ranking it 84th out of 182 countries.

More telling is this: in 2026, Guyanese citizens are still leaving the country despite the nation possessing one of the world's fastest-growing GDPs. The UN's Human Flight Index places Guyana at roughly 8.2

out of 10 – making it a leading country for human capital loss in South America, well ahead of Venezuela at 6.5 and Suriname at 5.7.

The 2026 Democracy and Development Report from the United Nations Development Programme ranks Guyana 12th globally for brain drain. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the country sits fourth – behind only Haiti, Jamaica, and one other regional nation. Nearly 90 percent of Guyanese with tertiary education eventually migrate, the report finds, with North America the most common destination. Earlier World Bank data has long held that about 39 percent of Guyanese citizens already live abroad.

Two stories are running simultaneously. One is a sovereign balance sheet that most finance ministries in the region would trade theirs for. The other is a quiet, steady exit by the people who would normally be running its hospitals, classrooms, regulatory

agencies, and ministries.

## The Promise Still Unkept

Many Guyanese are still awaiting the \$100,000 grant the government promised since last December. That is not a footnote. That is a policy failure in the middle of an oil boom. I left Guyana in 1996, nearly 30 years ago. I have watched from the United States. Guyana has transformed from one of the poorest nations in the Western Hemisphere to the fastest-growing economy on earth. I wanted nothing more than to celebrate that transformation today. But I cannot celebrate numbers when many are still suffering.

Guyana at 60 should be a country where every national born and living there is building real, generational wealth from the oil beneath its waters. Instead, the Natural Resource Fund sits above US\$3.1 billion while Guyanese buy tennis rolls on credit.

The PPP/Civic government must move beyond rhetoric

and ribbon-cuttings. Roads and bridges are necessary. They are not sufficient. Sixty years of independence demands more than infrastructure. It demands that the ordinary Guyanese – the teacher, the nurse, the security guard, the senior citizen living on \$220 a month – feel this oil wealth in their daily lives. Not in presidential speeches. Not in budget headlines. In their pockets.

No one in Guyana should be struggling to buy a packet of tennis rolls in an oil-rich nation. Not at 60. Not ever. Guyana at 60 should be wealthy for all, not just for some.

- NewsAmericasnow.com

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Felicia J. Persaud is a Guyana-born media entrepreneur, founder of News Americas Now, Hard Beat Communications, Invest Caribbean, CaribPR Wire, and AI Capital Exchange. She has lived in the United States since 1996.**



## Mistrust

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

Prior to that, the person was a most trusted family member, perhaps a spouse, but when that steady flow of cash kept on coming, the temptation was just too great to resist. "I thought that I could trust her, but she robbed me blind," is what's usually said after acts like that.

But it's in relationships that trust really comes into play. After all, a relationship is based on love, loyalty, respect, and trust, and as most people have experienced, trust is the overriding factor.

Of course, that goes for workers too, for if you have a domestic helper, babysitter, security person, mechanic, or doctor, trust is of utmost importance. But back to trust in relationships, for that has been the downfall of many couples who put too much trust in each other, blindly.

Is it wise to say that you trust your spouse one hundred percent? Isn't it better to say that: "Of course I trust my wife/husband, but I wouldn't put my neck on the block and swear blind." Remember, people are people, and very often that person may just slip and slide down that slippery slope and do what is considered out of character. Ha, out of character indeed, all that he wanted was the opportunity, and wham bam, thank you ma'am, there he slides down the salacious slope of seduction.

And yet there are people who will swear that they trust their partner one hundred percent. Others will sniff and scrutinize him when he comes home at night.

Would you leave your spouse in the company of your best friend to spend the night together, or to go on a weekend retreat and share the same room? "Hey Marie, I'm



going away for a week, can you stay with my husband while I'm gone?"

Nevertheless, trust is important, for without it, we are most unfortunate. The fact is, though, when trust is broken, it can never be redeemed.

"I know that he cheated on me, but I never thought that he'd do it again. 'Once bitten, twice shy. Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me. No one is saying that you're to walk around with a magnifying glass, scrutinizing, questioning all motives, and mistrusting everyone, as that would be a terrible way to

live. But be careful when dealing with fellow human beings, and don't be careless.

So, all those who are chiding those who mistrust their stance, do you wonder where your partner is late at night, smell for perfume or cologne, or check their cell phone? Mistrust exists.

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



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## Vybz Kartel New Album Is The Most Personal Of His Career



Vybz Kartel in a YouTube screenshot from the video for 'God & Time.'

When Vybz Kartel was sentenced to 35 years in a Jamaican prison in 2014, many wondered if the world would ever hear new music from the man widely regarded as the King of Dancehall. When the Court of Appeal unanimously overturned that conviction on August 6, 2024, the answer came swiftly and decisively - and it has not stopped since.

Now, less than two years after walking free, Kartel is set to release his most personal album yet. 'God & Time' drops June 5 via TJ Records and Vybz Kartel Muzik, with Zojack Worldwide handling distribution - and the dancehall icon says this one comes from a place no previous album has reached.

"I named the album God & Time because it's a slang that has been popular in Jamaica since we were children," Kartel told Billboard in an exclusive interview. "When I was in prison, my lawyer used to always say that to me. I eventually just started believing in myself and applying it to my life."

### The Journey That Made The Album

For the Caribbean diaspora and millions of fans globally who followed every twist of Kartel's decade-long legal battle - God & Time carries a meaning that goes far beyond music.

Kartel and his co-accused - Shawn Campbell, Kahira

Jones and Andre St. John - were originally convicted following a historic 64-day trial for the 2011 murder of Clive "Lizard" Williams, a charge all four have consistently denied. The Court of Appeal's unanimous ruling that they would not face a new trial ended one of the most closely watched legal sagas in Caribbean history.

Since his release, Kartel has not wasted a single moment. He mounted a massive Freedom Street concert in Kingston to bring in 2025, appeared at Drake's Wireless Festival takeover, and completed his own Worl' Boss Tour across the UK, Europe, and the United States. Earlier this month he appeared on Chris Brown's "F--k and Party" - a cut from Brown's LP that debuted at number seven on the Billboard 200.

And through it all, the music kept coming - and getting better. Both 2024's 'Party With Me' and 2025's 'Heart & Soul' earned Grammy nominations for best reggae album, marking Kartel's first nods at the ceremony and signaling that his artistic powers had not just survived incarceration - they had deepened.

**God & Time - What To Expect**  
'God & Time' follows two consecutive Grammy-nominated projects and reunites Kartel with the same creative team behind

2015's Viking and 2016's King of the Dancehall - the album that spawned "Fever," one of the defining dancehall songs of the decade.

The album's lead single "Panic" features Grammy-nominated pop-dancehall star Shenseea, while the broader track list brings together Latin Grammy-winning reggaetonero Farruko and contemporary Jamaican music star Skillibeng - a lineup that signals Kartel's intention to push dancehall's boundaries while staying rooted in its DNA.

'God & Time' is set to survey the full range of Kartel's emotions following his release - self-reflection alongside the waist-winning riddims and genre-bending crossover records that have defined his career. Kartel has also teased additional surprise collaborations yet to be revealed.

"You can expect Vybz Kartel energy," he told Billboard. "The flow will be different, and the lyrics will be amazing."

### A Caribbean Heritage Month Release

The June 5th release date places 'God & Time' squarely in the heart of Caribbean Heritage Month - a timing that feels like coincidence and more like destiny for an artist whose entire career has been a reflection of Caribbean culture, language, resilience, and reinvention. For a generation of Caribbean diaspora fans who held onto hope through every court hearing, every appeal, and every year of silence - God & Time is more than an album title. It is a philosophy. And Kartel, more than anyone, has lived it. The album is available for pre-order now. The album drops on June 5, 2026.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## Reggae Sumfest Marks 10 Years Under DownSound With Miami Launch

The international launch of A Taste of Reggae Sumfest in Miami was more than a promotional event for this year's festival. For DownSound Entertainment CEO Josef Bogdanovich, it also marked a major milestone — 10 years since the company assumed stewardship of Jamaica's premier reggae festival.

Entertainment stakeholders, members of the Jamaican diaspora, influencers, and music industry insiders gathered at Komodo restaurant in Miami's Brickell district for the official international launch of the festival, set for Plantation Cove in St. Ann, Jamaica.

"Tonight is special for many reasons," Bogdanovich told attendees. "Not only are we building excitement for another incredible staging of Sumfest, but this year also marks 10 years since DownSound took over the festival."

Since taking over the festival in 2016, Bogdanovich said the organization has worked to elevate Reggae Sumfest into a world-class entertainment product while preserving Jamaican culture and music.

The event also highlighted the festival's economic impact on Jamaica, particularly following the devastation caused by Hurricane Melissa last year. Bogdanovich said the festival supports thousands of Jamaicans, including vendors, hotel workers, drivers, stylists, production crews, creatives, and small



Jamaica's Consul General to the Southeastern United States, Oliver Mair, presented a citation to DownSound Entertainment CEO Josef Bogdanovich.

business owners.

Dancehall superstar Vybz Kartel made a surprise appearance during the launch and praised organizers and fans for continuing to support reggae and dancehall globally.

Jamaica's Consul General to the Southeastern United States, Oliver Mair, described Reggae Sumfest as a major cultural tradition for the Jamaican diaspora in South Florida.

This year's staging has been condensed into a single-night experience after Hurricane Melissa severely damaged the Catherine Hall Entertainment Complex in Montego Bay, forcing organizers to relocate the festival.

Jamaica's Culture Minister Olivia Grange said that despite the changes, "what will not change is the unique energy and vibrant performances at Reggae Sumfest."

Organizers also announced that Zimi Seh Brunch will join the weekend lineup with a special St. Ann edition on July 19th.



## Shaggy Gets His Own Day In Brooklyn

Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso declared May 19, 2026, as "Shaggy Day" in Brooklyn - honoring the reggae and dancehall legend on the occasion of his fifteenth studio album release.

The proclamation was handed over to Shaggy - born Orville Richard Burrell in Jamaica - at a public celebration held at I AM CARIBBEING HQ at 1399 Nostrand Avenue in Little Caribbean, with Deputy Borough President Rev. Kim Council representing the Borough President's office.

The new album, titled "Lottery," includes "BUN (She Loves Me)," "Dancehall Nice" featuring Beres Hammond and Dexta Daps, the title track "Lottery" featuring Jeremih, and "We Love Di Gal Dem" featuring 450.

Shaggy moved to Flatbush as a teenager from Jamaica and launched his music career in Brooklyn - building a four-decade run that has produced more than 40 million albums sold and eight Billboard Hot 100 singles. Beyond music, he established the Shaggy Make a Difference Foundation in 2009 and most recently led relief efforts following Hurricane Melissa, raising over \$500,000 at a benefit concert at UBS Arena and delivering essential goods via private flights.

"Brooklyn is the borough that took a kid from Jamaica and gave him a stage, a sound, and a purpose," Shaggy said at the celebration, as quoted in the release.



Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso declared May 19, 2026, as "Shaggy Day" in Brooklyn - honoring the reggae and dancehall legend on the occasion of his fifteenth studio album release.

Borough President Reynoso added: "From his musical genius to his leadership in philanthropy, Shaggy embodies the very best of our borough."



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# Harlesden's Walk Of Music Salutes Reggae Greats

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL  
Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

Beginning back in the 1960s, anyone who wanted to check out the British ska/rock steady/reggae scene – between the 1960s and the 1990s – was pointed to Harlesden in North-West London. It is where the music's movers and shakers did business and partied.

Earlier this year, on March 17th and 20th, 12 reggae artists and record companies were honored with street markers on the Harlesden Walk of Music. Located in the borough of Brent, the strip is like the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles.

Among the honorees were the late Dennis Brown, Delroy Washington, and producer/record label Sonny Roberts, who were all honored posthumously; UK reggae legends Aswad, General Levy, Janet Kay, the Ruff Cutt band, The Cimarons band, Hawkeye Records, Jet Star Records, Starlight Records and Trojan Records. They were all acknowledged by the council of Brent.

The ceremonies will be broadcast in the United Kingdom on July 1st as part of International Reggae Day. Coral J. Reid, head of publicity and marketing for the Harlesden Walk of Music Project, told Caribbean Today that The

Cimarons, Dennis Brown, Delroy Washington, Hawkeye Records, Jet Star Records, Sonny Roberts, Starlight Records, and Trojan Records were selected by "a thorough process of achievement, recognition, and elimination."

Aswad, Janet Kay, General Levy and Ruff Kutt were selected based on a paper-based survey on the Brent Council's website that ran from July 21 to September 14, 2025.

The events were attended by Tony "Gad" Robinson, bass guitarist and original member of Aswad; The Cimarons; General Levy; Janet Kay; Carl Palmer, one of three brothers who operated Jet Star Records; Cleon Roberts, daughter of Sonny Roberts,



Carl Palmer, one of three brothers who operated Jet Star Records in Harlesden, United Kingdom, at the unveiling of a street marker on the Harlesden Walk of Music in March. The ceremony honored the contributions of 12 artists, musicians, and administrators to the development of reggae in that country. With him is his wife, Beverly. (Contributed image)

who died in 2021; and Anthony "Chips" Richards, representing Trojan Records.

Dennis Brown, who died in 1999, lived in the UK for many

years. His wife, Yvonne, and two of their children were present for the unveiling of his plaque.

Richards, who has lived in the UK for over 60 years, said the Harlesden Walk of Music tells the story of the Windrush Generation, West Indians who settled in the country from

1948-71.

"They (music community) were young, energetic, and wanting success. They helped pave the way for a lot of the musicians doing well today," he stated.



## Sean Paul's Dutty Rock Productions Drops Brawlin Riddim

International superstar Sean Paul has released another riddim compilation through his Dutty Rock Productions imprint - this time delivering "Brawlin Riddim," a hard-hitting dancehall project featuring an all-star lineup.

The compilation features Busy Signal, Sean Paul, Spragga Benz, Charly Black, Chi Ching Ching, Leftside, Future Fambo, Looga Man, Bush Wakka, and Ras Ajai - each bringing their own lyrical energy to a production anchored by pulsing bass, sharp synth leads, and siren sound effects that evoke the raw energy of a Kingston street dance.

The riddim was produced by Sean Paul and Dutty Rock Productions, mixed and mastered by Grammy-winning engineer



"Brawlin Riddim" is now available on all major digital streaming platforms.

Andre "Dre Day," and recorded by dancehall heavyweight Andre "Suku Ward" Gray at Dutty Rock's studios in Kingston, Jamaica.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



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NURTURING GREATNESS

## From Jamaica To Gordon Ramsay Glory: Chef Darian Bryan Expands Culinary Empire With New Steakhouse

Fresh off his dramatic victory on Next Level Chef, Jamaican-born culinary star Darian Bryan is preparing to open a brand-new steakhouse in Buffalo, New York, adding another major milestone to his remarkable immigrant success story.

Reserve Steakhouse by Chef Darian is set to open this month in Buffalo's Larkinville district, taking over the former Eckl's location next to Bryan's already popular Caribbean restaurant, Bratts Hill by Chef Darian.

The opening comes just weeks after Bryan captured the \$250,000 grand prize on celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay's hit competition show, cementing his place as one of the Caribbean diaspora's rising culinary stars.

For Bryan, the journey from Jamaica's Clarendon Parish to national television fame has been anything but easy.

Growing up among 23 family members in Jamaica, Bryan moved to Buffalo at age 20 with limited resources and little



Chef Darian Bryan and Chef Gordon Ramsay on Next Level Chef. (Photo Chef Darian Bryan/IG)

knowledge of American cuisine. His first job at Denny's introduced him to restaurant management and ingredients he had never encountered before.

"It was a great experience," Bryan said of the job that helped shape his early culinary career.

After enrolling at Erie Community College's culinary program, Bryan faced cultural and financial struggles, including language barriers, discrimination, and harsh Buffalo winters while biking to school.

"I had to work twice as hard to get to the top," he recalled.

That determination paid off. Bryan eventually became executive chef of the program and

built an impressive résumé that included serving as personal chef to former NFL players, including Vontae Davis and Stefon Diggs.

Today, his Larkinville culinary empire includes Bratts Hill, the Jamaican Market, the Plating Society Boutique, a chef's table restaurant, and the Cook Shop.

Bryan says his mission goes beyond food. Through the Chef Darian Foundation, he supports culinary education, food assistance initiatives, and grants for aspiring chefs.

"Food should make people happy," Bryan said, adding that he remains committed to representing Jamaica proudly through every dish he creates.

The chef, who is married to Jessica Bryan and has two children, recently hosted a sold-out, exclusive dinner experience at Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino following his television win.

Now, with Reserve Steakhouse preparing to open its doors, Chef Darian's next chapter is already underway - blending fine dining, Caribbean flavor, and the resilience of a Jamaican immigrant dream realized.



## Rasta Pasta Recipe

- 1 yellow pepper, sliced
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 (14.5 Aounce) can chicken broth
- 1 ¼ cups skim milk
- ¼ cup grated parmesan
- 2 Tbsp. Neufchatel cheese

### METHOD

- Cut chicken into thin strips and coat with jerk seasoning!
- Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the chicken and cook for 4 minutes on each side, or until the internal temperature reaches 165°F. Remove chicken from the pan and keep warm.

- Add pasta to the pan and top with pepper strips, green onions, garlic, broth, and milk. Stir slightly and cover the pan and bring to a boil.
- Once it comes to a boil, reduce the heat to medium-low and cook covered until pasta is tender.
- Stir in Parmesan cheese and cream cheese.
- Return chicken to the pan, stir through and enjoy.

- [healthyoptionsbuffalo.com](http://healthyoptionsbuffalo.com)



Rasta Pasta

BY CHEF DARIAN BRYAN

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. chicken breasts
- 3 tsp. jerk seasoning
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 cup penne pasta, whole wheat
- 1 green pepper, sliced
- 1 red pepper, sliced

## Island SPACE Mango Festival Returns Bigger Than Ever For Father's Day Celebration

South Florida's love affair with mangoes, Caribbean culture, and family fun will take center stage this Father's Day as the third annual Island SPACE Mango Festival returns on Sunday, June 21, 2026, at the Charles F. Dodge City Center in Pembroke Pines.

Organizers say the event, presented by Island SPACE Caribbean Museum, has rapidly grown from a small community gathering in 2024 into one of the region's most anticipated Caribbean cultural festivals, with more than 1,500 attendees expected this year.

Visitors can expect an immersive Caribbean-inspired experience featuring dozens of mango varieties, chef demonstrations, live entertainment, artisan vendors, workshops, tastings, and family activities throughout the afternoon.

This year's festival also places a special spotlight on fathers and

father figures through a new feature called "Daddy's Kingdom," a red-carpet experience complete with a throne-and-crown photo station, curated gifts, tastings, pampering experiences, and premium raffles.

Festivalgoers will also enjoy the Mango Walk showcasing exotic mango varieties, the Daddy Mango Eating Competition, a live mango auction, a Kids & Family Zone, multicultural performances, and all-day DJ music.

"It is the kind of Sunday people plan around," said Calibe Thompson. "You can spend the afternoon with us, celebrate the fathers in your life and then head into the energy of the World Cup just minutes away."

The event coincides with a FIFA World Cup group-stage match at Hard Rock Stadium later that evening, giving attendees the opportunity to combine a cultural festival experience with one of the world's biggest sporting events.

Organizers say the move to the Charles F. Dodge City Center marks a major milestone for the growing festival, offering expanded indoor, air-conditioned space, increased vendor capacity, and easier parking access for visitors from across South Florida and beyond.

Attendees are expected to include Caribbean families, food lovers, home gardeners, and tropical fruit enthusiasts eager to explore mango-inspired cuisine and Caribbean traditions.

Island SPACE officials say the festival reflects the museum's broader mission to preserve and celebrate Caribbean heritage, culture, art, and diaspora stories in South Florida.

Tickets and event details are available at [islandpacefl.org/mangofest26](http://islandpacefl.org/mangofest26).



## Caribbean Restaurants Make NY Times 100 Best Restaurants In New York City

Caribbean cuisine has arrived at America's most prestigious dining table. A Caribbean restaurant has grabbed the coveted number one spot, and several others have made the list of the NY Times 100 Best Restaurants in New York City.

The landmark annual ranking was chosen this year by the publication's new co-chief critic Ligaya Mishan. The recognition marks a defining cultural moment for a cuisine long excluded from the upper ranks of dining despite its deep roots, rich complexity, and undeniable influence on American food culture. Leading the 100 restaurants list and the Caribbean contingent is Kabawa - a prix-fixe Caribbean fine dining experience in Manhattan's East Village that earned the number one spot, beating out even Le Bernadine, which fell to 21.

### Kabawa-The Caribbean Restaurant That's Making Diners See Things Anew

At the top of the list, and representing the Caribbean, sits Kabawa, the Manhattan tasting-menu restaurant helmed by Barbadian chef Paul Carmichael. The Times described it as one of those rare restaurants with the power to make diners see things anew - high praise in a city with more than 25,000 restaurants competing for attention.

Carmichael's prix-fixe menu is built around the bold, layered flavors of the Caribbean - sorrel powder, tamarind, allspice, and Scotch bonnets - but carries a deeper purpose. The Times noted that the Barbados-born chef has something profound to say about Caribbean cuisine as a through line in the African diaspora - a point of solidarity sustained through colonization and disenfranchisement.

None of it is heavy-handed. The Times described the mood as effervescent, the menu urging diners to "Luv yuh self." And on any given night, Carmichael can be found next door at the more informal Bar Kabawa, slinging goat patties - because as the Times put it, he understands that the small joys matter too.

Kabawa is located at 8 Extra Place in the East Village and is part of the Momofuku restaurant group.

### The Caribbean Restaurants That Also Made The List

Beyond Kabawa, several community Caribbean staples earned spots on the prestigious list - validating what Caribbean New Yorkers have known for generations.

**A&A Bake and Doubles** - Brooklyn (Ranked #95) The beloved Trinidadian institution in Bedford-Stuyvesant made

the cut with its iconic doubles - baras fluffy, channa chickpeas sweet-hot, musky and messy, with all the sauces - at just \$2.50 each. Located at 1337 Fulton Street, A&A has long been a cultural anchor for New York's Trinidadian and Tobagonian community.

**Cas West Indian & American Restaurant** - Brooklyn (Ranked #91) This bare-bones Crown Heights Jamaican spot earned its spot on the strength of its oxtail alone - the gravy described by the Times as dark and luscious, the inky imprint on the rice worth the visit by itself. Located at 135 Kingston Avenue, Cas keeps it real with Golden Krust loaves on the shelf and freshly made pepper shrimp packed the traditional way.

**Trinciti Roti Shop** - Queens (Ranked #88) The Times made it clear that Trinciti in South Ozone Park is worth every minute of the A train wait and the half mile walk from the station. The star of the show is the buss up shut - a roti as big as a shirt, rolled and wrapped and rolled again with gobs of butter and ghee, finishing with all the flaky richness of a Southern biscuit. Located at 111-03 Lefferts Boulevard in Ozone Park.

**Kingston Tropical** - The Bronx (Ranked #72) Since 1970, this Wakefield takeout spot has been serving Jamaican patties done exactly by the book - marigold yellow, faithfully crimped, perfumed with thyme, flaky without collapsing. The Times paid tribute to founder John Levi, who established the bakery with his wife Joyce and passed away just months ago. Located at 4000 White Plains Road.

### Why This Moment Matters

The inclusion of Caribbean restaurants across multiple boroughs and price points - from a Manhattan tasting menu to a \$2.50 doubles - sends a powerful message. Caribbean food is not a monolith, nor is it a niche. It is a cuisine with history, depth, diaspora roots, and a story to tell that goes far beyond jerk chicken and rum punch.

For the Caribbean diaspora in New York - the largest in the United States - this recognition by the nation's most influential food publication is long overdue validation. Caribbean restaurants have sustained communities, preserved cultural memory, and fed generations of immigrants and their American-born children for decades without a fraction of the media attention lavished on European and Asian cuisines.

The 2026 list suggests that it is finally beginning to change.

- [NewsAmericasNow.com](http://NewsAmericasNow.com)



## HEALTH NEWS



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## Jamaica To Name Children's Hospital After Former Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller

The Jamaican government says it will name the Western Child and Adolescent Hospital in St. James in honor of former Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller, recognizing her role in securing and initiating the landmark healthcare project.

Prime Minister Andrew Holness made the announcement during a ceremony in Kingston to rename the Ministry of Labor and Social Security's 1F North Street building in tribute to Simpson Miller, who served as Jamaica's Minister of Labor for 11 years.

The 220-bed Western Child and Adolescent Hospital is currently under construction on the compound of Cornwall Regional Hospital in Montego Bay and is expected to become the English-speaking Caribbean's first dedicated pediatric and adolescent hospital.

The facility will provide specialized healthcare services for children and adolescents up to age 18.

Holness said the decision to name the hospital after Simpson Miller had always been part of the government's plans, noting that she played a major role in negotiating



Former Jamaica Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller in a 2015 JIS image.

the project with the Chinese government during her tenure.

"I want to give an assurance that the Western Children Hospital, which Portia Simpson Miller went to China and negotiated with the Government of China, came back to Jamaica and announced it, that it is only appropriate that it should be named in her honor, and it will be done," Holness said.

The prime minister explained that the formal naming announcement was initially expected to coincide with the hospital's completion and commissioning. He described the move as part of a broader effort to preserve Simpson Miller's legacy despite political differences.

Holness also revealed plans to rename sections of the Three Miles transportation corridor in her honor, including overpasses and nearby areas formerly known as Portia Simpson Miller Square before major infrastructure upgrades were carried out.

Reflecting on their long-standing relationship, Holness spoke warmly of the former prime minister, affectionately known as "Mama P."

"She's always in my heart and we're always good friends," he said, adding that his mother worked at the Ministry of Labour during Simpson Miller's tenure and that the two families have maintained close ties over the years.

During her 2007/08 Budget Debate presentation in Jamaica's House of Representatives, Simpson Miller described the hospital project as a major initiative to improve healthcare services for the island's children and adolescents.

The news comes as Simpson Miller, 79, is living with dementia. Her condition was publicly confirmed by her husband and primary caregiver, Errald Miller.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



## Florida Restores HIV Drug Program Funding After Backlash Over Cuts

Florida lawmakers have reached a budget agreement restoring major funding and eligibility protections to the state's AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) after widespread criticism from HIV advocates and healthcare providers.

The agreement restores eligibility to 400 percent of the federal poverty level and reverses restrictions introduced earlier this year by the Florida Department of Health. Lawmakers also approved \$75 million in funding for the program and reinstated coverage for medications, including Biktarvy, one of the most commonly prescribed HIV treatments in the United States.

The AIDS Drug Assistance Program helps low-income Floridians living with HIV obtain life-saving medications and

insurance support.

Earlier this year, the state reduced income eligibility from 400 percent to 130 percent of the federal poverty level and ended insurance premium assistance for many recipients. According to the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, more than 12,000 Floridians lost coverage as a result.

"Florida's health department walked away from people living with HIV. Lawmakers brought them back," said Esteban Wood, AHF's director of advocacy and legislative affairs.

Advocates warn that interruptions in HIV treatment can increase hospitalization, healthcare costs, and the risk of new HIV transmissions.

- *Rewritten from CBS News*



## St. Kitts Defends Decision To Deny Entry To Nigerians Amid Ebola Concerns

The St. Kitts and Nevis government is defending its decision to deny entry to 17 Nigerian nationals, saying the move was necessary to protect public health amid growing international concerns over Ebola outbreaks in parts of Africa.

In a statement, the Ministry of National Security said the decision "was not taken lightly" and was based on guidance from health authorities.

"At this time, our foremost duty is to act with caution, responsibility, and in accordance with health guidance, while continuing to treat all persons with dignity and respect," the ministry stated.

Officials said the Nigerians arrived on regional airline flights but provided no additional details.

The government pointed to advisories from the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, which reportedly classified Nigeria as being at high risk for Ebola importation because of ongoing outbreaks in parts of Africa and increased movement through major transport hubs.

The World Health Organization has declared the Ebola outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda a public health emergency of international concern.

Authorities in St. Kitts said they hope the global health situation is quickly contained so normal travel can resume.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



## Jamaica Warns Against Travel To Ebola-Affected African Countries

Jamaica is urging citizens to avoid non-essential travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda amid ongoing Ebola outbreaks in both countries.

In a statement, Jamaica's Ministry of Health and Wellness advised travelers to reconsider plans to visit or transit through the affected nations following the World Health Organization declaration that the outbreaks constitute a public health emergency of international concern.

The ministry said Jamaica has strengthened health surveillance measures at ports of entry. Travelers arriving from affected countries within the last 21 days who show no

symptoms will be required to self-quarantine under medical supervision, while symptomatic individuals will be isolated and treated as suspected Ebola cases.

Health officials are also urging Jamaicans to rely only on official sources for information regarding the outbreak.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus recently warned that efforts to contain the outbreak are struggling to keep pace with the spread of the virus.

Ebola is a severe and often fatal disease with mortality rates ranging from 25 to 90 percent in past outbreaks.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



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## Jamaica's US Ambassador Holds Talks With Atlanta Mayor On Trade And Investment

Antony Anderson recently held high-level discussions with Andre Dickens aimed at strengthening investment, trade, and cultural ties between Jamaica and the city of Atlanta.

The meeting took place at the Buckhead Club in Atlanta

and focused on expanding economic partnerships, increasing investment opportunities, and boosting trade between Jamaica and Atlanta-based businesses.

Both leaders also highlighted the importance of cultural connections, particularly given

Atlanta's large Jamaican diaspora community.

During the meeting, Ambassador Anderson presented Jamaica's strategic priorities and outlined potential areas for collaboration. The discussions reflected a shared commitment

to deepening the longstanding relationship between Jamaica and Atlanta, one of the United States' leading economic and cultural centers.

The talks come as cities like Atlanta are playing an increasingly important role in international engagement and economic development through sub-national diplomacy.

Both sides expressed optimism that the discussions would lead to future initiatives promoting stronger business linkages and cultural



Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Major General (Ret'd) Antony Anderson (left), makes a presentation to Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens during a courtesy call at the Buckhead Club in Atlanta on Sunday, May 3, 2026. (Photo: Derrick Scott)

exchange between Jamaica and Atlanta.



## Bahamas Imposes Temporary Travel Ban Over Ebola Concerns

The Bahamas has announced a 30-day travel ban on people arriving from or recently visiting the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, and South Sudan amid growing international concerns over the spread of the Ebola virus.

The government said the measure took immediate effect as a precautionary public health action aimed at protecting residents, visitors, and the wider

community. Officials said the restrictions will remain in place for 30 days pending further review by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

The announcement follows confirmation that two foreign nationals who recently arrived in The Bahamas from the Democratic Republic of the Congo were placed in isolation after developing fevers. Health authorities later said the

symptoms subsided and that the men were not showing signs consistent with Ebola.

Health Minister Michael Darville said the individuals remain in isolation while testing continues.

Officials stressed there are currently no confirmed Ebola cases in The Bahamas and that the overall public risk remains low.



## Courtyard By Marriott Kingston Unveils Modern New Look Inspired By Jamaican Hospitality



The Renovated Lobby at the Courtyard by Marriott Kingston, Jamaica. (Contributed image)

The Courtyard by Marriott Kingston has unveiled a major renovation designed to blend modern sophistication with the warmth and culture of Jamaican hospitality.

Located in New Kingston's

business district, the hotel has transformed its lobby, restaurant, and bar spaces to create a more contemporary and social atmosphere for both business and leisure travelers. Since opening in 2015, the property has become

a key destination for corporate visitors, diplomats, and tourists visiting Jamaica's capital.

Senior Sales Manager Romie Morris said the renovation reflects Kingston's own evolution as a growing center for business, entertainment, and culture. The redesigned spaces now feature modern furnishings, flexible work areas, and Caribbean-inspired accents aimed at creating a seamless experience for guests to work, relax, and socialize.

The hotel also upgraded its dining experience with interactive buffet stations, locally inspired cuisine, and a redesigned bar expected to become a hub for networking and nightlife.

General Manager Lee-Ann Godfrey said the investment reflects confidence in Jamaica's expanding tourism and business travel sectors.



## Jamaica To Host Second CTO Air Connectivity Summit In 2027

Jamaica will host the second annual Caribbean Tourism Organization Air Connectivity Summit in Kingston on Feb. 23, 2027, as regional leaders continue efforts to strengthen Caribbean air travel and tourism growth.

Jamaica Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett made the announcement during the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's Caribbean Travel Marketplace in Antigua. "The summit will provide strategic insight for regional planning," Bartlett said, adding that Jamaica hopes to bring together airline partners and regional stakeholders to discuss

the future of Caribbean air connectivity.

The summit will take place one week after the United Nations-designated Global Tourism Resilience Day on Feb. 17, an initiative championed by Jamaica.

The inaugural CTO Air Connectivity Summit was held earlier this year in Bermuda, bringing together tourism officials, airline executives, airport leaders, and industry stakeholders to tackle issues including high airfares, taxes, limited routes, and regional connectivity gaps.

Rosa Harris, chair of the CTO Airlift Committee,

described air connectivity as "our oxygen" and "an economic lifeline" for the Caribbean.

Officials say the 2027 summit will focus on improving airline partnerships, expanding interline agreements, strengthening infrastructure, and diversifying tourism markets, particularly from South America, where Caribbean arrivals increased by nearly 24 percent in 2025.

CTO Secretary-General Dona Regis-Prosper said the Jamaica summit will help transform ideas discussed in Bermuda into concrete regional action.



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# IMMIGRATION NEWS



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## What Caribbean Immigrants Need To Know About The New Green Card Rules

Confusion is again reigning among immigrants. New green card rules from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services now reflect a significant policy shift that could force thousands of Caribbean and other immigrants already living in the United States. It now requires them to leave the country and apply for permanent residency from abroad – upending a decades-long practice that allowed eligible immigrants to apply for a Green Card without leaving US soil.

The new policy memo, announced May 22, 2026, directs USCIS officers to treat adjustment of status – the process by which eligible immigrants apply for permanent residency while remaining in the United States – as an “extraordinary discretionary relief” rather than a routine process available to qualifying applicants.

The change represents one of the most significant shifts in US immigration processing in decades and carries immediate implications for Caribbean nationals on student visas, tourist visas, and certain temporary work visas who had planned to pursue permanent



New green card rules from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services now reflect a significant policy shift that could force thousands of Caribbean and other immigrants already living in the United States.

residency without leaving the country.

### What Changed And Why It Matters

Under longstanding practice, immigrants who were physically present in the United States and met certain eligibility requirements could file an I-485 adjustment of status application to obtain a Green Card without returning to their home country. For Caribbean immigrants – many of whom face lengthy consular processing waits and logistical challenges in returning to their home countries – this pathway has been critical.

Under the new policy, as analyzed by immigration law firm Quarles, USCIS officers are now directed to deny adjustment of status applications unless the applicant can demonstrate “unusual or even outstanding equities” – a significantly higher standard than existed under prior practice, where adjustment was treated as relatively routine for eligible applicants.

USCIS said the goal of the new policy is to reduce illegal overstays and reallocate agency resources – characterizing the shift not as a new rule but as enforcement of long-standing immigration law.

### Five Things Caribbean Immigrants Need To Know

#### 1. Green Cards Will No Longer Be Routine For Many Applicants

USCIS has directed that adjustment of status is now reserved for “extraordinary circumstances.” Most immigrants on temporary visas – including students, tourists, and some temporary workers – who want a Green Card may now be required to return to their home country to apply through consular processing at a US embassy or consulate abroad, according to the Quarles analysis.

#### 2. Already-Pending Applications Are Also Affected

Critically, as Quarles noted, the new policy memo does not contain a grandfathering provision for applications already filed. This means immigrants who filed I-485 applications before the new policy was announced may still face the heightened scrutiny under the new standard at the time their application is reviewed. Applicants may face additional Requests for Evidence or questions at interviews about why adjustment, rather than consular processing, is warranted in their case.

#### 3. H-1B And L-1 Workers May Be Less Impacted

The policy memo suggests that immigrants holding H-1B or L-1 work visas – which carry what is known as “dual intent,” meaning the holder can legally seek permanent residency while on a temporary work visa – may face less impact from the new policy. However, as Quarles cautioned, holding a dual-intent visa alone is not sufficient to guarantee approval, as USCIS officers must still weigh all relevant factors on a case-by-case basis.

#### 4. Filing An Application Is Still Permitted

Importantly, as Quarles noted, the new policy does not stop immigrants from filing I-485 applications. The right to file is governed by federal statute and cannot be overridden

by a policy memo. However, the standard for approval has been raised significantly, meaning filing does not carry the same expectation of approval it once did.

#### 5. Legal Challenges Are Expected

Given the sweeping scope of the change and its retroactive application to already-pending cases, immigration attorneys say legal challenges in federal courts are almost inevitable. Courts may be asked to address whether the memo’s retroactive application raises due process concerns and whether the policy is consistent with prior congressional and judicial action, according to the Quarles analysis.

### What Caribbean Immigrants Should Do Right Now

Immigration attorneys are urging Caribbean nationals with pending or planned Green Card applications to take immediate action:

- Consult a licensed immigration attorney immediately – not a notario or immigration consultant
- Do not travel outside the United States on Advance Parole without first consulting an attorney, as the new policy raises the stakes for travelers with pending applications
- Document your case thoroughly – family ties, length of time in the US, employment history, and good moral character are all relevant factors officers will consider
- Do not panic if your application is pending – applications can still be filed and approved, but the standard has changed

### The Broader Context

The new USCIS adjustment of status policy follows a series of significant immigration enforcement changes under the Trump administration – including the recent signature rule change that allows USCIS to deny applications with invalid signatures without refund, expanded deportation operations, and new restrictions on asylum processing.

For the Caribbean diaspora in the United States – a community that includes hundreds of thousands of Jamaicans, Trinidadians, Haitians, Guyanese, Barbadians, and others navigating the US immigration system – the cumulative impact of these policy shifts is creating an increasingly complex and high-stakes environment for those seeking permanent residency.

- NewsAmericasnow.com





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# Miami Gardens Braces For FIFA World Cup Fever

**BY HOWARD CAMPBELL**  
**Edited By Felicia J. Persaud**

The city of Miami Gardens in South Florida has a population of 113,579 according to the 2025 United States Census. Those figures are expected to swell substantially this month and in July, when it hosts seven matches in the FIFA World Cup.

The first of those matches, Saudi Arabia vs. Uruguay, takes place on June 15th at the Hard Rock Stadium, 347 Don Shula Drive, Miami Gardens, FL 33056 - about 16 miles north of downtown Miami and 27 miles north of Miami Beach. The other matches that will be played this month are:

- **June 21st: Uruguay vs. Cabo Verde**
- **June 24th: Scotland vs. Brazil**
- **June 27th: Colombia vs. Portugal**

### Knockout Stages

Next month, there will be three knock-out matches.

**Match 86 | Round of 32 | Friday, July 3**

**Match 99 | Quarter-final | Saturday, July 11**

**Match 103 | Bronze final | Saturday, July 18**

Argentina, with superstar striker Lionel Messi, is the defending champion.

Hard Rock Stadium, which opened in 1987, hosted matches in the 2024 Copa América soccer tournament, including the final, which Argentina won 1-0 over Colombia. It is home to the NFL team, the Miami Dolphins, and the University of Miami's Hurricanes football team.

Miami Gardens administrators are anticipating bumper crowds for the games, in a city that reflects South Florida's diverse populace. Mayor Rodney Harris, who has held the post since 2020, expects his city to benefit considerably from global exposure.

"It will give us an opportunity to tell our story. After FIFA is all gone and it's all over, people can come back to Miami Gardens, open up a business here in Miami Gardens, and come be a part of the place we call home," he said.

FIFA officials said that while it has hosted countless NFL games, the World Cup spectacle will be vastly different for Miami Gardens.

"We're going to have seven games in the greater Miami area, and it's going to be like seven Super Bowls," said Rodney Barretto, that organization's host committee co-chairman. He added that stringent safety measures are in place.

"We probably have 40, 50 agencies involved in the

security aspect. The federal government is involved, the state government, and even the military is involved. It's a challenge, but it's something that we've done before. We've done it with the Super Bowl. We're just doing at 7x," said Barretto

A traditional home for African Americans, Miami Gardens also has a large West Indian presence, mainly Jamaicans. There are sizable communities with people from Latin America, all of whom are huge fans of soccer. But the cheapest tickets for Miami games will cost over \$500 dollars. In a city where the median household income is approximately \$63,908, with some estimates reaching up to \$65,164, few of its residents will likely be able to attend the World Cup in their own backyard. Still, these prices are down from last month, when tickets to all of Miami's games started at \$11,750.

You can buy tickets to the FIFA World Cup matches on StubHub, Ticketmaster, Vivid Seats, and SeatGeek. But FIFA's website's "strongly recommend[s]" making purchases only through FIFA.com/tickets.

Beyond the stadium, the greater Miami area will host the official Miami FIFA World Cup 26™ Fan Festival at Bayfront Park, providing public match broadcasts, entertainment, and cultural celebrations. Local community events will also be popping up across the city, such as the Coke Florida FIFA Caravan, which will make stops in Miami Gardens in the weeks leading up to the tournament.

### PARKING AND GETTING THERE

- There's no direct Metrorail connection to the stadium, meaning Uber and Lyft prices will surge dramatically on event days.
- Shuttle buses typically run from Metrorail stations (Northside, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) to the stadium. Round-trip shuttle tickets: \$5-\$20
- Frequency: Every 10-15 minutes starting 3 hours before kickoff

Parking lots will fill up hours before kick-off. Arrival recommendation: 3-4 hours before kick-off. Hard Rock Stadium has approximately 26,000 parking spaces across multiple lots. During FIFA World Cup matches, expect parking fees: \$40-\$100+, depending on lot proximity. Exit time: 1-2 hours post-match in heavy traffic

### FIFA World Cup 2026™ Fan Events Across South Florida

South Florida is gearing up for an unforgettable celebration

of football, culture, music, and community as the FIFA World Cup 2026™ arrives in Miami. From beachfront tournaments and live concerts to fan festivals and official watch parties, residents and visitors will have plenty of opportunities to experience the excitement throughout June and July 2026.

### Copa del Sol Community Tournament June 5-7, 2026 Lummus Park, Miami Beach (between 8th and 10th Streets)

The Copa del Sol community tournament, developed exclusively by the FIFA World Cup 26™ Miami Host Committee in partnership

with community and commercial partners and produced by Street Soccer USA, will bring high-energy 4v4 football action to Miami Beach. The fast-paced mini-pitch tournament will feature more than 150 youth, women's, corporate, amateur,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)

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# SPORTS NEWS



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## Jamaican Blaise Bicknell Focused On Making History At Kingston Open

Jamaican tennis star Blaise Bicknell is preparing for what could become one of the biggest moments of his career as the island gets set to host the historic Kingston Open this August.

The Kingston Open will mark the first ATP Challenger tournament ever staged in the English-speaking Caribbean, placing Jamaica firmly on the international tennis calendar. Scheduled for August 16-29, 2026, the event will feature back-to-back ATP Challenger 75 tournaments with players competing for valuable ATP ranking points and more than US\$214,000 in prize money.

For Bicknell, Jamaica's top-ranked male tennis player, the tournament represents far more than another competition. "It's special to have this opportunity at home. Growing up in Jamaica, you dream about competing at a high level in front of your own people. The Kingston Open is going to inspire a lot of young players across the Caribbean," Bicknell

said.

Born in Kingston, Bicknell has steadily built his reputation on the international circuit over the past several years. The 24-year-old, who played collegiate tennis at both the University of Florida and the University of Tennessee, has represented Jamaica proudly in Davis Cup competition while climbing the ATP rankings.

Bicknell reached a career-high ATP singles ranking of No. 306 in May 2024 and currently sits just outside the world's top 320 players.

His breakthrough came in 2024 when he captured his first ATP Challenger title at the Southern California Open in Indian Wells, a milestone victory that announced Jamaica's arrival on the professional tennis scene.

Over the years, Bicknell has also earned several local and regional accolades, including representing Jamaica at junior international tournaments, standout performances on the ITF circuit, and becoming one of



Kingston, Jamaica-born tennis star Blaise Bicknell is set for the Kingston Open in August. (Contributed image)

the Caribbean's most promising tennis talents. In 2026 alone, he has recorded strong runs in tournaments across the United States, Mexico, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Republic of Congo as he continues pushing toward the ATP Top 300.

As preparations intensify for the Kingston Open, Bicknell

says his focus goes beyond physical conditioning. "Tennis is not just physical. You have to prepare mentally, emotionally, and physically because every match challenges you differently. I've been working hard on my fitness, recovery, discipline, and staying mentally strong under pressure," he said.

He added that maintaining emotional balance is equally important during the demanding professional tour schedule. "When you travel constantly and compete every week, your emotional health matters too. I have learned that rest, family support, proper recovery, and staying grounded are just as important as training sessions," he said.

Bicknell's game has often drawn attention for its athleticism, creativity, and fearless shot-making, qualities he says were influenced by Jamaican German tennis star Dustin Brown.

Growing up, Bicknell admired Brown's unconventional style and confidence against

some of the world's best players. "Dustin Brown inspired a lot of us from the Caribbean. He played with freedom, flair, and confidence. Seeing somebody with Jamaican roots compete against the biggest names in tennis showed me that it was possible," he said.

Brown, famous for defeating Rafael Nadal at Wimbledon in 2015 and reaching a career-high ATP ranking of No. 64, became one of the sport's most entertaining personalities because of his aggressive and unpredictable playing style.

Bicknell says he also studies players such as Carlos Alcaraz and Novak Djokovic for their discipline, movement, and mental toughness at the highest level of the sport.

The upcoming Kingston Open is expected to bring increased international attention to Jamaican tennis while boosting sports tourism and youth development

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 19)

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and open division teams competing in 15-minute matches.

### Event Schedule:

- **June 5 | 5 - 10 P.M.:** Parade of Teams & Opening Matches
- **June 6 | 9 A.M. - 10 P.M.:** Youth, Women's, Corporate & Open Cup Competitions plus Legends Matches
- **June 7 | 9 A.M. — 4 P.M.:** Elimination Rounds, Cup Finals & Awards Ceremony

### Miami Beach Kickoff Concert & Watch Party

June 11, 2026

#### Lummus Park, Miami Beach

Miami Beach will host one of the region's signature FIFA celebrations with the One Game One Passion™ Kickoff Watch Party and Concert. The free public event will begin with a live broadcast of the opening FIFA World Cup 2026™ match, followed by a major concert celebration on the beach.

### Schedule:

- **1 P.M.:** Doors Open
- **3 P.M.:** Mexico City vs. South Africa (Live Watch Party)
- **7 P.M.:** Concert Experience

### FIFA Fan Festival™ Miami

June 13 - July 5, 2026

Bayfront Park, Downtown Miami

The FIFA Fan Festival™ Miami will serve as the centerpiece of the city's World Cup celebrations. Spanning 23 days at Bayfront Park, the festival will feature live match broadcasts on giant screens, concerts, cultural performances, immersive fan activations, family-friendly experiences, local food and beverage vendors, and daily entertainment.

### ReefLine: Art of the Game

June 14-28, 2026

Lummus Park, Miami Beach

Football and art collide at ReefLine: Art of the Game, a

## Miami Gardens Braces For FIFA World Cup Fever

unique beachfront installation transforming Lummus Park into a giant sand soccer pitch inspired by the spirit of the FIFA World Cup 26™.

The immersive experience officially opens on June 14th from 6 to 9 P.M with a special unveiling event celebrating football, creativity, and Miami culture.

### Official FIFA World Cup 2026™ Watch Parties

Following the FIFA Fan Festival™ Miami, official public viewing parties will take place throughout South Florida, bringing fans together for the tournament's biggest matches.

### Little Haiti Soccer Park

Miami

July 18, 2026

- Bronze Final - 5 P.M

### North Beach Bandshell Sand Bowl

Miami Beach

July 18, 2026

- Bronze Final - 5 P.M
- July 19, 2026
- FIFA World Cup Final™ - 3 P.M

### Amelia Earhart Park

Hialeah

July 19, 2026

- FIFA World Cup Final™ - 3 P.M

### Tropical Park

Miami

July 19, 2026

- FIFA World Cup Final™ - 3 P.M

### Palmetto Golf Course

Miami

July 19, 2026

- FIFA World Cup Final™ - 3 P.M

### NoMi Village

North Miami

June 13, 2026

- Qatar vs. Switzerland - 3 P.M
- Brazil vs. Morocco - 6 P.M
- Haiti vs. Scotland - 9 P.M

July 11, 2026

- Quarter Final - 5 P.M

### July 19, 2026

- FIFA World Cup Final™ - 3 P.M

### Amerant Bank Arena

Sunrise, Florida

June 12, 2026

- Canada vs. Bosnia & Herzegovina - 3 P.M
- United States vs. Paraguay - 6 P.M

### June 27, 2026

- Portugal vs. Colombia - 7:30 P.M

### July 11, 2026

- Quarter Final - 5 P.M

### July 19, 2026

- FIFA World Cup Final™ - 3 P.M

Additional dates and locations are expected to be announced in the coming months.

For more information, visit: Miami FIFA World Cup 26™ Fan Festival



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# David vs Goliath: Two Caribbean Nations Are About To Crash The World's Biggest Party

Germany. Brazil. Morocco. Ecuador. Côte d'Ivoire. Scotland. These are the giants standing between two small Caribbean nations and World Cup glory this summer. And neither Curaçao nor Haiti is remotely intimidated. When the 2026 FIFA World Cup kicks off across Canada, Mexico, and the United States this month, the Caribbean will have not one but two representatives on the world's biggest football stage - and both arrive with stories that transcend the sport itself.

**Curaçao: The Smallest Nation In World Cup History**  
With a population of just over 150,000 people - smaller than many US cities - Curaçao will make history as the smallest nation ever to compete in a FIFA World Cup when they take the field against Germany in Houston on June 14th.

Let that sink in. One hundred and fifty thousand people. Against a four-time World Champion. Yet, the Blue Wave did not stumble into this moment. Curaçao sailed through the second round of CONCACAF qualifying without a single loss, finishing a point clear of Jamaica in Group B to book their historic ticket to the finals. Ranked 82nd in the world, they earned their place the hard way - through discipline, teamwork, and a quiet determination that has caught the football world off guard.

"Cinderella may yet have her moment at the ball," as one analyst put it - and few who watched Curaçao's qualifying campaign would bet against them making noise.

## The Players To Watch

Fans of European club football may already know Tahith Chong - the former Feyenoord and Manchester United youngster who now lights up the Championship with Sheffield United. The winger brings electric



Curaçao makes its debut at the FIFA World Cup this month. (REUTERS/Gilbert Bellamy image)

pace and trickery that can change a game in the blink of an eye, and his performances at club level have raised expectations for what he can deliver on the international stage.

But the heartbeat of this team is captain Leandro Bacuna - an experienced, composed leader who has steadied the ship through every qualifying storm. His brother Juninho Bacuna adds dynamism and goals from midfield, having scored three times in qualifying. And 22-year-old Livano Comenencia - one of the breakout stars of the qualifying campaign - brings late attacking runs and clinical finishing that will test even the most organized defenses.

Between the posts, Eloy Room - one of the longest-serving players in the national team's history - provides the experience and shot-stopping quality Curaçao will need when the European and South American giants come calling.

## The Schedule: No Easy Games

Curaçao's World Cup journey reads like a Hollywood screenplay designed to maximize tension:

- June 14 - vs Germany - Houston, Texas
- June 23 - vs Ecuador - Kansas City

- June 25 - vs Côte d'Ivoire - Philadelphia

Four-time world champions Germany first. Then Ecuador. Then Côte d'Ivoire. Group E will test every ounce of what head coach Dick Advocaat - the tournament's oldest head coach - has built. Getting out of this group would be one of the greatest upsets in World Cup history. But stranger things have happened. And the Blue Wave has already proven the doubters wrong once.

## Haiti: Back After 52 Years

If Curaçao's story is one of a tiny nation punching above its weight, Haiti's is one of resilience and return.

Les Grenadiers are back at the World Cup for only the second time in their history - and the first since a pointless exit in 1974. Fifty-two years. Two generations of Haitian football fans who never saw their country on the world stage. That changes this summer.

Haiti secured their spot at the finals without playing a single qualifying game on home soil - a remarkable achievement for a nation that has faced unimaginable challenges off the pitch in recent years. They topped their four-nation CONCACAF qualifying group, finishing two

points clear of Honduras, and arrive at the 2026 finals ranked 83rd in the world.

Head coach Sebastien Migne - in his twelfth international tournament - has assembled a squad that blends experience with fresh talent and carries the unmistakable belief of a team that knows it belongs.

"After a 52-year absence, this is a significant moment for the fans, for my staff and for the players," Migne said, as quoted in official tournament materials. "As for them, the World Cup is the ultimate prize, the Holy Grail."

The Captain: Duckens Nazon If Haiti are to spring a surprise, much will depend on captain Duckens Nazon - the national team's all-time leading goal scorer with 44 goals in 76 appearances. The experienced forward brings leadership, hold-up play, and the clinical instinct to punish teams on the counter - exactly the qualities Haiti will need in matches where they are expected to spend long periods without the ball.

But this squad is far from a one-man show. Wilson Isidor - who came through the ranks at Paris Saint-Germain - scored on his international debut in a friendly against Iceland in March. Lenny Joseph is fresh from a season in which he scored 16 goals and provided 10 assists with Ferencvaros. And Carlens Arcus arrives having enjoyed a fine season in Ligue 1. This is a Haiti squad built for the moment.

## The Schedule: No Easy Games Either

Haiti's group is arguably even more daunting than Curaçao's:

- June 13 - vs Scotland - Boston
- June 19 - vs Brazil - Philadelphia
- June 25 - vs Morocco - Atlanta

Scotland first - the match Haiti's coaching staff will have circled as their best chance for a historic first World Cup point. Then Brazil - the five-time world champions. Then Morocco - one of the most improved teams on the planet after their stunning run to the semi-finals four years ago.

Migne is characteristically direct about his ambitions. "The first objective will, of course, be to try and secure our first point in the World Cup finals," he said, as quoted in official tournament materials. "But that would be too little motivation for my players. On our new roadmap, there's qualification for the round of 32."

Qualification for the round of 32. From Group C. With Brazil and Morocco waiting. That is not modesty. That is belief.

## The Caribbean Moment

Together, Curaçao and Haiti represent something larger than football this summer. They represent a Caribbean region that has spent decades on the margins of the global game, watching larger, wealthier nations dominate the sport while island nations scraped through qualifying and dreamed of moments like this.

This Caribbean American Heritage Month, those moments arrive. A nation of 150,000 people taking the field against Germany. A nation rebuilding from decades of hardship, facing Brazil with 52 years of wait behind them. David vs Goliath. Twice over. In the same tournament. The Caribbean and its Diaspora will be cheering and ready.

Full fixtures available at [fifa.com/en/tournaments/mens/worldcup/canadamexicousa2026](http://fifa.com/en/tournaments/mens/worldcup/canadamexicousa2026)

- NewsAmericasNow.com



# Jamaican Blaise Bicknell Focused On Making History At Kingston OpenA

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18) across the region.

Organizers believe the tournament could become a long-term catalyst for tennis growth in the Caribbean. According to sports administrator and marketing professional O'Neil Walters, the tournament has the potential to transform Jamaica's sports landscape and strengthen the country's reputation as a destination for international sporting events.

Walters, who serves as tournament administrator for PPIVOTT LLC, has been one of the leading figures helping to drive tennis tourism in Jamaica and organize historic ATP Challenger Tour events in the Caribbean. "This tournament is bigger than tennis. The Kingston Open is about youth development, economic activity, tourism, international exposure, and positioning Jamaica as a destination capable of hosting

world-class sporting events," he said.

He believes the event could create major opportunities for young Jamaican players while inspiring greater investment in tennis development across the region. "We want young players in Jamaica and the Caribbean to see that professional tennis is possible. Hosting ATP Challenger events here gives local athletes exposure to international competition and creates pathways that previously did not exist," Walters said.

Walters also expects the tournament to attract significant overseas interest. "We anticipate strong international participation, visitors traveling to Jamaica, and global attention on the island. This is an opportunity to showcase not only our tennis talent but Brand Jamaica, our culture, hospitality, energy, and ability to host at the highest level," he said.

For Bicknell, however, the mission remains simple. "I

want to compete hard, represent Jamaica well, and inspire the next generation. Having an ATP Challenger event here shows young players that they do not always have to leave home to dream big," he said.

As Jamaica prepares to host a historic moment for Caribbean tennis, all eyes will be on Bicknell, the local star hoping to shine brightest on home soil.




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