

Caribbean Today

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



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HISTORY MAKER?

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Caribbean roots actress, Teyana Taylor, left tongues wagging again as she donned a custom-made plum Burberry dress for her appearance at the BAFTAs 2026, held on February 22 at Southbank Center in London. (Photo by Karwai Tang/Getty Images)

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REGIONAL NEWS



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Here Are Some Of The Top Headlines Making Caribbean News:

REGIONAL

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio used his appearance at the 50th Regular Meeting of the Conference of CARICOM Heads of Government in St. Kitts on Feb. 25th to signal what he called a “reinvigorated” U.S. focus on the Caribbean and Western Hemisphere.

Speaking at the St. Kitts Marriott Beach Resort, Rubio framed his visit - the first by a U.S. Secretary of State to a CARICOM heads meeting in a decade - as evidence that Washington is prioritizing the region after years of relative neglect.

But beyond the rhetoric of partnership, what exactly did Rubio put on the table?

1. Expanded Security Cooperation

Rubio identified transnational criminal organizations, especially narcotics trafficking networks, as the most urgent shared threat facing the U.S. and the Caribbean. He acknowledged that many illegal firearms entering the region originate in the U.S. and said Washington is working to address that flow. He referenced recent terrorist



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio participates in a family photo with Caribbean Community (CARICOM) heads of government in Basseterre, Saint Kitts and Nevis, February 25, 2026. Rubio is meeting with Caribbean leaders seeking a common line on Venezuela and pressure on Cuba. He's also addressing President Donald Trump's priorities, including combating illegal immigration, drug trafficking and regional security. (Photo by Jonathan Ernst / POOL / AFP via Getty Images)

designations, sanctions related to Haiti, and the scale of Mexican drug cartels as examples of the growing threat.

What it means: Expect deeper law enforcement coordination and intelligence sharing.

What wasn't announced: No new funding, timeline, or regional security initiative.

2. Energy and Economic Growth

Rubio framed energy development - oil, gas, and

renewables - as key to regional prosperity. He encouraged U.S. private-sector investment in Caribbean energy and infrastructure.

What it means: Washington wants stronger commercial engagement.

What wasn't announced: No trade deal, financing package, or grant funding.

3. Venezuela

Rubio pointed to political changes, prisoner releases,

and renewed oil revenues as progress. The U.S. embassy in Caracas has reopened, with stability and future democratic elections emphasized.

4. Reinvigorated Ties

He described the moment as a reinvigoration - not a reset - stressing that U.S. and Caribbean security and prosperity are intertwined.

Bottom line: Strategic engagement was offered. Concrete dollars were not.

BAHAMAS

Deputy Prime Minister Chester Cooper has dismissed as “fake” a document circulating on social media alleging that he met with the late U.S. convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and received a campaign contribution from him. In a statement, Cooper firmly denied the claims. Epstein died in a New York prison cell on August 10, 2019, while awaiting trial on federal sex trafficking charges. His death came more than a decade after he was convicted of soliciting prostitution from a minor and was registered as a sex offender. Cooper described the circulating document as false and misleading.

JAMAICA

Opposition Leader Mark Golding is calling on the Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM) to conduct a comprehensive probe into the fatal shooting of former footballer Lucien Anderson in downtown Kingston on Sunday, Feb. 22nd. Anderson, 55, was shot and killed during what police have described as a confrontation at his home. Law enforcement officials say 13 rounds of ammunition were seized during the incident.

In a statement posted on social media, Golding said the circumstances surrounding Anderson's death are troubling and warrant a full, transparent investigation. INDECOM Commissioner Hugh Faulkner confirmed that an investigation into the fatal shooting is

currently underway. The incident has sparked renewed debate about police operations and accountability in Jamaica, with calls for clarity on the events that led to the deadly encounter.

HAITI

The United Nations has reported an “alarming increase” in the recruitment of children into armed gangs in Haiti, warning of devastating consequences for families and society. With nearly 45 percent of the population under age 18, children are increasingly targeted as gangs tighten their grip on large sections of Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas. Driven by poverty, hunger, school closures and displacement, many children are lured with money, drugs or promises of protection. Others are forcibly recruited. Some minors serve as lookouts and messengers, while others take part in armed clashes and kidnappings. Girls face heightened risks of sexual violence and exploitation.

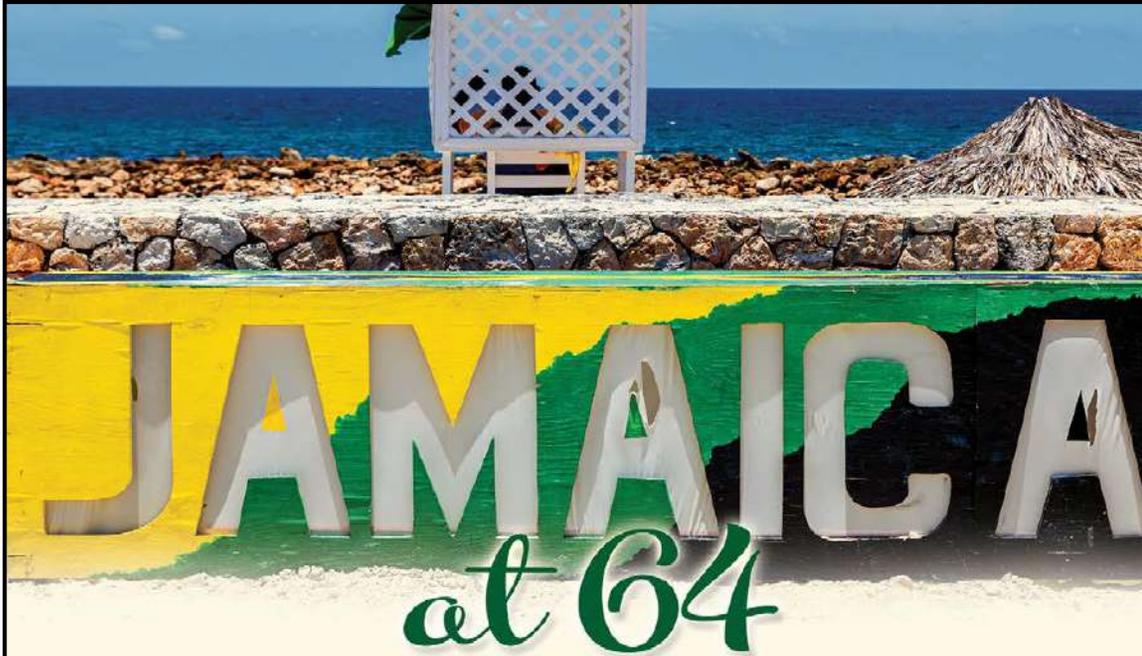
The UN says child protection services are overstretched or absent in gang-controlled communities. A new report calls for stronger child protection systems, expanded access to education, and economic support for vulnerable families. A newly formed UN-backed Gang Suppression Force, expected to deploy in April, aims to curb gang expansion and restore stability.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, (TTPS), says it has seized more than TT\$6.3 million worth of marijuana allegedly imported into the country, as part of ongoing efforts to dismantle organized drug networks. Acting on intelligence that a major shipment of narcotics had been brought into Trinidad and Tobago and stored in Gasparillo, officers conducted coordinated searches at two apartment buildings on Feb. 21st. During the operation, police discovered 109 packets of high-grade Colombian cannabis weighing 57.42 kilograms, with an estimated street value of TT\$6,316,200. Officers also seized TT\$119,900 and US\$146 in cash.

In a separate anti-narcotics operation in Arouca, a Surinamese national is assisting police after officers allegedly found three bags containing suspected Ketamine concealed inside a neck pillow in a hotel room. The substance has been secured for forensic testing as investigations proceed.

- Rewritten from CMC & NewsAmericasNow.com



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

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TPS Relief For Haitians - But English-Only Florida Driver's Tests Spark New Controversy

BY DAVID L. SNELLING
 Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

Haitians with Temporary Protected Status in Florida are now allowed to renew their driver's licenses after the Florida Department of Motor Vehicles, (DMV), initially turned them away because their driving privileges expired on the original Feb 3rd date when their TPS was set to end.

But the directive only applies until March 15th, or until a court issues a decision in the ongoing appeal filed by the Trump administration.

U.S. District Judge Ana Reyes stymied the President Trump administration from ending TPS for roughly 330,000 Haitians nationwide, with the largest population in Florida, Ohio, and Massachusetts.

Reyes reportedly said she received death threats after her ruling and when she subsequently refused to lift the order requested by the Trump administration. However, Reyes's ruling did not include extending driver's licenses for Haitians.

The Trump administration is appealing her decision. But the Miami-Dade Tax Collector's Office said Haitians in Florida with TPS can renew their driver's license, citing an updated state guidance.

The Miami-Dade County Tax Collector's Office said it is assisting eligible residents in accordance with a directive from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Individuals with TPS or a pending application and who present an expired Employment Authorization Document will remain eligible for a driver's license through March 15th.

Those seeking issuance beyond that date must provide alternative proof of lawful presence, as required by the advisory.

While Haitians' future hangs in the balance, they face another challenge: driver's license exams are now administered exclusively in English, with no translations or interpreter services available. Previously, the exams were given in English, Creole and Spanish.

The Florida Legislature passed the English-only driving exam bill sponsored by Republican state Rep. Berny Jacques, who is a Haitian immigrant.

Before the vote in the House, Harrison Lundy, a former House of Representatives candidate, called the measure shameful. "Mandating that these only exist in English is just really oppressive," he said. "There is no official one language of the United States."

Thamara Louis, a nurse who



Haitian immigrants line up outside a Florida DMV to renew their driver's licenses. (CBS Miami image)

has lived in the United States for 26 years, told reporters she came straight from an overnight shift. She said the loss of a valid license has made daily life difficult and expensive. "I have 26 years in this country. 26 years," Louis said. "Everywhere you go, you have trouble. The way people act. It makes everybody scared."

Immigration advocates warn that Haitians should check their state's requirements and, in some cases, may need to seek other alternatives to driving, like public transportation or carpooling, to avoid a traffic infraction and possible detention by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Some Haitians in South Florida said not having a valid driver's license would have affected their ability to get to work and make doctor

appointments.

According to the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, it was aware of the federal ruling that resumes the extension of Temporary Protected Status for Haitian nationals. "Currently, the Department is waiting for official guidance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security before it can resume licensing," it said in a statement.

Meanwhile, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services issued a new alert on its website following the judge's ruling, stating in part: "The Department of Homeland Security vehemently disagrees with this order and is working with the Department of Justice to determine next steps."

According to the USCIS website, work permits for Haitians with TPS have been

extended due to the judge's order.

The Biden administration granted TPS to immigrants living in countries impacted by humanitarian crises, natural disasters, and political upheaval. TPS allowed them to live and work in the U.S. until the conditions in their home countries improve.

Florida becomes the fourth state in the nation to offer English-only driving exams. The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles confirmed that all driver's license knowledge and skills exams, including oral tests, are now conducted only in English.

The change applies to all license classifications statewide, and printed exams in other languages have been removed. A 60-day transitional period was granted to individuals with appointments scheduled before February 6, 2026.

During this period, eligible customers could complete their exams in English or Spanish, but this accommodation ended on March 31, 2026.

After this date, all exams must be taken in English. Florida U.S. Rep. Byron Donalds, a 2026 gubernatorial candidate, supports the new legislation, saying it keeps the roadways safe from people who can't read the signs.



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Former Haitian-Born North Miami Mayor Faces Denaturalization Proceedings

US federal authorities have filed a civil complaint seeking to revoke the U.S. citizenship of former North Miami Mayor Philippe Bien-Aime, a Haitian-born elected official accused of committing immigration fraud to obtain naturalization.

According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the U.S. Department of Justice, Bien-Aime, who allegedly also used the name Jean Philippe Janvier, is accused of using two separate identities to secure immigration benefits after illegally entering the United States.

Federal officials say fingerprint comparisons conducted under a joint USCIS-Justice Department

initiative known as the Historic Fingerprint Enrollment project confirmed the dual identities.

Court filings allege that before becoming a U.S. citizen in 2006 under the name Philippe Bien-Aime, he entered the country using a fraudulent, photo-switched passport under the Janvier identity. In 2001, he was placed in removal proceedings and ordered deported. Authorities claim he withdrew his appeal, stating he had returned to Haiti but remained in the United States.

The complaint further alleges that he later married a U.S. citizen to obtain permanent residency while still legally married in Haiti, rendering the U.S. marriage invalid.



The feds are seeking to revoke the US citizenship of former North Miami Mayor Philippe Bien-Aime, a Haitian immigrant.

Prosecutors contend that he made false statements during his adjustment and naturalization interviews, including denying

that he was subject to a removal order.

The case is being handled by the Justice Department's Office of Immigration Litigation and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida. Officials emphasize that the allegations remain accusations pending court proceedings.

Bien-Aime was born and raised in Port-au-Prince, Haiti and arrived in the United States in 1993. His bio says he "worked hard to create the life he wanted," working in "the automobile industry for almost 20 years before following his entrepreneurial dream and opening his own business." He is the father of three children.

Bien Aime served as a

Commissioner of North Miami from 2013 and became mayor from 2019-2022. He did not serve out his full term as mayor. In 2022, he unsuccessfully ran for the County Commission, forcing him to resign as mayor under Florida's resign-to-run law.

Peterson St. Philippe, an attorney for Bien-Aime, told NBC Miami in a statement that they are in the process of reviewing the complaint and will be responding to the allegations "through the appropriate legal channels."

"As this is a pending litigation, we will not be commenting further at this time," St. Philippe said.



Haitian-Born Miami Pastor Released on Bail Following Sexual Molestation Charges Involving Teenager

Elco Vallier, a 50-year-old Loxahatchee, FL-based pastor at the Miami-based Haitian Ministry Theophile Church in Christ, has been released on \$27,500 bail following his arrest on charges of lewd and lascivious molestation and conduct involving a 15-year-old girl.

The investigation, led by the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office, (MDSO) Special Victims Unit, began after the teenager and her mother came forward with allegations of ongoing abuse. According to MDSO Detective Angel Rodriguez, the victim reported that Vallier fondled her and repeatedly attempted to kiss her on several occasions.

The case against the Haitian national was bolstered



Elco Vallier, the 50-year-old pastor at the Haitian Ministry Theophile Church in Christ, has been charged with "lewd and lascivious molestation and conduct involving a 15-year-old girl."

by digital and audio evidence. The victim's mother discovered a series of "inappropriate" text messages sent by the pastor to her daughter, which she told

authorities caused her immediate "concern and alarm."

To confirm the allegations, investigators arranged a monitored phone call between the minor and Vallier. During the recorded conversation, detectives reportedly overheard Vallier making sexually suggestive remarks to the teenager. This evidence led directly to the issuance of an arrest warrant.

"The victim reported to deputies that the pastor of her church on several occasions fondled her... and rubbed against her thighs," Detective Rodriguez stated. "The mom also observed several text messages that were inappropriate."

While the church's website currently welcomes the public with a note stating, "Our doors

at Haitian Ministry Theophile Church in Christ are open," authorities are now looking behind those doors for potential additional victims.

The Sheriff's Office is urging the community, particularly families and parents who attend the Theophile Church, to come forward if their children have had contact with Vallier.

"Detectives are urging the community to please come forward with any information," said Rodriguez. "If a child has come in contact with the pastor... detectives want to speak with you." Call (305) 715-3300.

Vallier currently awaits further court proceedings following his bonded release.



Music Mogul And Doctor/Lawyer Enter Crowded Race To Unseat Incumbent Congresswoman Cherfilus-McCormick

BY DAVID L. SNELLING
Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

Miami-based rapper turned activist, Luther Campbell, and doctor/attorney, Rudolph Moise, are the latest candidates to join a crowded field challenging embattled U.S. Democratic Congresswoman Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick for her Congressional seat.

Former Broward County mayor Dale Holness, community activist Elijah Manley, Sendra Dorce, Joseph Rodenay, Kedner Maxime, and Kevin McClellan are also running in the race for the Congressional District 20 seat, which covers portions of Broward and Palm Beach counties.

Campbell, Holness, and Manley are Democrats; Dorce and Rodenay are seeking the GOP nomination for the November 2026 election. Maxime is running as an independent, and McClellan is a write-in candidate.

Campbell, who stepped down as a football coach at Miami Edison High School to enter the political arena, said Cherfilus-McCormick's indictment essentially sealed his decision to run for Congress.

The 65-year-old Liberty City native with Jamaican roots said he's ready to fight for the constituents of District 20.

"After decades of fighting for my community - from the

courtroom defending free speech all the way to the United States Supreme Court, to building businesses that created jobs across the South, to mentoring and coaching thousands of young people into college - I have officially decided to run for Congress in Florida's 20th District," Campbell said in a statement. "My first order of business is to qualify by petition and let the people speak. This campaign is about results, not rhetoric. I'm not going to Washington to grandstand. I'm going to bring resources back home to CD20."

Campbell ran for Miami-Dade mayor during a special election in 2011 and finished fourth in a 12-person race. He is credited with creating the Miami bass genre as head man of the group 2 Live Crew in the 1980s and 1990s.

Campbell, known as Luke Skywalker and Uncle Luke, made national headlines when the group's album, 'As Nasty as They Wanna Be,' was labelled obscene by then Florida Governor Bob Martinez. Martinez ordered local law enforcement agencies to arrest record-store owners on obscenity charges for selling the group's album, and then Broward County Sheriff Nick Navarro subsequently arrested the group on obscenity charges after performing at a concert. In 2009, Campbell was

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)



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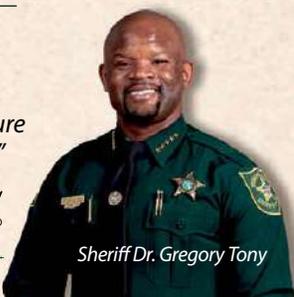
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Music Mogul And Doctor/Lawyer Enter Crowded Race To Unseat Incumbent Congresswoman Cherfilus-McCormick

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

arrested for falling behind on child support payments.

Moise is a Haitian immigrant, born in Port-au-Prince, who came to the U.S when he was 17 years old. He earned a degree from the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine. Later, he earned an MBA and a law degree from the University of Miami, before enlisting in the U.S. Air Force Reserve as a flight surgeon in 2013. Moise's résumé includes medical doctor, lawyer, veteran, and Creole film star and producer.

But now he is focused on running for a Congressional seat. "I am running for Congress because I believe deeply in the promise of this country," Moise said in a statement. "As a physician, I have seen firsthand the inequities in our healthcare system. As a Colonel, I understand leadership, discipline, and sacrifice. And as an immigrant, I understand what it means to fight for opportunity."

Moise previously ran twice for a Congressional seat but lost twice to U.S. Rep. Fredrica Wilson, Democrat.

Also running against Cherfilus-McCormick is Jamaican Dale Holness, a former Broward

County Commissioner whom Cherfilus-McCormick defeated for the Democratic nomination in 2021 by just five votes in a special election to replace Congressman Alcee Hastings, who died of cancer, and beat again during her reelection campaign. The Congresswoman sued Holness for defamation of character during the re-election campaign, and the two sides settled outside court.

Cherfilus-McCormick won re-election by default in 2024. Holness raised no money in his open campaign account for the first six months of 2025. But then he raised almost \$45,000 in the third quarter and reported more than \$140,000 in the last three months of the year, including a \$43,000 candidate loan. He started 2026 with almost \$200,000 cash on hand.

Manley, who was the first candidate to challenge Cherfilus-McCormick after opening a campaign account in early 2025, has raised more than \$678,000. Elijah has opened a narrow lead in the Democratic Primary for Florida's 20th Congressional District, edging the incumbent, according to a 300-voter survey by Political Matrix News.

U.S. Rep. Cherfilus-McCormick, the first Haitian



Congresswoman Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick faces a crowded field of candidates seeking to unseat her in the August primary and the Nov. 3 general election.

American congressional representative from Florida in Congress and only the second to serve in the House nationally, was indicted in November 2025 on 15 federal counts alleging she stole \$5 million in COVID-19 relief funds meant for her family's company, using them to finance her 2021-2022 campaign and purchase a \$109,000 diamond ring. She faces charges of fraud, money laundering, and tax violations.

Despite her legal troubles and calls to step down, Cherfilus-McCormick is running for re-election.

She is accused of stealing \$5 million in government funds after the federal government accidentally sent the amount to Cherfilus-McCormick and her family's healthcare business for COVID-19 vaccinations. She refused to return the money and instead used it to finance her 2022 reelection campaign, according to the indictment.

The government also accused her of purchasing a diamond ring worth \$100,000 with the funds.

Last month, she pleaded not guilty to the charges. "I reject these allegations and remain confident the full facts will make clear I did nothing wrong," Cherfilus-McCormick said in a statement. "Until then, my focus remains where it belongs: delivering for my constituents and continuing the work they sent me to Washington to do." If convicted, she faces up to 50 years in prison.

Cherfilus-McCormick is also now facing accusations in Washington of an entirely separate campaign-finance scheme involving "shell companies," local mayors, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in oil money.

According to the Miami Herald, the latest allegations, detailed in a House Ethics Committee report, accuse the congresswoman's team and family of soliciting more than \$800,000 from a politically connected Haitian oil company to secretly boost her 2022 reelection campaign. Rep. Greg Steube, (R-Fla.), said he will force a vote in March to expel Rep. Cherfilus-McCormick from Congress over allegations of campaign finance violations and other financial misconduct.

Her indictment has affected her campaign contributions and popularity. According to her campaign finance reports, she had \$107,000 at the end of 2025, but donations have slowed since, with only \$1,800 collected as of February 19. She has raised roughly \$500,000 for her reelection campaign to date.

But one poll suggests at least 22 percent of District 20 constituents support Cherfilus-McCormick following her federal indictment. The survey had a 3-percentage-point margin of error.

The 2026 Primary is Aug. 18th, followed by the General Election on Nov. 3rd.



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Jamaican-Born Broward Commissioner Hazelle Rogers Celebrates 30 Years Of Public Service In South Florida

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Jamaican-Born Broward Commissioner Hazelle Rogers is marking three decades of service to South Florida. On March 12th, Broward County Commissioner Hazelle Rogers will visit locations in South Florida that have defined her 30-year career as a public servant. The meet-and-greet is scheduled for restaurants in Lauderdale Lakes, Lauderhill, Oakland Park, Plantation, and Sunrise.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Rogers is one of the region's most recognizable West Indian officials. Currently a Broward County Commissioner, she was also mayor of Lauderdale Lakes and served two terms in the Florida State Senate.

Rogers migrated to the United States in 1969, initially settling in Brooklyn, New York, with her family. She has been a South Florida resident since 1981 and has seen the rise of the West Indies' influence throughout its boroughs.

"South Florida has grown tremendously in diversity, opportunity, and global influence. While challenges remain, life has improved for many through stronger representation, economic



Broward County's Jamaican-born County Commissioner, Hazelle Rogers, stands in front of a multi-purpose center named after her. She will visit locations in South Florida that have defined her 30-year career as a public servant on March 12th. (Contributed image)

opportunity, and community visibility," she noted during an interview with Caribbean Today. "Our resilience, culture, and contributions have shaped both my journey and this country. My leadership helped ensure the Caribbean community has a stronger voice and real opportunities."

To reinforce her point, Rogers pointed to 28 elected Jamaicans in Broward County and a strong Haitian presence in Miami-Dade. South Florida's commercial district is strongly represented by Guyana and Trinidad-owned businesses.

For all that progress, Rogers

has seen an anti-immigrant groundswell in the United States during the past 10 years, with the emergence of Donald Trump as president. That resentment makes Rogers' and her colleagues' jobs even more compelling.

"Being an immigrant is not always welcoming, but we are always challenged to remember why we are here, the expectations of our parents, and the support we can provide to others," said Commissioner Rogers. "We must always remember the journey of the enslaved African people, the backs on which we stand as we continue to move forward."

Like Rogers, fellow Jamaican

Dr. Garth Rose is a mainstay of the South Florida Caribbean community. He saluted her resilience and conviction since being first elected to serve as a Lauderdale Lakes Commissioner in 1996.

"Her achievements have been many, varied, and far-reaching, but I think her most notable achievement has been the development of the City of Lauderdale Lakes from a sleepy, quiet, residential community to one with a vibrant business community which, since 1996, has attracted many large and small businesses," he said. "Today, Lauderdale Lakes is one of the more formidable Caribbean

communities, not only in South Florida, but the entire United States."

Throughout her 30-year service, Rogers has done her share of legislative wheeling and dealing, trying to make it easier for constituents to realize the American Dream. At the same time, remembering her roots is just as important.

"Maintaining my Jamaican identity is essential because it grounds my values, faith, and commitment to community. It reminds me daily of where I come from and who I serve," she added.



Jamaica's Ambassador Declares Transnational Organized Crime The Caribbean's Greatest Security Threat

Transnational organized crime remains the most significant security threat facing the Caribbean region. Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States, Major General (Ret'd) Antony Anderson, reiterated recently at a public forum in Washington, D.C.

Ambassador Anderson was addressing a forum hosted by Georgetown University's Law Center under the theme "Jamaica's Role in Regional Security: U.S.—Jamaica Cooperation."

"Transnational organized crime that manifests through violence is the most significant threat to the security of our nation and the region," Ambassador Anderson stated. "For a long time, it has impacted all states in the region, including the United States. It is a business, and to sustain that business and its networks, those involved rely on violence or the threat of violence, undermining governance and exploiting borders in ways no single country can confront alone."

Referencing the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2023 Global Study on Homicide, Ambassador Anderson noted that the Caribbean records the highest homicide rates globally, with 50 per cent of all homicides linked to guns and gangs, compared to a global average of 24 per cent.

Drawing on his experience as Jamaica's Commissioner of Police from 2018 to 2024, Ambassador Anderson highlighted Jamaica's recent security gains. In 2025, Jamaica recorded its lowest homicide rate in over three decades, reflecting a 40 per cent reduction, or 24 per 100,000, following declines of 8 per cent in 2023 and 19 per cent in 2024. The downward trend has continued into 2026, with January recording a 55 per cent reduction, the lowest monthly figure since records began in 2001.

Ambassador Anderson underscored the importance of leadership and institutional

reform, noting Jamaica's efforts to modernize its security forces.

"You must empower your own people," he said. "No one understands your circumstances better than you do. We undertook a transformation process to build a capable, modern police force, ISO 9001-certified in quality management, technology-driven, and supported by expansive intelligence capacity. Strong leadership and succession planning remain central to this progress."

While acknowledging Jamaica's evolving security governance framework, the ambassador emphasized the enduring partnership between Jamaica and the United States. "There is no question that the United States is the most powerful country in this hemisphere," he said. "Jamaica has a longstanding relationship with the U.S. and one of the strongest law enforcement cooperation arrangements in the region. That cooperation has disrupted major narcotics trafficking networks, strengthened information sharing, and enhanced operational interoperability. We were particularly encouraged by bipartisan support in addressing the flow of illegal firearms into the Caribbean, alongside Jamaica's own legislative reforms to the Firearms Act."

Looking ahead, Ambassador Anderson framed Jamaica's security progress as a pathway toward sustainable peace. "Peaceful societies are not docile societies," he observed. "They are societies where competition does not become conflict. The trends show we are moving toward safety, not just in reducing murder, but across all crime categories. The next stage is peace. Our challenge is to channel ambition and drive into productivity, development, and collective national progress as we pursue economic and political sovereignty."



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Several Anti-Immigrant Bills In Florida Legislature Approved

BY DAVID L. SNELLING
Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

The challenges for undocumented immigrants in Florida continue to pile up, as the Florida Legislature approved sweeping bills that could impact their means of living. And the man responsible is none other than Haitian-born Republican State Representative Berny Jacques.

In a vote almost along party lines, the Florida House recently passed HB 197, which would require all private employers to use the federal E-Verify system to check the immigration status

of new workers. The measure expands Florida's existing 2023 law (SB 1718), which already mandates E-Verify for public employers and private businesses with 25 or more employees, and now extends it to houses of worship.

The bill includes penalizing employers who ignore their workers' documentation status, such as fines and face criminal charges for hiring more than 50 undocumented migrants.

"If this bill passes, it will expose a lot of lawbreakers that are harming Floridians, harming law-abiding people who want to get into the workforce," Jacques

said.

Rep. Yvonne Hinson, D-Gainesville, raised concerns about the bill placing an additional burden on small businesses. But Jacques said it would help prevent the employment of undocumented immigrants.

State Reps. Democrats Dotie Joseph and Marie Woodson, who are Haitian Americans, voted against the bill, warning that it could harm the economy for industries that rely on immigrant labor. "It's an increased stigma against immigrant communities and unnecessary bureaucracy," said Joseph, who represents



Haitian-born Republican State Representative Berny Jacques, who fled Haiti amid political unrest in 1994, is now the architect of several anti-immigrant bills. (bernyforflorida.com image)

North Miami, which constitutes a large Caribbean community.

Rep. Jose Alvarez, D-Kissimmee, and Rep. Mitch Rosenwald, D-Oakland Park, joined Republicans in supporting the bill, while Rep. J.J. Grow, R-Inverness, and Rep. Susan Plasencia, R-Orlando, opposed it.

Lawmakers also approved Jacques' bill, House Bill 1307, that now bans undocumented immigrants from holding bank accounts and buying a house, which is also causing an uproar in the immigrant community. The bill also now prohibits the Florida Department of Financial Services from issuing licenses to unauthorized immigrants.

Jacques said the bill was designed to remove incentives for illegal immigration and ensure economic accountability. Critics, however, argue it could push vulnerable families into the informal economy, increase financial exclusion, and disproportionately harm lower-

income immigrant communities.

In addition, lawmakers approved Jacques' bill that all driver's license exams be administered in English only. Previously, it was given in English, Creole and Spanish.

The bills have caused a stir within Florida's Haitian American community, as many question why a Haitian American lawmaker would support restrictions that could limit opportunities for immigrants.

Jacques was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and left the country with his family amid political unrest, settling in Florida in 1994. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and history from Washington Adventist University and a Juris Doctor from the Stetson University College of Law. He assumed office on November 8, 2022, as a member of the Florida House of Representatives for the 59th district.



Black Community Remembers Trailblazer, Activist And Mentor - Bahamian American Thelma Gibson

BY DAVID L. SNELLING
Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

Longtime Coconut Grove resident and community activist Thelma Gibson, who broke racial barriers in Florida, was honored during Black History Month. But the tribute took on a much deeper meaning following Gibson's death on February 11, 2026, at the age of 99.

She is remembered as a trailblazer and activist who incessantly fought to preserve the Bahamian cultural backbone of the Coconut Grove community. Bahamian settlers arrived in Coconut Grove, a section in the city of Miami, before it was incorporated in 1896. Born to Bahamian immigrant parents, Gibson advocated for affordable housing and the preservation of some buildings as historic landmarks after developers purchased homes and land in West Coconut Grove. Developers initially planned large-scale developments such as condos, office buildings, and shops, but they listened to Gibson, who was heralded for her efforts.

U.S. Rep. Frederica Wilson, who is also of Bahamian descent and who was mentored by Gibson, said she was heartbroken by her death. "Through decades of nonprofit leadership and public service, she helped preserve Black history and expand access to health care, affordable housing, education, and economic opportunity," Wilson said. "Her work saved lives and strengthened communities across South Florida. May Thelma Gibson rest in power and be forever remembered for a life lived in dedication to others."

Gibson was born on December 17, 1926, in Coconut Grove, where she grew up in a segregated neighborhood known as "Colored Town."

Despite challenges during segregation, Gibson pursued



Bahamian American Thelma Gibson is remembered as an icon who paved the way for Black women in nursing and education. Jackson Health System. (Facebook image)

her education at Columbia University and became a registered nurse specializing in operating techniques. But during segregation, she was not permitted to work in the operating rooms at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami.

Instead, she served in what was then called the "colored wards," caring for patients with skill and compassion. In 1964, she made history as the first Black supervisor of nursing at the Dade County Health Department.

Gibson's career spanned over three decades, during which she served in various health organizations and became a key community leader. She was instrumental in founding the Women's Chamber of Commerce of Dade County and the Thelma Gibson Health Initiative, which was designed to improve the lives of people living in low-income areas.

Gibson was appointed to the City of Miami Commission on an interim basis in 1997. Her husband, Theodore Gibson, served on the city commission from 1972 to 1981 and advocated for desegregation and improvements to historically black neighborhoods in Miami-

Theodore Gibson, who was also a priest, died in 1982 at the age of 67 following a bout with cancer. The couple got married in 1967.

The tributes poured in for Gibson, who was an icon who paved the way for Black women in nursing and education. Jackson Health System said Gibson was a trailblazer who helped shape the future of healthcare in Miami.

"During segregation, she was not permitted to work in the operating rooms at Jackson," it said in a release. "Instead, she served in what was then called the 'colored wards,' caring for patients with skill and compassion. She went on to care for hundreds of patients at Jackson Memorial."

The City of Homestead said Gibson was known as the "Godmother of Coconut Grove" and a pioneering nurse who overcame racial discrimination during World War II to serve underserved communities.

"She later opened a clinic in Goulds that welcomed patients of color from across South Florida," the city said in a statement. "Her legacy also includes advancing civil rights, co-founding the Miami-Dade Women's Chamber of Commerce, and preserving her husband's work through the Theodore Gibson Memorial Fund."

Miami-Dade Democrats in Miami-Dade County, Florida, said Gibson's impact will be felt forever.

"Her legacy of service, strength, and leadership helped shape our communities for generations to come," the group said in a statement.

Gibson was funeralized on Friday, Feb. 27, at Christ Episcopal Church in the Little Bahamas neighborhood, where she lived for most of her life.



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

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FEATURE



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How One Caribbean Woman Is Building A Lasting Community Legacy Beyond Borders

For many in the Caribbean Diaspora, the responsibility to give back does not end at migration - it evolves. Rooted in longstanding Caribbean values of community and care, women across the diaspora continue to carry these responsibilities beyond the islands. With a foundation of established work in Trinidad, the Debbie Lewis Foundation is now focused on expanding that impact to serve Caribbean families within the Diaspora.

The Debbie Lewis Foundation began long before its formal establishment. Debbie's grandmother, Mable, spent her days giving back to elderly homes in their hometown of Mon Repos, Trinidad. That tradition continued with Debbie's mother, Merle, who brought her along to serve - igniting a lifelong commitment to giving back. Drawn to youth and understanding that they are the future, the foundation was created unofficially in 2014 under the name 'Kids of Today,

Our Future of Tomorrow.' Over the past ten years, the foundation has provided youth in Trinidad with etiquette workshops, K.I.D.S. Camp Day programming, and donations to schools in some of the country's most underserved areas. With years of meaningful work completed in Trinidad, it became clear that the foundation's mission could extend beyond the islands. As Caribbean communities continue to grow abroad, there is a need to meet families where they are - particularly within one of the nation's largest Caribbean diaspora communities: New York City.

Expanding The Foundation's Work Across The Caribbean Diaspora

As of 2026, the Debbie Lewis Foundation has intentionally shifted its focus toward serving the Caribbean diaspora. This expansion is rooted in the same values that guided the foundation's work



Several of the members of the Debbie Lewis Foundation.

in Trinidad, while responding to the present-day needs of Caribbean families living abroad. The work in New York City is not aspirational - it is active, intentional, and focused on real-time community engagement. Through partnerships with Caribbean-led organizations, small businesses, and restaurants, the foundation aims to provide socioeconomic support, youth

and educational development, and community empowerment. Planned initiatives range from cultural dance workshops that educate children about traditional Caribbean dance forms to career-readiness services that provide resources and support for individuals seeking to advance in the workforce. This expansion into NYC reflects a commitment to doing the real

work - on the ground and within the community.

Legacy Forward: Intergenerational Leadership in Action

The Debbie Lewis Foundation was built on legacy - honoring the women who came before Debbie and the values they instilled. Introducing her daughter, Enyasha Harris, as the foundation's NYC lead represents the forward movement of that legacy. As a first-generation Caribbean American, Enyasha brings firsthand knowledge of the Diaspora through lived experience. Her leadership allows the foundation to connect across generations - engaging both youth and young adults - ensuring that the transition into diaspora-focused work is not only heard but genuinely felt. As more Caribbean families continue to migrate to New York City, understanding and access to resources become increasingly important. That commitment to connection, support, and continuity is what the Debbie Lewis Foundation stands for.



Unmasking Our Truths - Sheribaby: A Little Girl's Big Voice In Post-Independence Jamaica

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

Don't judge this book by its cover. 'Sheribaby: A Little Girl's Big Voice in Post-Independence Jamaica' is not a children's book - far from it. While the book celebrates family and cultural traditions, it is also an indictment of the social issues that stain Jamaica's paradise facade: classism, religious intolerance, child abuse (sexual and physical), and political parochialism. But they are all exposed from the perspective of a little girl with a big voice and 'big woman' sensibility.

Still, it's not all negative. We get to relive a time when Jamaica was emerging from the shadow of its mother country, England. A time when the island started to create its own cultural voice. But it is the breadth of this true-to-life story that makes 'Sheribaby' stand out; it is the experiences many of us can relate to.

Jamaican-born, US-based author, Sharon Gordon's commitment to storytelling is obvious as she weaves memory, belonging and identity into a story that is personal, heartfelt, and engaging. Inspired by her mentor Louise Bennett-Coverley (Miss Lou), Gordon sat at Miss Lou's feet (literally) as one of the children in her much-loved Ring Ding television program and learned the art of storytelling, acting, authenticity, and the love of Jamaica's cultural heritage and language.

"I am a storyteller because I channel Miss Lou. She was my mentor, and so I've always been a storyteller. And she kept challenging me. She would say: 'Sharon when you going to write your stories, when you going to

put these stories down?'" Gordon reminisced at her recent book launch in London.

'Duppy Mark'

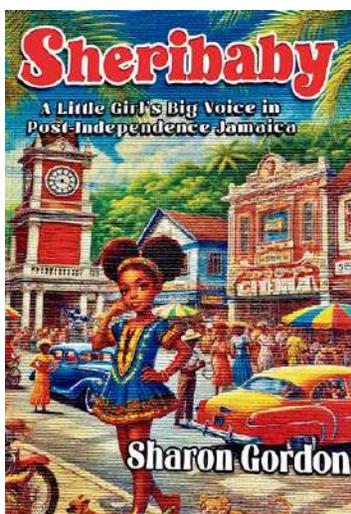
Part autobiography with a sprinkling of fictional touches, we first meet six-and-a-half-year-old Sheribaby, born in 1962, the year Jamaica gained independence, as she is beckoned by her mother and by curious women in colorful robes, bent on examining her for signs of "duppy mark." And with this, the story opens with the sweet, rhythmic cadence of Jamaican Patwa - liberally sprinkled throughout - as the women from the clap-hand church in their headwraps 'wheel and tun and bawl out fi sweet Jeesas.' But they must move fast as the man of the house declared in no uncertain terms: "Me no want no Obeah business in yah!"

Indeed, most Jamaicans born before or around independence can identify with this declaration as the tradition of Obeah was, and still is, considered a backward and superstitious belief practiced by the uneducated lower classes.

Gordon truly captures the nuances of this religious prejudice that still permeates Jamaican society. In fact, the 1898 anti-Obeah law, which drew the harshest punishments for the practice, is still on the books today. Thus, debasing Obeah and characterizing it as evil, its image amongst the public becomes negative.

Fractured

Gordon takes readers not just through the typical cultural journey of a newly formed society, but through one fractured by years of colonialism that bred discrimination and distrust, planted by a racist mother country



The book cover of Sheribaby. (Photo by Dawn Davis)

motivated by profit. This follows a division of labor that eventually translated into a class hierarchy, based on characteristics such as shades of lightness (the browning effect), straight nose/thin lips, and, of course, 'pretty hair' or 'good hair.'

Sheribaby had most of the desired characteristics, but she lived in the ghetto, Rollington Town in East Kingston. She also learned to cuss the very colorful 'duttu' Jamaican bad words. So, all this nullified her chances of being accepted into the middle or upper-class world. Yes, your postcode was/is also a signifier of your social status.

What do Jamaicans do to climb the social ladder? They send their children to Catholic schools, a sure symbol of rising social status. They go to the 'right' church. They go abroad to make enough money to better the family's standing. Sheribaby's world is shaped by all this. But Gordon balances this fight for upward mobility, highlighting the

price that comes with the effort.

Sheribaby and her siblings are left with a trusted family friend when her parents go off to America. She becomes a 'barrel child' who receives 'love' from the barrels sent back home with goodies. The abuse begins - both sexual and physical. She is silenced through fear, even though there are good souls around her, like the neighborhood Rasta man, Ras Carby.

"I was a barrel child like so many people," Gordon explained. "But what people don't talk about is what happened to these barrel children - the abuse, the neglect. A lot of these children grow up with all types of issues because you feel like your parents abandoned you."

Like so many Jamaicans determined to more-than-survive, Sheribaby pushes through adversity and excels through her passion for knowledge, authenticity, and culture, becoming the woman who would tell her story without filters.

Through her deft storytelling, Sharon Gordon has raised many issues that have personally affected so many born and raised in Jamaica. She asks questions - through Sheribaby - most are afraid, or ashamed to speak of. But it's time to face our fears head-on, time to confess, time to heal. And Gordon's Sheribaby may just be the catalyst we need because it's raw, it's honest, it's us, unmasked.

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From Borders To The Big Game: Immigrant Footprints On Super Bowl LX

Super Bowl LX was more than a championship game. It became a vivid, unfiltered reflection of who America is - and who it too often overlooks. On one of the world's most-watched stages, players with roots in Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, Panama, and Puerto Rico stood not as symbols but as living testaments to immigrant journeys. Their presence - along with the celebration of Latino culture in the halftime spotlight - reminded us that America's story is not written by borders alone, but by the people who cross them, contribute to them, and define them.



FELICIA J. PERSAUD

On football's biggest stage, immigrant stories were not on the sidelines. They were on the field. As millions tuned in, the matchup between the Seattle Seahawks and the New England Patriots showcased more than athletic excellence. It highlighted how deeply immigrant families are woven into the fabric of American life, even as political rhetoric continues to paint immigrants as outsiders or threats.

Several players taking the field carried stories rooted far beyond U.S. borders. Patriots kicker Andrés "Andy" Borregales became the first Venezuelan-born player to compete in a Super Bowl - a milestone that transcends sports and connects with a region long underrepresented in professional American football. Cornerback Christian González, who made incredible plays for the Patriots Sunday night, made history as the first player of Colombian heritage to appear in a Super Bowl. While safety Jaylinn Hawkins, of Panamanian descent, also took the field.

The winning Seahawks' roster reflected the immigrant reality as well. Tight end Elijah Arroyo, whose roots trace back to Mexico, represented another chapter in the growing influence

of Latino athletes in the NFL. Safety Julian Love is of Mexican and Cuban heritage, and Federico Maranges brought Puerto Rican representation to the field. Their presence underscored a truth often ignored in immigration debates: immigrant families are raising children who grow into leaders, professionals, and champions. Together, these players offered a snapshot of immigrant influence woven into the very fabric of American sport.

These were not token appearances. These are young men whose families crossed borders, worked hard, and raised children who stood on one of the world's largest stages. Their presence challenged simplistic narratives that reduce immigrants to stereotypes, reminding us that belonging takes many forms and includes many faces.

The significance extended beyond the field.

The half-time show, headlined by Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny, marked another powerful moment of visibility. Spanish echoed across the Super Bowl stage, placing Latino and Caribbean culture at the center of one of America's most watched events. For some, this sparked discomfort and backlash. For others, it reflected the country as it exists - multilingual, multicultural, and continually evolving.

The half-time show - and the players on the field - served as reminders that immigrant voices do belong in moments that define America's cultural calendar.

Celebrating this visibility is not a dismissal of the very real struggles immigrants continue to face, from harsh enforcement policies to detentions and discrimination. But it does reclaim a powerful truth: immigrants are creators, competitors, entertainers, and contributors to the national story.

At a time when immigrants are being vilified in political rhetoric and targeted in enforcement actions, seeing Colombian heritage, Venezuelan roots, Panamanian lineage,

Mexican pride, and Puerto Rican culture woven into the Super Bowl narrative matters. It challenges the notion that immigrants are outsiders. They are not merely present - they are essential.

Sports alone will not fix immigration policy. Representation does not end deportations. But when a generation of children sees themselves in the plays called

on the field or hears Spanish in the halftime spotlight, something deeper is affirmed: America is at its best when it reflects all of its people.

And this year, Super Bowl LX did exactly that.

They were athletes under stadium lights. Artists commanding global stages; families cheering from living rooms across the country.

And on Super Bowl Sunday,

they were not guests in America's house - they were home.

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.

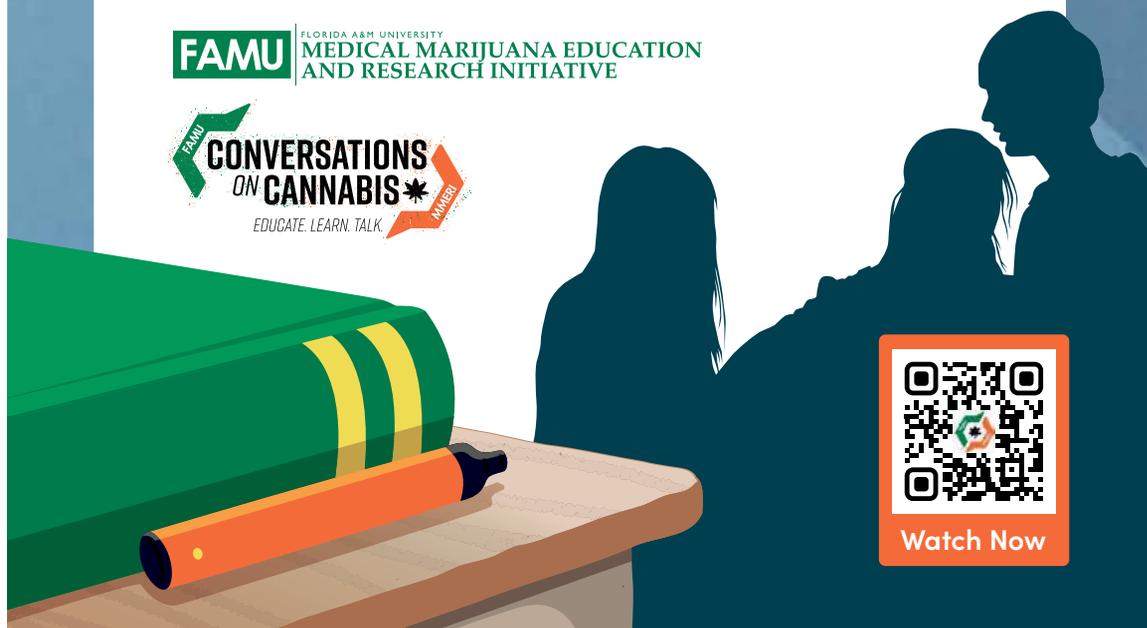


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Money Modifies

Money has always been a great motivator, a stimulant, a turn-on. Pay a man extra and he'll be more willing to work harder. Offer someone wads of cash and see how eager and willing they are to be your friend.

Win the lottery and see how quickly everything changes, sometimes for the good, but at times for the bad, for even though money changes everything, it's not always for the positive and may bring out the worst in people. "You get rich and switch" is often expressed when someone comes into money.

They say that money is the root of all evil, which is often misquoted; the real saying is: "The love of money is the root of all evil." We can quibble about that, but what I will add is, "The

lack of money is the root of all evil." Whichever way you spin it, money is the common denominator, and it seems to touch and bring about some sort of change, a modification.

Your attitude towards a poor man is different from that towards a wealthy man. "Hey, boy, get away from me." As opposed to: "Yes, sir, Mr. Brown will do, sir."

When a woman meets a man, she immediately, consciously or subconsciously



TONY ROBINSON

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(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

VIEWPOINT



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Rev. Jackson Lifted All Of Us Higher

BY BEN JEALOUS

One of the great strengths of our movement is that our leaders do more than inspire young people - they keep the door open for them. The leaders who carried forward the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. understood that movements survive only when the next generation is welcomed in. Leaders like Joseph Lowery, Rev. Orange, Rev. Earl Shinholster, Andrew Young, and many others lived that commitment.

Rev. Jesse Jackson carried it farther than most. He gave time - minutes, hours, sometimes days - to younger people trying to find their way. When I first raised my hand to volunteer, I was 14. I was short for my age. I had a bad stutter. But I heard that a man who had taken risks alongside Dr. King was running for president, and I wanted to help.

I helped lead Youth for Jackson in my county. We registered voters; we believed we could change things. And while I was giving my stump speech around my county on his behalf, I decided I had to



Rev. Jesse Jackson - October 8, 1941 – February 17, 2026.

conquer my stutter. I set my mind to it until I figured it out.

He asked me to meet when he came to speak at Stanford University. He treated young organizers like we belonged in the room.

In my early 20s, after I was kicked out of college for organizing protests, I walked into his home in Washington, D.C. He was serving as a shadow senator. The topic was winning voting rights for Washington, D.C., - a perennial

and yet always urgent battle. We talked strategy; he listened more than he spoke.

Years later, when the pressure mounted while I was leading the NAACP, he was still the person I would turn to first for advice and quiet moments. And when things got especially hot, he would just look and say:

“Flood rules. Eyes open. Mouth shut. Keep stepping forward.”

In Rockford, Illinois, we drove out together because we heard that three-year-old girls who had witnessed a police shooting were losing their hair from trauma. We arrived from the funeral of a Black teenager beaten to death with two-by-fours in the streets of Chicago - some said for crossing into the wrong territory, others because hateful people believed he was gay. Rev. Jackson went where the pain was - to help people heal, to help them find their power to move forward, and to push all of us forward again.

When voting rights came under assault, he did the same. When immigrant rights came under attack, he did the same. When working people of any color came under attack, he did the same.

In my 50s, Dave Chappelle and I sat on either side of Rev. Jackson as we watched Kamala

Harris, a Black woman, accept our party's nomination for president of the United States. It felt more than appropriate that that moment - like President Obama accepting victory on election night years earlier - happened in Rev. Jackson's town of Chicago.

Across every chapter, he was there. Not as a symbol. As a worker in the struggle. The lesson was simple. Show up. Keep going. Hold the door open for others.

That is how movements are reborn and rebuilt - even after setbacks, even when the odds feel like they are mounting against us. That is how freedom moves forward.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ben Jealous is a professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania and former president and CEO of the NAACP.



Money Modifies

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9) assesses his means, his wealth or lack of it, and makes a judgment call in her mind. If she goes out on a date with him and discovers that he doesn't really have much to offer, chances are he won't get a second date with her. But if during that first date it's established that he has money, maybe by the car that he picked her up in, then her option for the future with him will be positive, because money modifies everything.

It changes how people treat each other and what they will tolerate. Money makes people turn a blind eye, money makes people forgive transgressions, and money changes views and attitudes.

Is it a case of financial forgiveness or convenient moral expediency? A woman will profess undying love for her man, but as soon as his situation changes, so does her love, and she's out the door. Did the marriage vows say: 'Until death do us part,' or did it say: 'Until debt do us part?'

When it comes to paternity, sociologists have revealed that in many cases, the baby-mother will choose the 'father' who is more financially stable than any of her other possible impregnators. I can't say that I blame her, for survival is essential, but the point is, it's money or lack of it that determines her decision.

A poll was taken in the USA that asked various women what they would prefer, to be the mistress of a wealthy sports superstar or the wife of a man with a low-paying job. Most of the women chose to be the mistress of the sports superstar,



and that's because money changes everything, including attitude and principles.

And speaking of sports, there has been so much talk about some Jamaican athletes who have switched allegiance and chosen to compete for Turkey. As much as it pains me to see them switch allegiance and represent another country, I can understand why, for what Turkey is offering is not chicken feed. Imagine being given half a million US dollars just to switch allegiance, with lots more to come afterwards. It's very difficult to say no to that, and as Marlon Brando in The Godfather movie said: "Make them an offer they can't refuse."

They say that money can't buy happiness, but some will say that they'd rather be rich and miserable. Ironically, there have been so many instances of people

winning the lottery and ending up being very unhappy and even suicidal, for money changes everything, but not always for the good.

They also say that money can't buy life, which is true to some extent, because even wealthy people get sick and die. But money can get you better health care and even a great health insurance plan. Money is vital for our existence, well-being, survival and contentment, but it does modify attitudes.

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



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Can Caribbean Roots Teyana Taylor Make Oscar History?

BY CT TODAY
STAFF WRITER

Will a Harlem-born actress with Trinidadian roots become the next Caribbean-linked name etched into Oscar history?

As the 2026 Academy Awards approach on March 16th, Teyana Taylor in this Women's History Month stands at the center of one of the most compelling narratives of the season - not just as a Best Supporting Actress nominee for Paul Thomas Anderson's *One Battle After Another*, but as a quiet symbol of Caribbean Diaspora excellence reaching Hollywood's highest stage.

If Taylor wins, she will mark a significant milestone in Caribbean representation at the Oscars - expanding a lineage that includes trailblazers like Bahamian-rooted legend Sidney Poitier, whose historic wins reshaped global perceptions of Black artistry more than six decades ago.

While mainstream coverage often frames Taylor strictly as a Harlem success story, her father, Tito Smith, is Trinidadian - a detail that places her firmly within the Caribbean diaspora that has long shaped New York City's cultural landscape. That lineage matters.

A Performance That Sparked Debate

In *One Battle After Another*, Taylor plays Perfidia, a member of a fictional revolutionary group entangled in morally complex relationships with characters portrayed by Leonardo DiCaprio and Sean Penn. The film's layered storytelling and controversial dynamics have sparked intense discussion online and in industry circles.

Perfidia is seductive, strategic, vulnerable and politically charged - a character Taylor has described as "complex." Audiences have reacted strongly to scenes that many interpret as hypersexualized. But Taylor has confronted the criticism head-on. "Is that not what Black women go through?" she asked in an interview when questioned about the portrayal. "We are fetishized... and we are, unfortunately, the least protected people."

Rather than distancing herself from the discomfort, Taylor has argued that the role exposes difficult truths about power, exploitation and agency - especially for Black women navigating systems not built to protect them.

Her performance has been praised for emotional restraint and quiet intensity - a departure from Hollywood's traditional framing of Black women as either unbreakable or one-dimensional.



Teyana Taylor is up for an Oscar award this month for *Perfidia*.

Already A Golden Moment

Taylor's Oscar nomination follows a major Golden Globe victory earlier this year. In January, she became only the second Black actor of Caribbean heritage to win a Golden Globe - following Poitier - and joined an elite group of just 17 Black performers to receive the honor overall.

The achievement did not dominate headlines in Caribbean media the way it perhaps should have. Yet symbolically, it represented something powerful: the Caribbean diaspora's influence in film expanding beyond supporting cultural references into award-winning excellence.

More than 60 years after Poitier shattered ceilings, Taylor's rise reflects a new generation of diaspora representation - one less defined by explicit identity politics, but no less significant.

From Music Prodigy To Film Force

Taylor's path to the Oscars has been anything but linear. She first emerged as a teenage dance prodigy - choreographing Beyoncé's "Ring the Alarm" at 15 and later appearing in Jay-Z projects. She became embedded in Kanye West's creative universe and built a reputation as a multidimensional artist across music, choreography and fashion.

But Hollywood did not immediately recognize her depth as an actress. That changed with her critically acclaimed performance in *A Thousand and One*, which signaled a dramatic shift in public perception. By the time she stepped into *Perfidia*'s role, Taylor had evolved into a performer capable of layered, emotionally complex storytelling.

Her transition reflects a broader diaspora theme: Caribbean-descended artists refusing to be boxed into one lane.

Diaspora Identity, Matriarchal Strength

Raised primarily by her mother, Nikki Taylor, in Harlem, Taylor's story also mirrors

the strength of matriarchal households common across Caribbean and diaspora communities. Her mother has served not only as a parent, but as a manager and stylist - guiding her career with discipline and creative direction.

That foundation has shaped

Machel Montano Brings Road March Glory To Central Park For Epic NYC Encore

The King of Soca is set to light up Central Park once again. Fresh off a historic Trinidad and Tobago Carnival season where he captured his record-breaking 12th Road March Championship - the most by any artist in history - Machel Montano will return to New York City on August 8th for a high-energy dance festival at the iconic Rumsey Playfield stage.

The highly anticipated performance promises to deliver the same electrifying theatrics and carnival energy that defined his championship run in Trinidad earlier this year.

"The opportunity to perform at Central Park after achieving this 12 Road March milestone fills me with excitement," Montano said. "NYC has always been one of my greatest audiences and has supported my growth as an artist. From sold-



The King of Soca is set to light up Central Park this August.

out shows at Madison Square Garden, Barclays Center, and UBS Arena, to now stepping onto the iconic Central Park stage to present my Encore performance... this moment will be nothing short of legendary.

Brandy And Monica To Headline 2026 Saint Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival Finale

R&B superstars Brandy and Monica have been announced as headline performers for the 2026 Saint Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival, bringing renewed global attention to one of the Caribbean's premier cultural events.

Fresh from their sold-out "The Boy Is Mine Tour," the Grammy Award-winning duo will close the festival on Mother's Day with what organizers promise will be a powerful and nostalgic finale. Their appearance underscores the festival's continued ability to attract world-class talent while celebrating Caribbean culture and creativity.

Festival Chairman Thaddeus M. Antoine said the addition of Brandy and Monica significantly elevates an already strong lineup. "Their performances promise to blend nostalgia with contemporary flair, aligning seamlessly with the festival's tradition of showcasing world-class talent," he noted.

The festival, scheduled to begin April 30th, will feature an eclectic mix of Caribbean and international artists. Opening night will include reggae and dancehall acts Capleton, Valiant, and Asa Bantan, alongside American country singer Amber Digby. Other highlights include jazz performances by Esperanza

recognition even more so. Yet Taylor's nomination underscores an important reality: Caribbean heritage continues to influence global Black excellence across disciplines - not only in music, but in cinema, fashion and cultural thought leadership.

Her story widens the lens of what Caribbean success looks like in Hollywood. If she wins, the moment will not simply belong to her. It will echo across a diaspora that has long contributed to American culture while often being absorbed into broader narratives.

Whether Oscar night ends with a statuette in her hand or not, Taylor has already altered the conversation. But should her name be called, the Caribbean diaspora will know exactly what it means.



We ready to Give Dem Performance!"

With a career spanning more than four decades, Montano remains one of the Caribbean's most influential musical exports. Beyond his 12 Road March titles, he has claimed seven International Soca Monarch crowns and collaborated with global stars including Ariana Grande, Drake, Rihanna, Pitbull and Shaggy.

The August 8th show is expected to draw thousands of fans eager to celebrate Soca's global rise - and witness Montano's latest victory lap in one of the world's most famous parks. Tickets at https://www.eventim.us/wafform.aspx?act=eventtickets&_pky=682181 were also showing as "sold-out."



Spalding and the Branford Marsalis Quartet, gospel music from Tye Tribbett, and Caribbean stars such as Kes the Band, Dexta Daps, and Skip Marley.

Global artists Tems and Ella Mai will headline the World Beats segment, while the Mother's Day finale will also feature British soul legend Beverley Knight and Caribbean icon Billy Ocean.

Early bird tickets are now available, with organizers expecting strong international attendance for the island's signature music and cultural celebration.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT NEWS



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Beres Hammond & Friends Set to Light Up UBS Arena In Star-Studded Mother's Day Tribute

Mother's Day weekend in New York is getting a major reggae and soul infusion.

The highly anticipated Beres Hammond & Friends Mother's Day Experience, presented by Jammins Events, is set for Saturday, May 9th at UBS Arena - and international recording artist Lady Da Flame has officially been added to the powerhouse lineup.

Headlined by reggae legend Beres Hammond, the event also features soul icon Stephanie Mills and reggae favorite Romain

Virgo.

Lady Da Flame's Moment

Lady Da Flame's addition comes as her profile continues to rise across major media platforms, including Fox 5 DC's Good Day DC, Power 105.1, and WHUR 96.3. Known for electrifying live performances, she previously shared the stage on Hammond-led shows at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and in Coney Island - appearances that cemented her reputation as a commanding and soulful vocalist.

Her recent singles - including "Mind Games Remix," "Just Another Day," and the empowering anthem "I Am A Overcomer" - have resonated deeply across Caribbean and diaspora communities.

Adding to the buzz is her upcoming duet "Ropeen" with reggae stalwart Richie Stephens, a collaboration already generating strong



Legendary Jamaican Reggae crooner Beres Hammond is set to join a number of artists in NYC for a salute to mothers this Mother's Day.

anticipation.

A Mother's Day Celebration To Remember

With Beres Hammond's timeless catalog, Stephanie Mills' soul classics, Romain Virgo's modern reggae hits, and Lady Da Flame's rising star power, UBS Arena is set for an unforgettable night of love, rhythm, and Caribbean excellence.

Tickets are available now via Ticketmaster.



Oliver Samuels And CBS Star Zay Harding To Lead Explosive Easter Revival Of The Rope and The Cross

Jamaican acting icon Oliver Samuels and CBS television star Zay Harding will headline the cast of *The Rope and The Cross*, the groundbreaking religious epic by legendary Jamaican playwright Easton Lee, returning to the New York stage for a one-night-only Gala Easter Sunday performance on April 5.

The special presentation will take place at the Jamaica Performing Arts Center, (JPAC), in Queens at 7 p.m., following a complimentary Caribbean Cuisine Easter Reception hosted by The Door Restaurant at 5:30 p.m.

Presented as an exclusive staged reading concert performance, the event is produced and directed by BroadwayWorld Award winner

David Heron, in special arrangement with the estate of the late playwright.

A Radical Caribbean Reimagining Of The Passion Story

Set across rural Jamaica and ancient Jerusalem, *The Rope and The Cross* shatters traditional depictions of Christ's passion. Lee's visionary work reimagines Jesus and Judas as modern-day Jamaican men - young, defiant, and determined to dismantle injustice and inequality.

As state power closes in through deception and manipulation, the two rebels discover a brutal truth: entrenched systems will stop at nothing to silence change. The result is a searing political and

spiritual drama that remains as urgent today as when it premiered in Jamaica in 1979.

Legend Meets Leading Man

Samuels, a three-time Actor Boy Award winner, takes on the role of The Shepherd Narrator, guiding audiences through the story across time and place. With a career spanning more than 60 stage productions, Samuels' film credits include *The Mighty Quinn* opposite Denzel Washington and *Great Moments in Aviation* with Vanessa Redgrave. He recently completed the U.S. premiere tour of *Di Prodigal Pickney*.

Harding - best known as host of CBS's *The Visioneers With Zay Harding*, now in its second season with record-

breaking 2025 ratings - portrays High Priest Annas, a calculating power broker whose actions help seal the tragic fate of Jesus and Judas.

His acting credits include *American Horror Story*, *Mistresses*, and *Hawaii Five-O*, as well as stage roles including *Camelot* at American Conservatory Theater.

Honoring Caribbean Theatre Legacy

For Heron, the production continues a mission to preserve and elevate Caribbean theatre on the global stage.

"Two years ago, we presented the American premiere of *Alwin Bully's McBee* at JPAC," Heron said. "With *The Rope and The Cross*, we

are once again honoring a master whose voice still speaks powerfully. Easton Lee captured the rebellious spirit of Jamaica during the era of Prime Minister Michael Manley and drew striking parallels to resistance in biblical Israel. That tension - ancient and modern - makes this play timeless."

He added, "Oliver and Zay will be seen in ways audiences have never experienced them before. This is not just theatre - it's a cultural event."

Get tickets at theropeandthecross.eventbrite.com.

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SEMI-FINALS

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Sunday, May 3: 3 p.m.

FINALS

Saturday, May 9: 7 p.m.



The Caribbean Was In The House At SOBEWFF 2026

BY FELICIA J. PERSAUD

Thousands descended on South Beach this past weekend as the South Beach Food & Wine Festival, (SOBEWFF), celebrated its 25th anniversary - and the Caribbean made sure its flavors, culture, and culinary power were unmistakably present.

From The Bahamas to St. Kitts and Nevis, island nations proudly showcased their cuisine at the festival's Goya Village, offering eager attendees a taste of the region's bold spices, fresh seafood, and rich food traditions. Puerto Rican rum was also present, served up in a sampling of delights like 'Bad and Bougee.'

But this year, Caribbean representation went far beyond samples and stands. Afro-Caribbean cuisine stepped firmly into the global spotlight as some of the world's most celebrated chefs with Caribbean roots or connections took center stage - reframing the narrative around island food as refined, innovative, and culturally essential.

Spotlight On The Bahamas

Six-time James Beard

Award-winning chef Marcus Samuelsson helped amplify The Bahamas' culinary voice by bringing Chef Dwayne Sinclair of Down-To-Earth Adventure Farm to showcase Bahamian staples, including conch fritters. The collaboration underscored the depth of local talent and complemented Samuelsson's own culinary presence in The Bahamas through Marcus at Baha Mar Fish + Chop House.

Samuelsson, who is also involved in the Bahamas Culinary & Arts Festival at Baha Mar each October, thrilled audiences during Saturday's event by giving away multiple trips to this year's festival - further cementing the island's place on the global culinary calendar.

Trinidad Roots, Global Stage

Samuelsson also brought Top Chef Season 22 winner Tristen Epps-Long on stage. With family roots in Trinidad and Tobago, Epps-Long represents a new generation of Caribbean culinary leaders blending tradition with innovation.

His career has taken him from Red Rooster Harlem alongside

Samuelsson to executive chef at Red Rooster Overtown in Miami, where he has earned international acclaim. At SOBEWFF, Epps-Long and Samuelsson celebrated the Afro-Caribbean diaspora during the Overtown Brunch, highlighting flavors that have long shaped American cuisine but are now being recognized in their own right.

A Celebration Of Afro-Caribbean Cuisine

On Friday night, Feb. 20, Afro-Caribbean cuisine commanded its own stage at Las' Lap Link Up: A Celebration of Afro-Caribbean Cuisine, co-hosted by St. Lucia-born James Beard Award-winning chef Nina Compton and acclaimed chef Kwame Onwuachi.

Held at the Kimpton Surfcomber Hotel from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m., the event showcased island-inspired cuisine that fused storytelling, migration, and memory with refined technique. Onwuachi, whose Miami



Six-time James Beard Award-winning chef Marcus Samuelsson on stage at SOBEWFF 2026. (Felicia J. Persaud image)

Beach restaurant Las' Lap has quickly gained acclaim, continues to elevate Afro-Caribbean flavors into global fine dining spaces. His New York restaurant Tatiana has been recognized as one of North America's top new restaurants. Compton, the creative force behind Compere Lapin in New Orleans, brought her deeply personal interpretation of Caribbean cuisine to the stage - blending Saint Lucian heritage with contemporary culinary

artistry.

Together with Epps-Long, the chefs embodied a powerful shift: Caribbean cuisine is no longer confined to community gatherings or labeled as "exotic." It is increasingly central to mainstream dining, reshaping menus, inspiring global chefs, and driving new food economies.

From Margins To Mainstream
What unfolded at SOBEWFF 2026 was more than a food festival highlight. It reflected a broader cultural reckoning.

Afro-Caribbean flavors - once viewed narrowly through the lens of tourism or tradition - are now commanding space at the highest levels of global gastronomy. The movement is not about trendiness; it is about ownership, narrative power, and heritage.

The Caribbean was not simply present at SOBEWFF 2026. It was leading.

As the festival wrapped from February 19-22 in Miami Beach, one message was clear: Caribbean cuisine is no longer on the sidelines of the global table. It is shaping the future of food.



Is Year-Round Avocado Production Jamaica's Next Major Agricultural

Jamaica's push toward year-round avocado production is more than an agricultural milestone. It represents a potential turning point in the Caribbean's economic evolution - one that could position agriculture as a scalable investment sector capable of generating sustained export revenue, attracting private capital, and strengthening long-term food security.

For the first time in its history, Jamaica is preparing to produce avocados year-round, thanks to the introduction of three new varieties - Carla, Hass, and Semil31 - through a partnership between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining and the Trees That Feed Foundation. The initiative is designed to eliminate traditional seasonal production gaps, allowing farmers to harvest and supply markets consistently rather than intermittently.

This shift fundamentally changes the economics of avocado production in Jamaica.

Historically, Caribbean agriculture has faced a critical limitation: unpredictability. Seasonal harvest cycles constrained farmers' ability to consistently meet export demand, making it difficult to secure long-

term contracts or attract investment in processing, logistics, and infrastructure. Year-round production, however, provides the stability required to scale output and integrate into global supply chains.

Chief Technical Director at Jamaica's Ministry of Agriculture, Orville Palmer, emphasized the initiative's economic significance, noting that it aligns with the government's strategy to expand agricultural exports while providing farmers with steady income streams. Reliable production, he said, could elevate avocado to the same economic significance in Jamaica as its iconic ackee industry.

Globally, avocado demand has surged over the past decade, driven by consumer demand in North America, Europe, and emerging markets where health-conscious diets and plant-based foods are gaining popularity. The Hass avocado alone represents a



Mary and Mike McLaughlin, co-founders of Trees That Feed Foundation, visiting some of the first breadfruit trees they planted in Jamaica. (Contributed image)

multi-billion-dollar global export market, dominated by producers such as Mexico, Peru, and the Dominican Republic. Jamaica's entry into year-round production opens the door to capturing a share of that rapidly growing sector.

Beyond exports, the development has broader implications for agricultural investment across the Caribbean.

Year-round production transforms agriculture from a seasonal activity into a predictable revenue-generating sector—one capable of supporting financing structures, infrastructure investment, and long-term

business planning. Consistent output allows investors to evaluate risk more accurately, while farmers benefit from stable income rather than volatile seasonal earnings.

The initiative also highlights the growing importance of agricultural diversification in the Caribbean's economic future. While tourism has historically dominated the region's economy, governments are increasingly seeking to strengthen domestic production and reduce reliance on imports. The Caribbean currently imports billions of dollars in food annually, creating both vulnerability and opportunity. Expanding local agricultural production allows countries to retain more economic value domestically while improving food resilience.

In Jamaica's case, the new avocado varieties are being cultivated at the Bodles Research Station, where budwood sourced from the Dominican Republic is undergoing quarantine and field trials before distribution to farmers across the island. The effort reflects years of research and collaboration aimed at creating a sustainable production model suited to Jamaica's climate and

agricultural landscape.

The economic impact extends beyond farmers. Increased production supports growth across the agricultural value chain, including transportation, packaging, export logistics, and food processing. These downstream sectors generate employment, stimulate rural economies, and contribute to national GDP growth.

For the Caribbean more broadly, Jamaica's breakthrough represents a blueprint for transforming agriculture into a modern economic engine. It demonstrates how innovation, strategic partnerships, and long-term planning can reposition traditional industries for global competitiveness.

As global demand for food continues to rise and supply chains diversify, Jamaica's move toward year-round avocado production signals that Caribbean agriculture may be entering a new era - one defined not by subsistence or seasonality, but by scalability, investment, and economic opportunity.

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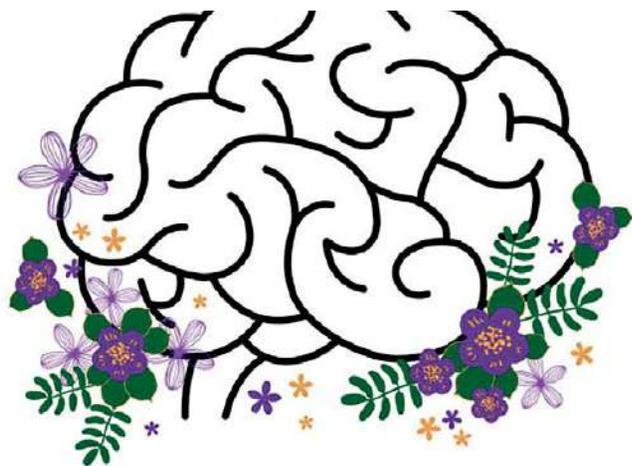
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HEALTH NEWS



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New Blood Test May Predict When Alzheimer's Symptoms Will Begin, Study Finds



ALZHEIMER'S AND BRAIN
awareness

A new study suggests that a simple blood test could help predict not only a person's risk of developing Alzheimer's disease but also when symptoms are

likely to begin.

Researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis found that levels of a protein known as p-tau217

in the blood rise in a consistent pattern years before memory loss appears. The findings were published in the journal *Nature Medicine*.

The protein p-tau217 is linked to the formation of tangles in the brain that disrupt communication between nerve cells - a hallmark of Alzheimer's disease. While brain scans can detect these tangles, imaging tests are costly and complex. Researchers sought to determine whether a blood test could serve as a simpler alternative.

The study analyzed data from more than 600 older adults enrolled in long-term Alzheimer's research projects. By comparing blood samples with cognitive performance over several years, scientists developed a model that uses age and p-tau217 levels to estimate

when symptoms may emerge, with a margin of error of three to four years.

Researchers cautioned that the test is not yet accurate enough for clinical use and is not recommended for people without symptoms. They also noted that the study population lacked diversity, which may limit

broader application.

Two major clinical trials are now underway to determine whether early treatment for individuals with elevated protein levels can delay or prevent the onset of Alzheimer's symptoms.



St. Vincent Monitoring Nipah Virus

St. Vincent and the Grenadines officials say they are closely monitoring global reports of Nipah virus, (NiV) cases, even as the Caribbean Public Health Agency, (CARPHA) has classified the region as low risk.

The Ministry of Health, Wellness, Environmental Health and Energy confirmed there are no suspected or confirmed cases locally and that national risk remains low. However, surveillance and preparedness measures are ongoing in collaboration with regional and international partners.

Nipah virus, a zoonotic disease spread from animals to humans, is carried by fruit bats and can also be transmitted

through contaminated food or close contact with infected individuals. Symptoms range from fever and respiratory issues to severe neurological complications, including encephalitis.

CARPHA noted that no confirmed cases have been reported in the Caribbean or the wider Americas. Still, health officials are urging travelers, particularly those visiting affected countries, to remain vigilant and seek medical care if symptoms develop.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



Rare Lung Diseases: What To Know For Earlier Diagnosis And Treatment

Rare lung diseases affect people nationwide, yet many patients go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed for years. One rare lung disease that illustrates the challenges of timely diagnosis is Autoimmune Pulmonary Alveolar Proteinosis, (aPAP). Like many rare lung diseases, aPAP has no cure, but treatment can help manage symptoms and improve quality of life.

To encourage early diagnosis of rare lung diseases like aPAP, the American Lung Association, with support from Savara, Inc., is sharing these five key points:

1. Symptoms are often common, but the pattern is not.

Rare lung diseases like aPAP often have symptoms similar to more common lung conditions, like persistent cough, fatigue, and shortness of breath, especially with exertion. "Part of aPAP is that its symptoms mimic many lung diseases, which means patients get misdiagnosed as having asthma or recurrent pneumonias and the correct diagnosis is often delayed," says Ali Ataya, MD a pulmonologist specializing in rare lung disease. "However, the distinguishing factor for rare lung diseases is a pattern over time of persistent, worsening symptoms or symptoms that don't respond to standard treatments."

2. Don't wait on persistent or worsening symptoms.

If symptoms are not improving with your current treatment, seeing a pulmonologist or healthcare provider specializing in rare lung diseases is key to getting the correct diagnosis. "A doctor familiar with rare lung diseases will know to look for a specific pattern of symptoms, especially when those symptoms aren't improving with standard treatments like inhalers



or antibiotics," says Dr. Ataya.

3. Diagnosis often requires specialized testing.

Unlike common lung conditions, rare lung diseases often cannot be confirmed with a single test. Diagnosis may involve: a detailed medical history and family medical history, a physical examination and specialized testing. A rare disease specialist will have a better understanding of what specialized tests to order to help diagnose your disease. Dr. Ataya says in the case of aPAP, "Ordering a chest CT scan can reveal telltale signs, such as hazy areas in the lungs known as a 'crazy paving' pattern, while a simple blood test can help confirm the diagnosis."

4. Treatment can help, especially when started early.

Many rare lung diseases don't yet have cures; however, treatment may be available to help manage symptoms, slow disease progression and improve quality of life. With rare lung diseases, it is vital to have a tailored treatment plan. A specialist can help get you on the path to targeted medical therapies, specialized procedures, pulmonary rehabilitation and ongoing monitoring to ensure

your treatment plan continues to meet your needs. As a patient living with aPAP, Niki P. advocates for getting treated by a specialist as soon as possible when living with a rare disease, "You need to know about your disease and what the treatments are."

5. Support, education and specialized care make a difference.

Living with a rare lung disease can be physically and emotionally challenging. Access to education, support networks and a coordinated care team that specializes in your rare disease is an essential part of long-term management. "You can thrive if you can get the right information from the experts. Don't procrastinate. Learn as much as you possibly can. There's so much available," says Niki. Early diagnosis starts with awareness. Learn more about rare lung diseases, like aPAP, and find trusted resources and support by calling the Lung HelpLine at 1-800-LUNGUSA. "If you or someone you know is struggling with unexplained lung symptoms. Don't settle for uncertainty," says Dr. Ataya.

- *StatePoint*



Miss Jamaica Universe Breaks Silence Three Months After Devastating Fall

Nearly three months after a shocking fall during the Miss Universe preliminary competition in Thailand left her hospitalized with serious injuries, Miss Universe Jamaica 2025 Gabrielle Alexis Henry has shared a deeply personal update on her recovery.

Henry, who tumbled off the stage during the evening gown segment in November, suffered a fracture and an intracranial hemorrhage, according to previous statements from the Miss Universe Organization. The fall stunned viewers worldwide and forced her to withdraw from the competition immediately.

In a recent Instagram post, Henry shared photos from her hospital bed and from rehabilitation, including one showing her pedaling on a stationary bike. Describing the experience as a season that has "redefined restoration and renewal," she reflected on the emotional and physical toll of the incident.

"At a time when I wanted only to represent Jamaica at my fullest, I faced the most unexpected injury of my life," she wrote. "My greatest strength



Miss Jamaica Universe Gabrielle Henry shared photos from her hospital bed and from rehabilitation.

has been in choosing to rise, even while I am still on the journey."

Henry expressed gratitude to the neurosurgeons, neurologists, nurses and physiotherapists in both Thailand and Jamaica who have guided her recovery.

Her legal representatives confirmed she has not yet been able to resume her work as an ophthalmology resident.

Since returning home, Henry has kept a low profile, focusing on healing. Her latest message signals resilience - not just for herself, but as inspiration for Jamaicans and supporters worldwide.

- *Rewritten from People.com*



Bahamas Launches 'Bahamas In A Day' Seaplane Experience From South Florida

The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation has partnered with Tropic Ocean Airways to launch a new same-day travel experience that brings the islands closer than ever to South Florida residents.

The program, called Bahamas In A Day, debuted on February 21st and operates every Saturday, offering travelers the opportunity to depart Fort Lauderdale in the morning, spend 8 hours in Bimini, and return home by early evening.

Guests check in at Tropic Ocean Airways' private Fort Lauderdale lobby just 30 minutes before departure. The seaplane lands on the water at the North Bimini Seaplane Base by 9 a.m., allowing visitors a full day to explore beaches, dine, snorkel, or relax before returning to Florida by 5:30 p.m.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism Chester Cooper said the initiative redefines accessibility to The



South Floridians can now fly to Bimini and back in a day.

Bahamas.

"By providing the opportunity to get from South Florida to The Bahamas in a mere 25 minutes, we are removing traditional barriers to international travel," Cooper said.

The package includes round-trip seaplane travel, free valet parking, and access to a private lounge. Optional island

excursions range from snorkeling and bone fishing to beach club experiences.

Tourism officials say the initiative supports broader efforts to expand premium, short-stay travel to The Bahamas. Check out flytropic.com/bahamasinaday/ for more.



Jamaica's Tourism Minister Honored With Global Tourism Resilience Award In Kenya

Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, was recently presented with the Global Tourism Resilience Lifetime Achievement Award during the 4th Global Tourism Resilience Day 2026 observance held at the Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi.

The award recognizes Minister Bartlett's longstanding leadership in advancing global tourism resilience frameworks and strengthening crisis preparedness and recovery strategies across the industry. His work has been widely credited with elevating resilience as a cornerstone of sustainable tourism development, helping

destinations better prepare for and recover from disruptions such as natural disasters, pandemics, economic shocks, and other global crises.

Over the past decade, Bartlett has championed policy innovation, international partnerships, and capacity-building initiatives to protect tourism-dependent economies. Central to this effort has been the establishment of the Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre, (GTRCMC), in Jamaica, which has become a leading voice in resilience planning worldwide.

In accepting the award, Bartlett underscored the

importance of collaboration in an increasingly interconnected world.

"This award is testament to the enduring work we have been doing through the Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre in Jamaica," he said. "I thank all our public and private partners who understand the importance of a resilient tourism industry."

The ceremony brought together tourism leaders and policymakers from around the globe to reaffirm commitments to strengthening resilience within the sector.



NBC's TODAY With Jenna & Sheinelle To Broadcast Live From Jamaica

NBC's TODAY with Jenna & Friends will air two special episodes from Jamaica on March 26th and 27th, marking the show's first official "Girls Trip" since Sheinelle Jones joined Jenna Bush Hager as co-host in January.

The national morning program will broadcast from Sandals Dunn's River, located along the north coast in Ocho Rios. The special episodes are being hosted in partnership with the Jamaica Tourist Board and Sandals Resorts.

Producers say the live shows will highlight Jamaica's culture, natural beauty, and hospitality, with Sandals Dunn's River

serving as the home base as the hosts explore the island and resort amenities.

To mark the occasion, viewers will have the opportunity to enter a contest to win a sponsored all-inclusive trip for two to Sandals Dunn's River. The prize includes a five-day, four-night stay with unlimited dining, premium beverages, land and water sports - including PADI-certified scuba diving - as well as round-trip airfare provided by the Jamaica Tourist Board. Fans must submit a short video explaining why they should be selected, with the winner to be announced later in March via the show's website.

Kevin Clarke, General Manager of Sandals Dunn's River, said the resort looks forward to showcasing the island's signature hospitality to viewers across the United States.

Sandals Dunn's River is part of Sandals Resorts International, which operates luxury all-inclusive resorts throughout the Caribbean.

Tourism officials say the broadcast represents a major promotional opportunity, bringing Jamaica directly into American households during peak morning viewership.



Princess Resorts Reopens 415 Rooms In Jamaica

Jamaica's accommodation sector continues to show strong signs of recovery with the reopening of 415 rooms at Princess Resorts and the reinstatement of approximately 800 tourism workers.

The move significantly increases visitors' capacity and delivers a major employment boost, marking another milestone in the island's post-pandemic tourism rebound. Princess Resorts is expected to complete its full reopening next month, restoring 590 rooms and bringing its total staff complement to 1,005.

Jamaica Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett, welcomed the development, describing it as a tangible sign that recovery efforts are translating into economic gains.

Director of Tourism

Donovan White noted that the additional room inventory comes at a strategic time, as demand from key source markets continues to rise.

Other major hotel chains, including Sandals Resorts and RIU Hotels, have also resumed operations, reflecting broader momentum across the sector.

Princess Hotels and Resorts Jamaica Managing Director Enrico Pezzoli said the reopening reflects resilience and renewed focus.

"The past period challenged us, but we return stronger and more intentional in everything we do," he said.

Tourism remains one of Jamaica's largest economic drivers and employers.



Baha Mar Breaks Ground On \$700M Expansion In Nassau



Prime Minister of the Bahamas at the groundbreaking of the \$700 million beachfront expansion at Cable Beach in the Bahamas.

Baha Mar in the Bahamas has broken ground on a more than \$700 million beachfront expansion at Cable Beach, a project expected to add 345 guest rooms and 77 branded luxury residences to the resort destination.

The development marks one of the largest new tourism investments in The Bahamas in recent years and is projected to create thousands of construction jobs and approximately 1,400 permanent positions once completed.

The expansion will integrate new hotel accommodations with high-end residential units, continuing a growing trend in the Caribbean hospitality sector that blends resort amenities with private ownership opportunities.

The project is being designed by Foster + Partners, the internationally recognized architectural firm, and will

expand the footprint of the existing Cable Beach property, which already features a casino, golf course, retail outlets, and more than 40 dining venues.

Prime Minister Philip Davis described the investment as a strong signal of confidence in the Bahamian economy and its tourism sector.

Baha Mar currently employs more than 5,300 Bahamians. Officials say the new expansion will further strengthen the country's tourism infrastructure while supporting broader economic activity across construction, hospitality, and local supply chains. Construction is now underway, with completion timelines expected to be announced in the coming months.

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IMMIGRATION NEWS


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Minnesota Clergy Sue DHS Over Alleged Denial Of Access To Immigration Detainees

A coalition of Minnesota religious leaders has filed a federal lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), alleging that clergy have been repeatedly blocked from providing pastoral care to immigration detainees held at the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building near Minneapolis–St. Paul International Airport.

The plaintiffs include the United Church of Christ Minnesota Conference, the Minneapolis Area Synod of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Jesuit priest Father Christopher Collins of St. Peter Claver Church in St. Paul. They argue that DHS is violating the religious rights of detainees by denying access to spiritual care.

According to the complaint, clergy members were turned away on multiple occasions, including attempts to visit detainees on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Ash Wednesday. DHS officials allegedly cited “security” and “safety” concerns.

The lawsuit names DHS Secretary Kristi Noem, Acting ICE Director Todd Lyons, and ICE field director David Easterwood as defendants. The legal action follows a separate class-action case alleging that detainees were denied access to attorneys. A federal judge recently ordered DHS to ensure private attorney access and delay transfers out of Minnesota.



New Hampshire Lawmakers Introduce Bill Requiring DHS To Secure Local Approval Before Opening ICE Facilities

New Hampshire lawmakers have introduced bicameral legislation that would require the Department of Homeland Security, (DHS) to notify Congress and obtain written approval from state and local officials before opening any new Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) processing facility or detention center. The proposed Respect for Local Communities Act, introduced by Congressman Chris Pappas, (NH-01), and Senator Jeanne Shaheen,

(D-NH), comes amid growing backlash over reports that ICE plans to expand detention capacity nationwide, including a potential site in Merrimack, New Hampshire. Senator Maggie Hassan and Congresswoman Maggie Goodlander are original co-sponsors.

The bill would require DHS to solicit public comment and secure approval from relevant state and local authorities before constructing, acquiring, or operating new facilities. It would

also mandate advance notification to key Congressional committees. Lawmakers cited concerns about transparency, public safety, and local governance, particularly after ICE documents revealed plans to spend more than \$38 billion to increase detention capacity. Merrimack officials say they were not consulted about the proposed facility, fueling community opposition and calls for greater federal accountability.



DHS Proposes Rule To Tighten Asylum Screening And Limit Work Permits

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced a proposed rule to tighten asylum screening procedures and limit eligibility for work authorization for applicants with pending asylum claims.

According to DHS, the proposal seeks to reduce what it describes as incentives for filing fraudulent or meritless asylum applications primarily to obtain employment authorization in the United States. Officials say the move is designed to ease pressure on U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), which currently faces more than 1.4 million pending affirmative asylum cases.

A DHS spokesperson said

FY 2027 H-1B Cap Registration Opens March 4 Under New Weighted Selection Rules

The initial registration period for the fiscal year (FY) 2027 H-1B visa cap will open at noon Eastern on March 4th and run through noon Eastern on March 19, 2026, according to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, (USCIS).

During this window, employers seeking to sponsor foreign workers under the H-1B cap must electronically register each beneficiary through a USCIS online account and pay a \$215 registration fee per submission. Only employers whose registrations are selected will be eligible to file a full H-1B cap-subject petition.

USCIS said selection notifications are expected to be issued by March 31, 2026, through users’ online accounts.

Account Requirements

Employers who do not already have a USCIS organizational account must create one before submitting registrations. Legal representatives may add company clients to their accounts at any time but must wait until March 4 to enter beneficiary details and submit registrations.

A petitioner may file an H-1B cap-subject petition - including those eligible for the advanced degree exemption - only if the beneficiary’s registration is selected during the lottery process.

Major Changes For FY 2027

This year’s cap season introduces a significant policy shift. The Department of Homeland Security has finalized a rule modifying how H-1B

the rule would “restore integrity” to the asylum system by revising filing and eligibility requirements tied to employment authorization documents (EADs). The agency argues that work permits should not be automatically available while applications are under review.

If finalized, the rule would reallocate agency resources to adjudicate asylum claims and address the growing backlog. The proposal supports President Trump’s Executive Order 14159 and is now open for a 60-day public comment period following publication in the Federal Register.



registrations are selected.

Under the new system, if registrations exceed the annual cap, USCIS will conduct a weighted selection process among unique beneficiaries with properly submitted registrations. The revised framework prioritizes higher-skilled and higher-paid applicants, a move officials say is designed to better protect wages and job opportunities for American workers.

If the number of registrations does not exceed the cap, all properly submitted registrations for unique beneficiaries during the initial period will be selected.

Additional Fee May Apply

Separately, a presidential proclamation dated September 19, 2025, imposed new restrictions on certain nonimmigrant workers. While the proclamation does not change the electronic registration process, selected petitioners may be required to pay an additional \$100,000 fee before filing an H-1B petition as a condition of eligibility.

The H-1B program allows U.S. employers to hire foreign workers in specialty occupations requiring specialized knowledge, typically in fields such as technology, engineering, healthcare, and finance.



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Will Jamaica Make History? Reggae Boyz Face New Caledonia In Crucial World Cup Play-Off

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL
 Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

Jamaica stands just two wins away from making history. Jamaica's Reggae Boyz seek a second berth at the 2026 FIFA World Cup as they prepare to face New Caledonia in a pivotal Inter-Confederation World Cup Qualifying play-off on March 26 at Estadio Akron in Zapopan, Mexico.

Victory would move Jamaica one step closer to securing a place at the FIFA World Cup 2026 - and potentially returning to the global stage for the first time since their memorable debut in France in 1998. Back then, Jamaica defeated Japan 2-0 in their final group match after tough outings against Argentina and Croatia.

The Reggae Boyz finished

second to Curaçao in the CONCACAF Group B zone, while New Caledonia were runners-up to New Zealand in the Oceania qualifiers. This time, the stakes are just as high. If Jamaica defeats New Caledonia, they will remain in Zapopan to face DR Congo on March 31st, with the winner earning a coveted ticket to the World Cup finals in North America. A victory for either team against the DR Congo guarantees a place at this summer's World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Jamaica has not qualified for the World Cup since 1998,



Reggae Boyz midfielder Kasey Palmer shows off Jamaica's new shirt ahead of the match, featuring a pattern reminiscent of vinyl records. (Adidas image)

when they played in France. They defeated Grenada and Martinique in preparation for the New Caledonia fixture.

Those matches were the first in charge for Rudolph Speid, who replaced Englishman Steve McLaren who resigned after the 0-0 draw against Curaçao in November.

The Reggae Boyz needed to beat Curaçao at home to qualify for the World Cup, but that match ended in disappointment in front of a packed National Stadium.

Speid insists his team will not take New Caledonia lightly.

"New Caledonia is a little bit different. Although they are a French colony just like Martinique, which is one of the reasons why we took the game, we figured there would be some similarities," he said.

"So, of course, they are a little different, so we'll have to go back and look at what we did well here today, and what we could improve and look at New Caledonia just to see how we can possibly defeat them and go

on to the final," Speid added.

The senior Reggae Boyz are looking to emulate the Under-17 team, who have qualified for the World Cup in Qatar in November.

Ranked significantly higher than New Caledonia, which sits 149th in the FIFA rankings, Jamaica will enter as the favorites. However, Les Cagous are chasing their first-ever World Cup appearance and will be eager to seize the opportunity.

Adding to the excitement, Jamaica recently unveiled striking new kits, designed in collaboration with the Bob Marley Foundation, that blend football with the island's rich cultural heritage.

Now, all eyes turn to Mexico. Will the Reggae Boyz seize their second chance and make history once again?

Tickets for the March 26th clash were set to go on sale through FIFA's official ticketing portal on February 26th, with prices likely starting around US\$60. Supporters can register through FIFA's website to secure seats, while resale platforms may offer additional options.



Nevis To Host Iconic Cross Channel Swim On March 28th



Participants in a previous Cross Channel Swim. (Nevis islands image)

The Nevis Tourism Authority, (NTA, has officially announced the return of the Nevis to St. Kitts Cross Channel Swim, set for March 28th, reaffirming the island's position as a premier sports tourism destination in the Caribbean.

The annual 4.1-kilometre (2.5-mile) open water swim across the famed Narrows between Nevis and St. Kitts is regarded as one of the region's most iconic endurance events. This year's staging will feature special guest Alice Dearing, a former Team GB Olympic open-water swimmer and the first Black woman to represent Great Britain in Olympic swimming.

The announcement was made during a press conference at the Malcolm Guishard Recreation Park, attended by government officials, tourism stakeholders, and regional and international media.

NTA Chief Executive Officer Andia Ravariere described the event as a flagship

tourism product and a powerful statement about Nevis' future in sports tourism.

"This rare crossing between two beautiful islands is an experience very few destinations can deliver," Ravariere said. "Welcoming Alice Dearing places this event firmly on the global stage and reinforces Nevis as a serious sports tourism destination."

Premier of Nevis and Minister of Tourism Mark Brantley called the swim a "bucket-list event" that attracts participants and families from around the world.

Now more than two decades old, the Cross Channel Swim continues to grow in participation and global recognition.

Registration is currently open at the official event website, nevistostkittscrosschannelswim.com/.



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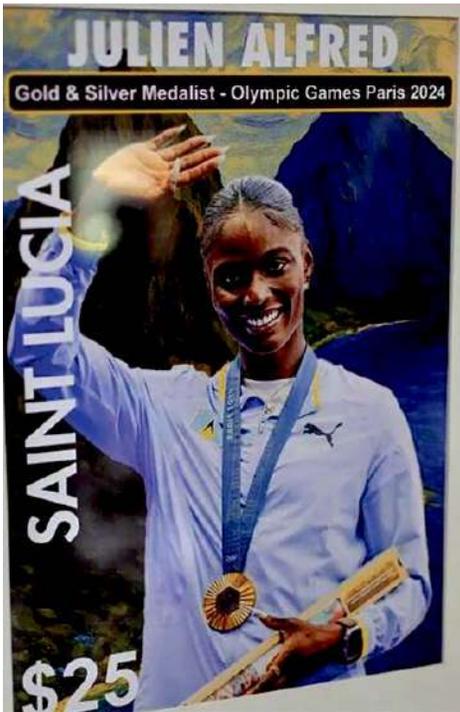
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Saint Lucia Honors Olympic Champion With Commemorative Independence Stamp

St. Lucian-born Olympic champion, Julien Alfred, now has her own commemorative postage stamp. The stamp was unveiled on Feb. 22nd during St. Lucia Independence celebrations.

The 24-year-old made history at the 2024 Paris Olympics when she captured the island's first-ever Olympic gold medal, blazing to victory in the women's 100 meters in a national record time of 10.72 seconds. She also secured a silver medal in the 200 meters, cementing her place as one of the Caribbean's brightest athletic stars.

The newly issued stamp series highlights defining moments from



The new St. Lucian Julien Alfred stamp.

Alfred's historic performances and will become part of Saint Lucia's official philatelic collection. Officials confirmed that while initially released as a commemorative stamp, it will transition into a definitive stamp — meaning it will become part of everyday postal use across the island.

The move transforms Alfred's Olympic triumph from a celebratory tribute into a permanent national symbol.

"To be honored by my island in this way is deeply humbling," Alfred said during the ceremony, which she attended virtually. "This place shaped me into who I am... I accept this not just for myself, but as a symbol honoring the strength of a united community."

Education, Youth Development and Sports Minister Kenson Casimir said

every envelope bearing Alfred's image will reflect "a small island nation that produces world-class talent."

Since her Olympic victories, Alfred has also been appointed a Tourism Ambassador for Saint

Lucia, further solidifying her role as a global representative of the island.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



Rivaldo Marshall Sets New Jamaican Indoor 800-M Record



Jamaican middle-distance runner Rivaldo Marshall has broken the national indoor record in the men's 800 meters. (CMC image)

Jamaican middle-distance runner Rivaldo Marshall delivered a stunning performance recently, breaking the national indoor record in the men's 800 meters at the Arkansas Qualifier held at the Randal Tyson Track Center.

The University of Arkansas senior clocked a blistering 1:45.62 to win the event, becoming the third Jamaican in just one week to reset the national indoor mark in the two-lap race.

Marshall's record-breaking run came days after teammate Tyrice Taylor posted 1:46.11 at the same venue, only to have World Athletics Championships medalist Navasky Anderson respond with 1:46.10 at a meet in France on Feb. 20th. Marshall's effort decisively lowered the mark once again.

In addition to setting a new Jamaican record, Marshall shattered a 25-year-old Arkansas school record of 1:45.95 established by Dirk Heinze in 2001 - the same year Marshall was born. His performance also eclipsed his own previous personal best of 1:46.30 set just last weekend.

Elsewhere at the meet, fellow Jamaican Machaeda Linton of Texas A&M impressed in the field events. She captured gold in the women's long jump with a leap of 6.51 meters and placed second in the triple jump with an effort of 12.89 meters. Jamaican athletes continue to make a strong statement during the U.S. indoor season.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



Jamaica's Four-Man Bobsled Team Finishes Joint 21st At Winter Olympics

Jamaica's bobsled program marked significant milestones at the 2026 Winter Olympics, qualifying three sleds - the two-man, four-man, and women's monobob - and capturing its first-ever North American Cup victory in November 2025.

In Milan-Cortina, the four-man team delivered a determined performance, finishing joint 21st after three heats in a field where fractions of a second proved decisive.

Pilot Shane Pitter steered the sled alongside push athletes Junior Harris, Tyquendo Tracey, and Joel Fearon. The quartet combined explosive starts with disciplined driving to post a total time of 2:46.02.

Their consistency stood out. Jamaica clocked 55.28 seconds in the opening run, followed by 55.29 and 55.45 in the next two heats - near-identical splits that

reflected composure under pressure on an unforgiving Olympic track.

When the standings were finalized, Jamaica was tied with Liechtenstein for 21st place. Only the top 20 teams advanced to the fourth and final run. Canada secured the last qualifying position in 2:45.87 - just 0.15 seconds ahead.

Though narrowly missing advancement, Jamaica's showing reinforced the steady progress of its winter sports program. Competing far from tropical shores, the team once again demonstrated resilience,



The Jamaica four-man bobsled team of Shane Pitter, Junior Harris, Tyquendo Tracey and Joel Fearon completed their MilanoCortina2026 campaign just outside of the top 20 medal round with a 3rd round time of 55.45. They finished 21st overall with a combined time of 2:46.02 after three rounds.

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SPORTS NEWS

Jamaican Jockey Kiaman McGregor Hits 100th U.S. Win

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Two years ago, when jockey Kiaman McGregor came to the United States, he was an exercise rider for Barbadian Saffie Joseph, the top trainer at that South Florida track.

On January 31st, the Jamaican rode his 100th winner in the US aboard 9-1 shot Acclaimed Preacher at Turf Paradise in Arizona. It completed a quick double for the 28-year-old McGregor, who won the card's previous race with 1-9 favorite Pepper Mill.

"It's a marvelous feeling," McGregor told Caribbean Today recently. "I've been working very hard for the past two years and I'm proud of myself. I'd like to give a shout-out to di trainers, my agents, di grooms and owners who helped make it possible to win 100 winners."

Of the eight tracks he has ridden since moving to the US, Turf Paradise has been McGregor's happy hunting ground. At the time of the interview, he had ridden 48 winners, including his first, Corn Pop, in March 2024.

He rode 21 winners to top the standings at Grants Pass Downs racetrack in Oregon last



Jamaican jockey Kiaman McGregor is making his name in the racing circles.

year. McGregor has also ridden at Gulfstream, Colonial Downs in Virginia and Emerald Downs in Washington.

He is among a growing number of young Caribbean jockeys doing well in the US. Others include Micah Husbands of Barbados, who has struck up a productive partnership with Joseph at Gulfstream; and Kevin Krigger of St. Croix, a top rider at Emerald Downs.

McGregor, who is from Kingston, says he aspired to be a jockey when he first saw a horse at age 11. In 2018, he graduated from the Jockeys Training School at Caymanas Park, Jamaica's only racetrack.

Months after his maiden ride, McGregor won his first race there on Newton's First Law. As for winning a jockey's title back home, that is not in his immediate plans.

"I do plan to ride in Jamaica, but I can't tell when that will be. Right now, I'm working on getting more known internationally," McGregor added.



Jamaica's Caribbean Premier League Gets New Owner

Kingsmen Sports Enterprise is the new owner of Jamaica's Caribbean Premier League (CPL) franchise. The company says the return of top-tier T20 cricket to the island will deliver meaningful economic benefits while strengthening the country's sporting brand.

The U.S.-based company, owned by Fawad Sarwar, secured the Jamaican franchise following a successful bidding and negotiation process. The team is set to return to CPL action in August after a two-year absence. The franchise had been sold back to the CPL by former owner Kris Persaud, who subsequently acquired the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons.

Kingsmen representative, Faisal Mirza, said Jamaica was a natural fit as the organization expands its global cricket portfolio, which recently included the acquisition of the Hyderabad franchise in

Pakistan's Super League.

Mirza emphasized that Kingsmen intends to finance and operate the franchise independently rather than rely heavily on government support.

"We ourselves as Kingsmen are really driven to make this a success," Mirza said. "We don't want to rely on outside influence. Being able to partner is ideal, but we try to drive from within."

He noted that a successful, self-sustaining model would encourage stronger collaboration with the Jamaican government over time, creating a "symbiotic relationship" that supports the broader CPL ecosystem.

The return of a CPL franchise is expected to stimulate tourism, generate jobs, boost hospitality revenues, and reignite Jamaica's vibrant cricket culture.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



Team Jamaica Bickle Counts Down To Another Year At The Penn Relays

Team Jamaica Bickle (TJB), the New York-based non-profit organization dedicated to supporting Jamaican and Caribbean athletes, is counting down to another year at the Penn Relays.

The group, founded by Irwine Clare Sr., OD, will host its signature fundraising event, the Labor of Love Resilience Gala, on Sunday, April 12, 2026, from noon at the Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury, New York.

The annual gala brings together members of the Northeast Diaspora, community leaders, supporters, and sports enthusiasts for an afternoon of elegance, culture, and purpose, all in support of athletes competing at the annual relay carnival in Pennsylvania.

According to Clare, the event has grown into a cornerstone gathering for the community. "The Labor of Love Luncheon Gala has become the Northeast Diaspora's signature gathering - classy, trendsetting, and powered by a simple mission: love for our athletes and belief in their future," Clare said.

Gala Chair Karen N. Wilson-Robinson, Esq., emphasized the impact of the fundraiser, noting that proceeds

play a critical role in TJB's mission. Robinson shared that funds raised go a long way in supporting Jamaican and Caribbean athletes, ensuring they have the resources, care, and encouragement needed to perform at their best during the highly anticipated relay carnival. This year's event is of added significance, as a portion of the funds raised will support many of the schools in Western Jamaica that were severely impacted by Hurricane Melissa.

Guests can look forward to an engaging program featuring live entertainment provided by VP Records, with music by Road International, adding vibrant Caribbean energy to the afternoon.

Tickets are now on sale, with pricing as follows: General Admission: \$200 and VIP: \$300. The Labor of Love Resilience Gala continues Team Jamaica Bickle's long-standing tradition of service, community, and unwavering commitment to athlete support. For ticket information and additional details, supporters are encouraged to follow Team Jamaica Bickle on social media or teamjamaicabickle.org/.



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