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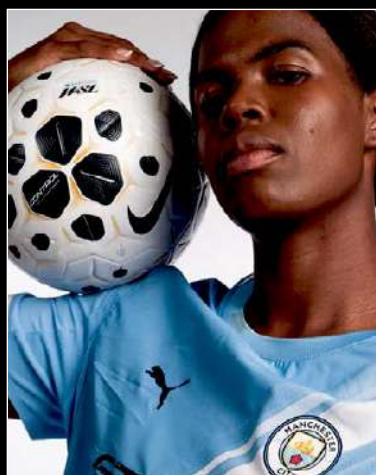
THE MULTI-AWARD WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE WITH THE LARGEST PROVEN CIRCULATION IN FLORIDA GUARANTEED



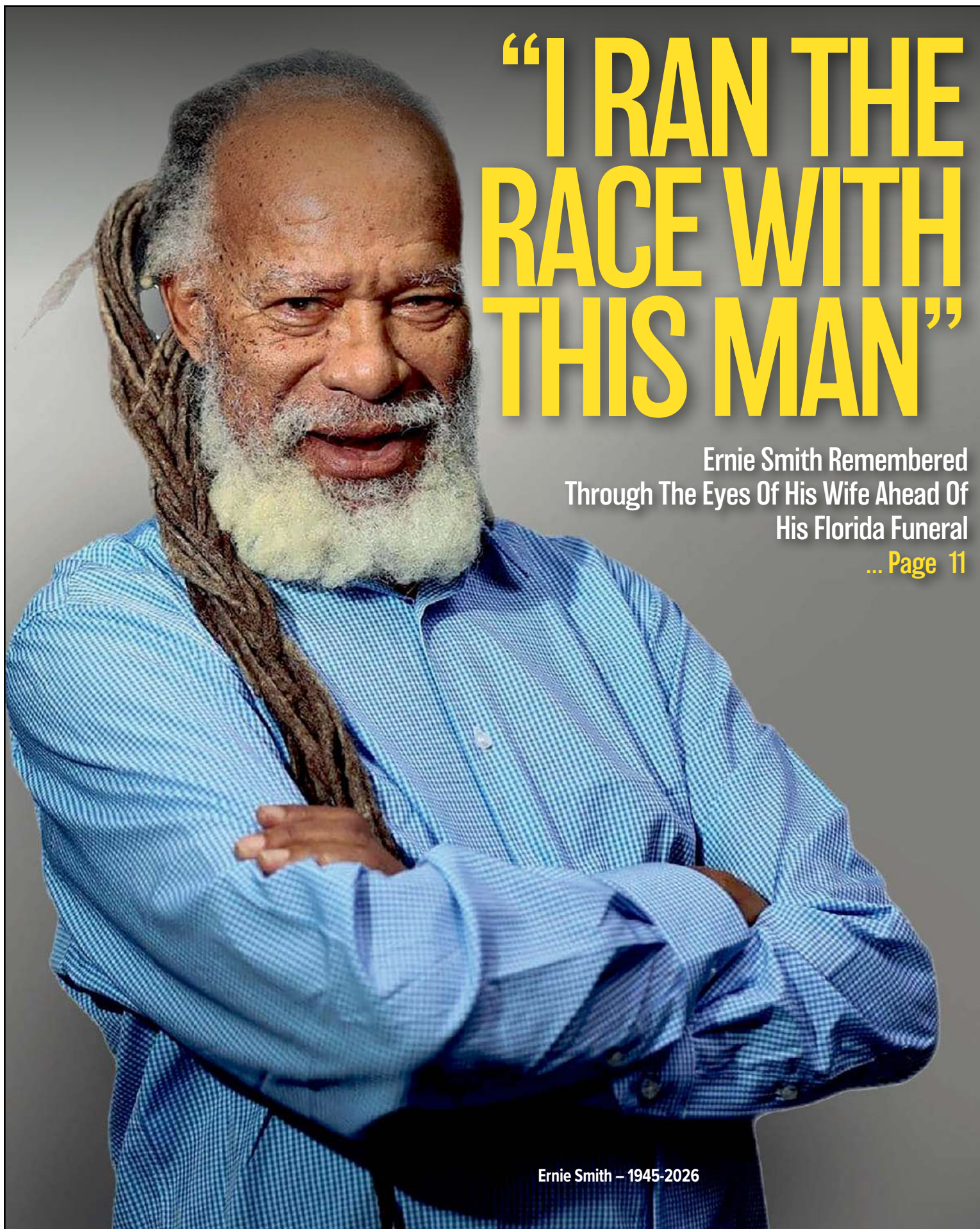
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REGIONAL NEWS



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Here Are Some Of The Top Headlines Making Caribbean News:

REGIONAL

American streamer IShowSpeed, whose real name is Darren Jason Watkins Jr., has racked up millions of cumulative live-stream viewers across several Caribbean islands, turning what would have cost governments millions in tourism advertising into a free, real-time global showcase.

The 21-year-old kicked off his Caribbean run in Trinidad and Tobago before hitting Grenada, Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, Guadeloupe, St. Maarten, Saint Martin, and Antigua and Barbuda, in the first week of his tour. He's also expected to visit Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. For islands on the itinerary, the calculus is straightforward: millions of eyeballs, zero cost, and the kind of youth-market penetration that no tourism board has reliably cracked.

Speed was born in Ohio. He reportedly became a millionaire by age 16 or 17 - one of the fastest wealth accumulations in streaming history. By the end of 2023, he had firmly established himself as a multi-millionaire, with his net worth growing well beyond early estimates, driven by YouTube ad revenue, brand deals, merchandise, and his massive live-streaming audience. His net worth ranges from \$10 million to \$30 million.

GUYANA

As Guyana counts down to its 60th independence anniversary, the country again finds itself defending its sovereignty. Guyana's President, Irfaan Ali, has expressed "grave concern" over what he described as a provocative display by Venezuela during recent engagements with Caribbean leaders, as tensions continue over the long-running Essequibo territorial dispute.

In a letter to Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Chairman Terrance Drew, Ali criticized the public display of a brooch worn by Acting President of Venezuela, Delcy Rodríguez, that depicted a map of Venezuela, including Guyana's Essequibo region. The Guyanese president said that while Georgetown respects the right of CARICOM member states to engage with Venezuela, it was "deeply regrettable" that such meetings were accompanied by symbols asserting a territorial claim against Guyana.

Rodríguez recently met with Grenada's Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell and Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley during visits aimed at strengthening Venezuela's ties with the Caribbean.

The dispute between the two South American nations dates back more than a century and is currently before the ICJ, which is set to begin oral hearings in early May. Guyana is



American streamer IShowSpeed, whose real name is Darren Jason Watkins Jr., during his visit to St. Vincent & The Grenadines.

seeking affirmation of the 1899 Arbitral Award that established the boundary between the two countries.

The court has already ruled that it has jurisdiction over the matter, paving the way for a full hearing on the merits. Ali reiterated that Guyana remains committed to a peaceful resolution under international law but expects all parties to respect the judicial process and refrain from actions that could escalate tensions.

CARICOM for its part has drawn a clear line against any use of its platforms to advance or legitimize Venezuela's claim to Guyana's Essequibo region, stressing that the controversy remains before the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Member states, CARICOM added, must remain mindful of their collective responsibilities to uphold international law, respect judicial processes, and maintain good neighborly relations.

Meanwhile, a high-profile extradition case involving Guyana opposition leader Azruddin Mohamed and his father, businessman Nazar Mohamed, remains in legal limbo as the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) prepares to deliver a key ruling.

The CCJ has confirmed that an interim stay on their extradition will remain in place until a final judgment is issued, effectively halting proceedings in the Georgetown Magistrates' Courts.

At the center of the case is whether the extradition process was compromised early on. Attorneys for the Mohameds argue that the Authority to Proceed (ATP), issued by the Minister of Home Affairs, was tainted by bias, potentially invalidating the entire process.

However, CCJ judges questioned whether concerns about bias could instead be addressed at later stages, such as during committal proceedings or through habeas corpus. Guyana's Attorney General Anil Nandlall described extradition as a unique legal process governed by international obligations. The CCJ's ruling is expected to have broader implications for extradition law across the Caribbean.

JAMAICA

Jamaica's Parliament has passed the National Reconstruction and Resilience Authority (NaRR) Act, aimed at accelerating rebuilding efforts following Hurricane Melissa, which caused an estimated US\$9.9 billion in damage and 45 deaths. The legislation was approved on April 29th after more than eight hours of debate, with the government securing 31 votes to the opposition's 15.

The debate was marked by tension, including the suspension of opposition legislator Dr. Angela Brown-Burke for "unparliamentary behavior." Opposition members attempted to delay the bill, raising concerns that it grants excessive powers to the government without sufficient oversight.

The government has defended the measure as necessary to fast-track recovery and improve coordination, citing international models such as New Zealand's post-earthquake rebuilding framework. Amendments were

introduced requiring stakeholder consultations and regular reporting to Parliament.

Despite criticism from civil society groups calling for stronger safeguards, the bill now moves to the Senate for further review as Jamaica continues its post-hurricane recovery efforts.

BARBADOS

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley and Venezuela's acting head of state Delcy Rodríguez have agreed to deepen bilateral relations following talks in the Barbadian capital last week.

The discussions focused on expanding cooperation in key areas, including energy, agriculture, education, and tourism, with both leaders outlining plans to boost trade and regional collaboration.

Rodríguez said the countries are exploring joint food production initiatives that could position Barbados as a regional hub for exports to the Caribbean and beyond. The leaders also discussed strengthening commercial ties to allow both nations to trade goods more directly.

Energy cooperation was another major focus, with Venezuela inviting Barbados to invest in its oil and gas sector and explore opportunities in renewable energy, including solar panel production.

In education, both countries are considering language exchange programs to expand Spanish learning in Barbados and English-language training opportunities in Venezuela. Tourism also featured prominently, with discussions on increasing flights, creating joint travel packages, and establishing maritime links to improve the movement of people and goods.

THE BAHAMAS

Bahamians will head to the polls on May 12th, following the announcement of an early general election by Prime Minister Philip Davis.

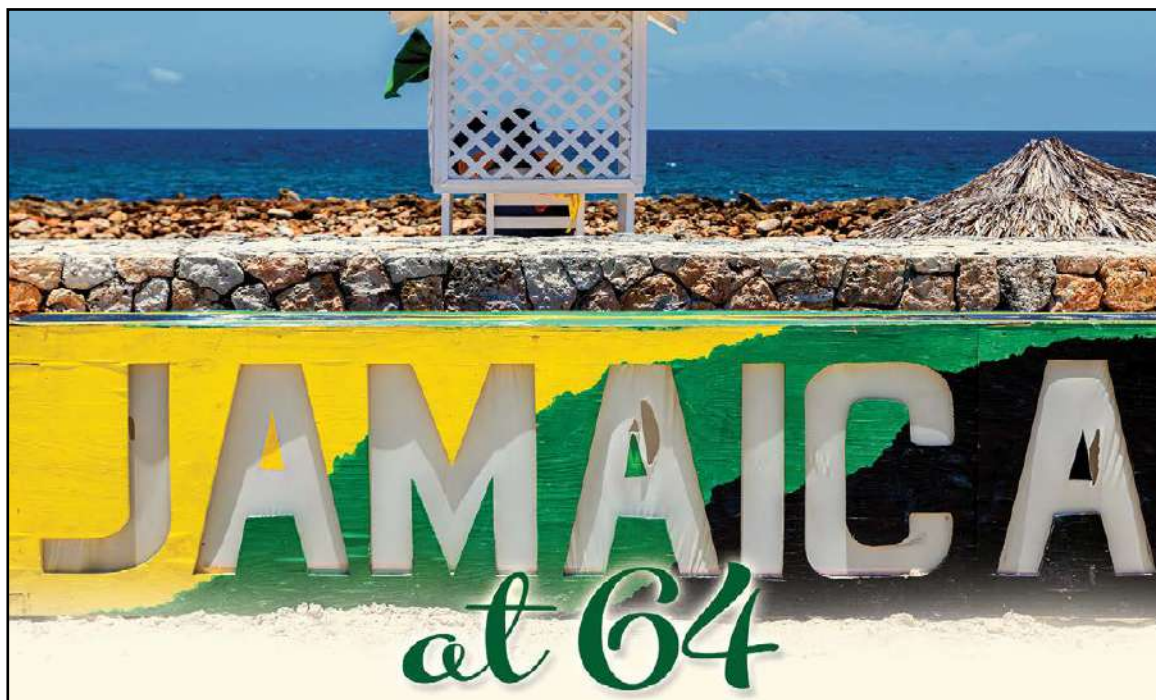
The election, originally not due until October, comes as the country grapples with rising cost-of-living pressures. On the same day as the announcement, the government moved to ease financial strain by removing value-added tax (VAT) on unprepared grocery items.

"As we move through this election season, I ask every Bahamian to remember one simple truth: wherever we may fall politically, we all love this country," Davis said in a statement.

The upcoming vote is expected to be primarily contested between Davis' ruling Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) and the opposition Free National Movement (FNM). However, the Coalition of Independents is also expected to participate.

The PLP came to power in September 2021 after defeating the FNM. Historically, Bahamian elections have been dominated by the two major parties, with no prime minister elected from a third party since independence.

- Rewritten from CMC News, Reuters and 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

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

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Will SCOTUS Leave Haitian Immigrants In Limbo?

BY CT TODAY Staff Writer

The future of hundreds of thousands of Haitian immigrants in the United States now hangs in the balance as the U.S. Supreme Court weighs a decision that could determine whether Temporary Protected Status (TPS) protections can be ended without judicial review.

At the center of the case are roughly 350,000 Haitians who have been living and working legally in the U.S. under TPS, a humanitarian program first granted after Haiti's devastating 2010 earthquake.

During arguments last Wednesday, several conservative justices signaled support for the Trump administration's position that federal courts may not have the authority to review decisions to terminate TPS. If upheld, the ruling could limit legal challenges not only for Haitians, but for more than one million immigrants currently protected under the program.

Outside the courthouse, immigrants and advocates gathered in protest, calling on the justices to protect families who have built their lives in the United States over the past decade.



Advocates rally to keep TPS. (Haitian Bridge Alliance image)

"We are here because we know what is at stake," Viles Dorsainvil, a Haitian TPS holder and community advocate, was quoted by Haitian Bridge Alliance as saying. "The question before the court is not only legal, but moral."

Inside the courtroom, debate centered heavily on procedural issues - specifically, whether courts can review how the government makes TPS decisions. That focus raised concerns among advocates that broader humanitarian issues may take a backseat to legal technicalities.

Liberal justices also pressed

government attorneys on past statements by former President Donald Trump about Haiti, questioning whether racial bias may have influenced the decision to end protections.

The stakes are especially high given current conditions in Haiti. Ongoing gang violence, political instability, and economic collapse have left large portions of the country unsafe, with U.S. officials maintaining a Level 4 "Do Not Travel" advisory.

For many TPS holders, the consequences are deeply personal. Some, like medical professionals, students, and long-

time residents, have built careers and families in the U.S. Others fear they will face violence or lack access to basic healthcare if forced to return.

Advocates warn that ending TPS could result in mass deportations and disrupt communities across the country, particularly in states like Florida with large Haitian populations. The Supreme Court's decision, expected by June, could reshape not only immigration policy but also the limits of executive power - determining whether humanitarian protection can be ended without meaningful oversight.

For now, thousands remain in limbo, waiting to learn whether the country they have called home for years will allow them to stay.

FOR NOW

Haitian Bridge Alliance advises that all TPS status protections remain in effect. "Haitian TPS holders should know that if they are stopped in the street by ICE, they have protected status still!" the group said on its website. "Employers should know their Haitian TPS holders are STILL authorized to work."



U.S. Military Anti-Drug Operations Death Toll Now At 186

A U.S. military campaign targeting suspected drug-trafficking vessels in Caribbean and Latin American waters continues, with at least 186 people killed since September 2025.

The operation, known as Operation Southern Spear, involves airstrikes on so-called "narco-boats" in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean. U.S. Southern Command says the strikes are aimed at disrupting drug smuggling routes into the United States.

The latest reported incident occurred in late April, when a military strike on a vessel in the eastern Pacific killed three people. U.S. officials have defended the campaign, with President Donald Trump

describing it as part of an "armed conflict" with drug cartels and a necessary escalation to combat narcotics trafficking.

However, critics have raised concerns about the legality of the strikes and the lack of publicly presented evidence confirming that targeted vessels were carrying drugs. Human rights advocates warn the operations may amount to extrajudicial killings.

Legal challenges are also emerging. Families of two Trinidadian men killed in a strike have filed a federal lawsuit in the United States, alleging wrongful death.

The campaign continues amid an increased U.S. military presence in the region



U.S., OAS Congratulate Antigua & Barbuda PM On Landslide Election Victory



Prime Minister Gaston Browne taking the oath of office for a fourth term on May 1, 2026. (CMC screengrab)

The United States and the Organization of American States (OAS), have congratulated Prime Minister Gaston Browne on his reelection following a decisive victory in Antigua and Barbuda's general elections.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington looks forward to continued collaboration with Browne's government, particularly on regional security, countering illegal immigration, and tackling transnational crime and illicit trafficking.

Browne's decision to call early elections paid off, with his Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP), securing 15 of the 17 seats in Parliament - an improvement on its narrow 9-7 win in 2023.

Preliminary results from the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission show that opposition leader Jamale Pringle was the only United Progressive Party (UPP), candidate to retain a seat. On Barbuda, Trevor Walker of the Barbuda People's Movement held his seat.

An OAS Electoral Observation Mission praised the elections as transparent and orderly, commending voters, officials, and security personnel for their role in the process. In his victory address, Browne pledged inclusive development, emphasizing opportunities in education, jobs, and business.

"We are here to serve all the people of Antigua and Barbuda," he said.

Pringle, conceding defeat,

thanked supporters and said the party would regroup.

- Rewritten from CMC



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GoFundMe For Slain Coral Springs Vice Mayor Nears \$50K As Husband Pleads Not Guilty

A GoFundMe established in honor of slain Haitian-American Coral Springs Vice Mayor Nancy Metayer Bowen has raised nearly \$50,000 toward its \$250,000 goal, as family, friends, and the wider community continue to mourn her loss.

The Nancy Metayer Endowment Fund was launched on April 8th by her sister, Jennifer Metayer-Smith, to support the family and preserve her legacy. Just days later, on April 17th, hundreds gathered at Church by the Glades for a public viewing and celebration of life, remembering the 38-year-old leader for her compassion, energy, and dedication to service.

Metayer Bowen, the first Black and Haitian-American woman elected to the Coral Springs City Commission, was widely described as “the heart of the commission” and a leader who made people feel seen and included.

A graduate of Florida A&M University and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, she built a career in public service and was preparing to launch a congressional bid when she died.

House lawmakers honored Metayer Bowen on April 28th during a brief floor session, holding a roughly 20-second moment of silence after brief remarks on her accomplishments and legacy.

Speaker Pro Tempore, Wyman Duggan of Jacksonville, delivered the remarks before members marked their attendance.

“Earlier this month, we tragically lost Coral Springs Vice Mayor Nancy Metayer Bowen. Elected in 2020 at just 32 years old, she quickly became a respected leader and dedicated public servant in her community. As an environmental scientist, she championed environmental and public health initiatives.



The Nancy Metayer Endowment Fund was launched on April 8th by her sister, Jennifer Metayer-Smith, to support the family and preserve her legacy. (GoFundMe image)

Broward County Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale on Tuesday. His attorneys have submitted a written not guilty plea after Bowen was indicted on a first-degree murder charge in the death of his wife. He’s being represented by Glenn Roderman and Philip Johnston of Roderman & Johnston after the public defender’s office asked to recuse itself on the basis of some of the attorneys’ relationships with the vice mayor.

The indictment shows a grand jury has charged Bowen with first-degree premeditated pmmurder with a firearm and tampering with evidence, namely a firearm and a cell phone. The indictment was entered in court records on April 22nd.

After reaching Bowen’s attorney by phone from the courtroom, Judge Ernest A. Kollra scheduled a status hearing for May 28.

Meanwhile, Coral Springs officials planted a tree in her memory. It bears a plaque with her name and a phrase repeated at her memorials: “Be like Nancy.”

U.S. Rep. Jared Moskowitz has also filed legislation to rename a local post office after her.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



More importantly, she was deeply devoted to her family and friends,” he said. “She was a friend to many in this House, and her legacy will never be forgotten. On behalf of Reps. (Christine) Hunschofsky and (Anna) Eskamani, I ask for a moment of silence for Nancy Metayer Bowen. Members, please join

me in a moment of silence.”

Her death has also reignited calls for stronger domestic violence protections. Authorities have charged her husband, Stephen Bowen, with premeditated murder and he remains in custody without bond.

Bowen, 40, appeared in court without his attorneys at the

Dominica Revokes ‘Golden Passport’ Of Iranian After Sanctions Probe

Dominica has revoked the citizenship of an Iranian national linked to a widening international sanctions probe, in a move that underscores growing scrutiny of the Caribbean’s Citizenship by Investment (CBI) programs.

The decision follows an investigation by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), which found that Abolfazl Shamkhani and his brother, sanctioned oil trader Hossein Shamkhani, used Dominican-issued identities to quietly build a luxury real estate portfolio in Dubai valued at approximately \$29 million.

According to documents obtained by OCCRP, Dominica revoked Abolfazl Shamkhani’s citizenship, which had been granted under the name “Sami Hayek,” citing the concealment of key information during the application process. Officials said Shamkhani failed to disclose his connection to his father, Ali Shamkhani, a senior Iranian political figure, when applying for citizenship in 2020.

The revocation letter also cited actions deemed incompatible with loyalty to Dominica, and gave Shamkhani 25 days to request a formal review of the decision. The move mirrors a similar action taken in 2025 against his brother, Hossein Shamkhani, who has been sanctioned by the United States, European Union, and United Kingdom for his alleged role in a large-scale oil smuggling network tied to Iran and Russia.

Authorities allege that the network used offshore companies, global shipping operations, and foreign passports to evade sanctions and move funds across borders.

U.S. officials have further claimed that the Shamkhani network funneled millions into international real estate holdings and shell companies to conceal the origins of its wealth. While Abolfazl Shamkhani has not been criminally charged, U.S. prosecutors have linked him to companies associated with the broader network and are currently pursuing the seizure

of millions in assets connected to those operations.

The case is also drawing renewed attention to the use of Caribbean citizenship programs by high-net-worth individuals seeking global mobility, and the risks of such programs being exploited.

In response, Dominica has begun tightening its CBI program, including restricting new applications from Iranian nationals unless strict residency and financial disclosure conditions are met. The government says the changes are aimed at protecting the integrity of the program and ensuring compliance with international standards.

The developments highlight the increasing pressure on Caribbean nations to strengthen due diligence frameworks, as global scrutiny intensifies around the intersection of citizenship programs, financial networks, and geopolitical risk.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



Sheriff Gregory Tony, Ph.D.
sheriff.org

Beat the Heat with BSO

South Florida summers are full of fun in the sun! The Broward Sheriff’s Office (BSO) reminds parents and caregivers to take a few simple steps to keep kids safe all season long:

- Never leave a child alone in a vehicle, even for a brief period.
- Always supervise children around all water, including bathtubs, buckets, kiddie pools and pools. Children can drown in as little as two inches of water.
- Make hydration a priority. Keep water easily accessible and encourage children to drink frequently, especially during outdoor play and high heat.
- Schedule activities during cooler hours and provide shade to help prevent heat-related illness.
- Enroll children in swim programs to build confidence and essential water safety skills.
- Take advantage of FREE car seat checks and workshops.
- Teach children to rest, cool down and speak-up if they feel dizzy, over-heated or unwell.

Scan to learn more summer safety tips and resources from BSO.

Sheriff Dr. Gregory Tony

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SHOP TALK WITH THE SHERIFF PODCAST

Bob Marley Family Sues Cannabis Company Tilray For \$11m In Royalties

The family of reggae icon Bob Marley has launched a high-stakes legal battle against a major global cannabis company, accusing it of failing to pay millions owed under a licensing deal tied to the Marley name.

The lawsuit, filed in Delaware by Marley Green LLC, targets Tilray Brands Inc. and its affiliates, alleging the company owes more than \$11 million in unpaid royalties connected to the Marley Natural cannabis brand. The case underscores growing tensions between legacy-driven cultural brands and multinational corporations operating in the booming legal cannabis industry.

According to court filings, the dispute stems from a partnership dating back to 2014, when the Marley family teamed up with Privateer Holdings to launch Marley Natural. The brand was positioned as the world's first

global cannabis label rooted in the values, lifestyle, and legacy of Bob Marley, whose name remains one of the most powerful cultural symbols associated with marijuana worldwide.

However, the relationship took a turn following Tilray's 2019 acquisition of Privateer Holdings. Marley Green LLC alleges that, after the takeover, Tilray engaged in what it describes as a "scheme to defraud" by restructuring its corporate entities to shift financial responsibility for royalty payments to a subsidiary that lacked sufficient funds.

The lawsuit claims this move effectively shielded Tilray from meeting its contractual obligations, resulting in an unpaid balance that grew to nearly \$13 million by 2023. While the Marley estate recovered approximately \$1.7 million from a subsidiary, it is now seeking to recover

the remaining balance through legal action.

Central to the case is the accusation that Tilray deliberately transferred liabilities to what the Marley estate describes as an "empty" entity, thereby breaching the licensing agreement. The estate ultimately terminated the deal after repeated failures to receive the required minimum royalty payments.

TILRAY

Tilray, for its part, has argued that its primary business entities are not directly bound by the original agreement following its corporate restructuring. That defense is now being challenged in court, where the Marley estate contends that the restructuring was carried out in bad faith specifically to avoid payment. The case is not just a financial dispute - it also highlights broader issues about control, ownership,

and the commercialization of cultural legacy. Under the leadership of Cedella Marley, the Marley estate has carefully managed an expansive global brand portfolio that includes music, lifestyle products, and cannabis-related ventures.

Cedella Marley has previously demonstrated a willingness to aggressively defend the family's intellectual property. The estate has secured legal victories in past disputes, including trademark infringement cases and conflicts involving Marley-branded consumer goods.

Industry observers say the outcome of the lawsuit could have significant implications for how legacy brands, particularly those rooted in Caribbean culture, engage with large corporate partners in emerging industries like cannabis.

The legal battle also comes at a time of increased scrutiny within the

cannabis sector, where rapid expansion, mergers, and corporate restructuring have created complex financial arrangements. For companies leveraging globally recognized cultural icons, the stakes are especially high.

For the Marley family, the case represents more than a fight over unpaid royalties. It is a broader effort to protect the integrity and value of a legacy that has become synonymous with both music and cannabis culture.

As the case moves forward, it is expected to draw close attention not only from the business community but also from fans and observers across the Caribbean and Black diaspora, where Bob Marley's influence remains deeply rooted.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



The advertisement features a pair of hands holding a Florida Lottery ticket. The ticket is orange and white with the text "EVERY GAME GIVES BACK" in large, bold, black letters. Below that, it says "BILLIONS TO EDUCATION". At the bottom of the ticket, there is a barcode and the number "1915-018152963-247640". The background is a light blue gradient with a graduation cap and confetti. In the top right corner, there is the Florida Lottery logo, which includes a pink and red bird, and the slogan "it's good fun".

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Salute To Educators: Johnson And Jackson Win M-DCPS Top Honors, Principal Of The Year, And Assistant Principal Of The Year

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

Two Black educators won Miami-Dade County Public Schools' 2026 Principal of the Year and Assistant Principal of the Year awards, as they were recognized by their peers for elevating education for students and teachers.

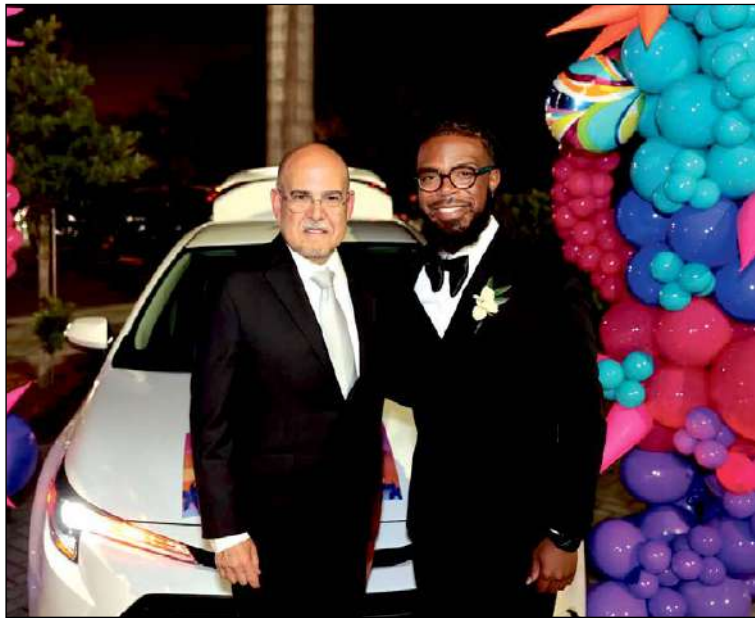
In 2020, Lamar Johnson won the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Assistant Principal of the Year while working at Jesse J. McCrary Jr. Elementary School in Miami.

Five years later, he claimed the top administrator prize.

Johnson, a Principal at Liberty City Elementary School, was recently named 2026 Principal of the Year during a ceremony held at the DoubleTree by Hilton.

On the same night, Dr. Andre Jackson of Miami Jackson Senior High School won the top honor of Assistant Principal of the Year.

The two were praised for uplifting and empowering students and teachers at their respective schools, who demonstrated stellar performances in the classrooms.



Miami Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Jose L. Dotres, I., and De Andre Jackson. (Contributed Image)

Maintaining a good GPA and students scoring highly on tests, among other achievements, were among the goals Johnson and Jackson sought as the school's top administrators.

They said teachers made it possible by leading by example. "Liberty City Elementary's success is built on empowered teachers who lead boldly,

collaborate effectively, and drive results," said Johnson. "By cultivating a culture where educators are developed, supported, and trusted as leaders, we have created a school where students thrive."

Johnson, an 18-year veteran of M-DCPS, began his career as a teacher at Poinciana Park Elementary School, as a mathematics instructional coach,

and as an assistant principal at Jesse J. McCrary Jr. Elementary School for seven years, where he won Assistant Principal of the Year in 2020.

Since becoming Liberty City Elementary School's principal five years ago, he has led a turnaround, taking the school from a "C" rating to an "A" rating. Math proficiency rose from 28 percent to 72 percent, and Language Arts from 32 percent to 48 percent.

Johnson credits strengthening relationships between teachers and students and making sure they have the important tools to thrive for his school's achievements.

Johnson also expanded academic programs, including Head Start, gifted programs, chess, and Miami SCORES, which combine sports with literacy through poetry.

He launched the Lion Bucks Program, a school-wide incentive system in which students earn Lion Bucks for academic progress, strong attendance, and positive behavior, and then redeem them for books, supplies, snacks, and privileges.

Rather than relying on a punitive approach, the program shifts the focus to celebrating growth and positive decision-making. The result was profound: passage rates rose, and discipline referrals declined, culminating in the school's first "A" rating since 2009.

At the heart of Johnson's philosophy and his results is a belief that leadership is shared, growth is continuous, and every teacher feels a sense of ownership of student success. But at the end of the day, he feels that his crowning achievement is the change he has seen in the school and the impact that it has had on the community's sense of pride.

JACKSON

Jackson's career spans 12 years, including a stint with the Chicago Public Schools system. He joined M-DCPS in 2018 as a 10th grade reading instructor and literacy coach at Miami Central Senior High School in Miami. Jackson became the assistant principal six years later.

Like Johnson, he also credits teachers for turning around a school that was once synonymous with an "F" rating, becoming among the top-performing high schools in South Florida.

"I truly believe that teachers determine the trajectory of a student's life," said Jackson. "My biggest investment has been building teacher capacity because it impacts the school

community at large as well as our students. A quality teacher equates to a better society, a better future for our students."

When he moved to Miami Jackson High School in 2022 to become the Assistant Principal, Jackson made an immediate impact on the student and teacher populations, offering an effective plan to bring academics to its highest level.

During his tenure, Jackson went from a "C" to a "B" school, missing his mark for an "A" grade by just a few points. The school's graduation rate increased from 80 to 96 percent.

He identified several issues that were causing students to lag, including stagnation in credit-recovery classes that prevented them from earning an "A" grade. Johnson met with students and parents in person and created a monitoring system and solutions to help students overcome the challenge.

When his principal put him in charge of the "Attendance Wars" initiative, Jackson sprang into action.

Every day, the grade level with the highest attendance percentage was celebrated with spirited announcements, creating a friendly and fun competition. Ninth-grade students greeted students with drums and cheers; tenth graders sported class T-shirts; eleventh graders rolled out a literal red carpet with a giant banner; and seniors played music and handed out snacks as students arrived in the morning. There was even an "Attendance Wars" rap over the PA system.

Jackson's hard work paid off when Miami Jackson won "Most Improved Attendance" for that grading period.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Jose L. Dotres praised both Jackson and Johnson for their leadership.

Dr. Jackson is the kind of leader who truly puts students first every day, ensuring everyone who walks through the doors has the support they need to succeed. We are so lucky to have him, Dotres said.

Jorge M. Bulnes from Southwest Miami Senior High School won Principal of the Year runner-up, and Karen Gonzalez Delgado from Miami Norland Senior High School won Assistant Principal of the Year runner-up.

The principal of the year winner will receive a three-year car lease from Headquarters Toyota, and the assistant principal of the year will receive a five-day cruise from Royal Caribbean. The runners-up will receive a cash prize.



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Well Into Your Future

Congressional Democratic Candidates Call For Gov. Desantis To Call Special Election To Replace Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

A Florida Congressional candidate has threatened to file a lawsuit to force Republican Governor Ron DeSantis to call a special election to replace former U.S. Rep. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick.

Cherfilus-McCormick, the first Haitian American lawmaker from Florida, resigned from Congress on April 21st ahead of a possible expulsion vote and amid an investigation that found she committed 25 violations of House rules and ethics standards.

Community activist Elijah Manley, who filed paperwork to run in the Congressional District 20 race, said he plans to seek legal action for a special election during the summer as Cherfilus-McCormick's resignation leaves constituents without representation until November's election.

Her replacement and whoever wins the race will be sworn into political office until January 2027. Congressional District 20 covers portions of Broward and Palm Beach counties, a Democratic stronghold.

"I am calling on Governor Ron DeSantis to move quickly and set up a Special Election, so the families of this district have representation during this critical period," Manley said in a statement. "Every day without a representative is another day working people in South Florida are pushed aside."

As of April 27, 2026, DeSantis has yet to call a special election despite growing calls from Democratic Primary challengers who say it's crucial that the seat be filled before Congress recesses in August.

Reports suggest DeSantis might not call a special election because of his push for redistricting during a special session last month, which targets Congressional District 20 and seats represented by Broward County Democrats, U.S. Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Jared Moskowitz.

In addition, keeping the seat vacant would give Republicans an advantage in the House until the election.

Democrats Luther Campbell, Dale Holness, doctor/attorney Rudolph Moise, Maisha Williams Mark Douglas had also filed paperwork to challenge Cherfilus-McCormick in the Primary before she resigned.

The Jamaican former Broward County Commissioner, Holness, is also calling for a special election, despite it being a slim chance, since it's closer to the Primary election in August.

"The state usually doesn't when they're so close to a regular election, but if we were to be fair, we would have a special election now and then follow up with the General Election," he said.

Holness said if the governor appoints someone instead, it should be him. "I have had the experience of serving the people of South Florida in an elected

role, and as a community leader, so I know what policies are critical to our people," he stated. "We must grow our economy and have high-paying jobs. We must invest in education."

Holness, a former Broward County mayor, lost to Cherfilus-McCormick in a special election by just five votes in 2021 to replace Alcee Hastings, who died of pancreatic cancer.

Broward Supervisor of Elections Joe Scott told the Orlando Sentinel that a special primary and general election could be held quickly, and a replacement could be on the job in Washington in just a few months.

Scott said he was preparing a letter to state officials outlining a timetable for a special primary election, and then a special general election to be held on Aug. 18th, the date Florida is scheduled to hold primary elections for state and federal offices, including Congress.

Under his timetable, he said a member of Congress could take office shortly after that voting. "I don't think it's appropriate for a congressional district to go without representation. This district has already done without adequate representation for a bit now," Scott was quoted as saying.

Cherfilus-McCormick resigned from Congress just hours before a House committee was scheduled to hand down sanctions, possibly including expulsion. The Committee in March found that she committed

25 violations of House rules and ethics standards, including campaign-finance violations.

At the center of the investigation was Cherfilus-McCormick, who allegedly stole \$5 million in federal COVID-19 disaster relief funds for her family's healthcare company and funneled some of the money to fund her campaign. She was also accused of purchasing a diamond carat ring worth \$100,000.

Cherfilus-McCormick is awaiting trial on 15 federal counts related to the alleged theft, including conspiracy to steal funds that were mistakenly overpaid to her family's Trinity Healthcare Services during the pandemic. She has pleaded not guilty, and her trial was pushed back to 2027 after a federal judge approved her attorneys' request.

If convicted, she faces over 50 years in prison.

Holness has said the federal disaster money that Cherfilus-McCormick funneled into her campaign was the difference-maker in the special election.

"It is really painful to think that if we had equal opportunity to raise funds and to campaign without that extra money. The outcome, I believe, would have certainly been different," he said. "Five votes with millions of dollars on the other side, and me calling every friend and every person I know to raise some money and put in some of my own money that I earned, I think I put \$50,000 in that time. I raised \$530,000. We thought we were

doing pretty good. And then I saw money being spent in every which way, wondering where that money came from."

The race this year is wide open now that the incumbent is off the ballot.

Campbell, the frontman for rap group Two Live Crew, said Cherfilus McCormick's House ethics violations and subsequent resignation is a dark day for Congressional District 20 constituents.

He's said he's seeking to fill the void and tackle the issues left abandoned.

"Hundreds of workers losing their jobs while families are already struggling is unacceptable," he shared on social media. "But let's be real - this didn't just happen. This is the result of bad leadership and a system designed to fail our public schools."

Manley, who attended Cherfilus-McCormick's House committee hearing in March, said Broward County is in turmoil and needs an overhaul.

"We're going to clean up Broward County too, because it is a mess," he said on social media. "Bluest county in the state and zero infrastructure. I walk into rooms and stare at the same five 70-year-olds time after time. The days of mediocre Democratic politics here are numbered."

Other candidates in the race are Republicans Sendra Dorce and Joseph Rodenay, independent Kedner Maxime, and write-in candidate Kevin McClellan.



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The Mocha Mermaid's Mission To Save The Ocean

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

Lovingly known as the 'Mocha Mermaid,' Danni Washington has had an intense love affair with the ocean, all marine life, and the health of planet Earth since she was a child.

Today, the Miami native is sharing her passion through education, creative events and activities, and hosting television programs. Crediting her parents for her introduction to the ocean's natural wonders, Washington recently told Caribbean Today about her beginnings.

"Having a Jamaican mother and American father, we frequented the beach a lot," said an animated Washington. "They took me to the beach from when I was an infant, and all throughout my childhood. Being able to get in the water, see the wildlife, and explore a place that I found so amazing really helped me grow that passion."

Different Approach

As a child of the pre-Internet 90s, she would 'devour' books about the ocean, which led to her admittance in Broward High School's Marine Science magnet program. She would go on to study Marine Science at the University of Miami, where she worked with many scientists, including those researching sharks, marine mammals, and coral reefs. But after graduation, the Marine Scientist took a different approach to spreading her knowledge.

"Instead of going the route I thought I would go, which would be a traditional science field researcher, publishing

papers, and academia, I made a quick left turn and decided to go into communications and to figure out how I can use different platforms that were available to me to communicate the importance of the ocean?," Washington explained. "And so that's where the ideas sprang up



Danni Washington is the first African American woman to host her own science television series on an American network. (Contributed image)

about becoming a TV host, which was solely based on the host that I knew as a child on PBS television, Lamar Burton."

"I realized at that point that there were really only a few women that I could look up to in that space," the Ocean Advocate remarked. "So, I wanted to shake up things and figure out a new path for myself, and that really became my North Star."

Indeed, the science communicator is the first African American woman to host her own science television series on an American network. The show, 'Xploration Nature Knows Best,' ran on Fox and Amazon Prime, focusing on the many ways scientists work with the

natural world to create innovative solutions for the planet. She was also featured as a correspondent on the syndicated CBS series 'Mission Unstoppable.'

Washington has also worked on other STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) productions - 'Science the S#!* Out of It' for Facebook Watch; The Science Channel's 'Strange Evidence'; 'Untamed Science' for Pearson Publishing. She currently hosts The 'Genius Generation,' a



The 'Mocha Mermaid' - Danni Washington. (Contributed image)

podcast celebrating young people making scientific discoveries and inventions.

Big Blue & You

As part of her commitment to shape a cleaner future, Washington co-founded 'Big Blue & You' in 2008 with her mother, Michelle Swaby-Smith, who serves as executive director. The non-profit organization underscores Washington's passion, activism, and purpose to make science accessible to

youth and particularly young people of color and underserved communities.

Using the "power of art, science, and media," the organization empowers the next generation through events and activities that focus on caring for our oceans and natural environment.

'Art By The Sea' is one example. A free-to-the-public event, it took place this past March in Miami Beach by the ocean, bringing together artists, scientists, educators, performers, community groups, and thousands of children. Art projects, science and environmental learning, live music, and unique experiences created awareness and scientific discovery to help build curiosity and passion for the marine environment. The event provides a platform for young people to see the possibility that they can inspire positive change for the planet.

As a daughter of the Caribbean, Washington noted that people from island nations are on the front lines of these problems due to environmental injustice. Our islands have been placed in positions where we have to deal with pollution, rising sea levels, and insufficient food, she stressed.

The public speaker/TV presenter reaches out to audiences at all levels, from all educational backgrounds, and of all ages. That's why her focus is to break down the science into bite-sized pieces for all to

understand, but importantly, not to dumb it down. She explained that she has worked with brilliant scientists involved in cutting-edge research, and her goal is to make it accessible to all.

"I feel inspired when I know that there are great people who really have some cool ideas that are worth sharing," said Washington. "But it's going to take many different talents for us to get where we need to go. That's why I encourage so many people, despite the noise and despite the chaos of our current communication on different devices and platforms, to be clear in your messaging."

"It's very easy to just fall into a place of despair, but we have to dig deep and figure out what's next and start to ideate what our future looks like..." added a hopeful Washington. "But as challenging as what we are facing is, I really believe in the resilience of nature, and that nature can heal itself if we can give it time and space to do so. Nature will always win."



Annika Ashton Is The First Black Woman And Jamaican Broward County Attorney

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

Deputy Broward County attorney Annika E. Ashton has made history. Ashton is the new Broward County Attorney, becoming the first Black woman and Jamaican American to hold the role, overcoming racial and gender barriers to serve as the county's chief legal advisor.

Ashton's new role will become effective on September 10, 2026. The Broward County Commission unanimously appointed her last month to replace the retiring Andrew Meyers.

The Coral Springs resident thanked the commission and the Broward County legal department for their support. "I'm very excited to work with a really great office of people and have the support of the Broward County Commission," Ashton said.

Broward County Commissioner Nan Rich called Ashton "the most qualified person to lead the County Attorney's Office," noting the

county attorney position is one of only three the board is responsible for appointing

Ashton has worked for Broward County since 2014, starting as an assistant county attorney, rising to senior assistant county attorney, and becoming a deputy county attorney in 2019.

Ashton's county work has included litigating federal court cases, drafting ordinances, and contributing to the \$1 billion expansion of the Broward County Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale.

She previously did private practice in New York and Miami. Ashton was born in Spanish Town, Jamaica, and raised with deep family roots in Clarendon, particularly Palmer Cross.

She migrated to the U.S., graduated from Ft Lauderdale Boyd Anderson High School, earned her bachelor's degree from Princeton University, and law degree from Columbia Law School. She clerked for the Hon. Adalberto Jordan on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida and



Jamaican Annika Ashton's new role will become effective on September 10, 2026. The Broward County Commission unanimously appointed her last month to replace the retiring Andrew Meyers. (Contributed image)

the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. She is also a Past President of the Caribbean Bar Association.

Ashton credits her Jamaican upbringing for a stellar legal career. She said women's leadership in Jamaica helped her thrive, studying successful women in business and public service, as well as community figures like Cathy Levy, founder

of the iconic Little People and Teen Players Club, who has been a stalwart of youth arts education in Jamaica for decades.

These early influences, along with the cultural ethos of resilience captured in the popular Jamaican refrain: 'Wi likkle but wi tallawah,' she notes, helped shape her ambition and belief that she could make a meaningful impact on the world around her.

As the new chief attorney for Broward County, Ashton will provide legal counsel to commissioners and administrators, represent the county in litigation, draft legal documents, including ordinances and government contracts, and oversee zoning matters.

Ashton will also advise commissioners on legal aspects of county projects, developments, and public services, including environmental, transportation, and consumer protection issues in Broward County.



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Undocumented Immigrants Paid Trillions In Taxes And America Still Calls Them A Burden

At a time when undocumented immigrants are being targeted, detained, and deported across the United States, one fact is rarely part of the conversation: they have paid an estimated \$3 trillion in taxes over the last 30 years.

Let that sink in. Three trillion dollars - contributed by people who, in many cases, are denied the very benefits those taxes help fund, according to the Cato Institute.



FELICIA J. PERSAUD

This is not speculation. It is based on data showing that undocumented immigrants, despite lacking legal status, are deeply embedded in the U.S. tax system. Many work under borrowed identification or tax ID numbers passed off as Social Security numbers, allowing employers to withhold payroll taxes. Others pay sales taxes, property taxes through rent, and a range of indirect taxes that support federal, state, and local governments.

Researchers from Cato estimate that undocumented immigrants comply with income taxes at roughly 75 percent of the rate of the average taxpayer - often contributing without claiming refunds or accessing public benefits.

In other words, they are paying into a system that largely excludes them. And yet, the narrative persists. Undocumented immigrants are frequently portrayed as a drain, as people who take more than they give. But the numbers tell a very different story.

They are not outside the system; they are funding it. When you widen the lens beyond undocumented immigrants, the pattern becomes even clearer.

According to the same Cato Institute study, immigrants overall have contributed more in taxes per person than U.S.-born Americans over the past three decades. From 1994 to 2023, immigrants generated roughly \$100,000 more in taxes per capita - about 17 percent more than the average U.S.-born individual.

In 2023 alone, immigrants paid \$1.3 trillion in taxes while receiving approximately \$761 billion in benefits, resulting in a net fiscal surplus of more than half a trillion dollars.

That is not a burden; that is a net gain. The reason is straightforward: immigrants are more likely to be working. Even when they earn lower hourly wages, they tend to work more hours overall. That translates into higher total earnings per capita - and higher tax contributions.

Their presence in the workforce is not marginal. It is essential, and the impact does not stop there.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, immigration also increases the productivity of U.S.-born workers, boosting incomes and generating additional tax revenue. In fact, roughly one-third of the fiscal benefit from recent immigrants comes from these indirect effects.

Yet, even as these contributions continue, the policy direction is moving in the opposite direction. Restrictions on immigration and increased enforcement are projected to add hundreds of billions to federal deficits over the next decade - largely because fewer workers means less tax revenue.

That raises a simple but uncomfortable question: if undocumented immigrants are paying into the system - if immigrants overall are generating more revenue than

they consume - why does the narrative remain so disconnected from reality?

Why are those helping sustain the system still being framed as a burden? Because this is not just about economics. It is about perception; it is about who is seen as contributing - and who is not.

For decades, undocumented

immigrants have lived in that contradiction. Working, paying, contributing - all while being told they do not belong.

The data makes one thing clear: they were never outside the system.

The question now is whether America is willing to acknowledge the role they have been playing all along - or

continue to ignore the reality it has benefited from for decades.

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.



DID YOU KNOW?

Research on cannabis as a treatment for autism symptoms is still in its early stages. Some clinicians report potential benefits for symptoms like anxiety or irritability, while others caution that risks may outweigh benefits—making individualized, doctor-guided care essential.

SOURCE Florida A&M University Medical Marijuana Education and Research Initiative (FAMU MMERI)

Caveat Emptor

Recently, while at a dinner gathering, this lady got up and extolled the virtues of her husband for all to hear. She finished each sentence by saying, "I married well, I married well."

It was so heartwarming to hear a woman speak so glowingly of her husband, as so many women seem to be always cussing and chastising their husbands, privately or in public. She clearly is one whom men should marry.

But it goes even further



TONY ROBINSON

than that, for at times it's difficult to discern who is marriage material and who is not. Just like that lady, a man would love to say of his wife: "I married well." The fact is, though, men are often blinded by beauty, and as long as the woman is pretty, then he'll marry her.

The terms beautiful bride and arm candy come to mind, as many men are content to have a pretty woman on their arm as a wife, even though nothing else is happening in other areas.

But caveat emptor, the Greeks say - buyer beware - for there are many pitfalls and dangers that come with marrying the wrong person. The term 'unequally yoked' from

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

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VIEWPOINT



One Wallet Across The Caribbean: Rethinking Payments For Growth And Connection

BY DR. ISAAC NEWTON

Imagine stepping off a plane in Port of Spain, paying for a taxi with your Jamaican wallet, grabbing lunch in Barbados, and settling a hotel bill in Guyana, all instantly, securely, and in your own currency – one wallet. No delays, no conversions, no uncertainty. This is not a dream. Ghana has already made it real by transforming its national ID into a full-featured payment tool. Citizens can link bank accounts, send and receive money, and pay for goods through a single platform. It works alongside global networks such as Visa and Mastercard while providing a faster, simpler, and more affordable way to move money. Systems must serve the people who use them first and connect seamlessly to the wider world.

Other countries provide valuable lessons. In Nigeria, mobile transfers and instant bank payments make moving money fast and accessible for everyone. In India, the Unified Payments Interface allows anyone to send money instantly using a phone number or a QR code, whether paying a street vendor or a utility company.

In China, applications such as Alipay and WeChat Pay integrate payments into daily life, from ordering food to taking public transportation. These systems succeed because they prioritize the user experience, eliminate friction, and make transactions predictable and reliable.

The Caribbean faces a similar challenge. Countries including Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Barbados, Suriname, and the members of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union operate across multiple currencies and fragmented systems. Travel and trade are slowed by delays, inconsistent acceptance, and unnecessary complexity. Citizens and visitors face obstacles that make simple transactions frustrating and time-consuming.

The solution is a regional digital payments layer that works across local currencies. Citizens and visitors could pay anywhere in the Caribbean while the system converts automatically. Transactions would be immediate, transparent, and consistent, whether in Nassau, Castries, or Georgetown. The region could function as a single connected

marketplace while each country retains its own currency.

Achieving this requires three strategic steps. Governments must establish secure digital identity systems that authenticate users across borders. Central banks and regulators must build a real-time network connecting banks, mobile wallets, and fintech platforms. Global providers such as Visa and Mastercard should integrate as gateways for international transactions rather than as the foundation of the system. These steps create a structure that is robust, inclusive, and adaptable.

The impact would be profound. A vendor in Kingston

could receive payment from a visitor in Port of Spain instantly. A supplier in Bridgetown could receive funds from Georgetown without delay. Commerce, tourism, and daily transactions would become faster, simpler, and more reliable. The Caribbean could strengthen financial independence, expand inclusion, and operate efficiently within the global economy.

This is more than a payment system. It is a foundation for growth, opportunity, and trust. By designing solutions that serve local people first and connect to the world, the Caribbean can become a leader in digital finance while making life easier and more predictable

for every citizen and visitor.

Editor's Note: Dr. Isaac Newton is a leadership strategist and change management expert specializing in governance and ethical leadership. Educated at Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia, he is co-author of Steps to Good Governance and has advised boards, educators, and public leaders across the Caribbean and internationally, integrating policy, psychology, and ethics to strengthen institutional performance.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



Caveat Emptor

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

the Bible should not be scoffed at but taken seriously. As should the words from the song: 'Take time to know her son, take time to know her.'

It was also Shakespeare who penned: 'Marry in haste and repent at leisure.' So, before you even make a hasty decision, there are some indicators that should be heeded.

Firstly, don't marry a woman who wants you to be her retirement plan after she's played the field, partied hard, and been involved with a host of different men. A man should do his due diligence and find out about her past before he plans to marry her.

He should know by the heightened interest that she has in him, that her intentions are not in his best interest, but in hers. It borders on desperation. After all that running around, she now expects a man, older of course, to marry her and take care of her needs, wants, and whatever else, until death do they part.

Do not marry a woman who has too many children. Any man who marries a woman with multiple children had better be prepared for challenges to come. Of course, it's okay to marry a woman who has one child, as many of those unions work out beautifully, with that child bonding with and accepting the stepdad as its own father. That multiple children scenario often spells disaster.

He will pay through his nose, financially and emotionally, and sometimes be verbally abused by those children if he dares to reprimand them. Would you let your son marry a woman with four children for four different fathers?

Do not marry a woman who is older than you. The same



applies to marrying a woman who is too young, for that age difference can prove to be a huge problem. But somehow it seems much worse when a man marries a woman older than he is. The experts suggest an age difference of say three to seven years, with the man being older, of course.

But to marry a woman who is older is absolutely not recommended. After a while, she'll not only look like his mother but act like she is too. The French president Macron has been getting a hard time from the press and onlookers for marrying his former teacher.

In 1993, at the age of 39, she met the 15-year-old Emmanuel Macron at La Providence high school, where she taught, and he was a student and a classmate of her daughter. Do the math; it just doesn't add up.

Do not marry any ugly woman if her mother is ugly too, for it means that the ugly genes are consistent and your children will be ugly too. Of course, there are men whom women should not marry, but I have found that many women will accept almost any man if he has money. They will overlook the faults just to have a suitable high-end material lifestyle.

How often have we seen beautiful young women with old men who look like a bullfrog, and the remark always is: "He must have money."

But again, caveat emptor.

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



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Ernie Smith's Life Through Loving Eyes

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

We are all grieving the loss of Jamaica's legendary singer, songwriter, and musician Ernie Smith, who passed away on April 16, 2026, just two weeks shy of his 81st birthday.

But none more than his wife of four years, Claudette Bailey-Smith. Caribbean Today reached out to her recently to talk about her late husband's life, legacy, and their life together.

"I had a little carry-on packed for the hospital with all his stuff. I just opened it, and I'm looking at the pants and shirt that he wore to the hospital, his shoes, his belt, his cologne," Claudette Bailey-Smith, on the verge of tears, told Caribbean Today.

But somehow steeling herself, she added: "I'm not gonna cry, for we are here to celebrate his life."

The man, born Glenroy Anthony Michael Archangelo Smith, whose deep baritone was immediately recognizable and dominated the airwaves in the 60s and 70s with hits like 'Duppy Gunman,' 'Ride On Sammy,' 'Life Is Just For Living,' came into her life almost by chance.

The Spark

She met him on May 28, 2022, after he performed at Gulfstream Park in Hallandale Beach, Florida, with the late Pluto Shervington. His manager at the time, a close friend of Bailey-Smith, asked if the crooner could stay at her house rather than at a hotel. She agreed, and that was the spark that lit both their worlds.

"When he came, I showed him the bedroom that he would be staying in, and he put his bags down and came out. We sat on the couch in the living room for

a bit, and out of the blue he says to me: 'Will you marry me?' I said, 'No,'" said Bailey-Smith, smiling.

He sat at her piano that night and played and sang for her songs he released in the 1990s – 'Misread The Book,' and 'Let the Children Play,' music he wrote for Bob Marley's mother Cedella Booker. After this night, they both felt the unbreakable bond between them.

A clinical psychotherapist, Jamaican American Bailey-Smith has lived in the United States for more than 50 years but remains deeply connected to and travels to Jamaica regularly. A perfect situation for their relationship as they saw each other frequently.

"On the 5th of July 2022, I was in Jamaica for a week or two. He became ill; he had an epileptic seizure. So, I knew I couldn't leave," Bailey-Smith disclosed. "He eventually got well, and he did some shows, and then we returned to Miami... anywhere you saw one, you saw the other. We traveled together, and Glenroy Smith opened up his psyche to me and related things to me that he would not normally disclose to anybody else."

"He talked about his music, places he's been, some of his failures, his successes," said Bailey-Smith. "And he was always true to the music, and I was always there to support him. I was always there to encourage him."

Daily Prayer

The couple shared much in common, their taste in music and even childhood memories of school days in Jamaica. One Sunday morning, while sitting at the piano, he started playing lines from a prayer/hymn they both recited in school back in the day - 'Lead Us Heavenly Father



Claudette Bailey-Smith, r., & her late husband, Ernie Smith, in an undated photo. (Contributed Image)

Lead Us.' When they found the complete lyrics on Google, she recounted: "We both were crying like babies around the piano because it's like something we recaptured."

She recited the entire hymn that would become the couple's daily prayer. Bailey-Smith disclosed that her beloved was baptized last year at First Alliance International Church in Fort Lauderdale, a small congregation that would become their church home.

She noted that her husband was on a quest for Christ, adding that sometimes a person's quest is directly related to their suffering. He had times in his life when he was not satisfied with himself and his habits, but he overcame those, she said. But

when it came to his music, he was sure-footed.

Teachers

Bailey-Smith believes that life lessons are learned through the people put on our path.

"The universe sends you teachers. Glenroy Smith was my teacher," she disclosed. "This is why, even when I'm worried now, and I'm heavy with grief, I understand the bigger picture, because I believe that he came into my life at a time and at a season where I had to learn how to love somebody appropriately."

"I felt like I was commissioned to take care of this human being, and for me to maybe recover trust, to have a safe space where he did not have to apologize for how he felt

about certain things," she said. "He didn't have to belabor what happened in his past, and I was going to be supportive of him and his music."

One of seven siblings, Ernie Smith was a family man. Two of his five children, Ojay and Sahara, are singers/performers who would serve as backup singers from time to time. No doubt his music, his legacy, will live on through them.

When Ernie Smith got ill this last time, Bailey-Smith moved into the hospital to be by his side. On his last day in this life, he coded three times and had the courage to stay in the room, witnessing the furious chest compressions to revive his heart.

When that failed, "I just opened my mouth, and recited 'Lead Us Heavenly Father Lead Us,' with everything that I could give, and when I got to the last line, Dawn, that's when he surrendered, that's when he left," Bailey-Smith disclosed, tears flowing freely from her and the interviewer.

"I ran the race with this man. I followed through with what the universe, what God commissioned me to do, and I have no vacuum space in my psyche to have any regrets about who I chose and how I delivered the kind of affection to him that he was probably longing for," she added.

FUNERAL

The funeral service for the legendary Jamaican singer will be held on Saturday, May 16, 2026, at 11:00 AM EST at the Metropolitan Baptist Church, 7200 Davie Road Extension in Hollywood, Florida.



Caribbean-Roots Actors Star In Michael Jackson Movie

Caribbean-rooted actors have taken center stage in the Michael Jackson movie, Michael, bringing depth and cultural nuance to the story of one of music's most iconic families.

Award-winning actor Colman Domingo portrays Joe Jackson, the complex and often controversial patriarch of the Jackson family, while Nia Long takes on the role of Katherine Jackson, the matriarch whose quiet strength helped anchor the family through fame and pressure.

The film, which opened in theatres on Friday, April 24th, stars Jaafar Jackson, Michael Jackson's nephew, as his uncle. Juliano Krue Valdi, a 12-year-old actor and dancer, plays the young Michael. The movie traces the singer's rise from childhood in Gary, Indiana, to stardom with The Jackson 5 and on to solo



Caribbean roots actress Nia Long as Katherine Jackson in 'Michael.' (Lions Gate image)

global superstardom. The story focuses on the period from the 1960s through 1988, stopping before the later controversies that surrounded the artist.

In an interview with Black

Girl Nerds, Long, whose roots extend to Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Grenada, spoke about approaching the role of Katherine Jackson with empathy rather than judgment.

"I wouldn't say judgment," she explained. "I would definitely say empathy, and I would say that I have more in common with her than I ever thought I did."

Long said portraying Katherine required tapping into her own experiences as a mother, emphasizing the protective instinct that defines the role. "Once you're a mother and you're connected to the wellness of your family and the well-being of your children, there's an energy of protection that supersedes everything," she said. "That was her job, that was her mission, that was her heart."

She described Katherine Jackson as a steady, grounding force during the family's rise to global fame. "When you look at what the Jackson family had to manage, the level of stardom, there had to be a quiet force

leading the way," Long said. "That's what makes her such a beautiful woman."

Domingo, whose heritage traces back to Belize and Guatemala, also highlighted the importance of portraying Joe Jackson with complexity rather than in a one-dimensional light.

"We started by having great conversations about men that we know, that we're raised by, men of a certain generation," Domingo said, noting that Joe Jackson represented a generation shaped by responsibility, discipline, and survival.

He emphasized that the role required acknowledging both strength and vulnerability. "Sometimes people think that they're just hard in some ways, but we know their softness, we know their vulnerabilities," he

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT NEWS



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Reggae Giants Buju Banton And Stephen Marley Team Up For U.S. Summer Tour

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL
Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

Music fans in the United States have no shortage of tours to select from this summer. Several of them, including Chris Brown/Usher, Foreigner/Lynyrd Skynyrd and Buju Banton/Stephen Marley, are package deals.

The latter's 'Roots And Rhymes Summer Tour' is scheduled to start on June 17th in Redmond, Washington, with two shows. It's not often that two major reggae acts hit the road together.

Buju Banton and Stephen Marley are confirmed to do 23 shows in Washington, California, Colorado, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Michigan (Detroit), Wisconsin (Milwaukee), Indiana, Ohio (Cincinnati), Massachusetts (Boston), Connecticut (Hartford), New York, Virginia, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia.

Gramps Morgan will appear on 11 of the shows. Buju Banton and Marley share the bill with Ziggy Marley, J Boog, and Mike Love at Red Rocks Amphitheater in Morrison, Colorado, on June 24th.

Hip Hop, Pop, and Rock package tours are blockbuster affairs that attract thousands of fans and rake in millions of



Buju Banton's new tour comes as he dropped *Butterflies* last month on the VP Records label.

dollars for artists and promoters. However, that is not the case with reggae.

Veteran tour manager Copeland Forbes believes the last major reggae double bill was the Peter Tosh/Jimmy Cliff US/Canada trek in 1982. He hopes Buju Banton and Stephen Marley is the start of things to come.

"It's good for the music because it can start a trend. There are a lot of egos, and that is a big problem in reggae music," he said. "Although (promoter) Joe (Bogdanovich) is saying the (Vybz) Kartel and Movado thing at (Reggae) Sumfest is friendly, these things can get ugly."

Reggae Sumfest takes place

on July 18th at Plantation Cove in St. Ann's Parish, northeastern Jamaica. Co-headliners are Vybz Kartel and Movado, whose infamous Gaza/Gully feud sparked a national frenzy from 2006 to 2010.

This is the second US tour by Buju Banton since his release from prison in that country in December 2018. His Long Road to Freedom Tour of that country took place in 2024. Banton recently returned to VP Records with "Butterflies," produced by Supa Dups. It marks his first release under the partnership in two decades and offers a first look at a new album due this summer. The track premiered on April 10th.

"Buju has always been a defining voice in reggae, and his return to VP Records reinforces our shared commitment to continue inspiring our culture that resonates across the globe," said Christopher Chin, CEO of VP Records.

"I have been working with VP Records for over 30 years, and I will say it again... They Get It," Banton added. "Butterflies," produced by internationally acclaimed hitmaker Supa Dups (Rihanna, Drake, Bruno Mars), delivers a vibrant, feel-good sound anchored in a rich, tropical instrumental with an infectious rhythm.

Banton's unmistakable cadence glides effortlessly across the track, blending classic dancehall energy with a modern sonic edge. The single exemplifies a confident return, one that bridges legacy with evolution while reintroducing the essence of

dancehall to a new generation.

Stephen Marley is one of reggae's leading touring acts. He has a wide fan base throughout the US, especially on the East and West Coasts and Pacific Northwest.



Island SPACE Caribbean Museum To Host 'Three The Art Way' Exhibition In South Florida

A new Caribbean art exhibition blending visual art, music, film, and culinary expression is set to open in South Florida next month, offering audiences a unique, immersive cultural experience.

"Three The Art Way," presented by Island SPACE Caribbean Museum, will run from May 7th through August 30, 2026, at the Broward Mall location. The exhibition brings together three prominent Caribbean creatives - Paul Campbell, AJ Brown, and Mark Cameron - in a multidisciplinary showcase designed to go beyond traditional gallery displays.

Organizers say the exhibition will feature interactive elements that will allow visitors to engage directly with the artists through a series of curated events, including panel discussions, workshops, and performances.

"These gentlemen are icons of the Caribbean arts world," said Island SPACE Executive

Director Calibe Thompson, noting the exhibition will be "an explosion of dynamic color and personality."

The exhibition will open with a reception and artist panel on May 7th, followed by signature events such as a culinary art brunch, a paint-and-sip music session, and a theatrical presentation.

Each artist brings a unique perspective - Campbell, a celebrated Jamaican actor, incorporates cinematic storytelling into his work; Brown, lead singer of Third World, channels musical influences into visual art; and Cameron blends design, culinary arts, and Caribbean history into his pieces.

The exhibition underscores Island SPACE's mission to showcase Caribbean talent and cultural expression across the diaspora.



Caribbean-Roots Actors Star In Michael Jackson Movie

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12) said. "And we care about these men deeply, and so we wanted to make sure that we really looked at Joe Jackson... with as much complexity as possible."

Directed by Antoine Fuqua, Michael offers audiences an intimate look at the family dynamics, sacrifices, and pressures that shaped the King of Pop's early life and career.

The film also leaves room for a potential continuation, with Domingo hinting at a second installment that explores later chapters of Jackson's life.

Michael Jackson, who rose to fame with The Jackson 5 before becoming a global superstar, died in 2009 at age 50. He was acquitted in a 2005 criminal trial and consistently maintained his innocence in the face of allegations made during and after his lifetime.

His nephew does a great job of channeling Michael's signature look, executing his iconic choreography, embodying his voice, recreating his mannerisms, and getting into his headspace.

When it comes to the music, featuring hits from across Jackson's early career, does Jaafar provide the vocals in the musical movie? The answer is

both yes and no. When asked if he lent his voice to the project, Jaafar replied, "When I was doing all the performances, I was actually singing out live in the microphone on top of Michael's track."

He went on to explain that the final product is "a blend" of his vocals and Michael's together. But there are a few key moments that saw Jaafar on his own in front of a microphone. On more than one occasion, Michael takes his audience into the studio to watch the titular star record a few of his biggest hits. We then cut between Michael singing with and without a backing track. In those instances, the audience is hearing pure Jaafar without his uncle's blended-in vocals.

"It's actually me singing acapella," the actor shared. "Which was really fun to do."

With its focus on family, legacy, and the human stories behind global fame, Michael delivers not only a portrait of an icon but also a deeper exploration of the people who helped shape his journey.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



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Bakes And Saltfish: The Perfect Caribbean Mother's Day Treat



This Mother's Day, skip the usual and treat Mom to a Caribbean brunch she won't forget.

Few dishes capture the heart of Caribbean comfort food like bakes and saltfish - a beloved staple across Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, and known in Jamaica as fried dumplings. It's simple, flavorful, and deeply rooted in Caribbean tradition, making it the perfect way to celebrate.

Here's how to bring this classic dish to your table. Bake (Fried Dumpling) and Saltfish

FOR THE SALTFISH

- 1 lb. saltfish (bacalao)
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 cup chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 cup chopped scallions
- 1/2 cup chopped onions
- 1/4 tsp black pepper

FOR THE BAKES

- 2 cups of flour
- Salt, to taste
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 3/4 cup of water
- 1 1/2 cups of oil

MAKE THE SALTFISH

- Place the saltfish in boiling water and cook for about 10 minutes. Drain, add fresh water, and repeat the process at least twice to remove excess salt. Taste and repeat if necessary. Drain well, being careful not to overcook as the fish can become tough.
- Flake the fish into small pieces, removing any bones.

- Heat olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Add onions, scallions, and tomatoes, sautéing for about two minutes. Remove from heat and mix in the saltfish and black pepper.

MAKE THE BAKES

- In a bowl, combine flour, salt, and baking powder. Gradually add water, mixing to form a soft dough.
- Knead well, cover, and let rest for at least 30 minutes.
- Divide into small balls, flatten into 4–6 inch circles, and fry in hot oil until golden brown on both sides. Drain on paper towels.

ASSEMBLE AND SERVE

Slice open the bakes and fill generously with saltfish. Serve hot and enjoy. Pepper is optional - adjust to taste.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



Nevis Mango Festival Returns With Celebrity Chef Eric Adjepong

The Nevis Tourism Authority has announced the return of the popular Nevis Mango Festival, set for July 2nd -5th, as the island prepares to host one of the Caribbean's premier culinary events.

This year's four-day festival will be headlined by acclaimed chef Eric Adjepong, a Food Network personality and Top Chef finalist known for his innovative approach to West African cuisine. Widely regarded as the "Mango Capital of the Caribbean," Nevis is home to 44 varieties

of mangoes, many of which are unique to the island. Organizers say the festival offers visitors a rare opportunity to experience these flavors firsthand, as the fruit is not exported.

Adjepong, a first-generation Ghanaian American raised in New York, has built an international reputation for bringing African-inspired cuisine to a wider audience. He is the chef behind Elmina, a Washington, D.C.-based restaurant, and has appeared on several Food Network programs, including Wildcard Kitchen and

Tournament of Champions. "Being named Culinary Ambassador for the 2026 Nevis Mango Festival is a true honor," Adjepong said, noting he looks forward to leading cooking demonstrations and participating in judging events.

The festival will feature culinary showcases, tastings, and cultural experiences across multiple venues, highlighting Nevis' rich food heritage and growing reputation as a culinary destination.



Golden Krust Adds Jamaican Pepper Shrimp Patty To Permanent Menu

Golden Krust, one of North America's leading Jamaican fast-casual restaurant chains, has officially added its Jamaican Pepper Shrimp Patty to its permanent menu following strong customer demand.

The seafood patty was initially introduced as a limited-time offering but quickly became a fan favorite, prompting the brand to make it a permanent fixture. It remains one of the few seafood options available across Jamaican fast-casual concepts. The patty features tender, shell-less shrimp seasoned in a bold, tangy sauce with scotch bonnet



Jamaican Pepper Shrimp Patty is now permanently on the Golden Krust menu. Contributed image)

peppers, sweet peppers, garlic, onion, allspice, and thyme—delivering a distinctive coastal Caribbean flavor wrapped in Golden Krust's signature flaky crust.

The decision reflects the growing popularity of Caribbean cuisine in the mainstream, as evolving consumer tastes continue to influence traditional menus.

Founded in the Bronx in 1989, the family-owned brand has expanded to more than 100 locations and distribution in over 22,000 grocery stores. Golden Krust now produces more than 50 million patties annually, helping introduce generations of customers to authentic Jamaican flavors.



Caribbean Restaurant Kabawa Named Best In The U.S.

A Caribbean restaurant in New York City has taken the top spot in one of the food industry's most influential rankings, marking a major moment for Caribbean cuisine on the global stage.

Kabawa, located in Manhattan's East Village, has been named the best restaurant in the United States in Food & Wine's 2026 Global Tastemakers Awards. The honor places the relatively new establishment ahead of some of the country's most celebrated dining destinations.

Opened just last year, Kabawa is led by Barbados-born Chef Paul Carmichael and backed by the Momofuku restaurant group. But while it operates within a globally recognized brand, Kabawa has carved out its own identity by putting Caribbean flavors and storytelling at the center of the dining experience.

The restaurant occupies the former space of Momofuku Ko, once known for its high-concept tasting menus. Kabawa has taken a different approach, offering a more vibrant, communal experience built around a three-course menu that draws heavily on the Caribbean diaspora.

Dishes reflect a bold and unapologetic celebration of Caribbean cuisine. The menu features items such as red pepper shrimp, breadfruit tostones, jerk duck sausage, and slow-roasted goat served in a spicy Creole sauce. The format encourages sharing, creating what many describe as a more relaxed and immersive experience compared to traditional fine dining.

Carmichael has emphasized that Kabawa is about more than food. He has described the restaurant as a space that blends hospitality, culture, and storytelling, often referring to his role as a "master of ceremonies" rather than a traditional chef.



Some of the dishes at Kabawa. (Kabawa image)

That philosophy extends beyond the kitchen. The restaurant's atmosphere is designed to feel lively and welcoming, with staff interacting freely with guests and creating an environment that reflects the warmth and energy of Caribbean culture.

The drinks program follows the same theme, featuring cocktails inspired by Caribbean ingredients such as coconut and sorrel, alongside a strong focus on rum. Next door, Bar Kabawa continues the experience with a more casual setting, featuring Caribbean snacks and a high-energy playlist.

According to Food & Wine, what set Kabawa apart was not just its technical execution, but its ability to convey a strong sense of place and identity through food. The Global Tastemakers Awards are compiled with input from chefs, travel experts, and industry insiders, highlighting restaurants that offer unique and meaningful dining experiences.

For many in the Caribbean diaspora, Kabawa's recognition represents more than a culinary achievement. It signals a growing global appreciation for Caribbean cuisine, which has often been underrepresented in fine dining despite its rich history and influence.

As Kabawa continues to gain attention, the spotlight on Caribbean food is expected to grow, opening doors for more chefs and restaurants to showcase the region's flavours on the world stage.

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Peter A. Webley
Publisher

HEALTH NEWS



www.caribbeantoday.com

Bahamas Achieves Milestone In Eliminating Mother-To-Child HIV Transmission

The Bahamas has been officially certified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as having eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV, marking a major public health milestone for the Caribbean region.

The certification, announced in partnership with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), places The Bahamas among a select group of countries in the Americas that have achieved this global health target.

WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus praised the achievement, noting it reflects years of sustained commitment and dedication from healthcare professionals. Health officials say the success is rooted in a comprehensive healthcare approach that ensures universal antenatal care for all pregnant women, regardless of nationality or legal status. The system includes routine HIV testing, treatment access, and ongoing monitoring for both mothers and infants.

“This achievement reflects sustained political commitment and strong national leadership,” said PAHO Director Dr. Jarbas



Barbosa, adding that it sets the stage for continued progress in combating HIV and other communicable diseases.

Bahamas Health Minister Dr. Michael Darville credited the country’s healthcare workers and nationwide clinics for their role in reaching the milestone.

To achieve certification, countries must meet strict benchmarks, including reducing transmission rates to below 2% and ensuring high

levels of testing and treatment coverage among pregnant women.

The Bahamas now joins countries such as Cuba and Brazil in leading regional efforts to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV, as part of a broader initiative aimed at ending communicable diseases across the Americas by 2030.



Miami Dade College Launches Summer Camp For Neurodivergent Children

Miami Dade College has launched a new summer program designed specifically for neurodivergent children, marking a first for the institution and addressing a growing need in the community.

The EmpowerU Summer Camp, developed by the college’s School of Continuing Education and Professional Development, officially kicked off this week at the Kendall campus. The initiative was created in partnership with the Supreme Twins Foundation, a Miami-based nonprofit focused on neurodivergent advocacy.

Neurodivergent individuals include those with autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, and other conditions that affect how they learn and process information.

Organizers say the camp is designed to provide a structured and supportive environment for children who are often underserved by traditional

summer programs. The curriculum focuses on social and emotional development, life skills, and building an inclusive community.

“At Miami Dade College, we reaffirm our commitment to inclusion, equity and access to educational opportunities for all,” said college president Madeline Pumariega. “The EmpowerU Summer Camp represents an important step in creating spaces where every student can thrive.”

Ilieva Valdés, president of the Supreme Twins Foundation, said the program responds directly to the needs of local families.

“This collaboration is very special. It comes from the heart and from the real needs of our families,” she said.

The camp is part of Miami Dade College’s broader effort to expand inclusive, community-focused learning programs across South Florida.



Florida House Blocks Bill To Loosen Child Vaccine Requirements

A proposal to loosen child vaccination requirements in Florida has been halted after House Speaker Daniel Perez said the legislation would not be taken up during the current special session.

The measure, known as the Medical Freedom Act, had previously passed the Senate but stalled in the House, effectively ending its chances of becoming law this session.

Perez cited concerns about public health, particularly the risks of allowing children to attend school without vaccinations for diseases such as measles, mumps, polio and chickenpox.

“There is some concern... about children being in school without vaccines that have been working for decades,” Perez said.

The bill would have expanded exemptions for school vaccinations to include personal or philosophical beliefs, beyond the current allowance for religious exemptions. It also proposed limiting the authority of state health officials to mandate vaccines during public health emergencies.



Supporters argued the measure would give parents greater control over medical decisions for their children. Critics, however, warned it could undermine public health protections at a time when vaccination rates are declining.

State data shows kindergarten vaccination rates have dropped to about 88 percent, below the 95 percent threshold recommended for herd immunity against diseases like measles. Florida has also reported a rise in measles cases this year.

The decision highlights ongoing divisions in Florida over public health policy and the balance between personal choice and community safety.

- *Rewritten from Central Florida Public Media*



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No Caribbean Beaches In World's Top 10 - But Here Are The Top 10 Best Caribbean Beaches For 2026

The Caribbean may not have landed a spot in Tripadvisor's global top 10 best beaches for 2026, but the Caribbean region continues to shine with some of the world's most sought-after coastal escapes. Here are the top 10 best Caribbean beaches for 2026.

Tripadvisor has released its latest Travelers' Choice Awards for beaches, highlighting the top-rated destinations based on traveler reviews and ratings over the past year. While no Caribbean beach made the global top tier, several standout locations across the region secured top honors within the Caribbean category.

HERE ARE THE TOP 10 BEST CARIBBEAN BEACHES

1: Eagle Beach In Aruba

Leading the list is Eagle Beach in Aruba, known for its powdery white sand, calm waters, and consistent ranking among the world's most beautiful beaches. It is one of Aruba's less crowded beaches that still boasts the same soft white sands, warm waters, and spectacular sunset views that the island's known for. All your favorite beach day activities are on the menu, like swimming, snorkeling, and jet skiing -and amenities like bathrooms and free parking make it even more appealing.

2: Tobacco Bay Beach

Tobacco Bay Beach in Bermuda grabbed the second spot. Known among travelers as the ultimate fish-spotting haven, Tobacco Bay Beach offers calm, warm waters ringed by coral rocks – perfect for beginner snorkelers. With shallow waters in many areas and snorkel rental available, this beach is a great place for kids too. Don't miss out on great views from the nearby beach bar.

Explore Miami Program Offers Discounts on Attractions Throughout May

Residents and visitors across South Florida, including the Caribbean diaspora, are being invited to rediscover the city through a new limited-time initiative offering major discounts on some of the region's top attractions.

The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) has launched "Explore Miami," a promotional program running through May 31, designed to highlight the diverse experiences available across Greater Miami and Miami Beach.

The initiative features a range of special offers, including buy-one-get-one deals and discounted admissions at museums, parks, and entertainment venues.

"Explore Miami is a celebration of everything that makes our destination exceptional," said David Whitaker, President and CEO of the GMCVB. He noted that the program aims to make world-



Eagle Beach In Aruba has been named the number one beach in the Caribbean.

3: Playa Varadero

Playa Varadero beach in Varadero, Cuba took the third spot. It has everything you'd expect from a picture-perfect beach: Golden sand, turquoise-blue water, and stunning sunsets. Hop on a catamaran, go fishing, play a round of beach volleyball, walk along the shore—there's lots to do. Or just kick back and enjoy the beautiful, natural scenery.

4: Cas Abao Beach

Cas Abao Beach in Curacao came in at fourth. With its soft, white sand, turquoise waters, and stunning rock formations, Cas Abao Beach delivers on natural beauty. Small waves and plenty of fish make it a favorite spot for snorkeling and diving, and if you want to hang out on the shore, you can even treat yourself to a relaxing massage.

5.: Bavaro Beach

Bavaro Beach in Bavaro, Dominican Republic took the fifth spot. It is known for soft, white sand, warm, clear waters, and shady palm trees. The waves are perfect for swimming and snorkeling, thanks to the natural barrier reef. But if staying shore-side is more your speed, there are

also plenty of spots to relax and soak up the sun.

6: Palm Beach

Palm Beach in Aruba came in at sixth. It is known for its warm, calm water that makes swimming easy. There's barely a wave in sight. You'll spot vibrant fish if you snorkel, or you can just unwind on the sand. Food stands and souvenir shops are close by, too.

7: Carlisle Bay

Carlisle Bay beach in Bridgetown, Barbados came in at 7th for its soft, white sand, turquoise-blue waters, and lush vegetation. Carlisle Bay is a picture-perfect escape. Spend the day relaxing on a sunbed or

swimming or snorkeling in the calm, warm water, then treat yourself to a beachfront massage. Bonus: there's free Wi-Fi.

8: Seven Mile Beach

Coming in at 8th in the Top 10th ranking is Seven Mile Beach in the Cayman Islands. It is known for its miles of ultra-white sand and crystal-clear water make up Seven Mile Beach. It's a relaxing, family-friendly spot, perfect for barefoot walks and catching beautiful sunsets. There are endless water sports – from snorkeling to diving – plus amenities like free parking and restrooms.

9: The Baths National Park

The Baths National Park in Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands, ranked 9th. It is known for massive granite boulders on powdery sands, spilling out into the Caribbean Sea. Go snorkeling around the unique rock formations (there's plenty of fish to see), or kick back and enjoy the stunning views. And when you're feeling peckish, tasty snacks await at the nearby shops.

10: Playa Porto Marie

Playa Porto Marie in Sint Willibrordus, Curaçao rounded out the Top 10. The gentle slope of this beach makes swimming

easy, and it's a solid pick for snorkeling, too, with lots of marine life to spot. On land, you can catch more wildlife from observation points – plus, lounge chairs, showers, and a bar.

The rankings reflect traveler experiences, factoring in water quality, scenery, accessibility, and overall visitor satisfaction. Despite missing out on the global top 10 beaches, the Caribbean remains one of the world's premier beach destinations, consistently drawing millions of visitors each year.

For Caribbean nations, the recognition underscores the region's enduring appeal – from luxury escapes to cultural beach experiences - even as competition from destinations in Europe and Asia continues to grow. Tourism officials across the region are expected to leverage the rankings as part of ongoing efforts to attract visitors in 2026, particularly as global travel demand continues to rebound.

For travelers, the message is clear: while the Caribbean may not top the global list this year, it remains home to some of the most beautiful and diverse beaches anywhere in the world.

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IMMIGRATION NEWS



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Another Caribbean Immigrant Dies In ICE Custody

BY FELICIA J. PERSAUD

A 33-year-old Caribbean immigrant is the latest to die in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody this year. He is the 15th immigrant to die in ICE Custody this year and the third from the Caribbean.

Cuban national Denny Adan Gonzalez, who was arrested for assault on a female and domestic

violence, died on April 28th at the Stewart Detention Center in Georgia.

“The suspected cause of death is suicide, but the official cause remains under investigation,” ICE said. “CoreCivic staff found Gonzalez unresponsive in his cell at about 10:25 p.m.

“Emergency personnel responded immediately, using a cut-down tool and beginning CPR,” it added. “Webster County

Emergency Medical Services arrived and continued resuscitation efforts. Gonzalez was pronounced dead at 11:11 p.m.”

ICE said Gonzalez first entered the United States near the Hidalgo, Texas, port of entry in May 2019. It said the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency apprehended him and determined he was inadmissible.

After a credible fear determination by US Citizenship

and Immigration Services, ICE said Gonzalez was issued a Notice to Appear and ordered removed to Cuba by an immigration judge in December 2019.

ICE said he was removed in January 2020 but later re-entered the United States unlawfully and was “encountered” by US Border Patrol in El Paso, Texas, in April 2022.

Gonzalez was released under an order of supervision and reported to ICE in Charlotte, N.C., until September 2025, the immigration enforcement agency said.

On Dec. 12, 2025, it said Gonzalez was arrested by in Charlotte, North Carolina, for assault on a female and domestic violence.

His death comes on the heels of another Caribbean immigrant, Cuban national Aled Damien Carbonell-Betancourt, who also died after an apparent suicide at the Federal Detention Center in Miami on April 12th, US ICE said in a statement.

Carbonell-Betancourt had entered the United States on Oct. 30, 2024, and was later encountered by U.S. immigration officials. He was taken into ICE custody in February 2026 following a prior arrest and was being held pending immigration removal proceedings.

In accordance with agency policy, ICE notified the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Office of Inspector General, and the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility. The Cuban Embassy and the individual’s next of kin were also informed.

NUMEROUS DEATHS
The death comes amid a rising number of fatalities involving undocumented immigrants in ICE custody across the United States in 2026. At least 15 deaths have been reported in the first four months of the year, according to compiled data, prompting increased scrutiny of detention conditions, medical care, and oversight.

Mexican immigrant Alejandro Cabrera Clemente, 49, who died April 11 after being found unresponsive at the Winn Correctional Center in Louisiana. Staff initiated emergency response efforts and transported him to a local hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.

Cabrera, who had lived in the United States for over two decades, was in ICE custody pending removal proceedings. In another case, Tuan Van Bui, 55, died April 1 at a detention facility in Indiana after being discovered unresponsive. Authorities said emergency measures were immediately taken, but he was pronounced dead at the facility. The cause of death remains under investigation.

Additional deaths in March have further raised concerns. Jose Guadalupe Ramos-Solano died March 25 in California after being found unresponsive in his bunk, while 19-year-old Royer Perez-Jimenez died March 16 in Florida. Officials are investigating the circumstances surrounding both cases.

Another case drawing attention is that of Mohammad Nazeer Paktiawal, an immigrant from Afghanistan, who died in Texas one day after entering ICE custody after reporting chest pain and breathing issues.

Advocacy groups have raised ongoing concerns about access to adequate healthcare, mental health support, and emergency response capabilities within detention centers.

ICE has maintained that individuals in its custody are held in safe, secure, and humane environments and that comprehensive medical care is provided throughout detention, including emergency services. The agency also states that all in-custody deaths are subject to mandatory reporting and review.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



Advocate Criticizes U.S. Policy Linking Green Cards To Political Speech

An immigration advocate has sharply criticized a new U.S. policy that could deny green cards to Caribbean and other applicants based on their political views.

Murad Awawdeh, president and CEO of the New York Immigration Coalition, said updated guidance from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) allows immigration officials to consider applicants’ expressed opinions—including participation in protests or views deemed “anti-American”—when making decisions on permanent residency.

“Freedom of speech is a cornerstone of our democracy, and it must apply to everyone,” Awawdeh said, warning the policy could punish immigrants for exercising their rights. Under the guidance, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration

Services (USCIS) may weigh factors such as social media activity, prior statements, and associations when evaluating applications. Officials say anti-American activity could count as a negative factor in discretionary decisions.

DHS officials defended the move, stating immigration benefits are a privilege and should not be extended to individuals who oppose U.S. values.

Critics, however, argue the policy sets a troubling precedent. Former DHS official Amanda Baran said ideological screening “is fundamentally un-American” and undermines principles of free expression.

- Rewritten from CMC



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Miami Set To Host Seven World Cup Matches As Costs Raise Fan Concerns

South Florida is set to take center stage during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with seven matches scheduled for Hard Rock Stadium, but rising ticket and parking costs are already raising concerns among fans.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino confirmed the match schedule in Miami, which includes group-stage games such as:

- Saudi Arabia vs. Uruguay on June 15th
- Uruguay vs. Cape Verde on June 21st
- Scotland vs. Brazil on June 24th, and
- Colombia vs. Portugal on June 27th.

The stadium will also host a Round of 16 match on July 3rd, a semifinal on July 11th, and the third-place match on July 18th. The expanded tournament will feature 48 teams and 104 matches across 16 cities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico - the first time the World Cup will be held across three countries.

But while excitement is building, the cost of attending is becoming a growing issue. Ticket prices have surged during the latest sales phase, with premium seats for the final topping \$10,000. Even group-stage matches involving high-profile teams have seen significant increases.

In Miami, parking costs are also drawing criticism, with prices ranging from about \$175



to nearly \$250 per match, and no on-site purchases allowed. Fans must book in advance and may have to walk up to half a mile to reach the stadium.

FIFA has defended the pricing, citing strong demand and North American market conditions, but critics argue the rising costs could put the global event out of reach for many fans.

Full 48-Team Lineup

The field for the 2026 FIFA World Cup is now complete, with 48 teams confirmed for the expanded tournament set to be hosted across the United States, Canada, and Mexico this summer.

The tournament will feature a new format, with teams divided into 12 groups of four. Each team will play three group-stage matches, with the top two teams from each group, along with the eight best third-place finishers,

advancing to the knockout stage.

Caribbean and regional representation includes Haiti, Curaçao, Panama, and Jamaica-born players across multiple squads, alongside global powerhouses such as Brazil, Argentina, France, and England. The United States will open its campaign on June 12 against Paraguay, while Canada faces Bosnia and Herzegovina the same day. Mexico will kick off the tournament on June 11 against South Africa at the historic Estadio Azteca.

The expanded format will see 104 matches played across 16 cities, making it the largest World Cup in history.



Countdown On To Exxonmobil Guyana Global Super League 2026

The countdown is on to the 2026 Exxonmobil Guyana Global Super League.

Tickets are now on sale for the highly anticipated GSL 2026, offering cricket fans the chance to secure seats for one of the most exciting tournaments on the international T20 calendar.

The third edition of the competition will run from July 23rd to August 1st, 2026, at the Guyana National Stadium in Providence, featuring top franchise teams from leading global leagues.

This year's tournament will include the Guyana Amazon Warriors (Caribbean Premier League), Lahore Qalandars (Pakistan Super League), Desert Vipers (International League T20), Perth Scorchers XI (Big Bash League), and San Francisco Unicorns (Major League Cricket).

The five teams will compete in a round-robin format, followed by playoffs and a final



Last year's winner of the 2025 Exxonmobil Guyana Global Super League.

to determine the champion.

Organizers say fans can expect not only high-quality cricket but also an enhanced matchday experience, featuring entertainment and fan-engagement activities throughout the event. Previous editions have attracted strong local and international support, with lively crowds and a festival atmosphere at the Providence venue.

The Global Super League has quickly emerged as a premier T20 showcase, highlighting top talent while positioning Guyana as a growing destination for international sports and tourism.

Tickets are available at www.gslt20.com.



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Jamaica's Elva Goulbourne Inducted Into Penn Relays Hall Of Fame

Former Jamaican long jumper Elva Goulbourne says it is an awesome feeling after becoming the latest Jamaican athlete to be inducted into the Penn Relays Hall of Fame. One of the few athletes to win Penn Relays titles at both high school and collegiate levels, Goulbourne was recognized on the final day of competition at the 130th staging of the Penn Relays at Franklin Field in Philadelphia on Saturday. The former Dinthill Technical and Auburn University athlete was inducted for her long jump heroics and remains the record holder at the Penn Relays in the high school category, after her 6.40m effort for Dinthill in 1999.

Four years later, while representing Auburn, she also put her name in the record books at the collegiate level with a distance of 6.65m, winning back-to-back titles.

In the process, she became the first female athlete from Auburn to win an individual title at Penn Relays. Goulbourne remains the national record holder in the event, both indoors and outdoors, with marks of 6.86m and 7.16 meters. The Jamaica College 4x800

meters winning team of 1999 was also inducted into the Penn Relays Hall of Fame on Saturday, April 25th.

Her induction came as Jamaica College again secured victory in the high school boys Championship of America 4x100m relay at the April 25th final day of the 130th running of the Relays at the Franklin Field Stadium in Philadelphia.

The quartet of Makaellan Woods, Nathaniel Martin, Elijah Smikle, and Kai Kelly sped to 40.03 seconds to win the event. They held off the challenge of Kingston College, who were second in 40.10.

JC were the best-placed Jamaican team in the Championship of America 4x400m relay, finishing third in 3 minutes, 13.57 seconds, as Bullis High, with the outstanding Quincy Wilson, ended Jamaica's 19-year dominance in the event.

They won in 3 minutes, 10.15 seconds, becoming the first American high school to win the event since 2007.

In the collegiate section, Gary Card was victorious in the 100m



Former Jamaican long jumper Elva Goulbourne says it is an awesome feeling after becoming the latest Jamaican athlete to be inducted into the Penn Relays Hall of Fame.

final, clocking 10.34 seconds into a minus 1.4 meters per second wind. He had posted a meet record 10.03 in the preliminaries on Friday.

TEAM JAMAICA BICKLE

Meanwhile, Caribbean Diaspora organization, Team Jamaica Bickle (TJB), increased its incentive to Jamaican institutions that competed at the

130th Penn Relays Carnival at Franklin Field in Philadelphia, thanks to an additional US\$5,000 contribution from the Burton-Hutchinson Family Fund.

TJB has been offering incentives to the top high school relay teams over the past few years, but widened the scheme this year to include field events as well as incentives for tertiary institutions, a release from the organization said.

TJB announced that in addition to the US\$1,000 award to Jamaican teams that won the Championship of America High School 4x100m, 4x400m and 4x800m relays, bonuses were also paid to the winners of the discus, shot put, triple jump, high jump, and long jump events.

"The Burton-Hutchinson Family Fund is proud to support Team Jamaica Bickle's School Nutrition Program," the release quoted Julie Hutchinson as saying. "This investment reflects both our belief in the program's continued success and a personal connection

to its impact. Our family's journey was shaped by similar opportunities that empowered our patriarch, Dr Gladstone 'Fluney' Hutchinson, to pursue significant scholar-athletic achievement. We are committed to helping ensure the next generation has access to that same foundation."

The release said Team Jamaica Bickle continued its commitment to supporting Jamaican student-athletes at the Penn Relays by significantly expanding its incentive program, increasing overall prize support and extending opportunities across both track and field events.

"Building on last year's successful launch, the organization once again awarded prize money to the schools of Jamaican high school boys' and girls' teams that won the Championship of America 4x100m, 4x400m and 4x800m relays. For 2026, each winning team received a US\$1,000 contribution to their respective school," the release said.

Affordable Summer Camps Offer Options For South Florida Families

With summer fast approaching, families across South Florida are being offered a range of affordable camp options designed to keep children engaged, active, and learning without breaking the bank. A growing list of programs across Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties is providing budget-friendly alternatives, with many camps priced at \$300 per week or less—and several offering free or scholarship-based participation.

Among the options are academic and enrichment camps such as Achieve Miami, which offers a free six-week program for elementary students, and AileyCamp Miami, a scholarship-based initiative that combines dance training with life skills development for middle school students.

Public programs are also expanding access. Broward County Parks and Recreation and Miami-Dade

County Parks camps provide structured activities ranging from sports and arts to STEM and field trips, with fees starting as low as \$136 per week.

For families seeking specialized programming, Easterseals South Florida offers a free camp for children and young adults with special needs, while camps like Vocal Youth Miami and Fantasy Theatre Factory focus on music, performance, and creative arts. Organizers say the variety of programs reflects a growing effort to meet the diverse needs of families while addressing rising childcare costs during the summer months.

With options spanning academics, sports, arts, and outdoor exploration, parents are encouraged to explore early registration opportunities, as many programs offer discounts and limited spaces.

Jamaican Olympian Junelle Bromfield Defends Husband After Wedding Video Criticism

Jamaican-born Olympic sprinter Junelle Bromfield is now officially Mrs. Lyles - and she is speaking out after online criticism of her husband, U.S. track star Noah Lyles, following a viral wedding moment.

The couple, who married on April 4th in Georgia, drew attention after a "first look" video posted on TikTok showed Lyles reacting to Bromfield's wedding dress. Some viewers criticized his response as underwhelming, sparking debate across social media.

But Bromfield, a 2020 Olympic bronze medalist with Jamaica's 4x400m relay team, quickly defended her husband, saying his reaction came at a deeply emotional moment.



Jamaican-born Olympic sprinter Junelle Bromfield and her husband, US Olympian, Noah Lyles. (Junelle Bromfield Lyles/IG image)

"So, in that moment, that reaction that I got from Noah is exactly what I needed," she said in a TikTok response. "He tried to make me happy."

Bromfield revealed she had been dealing with significant

stress on her wedding day, including the absence of several family members who were unable to secure visas to attend. She also learned just minutes before the ceremony that a key participant would not be present.

he Jamaican athlete explained that Lyles' lighthearted reaction helped lift her spirits during an overwhelming moment.

The couple, who began dating in 2022 and got engaged in 2024 following Lyles' Olympic success, held an "All Shades of Melanin" themed wedding. Bromfield emphasized that their relationship remains strong, dismissing criticism and affirming her confidence and happiness.



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Bunny Shaw's Next Move? £1M Chelsea Offer Sparks Transfer Buzz

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Jamaican soccer star Khadija "Bunny" Shaw may soon be wearing a different shade of blue in the upcoming Women's Super League, (WSL), season. According to the New York Times, champions Chelsea, famous for their royal blue outfit, have offered Shaw a £1 million-per-year (US\$1.36 million) contract. The 29-year-old striker's contract with Manchester City expires this summer.

Shaw joined Manchester City - the light blues - from French club Bordeaux in 2021. Since then, she has achieved significant success, including the PFA Women's Players' Player of the Year award for the 2023-24 season, the WSL Golden Boot

winner for consecutive seasons, and the WSL Player of the Year award for 2023-24.

The New York Times story, dated April 24th, cited "multiple sources briefed on the situation, speaking on the condition of anonymity to protect relationships." It added that Shaw - who has scored 109 goals in 131 matches for Manchester City - is, however, keen to stay with that club. "However, the situation remains fluid and no decision has yet been made," the paper stated.

While the men's game has long surpassed the £1 million mark, it is the pinnacle in women's soccer. Last January, striker Trinity Rodman renewed her contract with the Washington



Will Jamaican soccer star Khadija "Bunny" Shaw be trading one blue for another soon?

Spirit in the National Women's Soccer League in the United States, to the tune of \$2 million. That made the 23-year-old daughter of NBA legend Dennis Rodman the highest-paid player in the women's game.

According to a story posted in February by the givemesport.com website, the other top highest-paid women's soccer

players are:

2. **Aitana Bonmati**, Spain Barcelona, £856,000
3. **Sophia Wilson** USWNT Portland Thorns, £739,000
4. **Alexia Putellas**, Spain Barcelona, £607,000
5. **Sam Kerr**, Australia, Chelsea £466,000

At the time of writing, Shaw had scored 21 goals from 27 matches in the WSL this season. That prolific form has helped put Manchester City atop the

standings and in a good position to win the league for the first time, with only a handful of matches left.

From Spanish Town, Jamaica's first capital, Shaw went professional eight years ago after graduating from the University of Tennessee. She made her international debut for Jamaica in 2015 at age 14 and has scored 66 goals in 48 matches for the Reggae Girlz.



Jamaica Smashes World Record Again To Win Mixed 4x100-M Gold

Jamaica's mixed 4x100-m relay team delivered a historic performance at the World Athletics Relays, breaking the world record for the second time in as many days to capture gold on Sunday.

The quartet of Ackeem Blake, Tina Clayton, Kadrian Goldson, and Tia Clayton stormed to victory in 39.62

seconds, eclipsing their own world record of 39.99 seconds set just a day earlier.

Jamaica finished well ahead of Canada, which took silver in 40.23 seconds, while the United States claimed bronze in 40.33.

The result also secured Jamaica's place in the upcoming Ultimate Championship, alongside Canada, the United

States, Germany, Spain, and Nigeria.

All finalists had already booked their spots for the 2027 World Athletics Championships in Beijing after advancing safely through the heats.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



World Athletics To Maintain Tough Stance On Nationality Switches

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe has signaled that the governing body will continue taking a firm position on athletes seeking to change national allegiance.

His comments follow a recent decision by the World Athletics Nationality Review Panel to reject applications from several Jamaican and Kenyan athletes hoping to represent Türkiye. Among those denied were Jamaica's Olympic champion Roje Stona, along with Jaydon Hibbert, Rajindra Campbell and Wayne Pinnock, as part of a group of 11 athletes whose requests were turned down.

Speaking ahead of the World Athletics Relays in Botswana, Coe said the organization remains committed to preserving the integrity of international competition. "The concept is very simple: there should be a clear understanding that the country an athlete begins their career with is the country they finish with," Coe said.


He added that global championships depend on strong national identity, allowing fans to follow true country-based competition. While Coe acknowledged there are valid exceptions -

such as marriage or political circumstances - he made it clear that financial incentives alone would not justify a

switch.


- *Rewritten from CMC*





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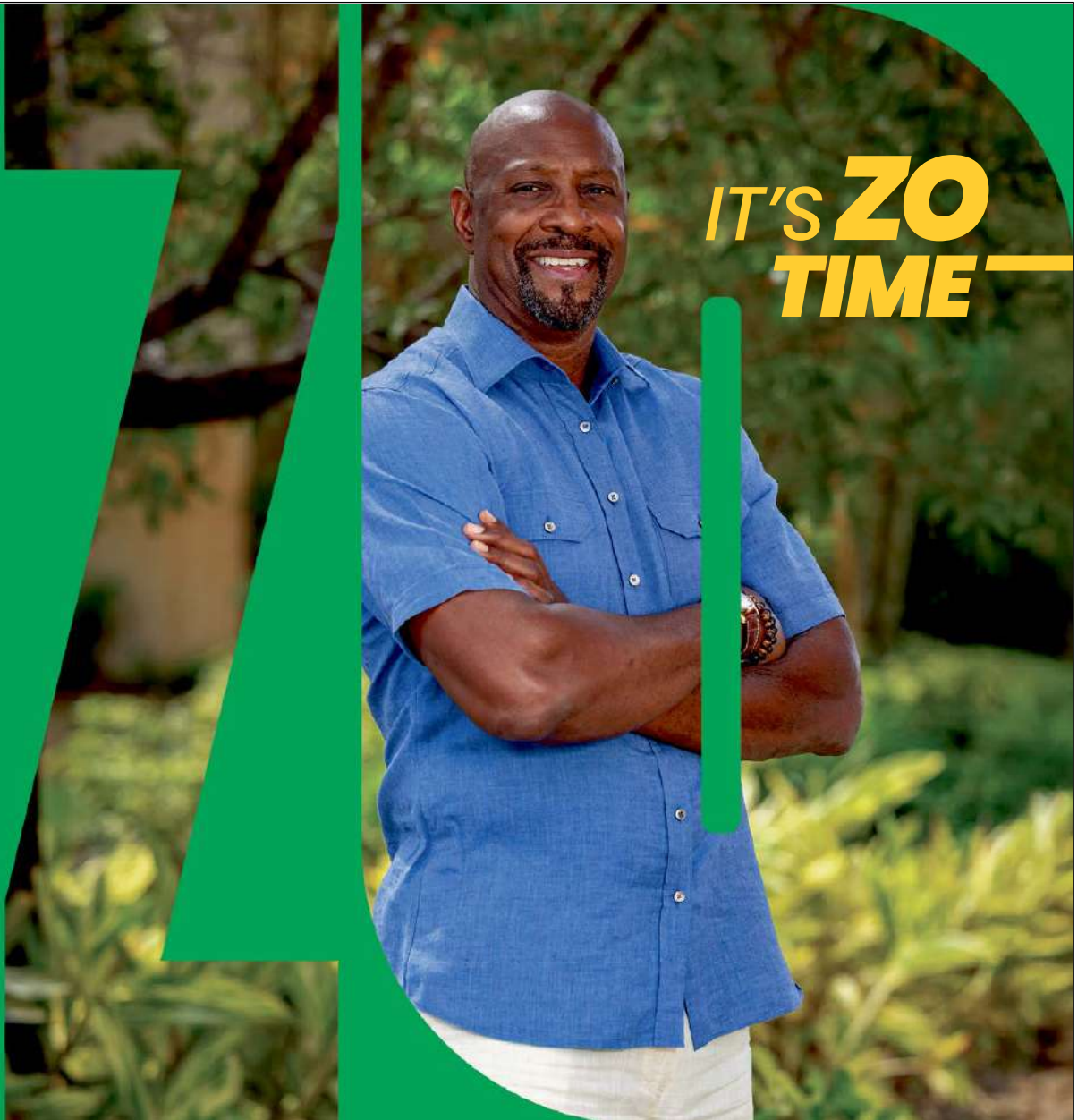
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