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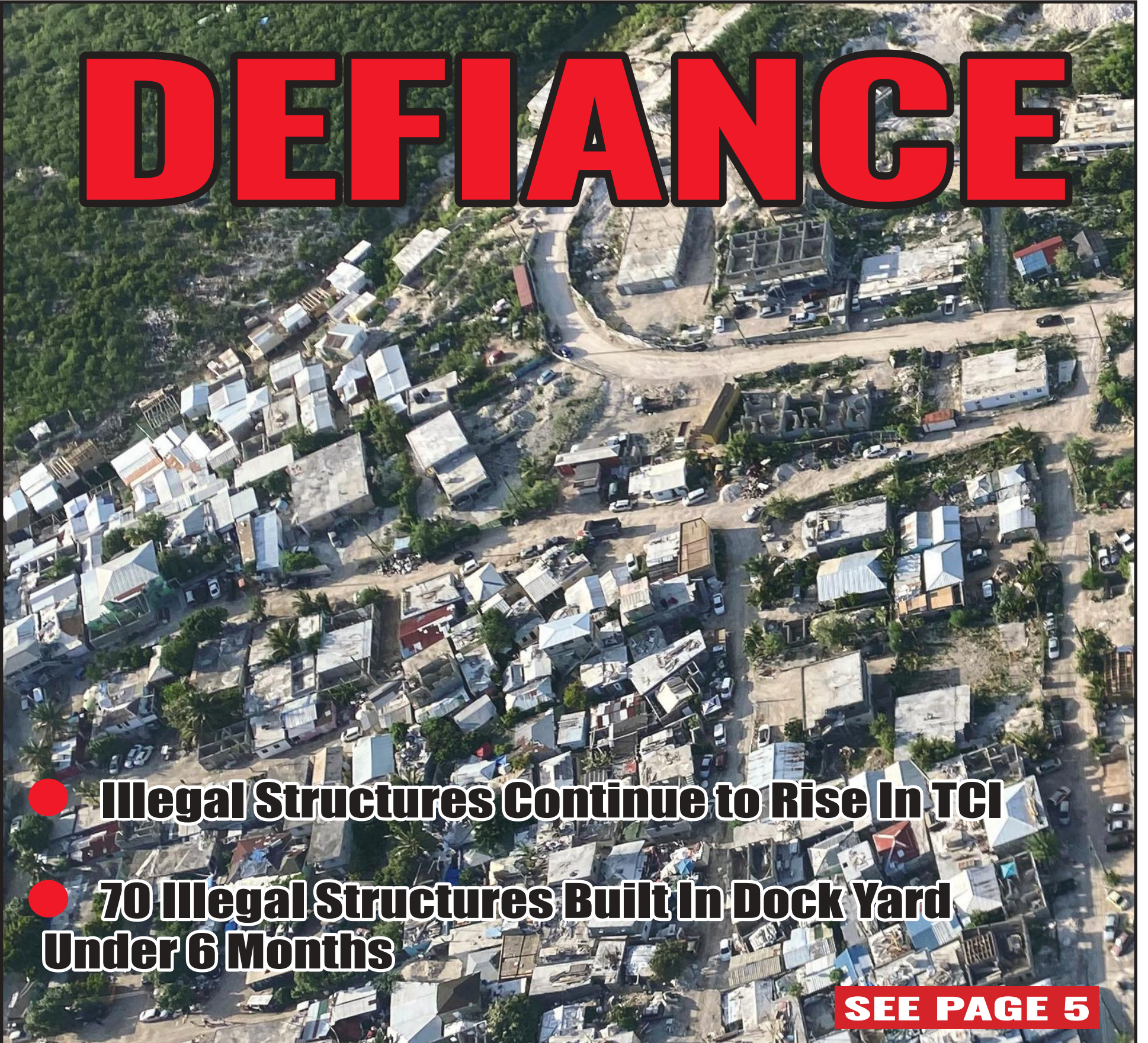


JOLLY CALLS FOR GREATER LEADERSHIP BY TC ISLANDERS IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - PG4



GOVERNOR FIRES NHIB BOARD, APPOINTS INDEPENDENT EXAMINER PG11

DEFIANCE



- **Illegal Structures Continue to Rise In TCI**
- **70 Illegal Structures Built In Dock Yard Under 6 Months**

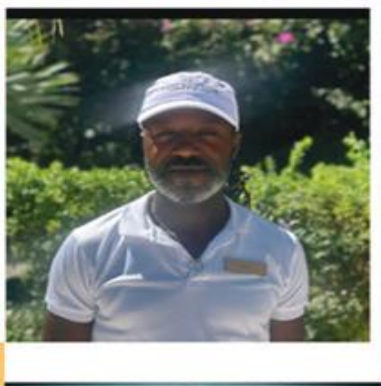
SEE PAGE 5

WEST BAY CLUB
WEST BAY RESORTS

CONGRATULATIONS

On Your Promotion

Phil has been a valued member of our team for several years, known for his warm personality, strong work ethic, and ability to anticipate guests' needs before they even ask. His leadership at the front lines has played a pivotal role in creating seamless guest experiences. His passion for service and ability to mentor others make him the perfect fit for his new role.



FULLER GARDINER JR.
Pool & Beach Supervisor

WEST BAY CLUB
WEST BAY RESORTS

CONGRATULATIONS

On Your Promotion

Audry's journey in the kitchen has been one of growth, skill mastery, and resilience. From her early days as a Cook, she showed a deep passion for culinary excellence, always eager to learn new techniques and elevate every dish she prepared. Her promotion to Chef de Partie is a well-deserved recognition of her ability to lead, innovate, and inspire those around her.



AUDRY SANCHEZ
Chef de Partie

WEST BAY CLUB
WEST BAY RESORTS

CONGRATULATIONS

On Your Promotion

Guerline has been an integral part of our housekeeping team, ensuring that every guest enjoys the highest standards of cleanliness and comfort. Her keen attention to detail and ability to support her team in high-pressure situations have been remarkable. This promotion is a testament to her reliability, expertise, and commitment to upholding our brand's reputation for excellence.



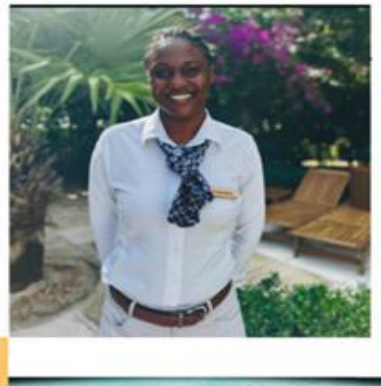
GUERLINE PIERRE
Linen Room Coordinator

WEST BAY CLUB
WEST BAY RESORTS

CONGRATULATIONS

On Your Promotion

Roshana has been a guiding hand for countless guests, ensuring that every stay is nothing short of extraordinary. Her dedication to guest satisfaction is unparalleled, always going the extra mile to create unforgettable moments. Her promotion to Lead Personal Concierge is a reflection of her leadership, problem-solving skills, and deep passion for hospitality.



ROSHANA GREY
Lead Personal Concierge

WEST BAY CLUB
WEST BAY RESORTS

CONGRATULATIONS

Employee & Leader of the Year



ARACELYS PARDO
Employee of the Year
Front of House - 2024



FRANKLYN BELIZAIRE
Employee of the Year
Back of House - 2024



KIZZYMAE HARRIS
Manager of the Year
2024

WEST BAY CLUB
WEST BAY RESORTS

CONGRATULATIONS

On Your Promotion

Jemima has been a dedicated member of our team, excelling in her role as Pre-Arrivals Agent with outstanding attention to detail and a commitment to exceptional service. Her professionalism, enthusiasm, and ability to connect with both guests and colleagues have made her a valued part of West Bay Club. As she transitions into her new role in Human Resources, we know she will bring the same passion and dedication, supporting our team and fostering a positive workplace culture.



JEMIMA ALDOPHE
Human Resources Coordinator



OPEN JOB POSITION

Executive Chef

We are seeking a proficient and enthusiastic Executive to join our team!

Job Overview: The executive chef will train and manage kitchen personnel and supervise/coordinate all related culinary activities; estimate food consumption and requisition or purchase food; select and develop recipes; standardize production recipes to ensure consistent quality; establish presentation technique and quality standards; plan and price menus; ensure proper equipment operation/maintenance; and ensure proper safety and sanitation in kitchen. The executive chef may oversee special catering events and may also offer culinary instruction and/or demonstrate culinary techniques. The executive chef directly supervises kitchen personnel with responsibility for hiring, discipline, performance reviews and initiating pay increases. He/she will assist in the development of employees.

Additionally, will supervise all kitchen workers and give performance reviews, grant pay increases and take disciplinary action when necessary. Executive chefs prepare meals in the kitchen and delegate work to other chefs and cooks during the restaurant's busy times. At the end of the workday, executive chef will insure the proper cleanliness and closing of the kitchen. Attendance at meetings as required.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's Degree in Culinary Arts, Food and Beverage Management or Equivalent
- International culinary experience in a five star property with focuses on Mediterranean and Asian cuisine
- Candidate should have at least 5 years' experience in an Executive Chef Kitchen management capacity and excellent knowledge of current culinary trends.
- Must have experience of resort pre-opening
- Must have experience in high volume hotel business.
- Must be competent in culinary creativity as demonstrated by cooking test.
- Have strong knowledge of food cost and inventories.
- Must possess the ability to handle stressful and busy hotel.
- Candidate must have good knowledge of computers (e.g. Excel & Word).
- Clear, concise written and verbal communication skills.
- Candidate must be comfortable to speak to guests and conduct meetings.
- Must have a good understanding of cost control.
- Candidate must be a leader and a mentor.

Full time. Weekend and holiday work may be required.

Salary \$60,000.00 - \$70,000.00 per annum

Bonus + Service Charge

Qualified candidates should submit their Resumes to
Mrs. Celianise Forbes, Director of Human Resources at
Email: humanresources@rockhouserestaurant.com

Deadline for submission: March 14, 2025

#1 International Drive, Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands, TCKA1ZZ

Qualified Belongers need only to apply

Tourism Minister Calls for Greater Leadership by TC Islanders in National Development

Minister of Tourism, Hon. Zhavar-go Jolly, is advocating for Turks and Caicos Islanders to take on greater leadership roles at all levels of the nation's development. Speaking at the 20th anniversary celebration of The Palms Resort in Grace Bay, Providenciales, on Wednesday, March 5, 2025, Minister Jolly emphasized the importance of local empowerment in shaping the future of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

"The next 20 years must be about empowerment—ensuring that Turks and Caicos Islanders are not just working in tourism, but leading in tourism," Jolly declared. "We need more managers, more directors, more entrepreneurs. We need to own our tourism industry in every sense—whether through leadership, investment, or innovation."

Jolly's remarks underscored the government's vision of fostering greater participation of Turks and Caicos Islanders in key decision-making roles within the tourism sector, which remains the economic backbone of the nation. He urged businesses across the country to prioritize the development and promotion of local talent.

As The Palms Resort marked two decades of excellence, Jolly paid tribute to the people who have made it a staple of luxury tourism in the Caribbean.

"Tonight, we gather not just to mark 20 years of The Palms but to honor the people who have made this place the institution it is today. Twenty years in hospitality is no small feat—this milestone represents thousands of guests served, countless memories created, and a legacy built on the dedication of the men and women who have kept The Palms thriving."

Reflecting on the resort's opening in 2005, Jolly noted that the success of The Palms, like that of the broader tourism industry in the Turks and Caicos Islands, is rooted in its people. He highlighted the contributions of front desk agents, housekeepers, chefs, maintenance teams, and various other staff members who work tirelessly to create an un-



Tourism Minister Hon. Zhavar-go Jolly



Her Excellency Governor Dileeni Daniel Selvaratnam addresses the event



Deputy Governor Her Excellency Anya Williams addresses the audience

paralleled guest experience. "The front desk agents who greet every guest with genuine warmth. The housekeepers who make sure each room is more than just clean—it feels like home. The chefs and restaurant teams who prepare world-class dining experiences that keep guests coming back. The maintenance teams who keep the property in top shape. And every single staff member—from security to landscaping, to the operations and management teams—who have played a role in making this resort not just a place to stay, but a place to return to," Jolly stated. The minister also took a moment to recognize those who have been with The Palms since its inception, praising their dedication and commitment to the industry. "Many of you here tonight have been part of this journey from the very beginning—15, 20 years of service to an industry that forms the foundation of our economy. That kind of commitment deserves to be celebrated. It deserves to be honored. Because while buildings may be built with brick and stone, legacies are built by people." Looking ahead, Jolly reaffirmed his vision for a future where Turks and Caicos Islanders play a central role in directing the nation's tourism sector. He called upon stakeholders to continue investing in local talent, ensuring that opportunities for advancement are accessible to all.



Stan Hartling (left), CEO of the Hartling Group, presents a trophy to local business partner Mervin Cox

"So tonight, let us raise a glass to 20 years of excellence—to the staff, to the management, to every hand that has shaped this journey. Thank you for your dedication, your commitment,

and your passion. Here's to many more years of success—built by you, powered by you, and always centered on the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands," Jolly noted.

DEFIANCE

By Vivian Tyson, NEWSLINE Editor-In-Chief



SIMONS...“We need a combination of stronger enforcement, better monitoring, and community engagement to discourage people from taking this risk.”

Despite ongoing public warnings, legal notices, and heightened enforcement measures, the construction of illegal structures on both Crown and private land continues to surge in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI). The Informal Settlement Unit (ISU), responsible for combating unauthorized squatting, recently carried out a demolition exercise in the Snake Hill area of Providenciales. However, according to Justice Carlos Simons, head of the ISU, defiant individuals are persistently disregarding official orders.

In an exclusive interview with NewslineTCI on Friday, Simons revealed that an alarming 70 illegal structures have been erected in Dock Yard, TCI’s largest informal settlement, in less than six months.

“It’s very difficult to get the message through to people, and I guess the only approach is by repetition,” Simons stated. “But no matter how much we repeat the message, people still take this risk. The way Dockyard has mushroomed in recent months is shocking—17 new structures have gone up on private land alone. Those structures are slated

for removal. And on Crown land, removal is even more certain, as no one can grant legal title or permission for their existence.” Authorities Struggle to Keep Up Simons underscored the growing challenge of enforcing land laws in the face of persistent squatting. He noted that the ISU, along with its supporting agencies, will need to enhance vigilance to curb this trend.

“What we’re hoping to achieve in the next few months is additional staff—a dedicated monitoring team for both Planning and Crown Lands, with at least two officers each, working either full-time or part-time, solely to track building activities in informal settlements. This way, we don’t have to rely on flyovers to detect new structures,” Simons explained.

Another long-term objective, he revealed, is securing statutory authority for the ISU to police informal settlements. “At the moment, that authority lies with Planning and Crown Lands. We need to strengthen the monitoring and enforcement capabilities of those agencies.”

Advanced Technology Aiding Detection

Illegal constructions are being identified through aerial surveillance, which compares recent images with past records to pinpoint unauthorized developments.

“That’s how we know there have been at least 70 new structures in Dockyard alone,” Simons said. “The growth is out of control.”

He confirmed that these structures were built over the past six months, underscoring the rapid expansion of squatting activities despite official warnings and previous demolitions.

Aerial monitoring has proven to be a critical tool in detecting unauthorized structures before they become permanent. However, due to the rapid pace of illegal construction, officials often find themselves playing catch-up. The demand for enhanced surveillance and enforcement remains high, as new buildings continue to appear almost overnight.

A Plea for Public Cooperation Simons urged the press and the general public to help amplify awareness about the issue, emphasizing its impact on law enforcement, health services, and overall community well-being.

“This affects all of us, whether

we live near these settlements or not. Unplanned structures make policing and emergency response efforts more difficult,” he said.

Beyond the strain on law enforcement, the proliferation of informal settlements presents broader concerns, including public health risks. Many of these unauthorized buildings lack proper sanitation, leading to potential outbreaks of disease. Additionally, the haphazard construction poses fire hazards and structural dangers to those living in and around these areas.

Government officials have indicated that they are looking into additional measures to curb illegal squatting, including stricter penalties and expedited demolition orders. However, Simons emphasized that enforcement alone will not resolve the issue—education and public awareness are also crucial in addressing the root causes of illegal settlements.

“The only way to combat this effectively is with a multi-pronged approach,” he stated. “We need a combination of stronger enforcement, better monitoring, and community engagement to discourage people from taking this risk.”

With the ISU pushing for increased statutory authority and additional resources, officials remain hopeful that progress can be made in stemming the rise of illegal settlements. However, Simons acknowledged that the problem will not be solved overnight.

“This is an ongoing battle,” he said. “But we are committed to tackling it head-on and ensuring that land laws in TCI are upheld.” Authorities remain committed to tackling the issue, but without widespread compliance and cooperation, the battle against illegal settlements in the TCI continues to be an uphill struggle. Whether through enhanced enforcement, technological advancements, or community engagement, the government faces a challenging task in reversing the trend of illegal construction before it becomes an even greater crisis.

A call to protect people living in fear or pain due to migration

Pope Francis's letter to the bishops of the United States

I am writing today to address a few words to you in these delicate moments that you are living as pastors of the people of God who walk together in the United States of America.

The journey from slavery to freedom that the people of Israel travelled, as narrated in the book of Exodus, invites us to look at the reality of our time, so clearly marked by the phenomenon of migration, as a decisive moment in history to reaffirm not only our faith in a God who is always close, incarnate, migrant and refugee, but also the infinite and transcendent dignity of every human person.

These words with which I begin are not an artificial construct. Even a cursory examination of the Church's social doctrine emphatically shows that Jesus Christ is the true Emmanuel (cf. Mt 1:23); he did not live apart from the difficult experience of being expelled from his own land because of an imminent risk to his life, and from the experience of having to take refuge in a society and a culture foreign to his own. The Son of God, in becoming man, also chose to live the drama of immigration. I like to recall, among other things, the words with which Pope Pius XII began his Apostolic Constitution on the Care of Migrants, which is considered the "Magna Carta" of the Church's thinking on migration:

"The family of Nazareth in exile, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, emigrants in Egypt and refugees there to escape the wrath of an ungodly king, are the model, the example and the consolation of emigrants and pilgrims of every age and country, of all refugees of every condition who, beset by persecution or necessity, are forced to leave their homeland, beloved family and dear

friends for foreign lands."

Likewise, Jesus Christ, loving everyone with a universal love, educates us in the permanent recognition of the dignity of every human being, without exception. In fact, when we speak of "infinite and transcendent dignity" we wish to emphasise that the most decisive value possessed by the human person surpasses and sustains every other juridical consideration that can be made to regulate life in society. Thus, all the Christian faithful and people of goodwill are called upon to consider the legitimacy of norms and public policies in the light of the dignity of the person and his or her fundamental rights, not vice versa. I have followed closely the major crisis that is taking place in the United States with the initiation of a programme of mass deportations. The rightly formed conscience cannot fail to make a critical judgment and express its disagreement with any measure that tacitly or explicitly identifies the illegal status of some migrants with criminality. At the same time, one must recognise the right of a nation to defend itself and keep communities safe from those who have committed violent or serious crimes while in the country or prior to arrival.

That said, the act of deporting people who in many cases have left their own land for reasons of extreme poverty, insecurity, exploitation, persecution or serious deterioration of the environment, damages the dignity of many men and women, and of entire families, and places them in a state of particular vulnerability and defencelessness. This is not a minor issue: an authentic rule of law is verified precisely in the dignified treatment that all people deserve, especially the poorest and most marginalised. The

true common good is promoted when society and government, with creativity and strict respect for the rights of all — as I have affirmed on numerous occasions — welcomes, protects, promotes and integrates the most fragile, unprotected and vulnerable. This does not impede the development of a policy that regulates orderly and legal migration. However, this development cannot come about through the privilege of some and the sacrifice of others. What is built on the basis of force, and not on the truth about the equal dignity of every human being, begins badly and will end badly.

Christians know very well that it is only by affirming the infinite dignity of all that our own identity as persons and as communities reaches its maturity. Christian love is not a concentric expansion of interests that little by little extend to other persons and groups. In other words: the human person is not a mere individual, relatively expansive, with some philanthropic feelings! The human person is a subject with dignity who, through the constitutive relationship with all, especially with the poorest, can gradually mature in his identity and vocation. The true *ordo amoris* that must be promoted is that which we discover by meditating constantly on the parable of the "Good Samaritan" (cf. Lk 10:25-37), that is, by meditating on the love that builds a fraternity open to all, without exception.

But worrying about personal, community or national identity, apart from these considerations, easily introduces an ideological criterion that distorts social life and imposes the will of the strongest as the criterion of truth.

I recognise your valuable efforts, dear brother bishops of the United States, as you

work closely with migrants and refugees, proclaiming Jesus Christ and promoting fundamental human rights. God will richly reward all that you do for the protection and defence of those who are considered less valuable, less important or less human!

I exhort all the faithful of the Catholic Church, and all men and women of goodwill, not to give in to narratives that discriminate against and cause unnecessary suffering to our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters. With charity and clarity we are all called to live in solidarity and fraternity, to build bridges that bring us ever closer together, to avoid walls of ignominy and to learn to give our lives as Jesus Christ gave his for the salvation of all.

Let us ask Our Lady of Guadalupe to protect individuals and families who live in fear or pain due to migration and/or deportation. May the "Virgin morena", who knew how to reconcile peoples when they were at enmity, grant us all to meet again as brothers and sisters, within her embrace, and thus take a step forward in the construction of a society that is more fraternal, inclusive and respectful of the dignity of all.

Fraternally,
Francis

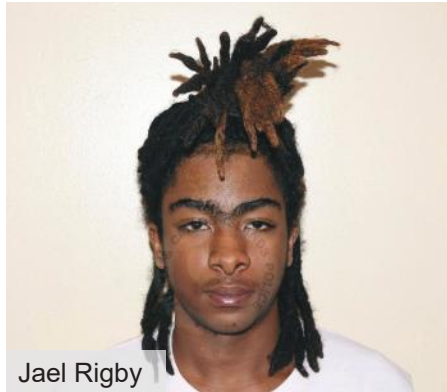
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Vivian Tyson – Editorial Department

POLICE BLOTTERS

Two Men Charged with Shooting at Police Officers



Jael Rigby



Keanu Wilson

Two young men have been charged in connection with a violent encounter with police officers in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands. The Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force (RTCIPF) confirmed that Keanu Tajay Wilson, 18, and Jael De Jesus Rigby, 18, are facing multiple firearm-related charges after an incident involving law enforcement.

Wilson and Rigby were formally charged on March 1, 2025, following an investigation by the Serious Crimes Unit. The charges stem from an alleged attack on officers during a routine stop on Walter Cox Drive

in Kew Town on the night of February 1, 2025.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has filed the following charges against the accused:

- Discharging a Firearm
- Discharging Ammunition
- Possession of a Firearm
- Possession of Ammunition
- Grievous Bodily Harm

According to police reports, officers attempted to stop a vehicle with suspicious occupants around 11:30 p.m. on February 1, 2025. The occupants, later identified as Wilson and Rigby, allegedly opened



Mark Clayton Hebb

fire, injuring an officer. A high-speed chase ensued, culminating in the suspects' apprehension in Blue Hills.

Authorities have confirmed that both Wilson and Rigby are well known to law enforcement and are persons of interest in other ongoing criminal investigations.

Both suspects are expected to appear before a Magistrate later this week to answer for the charges. The RTCIPF has assured the public that they remain committed to tackling gun violence and ensuring the safety of officers and residents. "The safety of our officers and the public is our top priority," an RTCIPF spokesperson stated. "We will continue to pursue those who engage

in violent criminal activities and ensure they are held accountable."

This latest incident highlights growing concerns about firearm-related offenses in Turks and Caicos, prompting renewed calls for stricter enforcement and intervention measures.

Male Charged with Dangerous Driving

A 59-year-old visitor, Mark Clayton Hebb, has appeared before a Magistrate after being charged with Dangerous Driving.

Mr. Hebb pleaded not guilty to the charge and was granted \$5,000 cash bail with one surety.

The case has been adjourned to March 24 for further proceedings.

The charge stems from an incident on February 28th on Sandcastle Drive, near the entrance of IGA Gourmet supermarket in Grace Bay, where Mr Hebb allegedly collided with a 58-year-old pedestrian while driving.

The pedestrian received initial medical attention before being airlifted to New York for further treatment.

Environmental Health Department Enhances Vector Control Efforts with New Chemical Storage Unit



The Environmental Health Department (EHD) of the Turks and Caicos Islands is pleased to announce the acquisition of a state-of-the-art Chemical

Storage Unit for Providenciales.

This significant investment underscores our commitment to enhancing public health, ensuring environmental

protection, and improving workplace safety for our vector control team. Future purchases of similar units are planned for North Caicos and South Caicos to further strengthen our island-wide vector control efforts.

The newly acquired storage unit is designed to safely house pesticides, fogging machines, and other essential vector control equipment. Its robust construction meets stringent safety standards, providing a secure and controlled environment for hazardous materials. This acquisition aligns with the government's mission to safeguard the health of residents and visitors by mitigating risks associated with improper chemical storage.

Key Benefits of the Chemical Storage Unit:

Enhanced Environmental Protection: The unit's spill containment system and ventilation features prevent leaks and reduce the risk of chemical exposure to the surrounding ecosystem. By properly storing pesticides, we are minimising the potential for soil and water contamination, thereby preserving

the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Improved Staff Safety: Equipped with fire-resistant materials and proper ventilation, the unit ensures that vector control staff can store and access chemicals in a safe and compliant manner. This reduces the risk of accidental exposure, inhalation hazards, and fire incidents.

Efficient Vector Control Operations: The secure and organised storage of fogging machines and pesticides ensures quick and efficient deployment during mosquito and pest control activities. This will enhance our ability to respond promptly to vector-borne disease threats, such as dengue fever and chikungunya.

The Environmental Health Department remains committed to implementing best practices in vector control and public health protection. The addition of this chemical storage unit marks a milestone in our ongoing efforts to enhance operational efficiency while upholding the highest safety and environmental standards.

The Palms Turks and Caicos Resort Celebrates 20 Years of Excellence

Honoring Employees and Milestone Achievements at the Messel Ballroom

The Palms Turks and Caicos Resort is proud to celebrate its remarkable 20th anniversary with a grand celebration that highlights the hotel's extraordinary journey of success, growth, and exceptional service.

This milestone event will take place on March 5, 2025, at the prestigious Messel Ballroom, located within The Palms Turks and Caicos Resort.

As one of the premier luxury resorts in the Caribbean, The Palms has set the gold standard in hospitality over the last two decades. This anniversary celebration marks an exceptional occasion to honor the hard work, dedication, and service excellence of The Palms' valued employees. The evening will be filled with gratitude as the resort takes the opportunity to reflect on its legacy, acknowledge its long-serving team members, and look ahead to the future of continued success.

"We are beyond proud to celebrate 20 years of excellence, and this celebration is an acknowledgment of the tireless dedication of our incredible team. It's because of them that we have been able to reach this milestone, and it's a moment to recognize their unwavering commitment to making The Palms the premier destination in Turks and Caicos," said Karen Whitt, Vice President of Sales + Marketing and Brand Development, of The Hartling Group.

"As I reflect on a journey that started two decades ago, this occasion is not just a celebration of The Palms' 20 years, but a celebration of the people who made these years possible. Every milestone we've achieved is a testament to the passion, integrity, and dedication of our team members, and for that, I am forever grateful. As we look ahead, we know the best is yet to come." Dr. Stan Hartling, CEO of The Hartling Group.

As part of the festivities, The Palms will be honoring employees who have shown exceptional loyalty and service to the resort over the past 15 to 20 years. These individuals have



Stan Hartling (stooping at left), CEO for the Hartling Group and Partner Mervin Cox (stooping at second left) share an exciting moment with longstanding staff members, who have been employed at the Palms Resort between 17 and 20 years.



Karen Whitt (left), VP for Sales, Marketing and Brand Development, Pierre Beswick (third left), VP of Resort Assets, and Iain McCormack (right), VP of Operations, present Stan Hartling (second left), CEO of the Hartling Group with a plaque for his vision, entrepreneurship and magnanimity.

been instrumental in the resort's success and are celebrated for their dedication to creating unparalleled guest experiences. Honorees of the 20th Anniversary Celebration

The following long-serving employees will be recognized for their remarkable contributions: Abel Celan, Alex Abellera, Alvin Ginton, Amor Balitaan, Andrea McKenzie, Annette Handfield, Arnel Gallardo, Betania Johnson, Charel Joseph, Charles Bertrand, Comalita Missick,

David Bethel, Diejuste Julien, Dwane Gidden, Earl Blake, Elder Jules, Emelito Amores, Emilienne Brutus, Ismena Amiscar, Jacques Pierre, Jeanne Brutus, Joane St. Jean, Kertis Agenor, Merle Ralph, Metius Montezi-ma, Michael Johnson, Moline Jean Baptiste, Naadia Bennett, Rockell Cox, Rosita Hamilton, Serveus Sylvain, Shanika Thomas, Sherrie Forbes, Sicily Roberts, Sidouane Laurant, Silenie Francois, Stennett Williams, Temika Demoa Tucker,

Yakeva Rigby, Yanik Dufresne. This celebration is not only an opportunity to honor the past but to inspire the future. The evening will be filled with reflections on The Palms' two-decade legacy and a vision for the next chapter of continued growth and excellence. The resort extends its deepest gratitude to its team members, whose dedication, loyalty, and hard work have made The Palms a cherished gem in the heart of Turks and Caicos.

Bight MP Audric Skippings Visits Cayman, Meets with TCI Patients at Health City Hospital



Hon. Audric Skippings, the newly elected Member of Parliament for The Bight, recently visited the Cayman Islands, where he met with Turks and Caicos Islanders receiving medical treatment at Health City Hospital.

During his visit, Skippings connected with many patients, listening to their experiences and health concerns. He was able to see the majority of TCI patients who were either admitted or receiving outpatient care.

Although the trip was not an official one—he was in Cayman accompanying a family member seeking medical attention— Skippings said he used the occasion to observe the facility, which is part of the TCI health network. He also engaged with hospital representatives to gain a deeper understanding of the overseas treatment process for TCI patients. Skippings said while he was unable to visit every admitted patient, he spoke with most of the families pres-

ent and extended his thoughts and prayers to those he was unable to see.

Reflecting on the experience, Skippings emphasized the need for improved healthcare services in the Turks and Caicos Islands. He expressed hope that, in the future, the country will no longer have to send its citizens abroad for critical medical care but instead provide world-class healthcare within its own borders.

“Our people deserve access to top-tier medical treatment at home, and that must be our goal,” he stated.

He also extended words of encouragement to all TCI patients receiving treatment, urging them to stay strong and know that they are in the thoughts of their fellow countrymen.

Hon. Skippings expressed his gratitude to Hon. Temard Butterfield for accompanying him on the patient visits.

NATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL SPELLING BEE RESULTS

The nation’s brightest young spellers took center stage at the National Primary School Spelling Bee held at Beaches Turks and Caicos on Thursday, 27 February 2025.

Sponsored by F Chambers, Island Printing, Beaches Turks and Caicos Islands in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, the highly anticipated event showcased the spelling prowess of eleven primary school students from across the country. With a remarkable display of talent and determination, Keressa Wynter, a student from Ianthe Pratt Primary, emerged triumphant.

Hon. Rachel M Taylor, Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, noted, “It is my great pleasure to extend heartfelt congratulations to our eleven (11) exceptional primary school students who participated in the National Spelling Bee, held on Thursday, 27 February at Beaches Turks and Caicos Resort Villages and Spa. This event is a true celebration of learning, perseverance, and excellence.

Expanding one’s vocabulary and mastering spelling are more than just academic skills—they are keys to better communication, critical thinking, and self-confidence. A strong vocabulary enhances reading comprehension, writing abilities, and even public speaking. Through this competition, our students have sharpened

their minds, strengthened their focus, and built discipline—qualities that will serve them well throughout life.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated teachers, coaches, and supportive parents. Your guidance and encouragement have played a vital role in shaping these young learners. Your investment in their education will have a lasting impact on their futures.

A special thank you to the organisers of this competition, led by our Education Officer, Mrs. Sarah Kennedy, for creating such a meaningful and enriching opportunity for our students. Your hard work and commitment continue to nurture a culture of academic excellence in our nation.

Furthermore, I express my sincere appreciation to our valued partners whose generous support has made this event possible. A special acknowledgment goes to Mr. Mark Fulford and Mrs. Ava Fulford, owners of F. Chambers and Island Printing. Your unwavering commitment to education exemplifies the saying: Staying together is progress! Working together is success! Your contributions are truly making a difference. Additionally, our gratitude extends to Beaches Turks and Caicos for their continued dedication to advancing education in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

As we reflect on the power of knowledge, let us remember what Proverbs 4:7 says. “Wisdom is the principal

thing; therefore, get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”

To all our young spellers, be proud of your efforts, embrace the challenges, and enjoy the journey—each of you is a winner for your resilience and dedication in representing your schools at the national level.

1st Place: Karessa Wynter, Ianthe Pratt Primary – 200 points (spelling all words correctly!)

2nd Place: Yash O’Chani, Precious Treasures International School – 195 points

3rd Place: Kevaun Lewis, Eliza Simons Primary – 190 points

Continue striving for excellence, and may this achievement be just the beginning of many more to come.”

Managing Director of Island Printing, Ava-Dayne Fulford in a statement said, “F Chambers and Island Printing are once again proud to have been the major sponsors of the 2025 National Spelling Bee. It is a partnership between us and the Ministry of Education that we hope to expand upon and elevate to greater heights in the future.”

She continued by saying, “It is important for us to understand that education is not just about imparting knowledge but about inspiring the curiosity, confidence, and creativity that will shape our leaders of tomorrow. The Spelling Bee is far more than just a contest of spelling; it’s a cele-

bration of discipline, hard work, and intellectual growth. It’s about pushing boundaries, striving for excellence, and building a foundation for lifelong learning.

Congratulations goes out this year’s winner, Keressa Wynter, of the Ianthe Pratt Primary School as well as the runner up, Yash O’Chani, of Precious Treasures International School. You have done well. Congratulations to all the brave young boys and girls who participated this year and we hope to see even greater participation in 2026. I must also mention the hard work of the coaches, teachers and parents - your work is invaluable. Keep inspiring, motivating and enlightening.”

Coordinator of the Spelling Bee, Education Officer, Mrs. Sarah Kennedy, extends heartfelt gratitude to Coaches, Parents, Volunteers - Pronouncers, Judges, Scorers, and timekeeper, Radio Turks and Caicos and FLOW for making this year’s Spelling Bee a tremendous success! “Your enthusiasm, dedication, and support have created an inspiring environment for our participants, allowing their hard work and passion for spelling to shine brightly.

Together, you have created a memorable experience that celebrates the power of words and fosters a love for learning. Thank you for joining us in this journey, and we look forward to seeing you all again next year!”

Turks and Caicos Islands Fashion Week Makes Spectacular Debut

The inaugural Turks and Caicos Islands Fashion Week concluded last Saturday, March 1, with a dazzling showcase of creativity, talent, and culture.

The event, which featured stunning designs and near-flawless runway appearances by local models, marked a significant moment for the burgeoning fashion industry in the islands.

NewslineTCI caught up with the two key figures behind the groundbreaking event: Alicia Swann, the chief organizer, and Dr. Kareem Melissa of the United States, a well-respected pageant guru and fashion industry expert.

A Vision for Growth

Swann revealed that the inspiration for Turks and Caicos Fashion Week stemmed from her deep love for her country and the untapped potential of its people.

"I see we have so much to offer, and I felt like there needed to be an opportunity for young people in particular to showcase what they are capable of doing. We saw that happen tonight," she shared.

Swann emphasized the need to diversify the country's international

appeal beyond its traditional tourism strengths of sun, sand, and sea.

"We now need to branch off to another area, which is fashion and arts. Instead of always traveling abroad, we want people to come to our country and see what else we can do," she explained.

Shaping the Future of Fashion in Turks and Caicos

With the event's successful launch, Swann envisions a bright future for the local fashion industry. She highlighted a partnership with the Turks and Caicos Community College, which will introduce programs focused on fashion and business, giving young people the opportunity to develop their skills.

"It's very important that we not only showcase talent but also help individuals understand the business side of fashion. What do you need to be successful? That's where education plays a role," Swann noted.

Government Support and Future Expansion

The long-term vision for Turks and Caicos Fashion Week received a significant boost with the endorsement of government officials. Both the



Minister of Culture, Hon. Rachel Taylor, and the Minister of Tourism, Hon. Zhavargo Jolly, have pledged their support for the event for the next five years.

"We have already started brainstorming how we are going to shape the world of fashion for Turks and Caicos. So, you'll see a lot more in the years to come," Swann assured.

A Platform for Emerging Talent

The event featured an open casting process for models, ensuring equal opportunities for all. While only the top talent made it to the runway, Swann stressed that plans are in place to nurture and develop young talents who did not make the final cut.

"We are looking to ensure that our models are recognized with international magazines and given opportunities to explore other avenues while keeping Turks and Caicos at the heart of it all," she said.

Overcoming Challenges and Building Partnerships

Like any first-time event, Turks and Caicos Fashion Week faced its fair share of challenges, the most pressing being financial constraints.

"A lot of times when you're doing something for the first time, buy-in is not always easy. We had to encourage sponsors to see that this is bigger than just a show; it's about opening doors for many businesses in Turks and Caicos," Swann explained.

The event secured key sponsorship from the Hartling Group, an organization Swann previously worked with. She credited this partnership as a testament to hard work and building strong professional relationships. "You never know where dedication can lead. Now they are my partners in my vision," she remarked.

A Global Perspective with Local Roots
Dr. Kareem Melissa, who was the producer of the event, echoed Swann's

sentiments, stating that her decision to join the project was rooted in her belief in the island's cultural richness. "I had to come to the island, feel the culture, step on the sand, experience the boutiques. I realized that this was the next step for me," she said.

Melissa is determined to ensure the event's longevity by providing a platform for young creatives.

"This is why it will last—because young people need a space to express themselves through fashion. We saw young designers tonight showcasing their work from after-school programs. That's what we want to encourage."

A Bright Future Ahead

Looking ahead, both Swann and Melissa envision Turks and Caicos Fashion Week evolving into a major global event.

"Our goal is to be the fashion capital of the world," Swann declared. "With our beautiful beaches, stunning models, and vibrant culture, we are positioning ourselves as a top destination for fashion."

The launch of the fashion and business program at the community college in September further cements this vision. Melissa, a professor with expertise in fashion business, emphasized the importance of equipping designers with the skills to market and sustain their brands successfully. "It's not enough to be a great designer. You have to know how to market your pieces, how to price them, and how to run a successful business. That's why this educational component is so important," she explained. With a strong foundation now in place, Turks and Caicos Islands Fashion Week is poised to become a staple on the international fashion calendar, bringing global attention to the country's creative industry while offering unparalleled opportunities for local talent.

Turks and Caicos Youth Foundation Inc., Edward Gartland Youth Centre

IS SEEKING

**EXPERIENCED MAINTENANCE WORKER
REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THE PROPERTY,
GARDENS, GENERAL MAINTENANCE
AND OTHER RELATED TASKS
AS REQUIRED.**

Must be able to work Mondays to Saturdays.

Salary: \$8.00ph
Start Date: March/April 2025

APPLY TO INFO@ECGYOUTHCENTRE.COM OR
CONTACT 649-331-9602 BY MARCH 12, 2025.

BELONGERS NEED ONLY APPLY

**This position is currently held by a
work permit holder.**

Governor Fires NHIB Board, Appoints Independent Examiner



"The priority remains to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services and position the NHIB to better serve the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands."

In a decisive move to address concerns over financial viability, the Governor of the Turks and Caicos Islands, Her Excellency Dileení Daniel Selvaratnam, has dismissed the entire National Health Insurance Board (NHIB) and appointed an independent examiner.

The decision follows a recent Cabinet presentation by the Ministry of Health, which raised alarm over the financial stability of

the NHIB.

In an official statement, Governor Selvaratnam emphasized that after careful review of submissions from both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance, there were reasonable grounds to believe that the NHIB's financial position could pose systemic risks to public finances.

"As Governor, in line with section 39(2)(b) (i) of the Public Finance Management Or-

dinance, I have appointed Interpath (BVI) Ltd as the Examiner to assess the financial affairs of the NHIB. The appointment is a necessary step to ensure accountability and sustainability," she stated.

Examiner's Role and Responsibilities

Interpath (BVI) Ltd, a global advisory firm with expertise in financial restructuring and operational transformation, has been tasked with:

- Examining the financial records, statements, and accounts of the NHIB.
- Assessing financial management practices and compliance with statutory obligations.
- Reviewing internal controls and governance structures related to financial operations.
- Submitting a comprehensive report with findings and recommendations to the Governor.

Revocation of NHIB Board and Appointment of Interim Directors

Citing the need for improved governance and financial oversight, the Governor exercised her authority under section 39(2) (b)(ii) of the Public Finance Management Ordinance to revoke the appointments of all NHIB Board Directors, effective March 7, 2025. In their place, an interim leadership team has been appointed, comprising:

- Interim Chair – Mrs. Shonia Been
- Deputy Governor or representative
- Attorney General or representative
- Permanent Secretary of Finance or representative
- Permanent Secretary of Health

or representative

- Director of Health Services (Chief Medical Officer)
- Director of the National Insurance Board
- Interim Chief Executive Officer of the NHIB

The decision to restructure the NHIB follows a critical evaluation of its financial management and operational practices, revealing serious concerns regarding accountability and fiduciary responsibility.

Ensuring Continuity of Healthcare Services

Governor Selvaratnam acknowledged that the move may cause concern among residents, particularly those who rely on NHIB for medical coverage. However, she reassured the public that necessary measures are in place to maintain the continuity of NHIB services.

"The priority remains to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services and position the NHIB to better serve the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The interim leadership will oversee daily operations while a full review and restructuring take place," she added.

The Ministry of Health has pledged to keep the public informed on the progress of the review and restructuring process. Official instruments of appointment and revocation will be published in the Official Gazette.

This bold intervention underscores the government's commitment to transparency, financial prudence, and the long-term sustainability of national health services in Turks and Caicos.

BERNADYA SMITH APPOINTED AS PUBLIC INFORMATION AND MEDIA MANAGER



Bernadya Smith

nadya Smith as the Public Information and Media Manager in the Department of Disaster Management and Emergencies (DDME) within the National Security Secretariat.

Ms. Smith holds an Associate Degree in Business Management and a Bachelor's Degree in Human Resource Management from the Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica. She has also obtained numerous certifications, including a Certificate of Distinction in Administration Management from DODS Training, a Certificate of Completion in Administrative Excellence for The Empowered Assistant from Office Dynamics International, and a Certificate of Distinction for Administrative Excellence from the TCIG Training Department.

With nine years of experience in the banking sector, Ms. Smith has served in various corporate roles, including that of a business support officer and country manager's assistant. She joined the public service in August 2017 as an Executive Administrator in Border Services and has since held similar positions in the Minis-

try of Physical Planning & Infrastructure Development and, most recently, at the Governor's Office, showcasing her skills in administration and operations management.

In this new role at the DDME, Ms. Smith will be responsible for developing and implementing strategic media campaigns, managing public relations initiatives, and ensuring effective communication between the organization and the public.

Ms. Smith commented on her appointment, "I am truly honoured to take on the role of Public Information and Media Manager in the Department of Disaster Management and Emergencies.

I look forward to building on the strong foundation already established and continuing to foster meaningful relationships with the public and media. I am committed to ensuring that our communications reflect the values and mission of the organization while driving its growth and success. I am grateful to God for His guidance

and strength every step of the way.

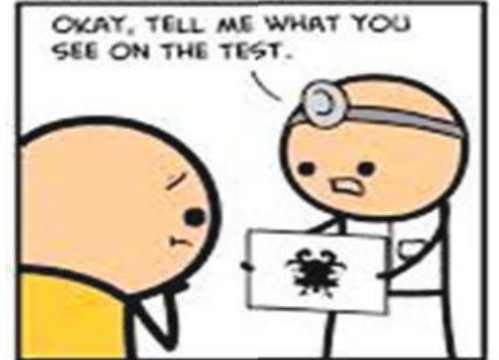
This achievement is due to the prayers and support received from my parents, Bernard and Barbara, my siblings and cherished friends. Thank you for your constant encouragement and belief in me. And to my daughter, you are my inspiration — your love and joy continue to motivate me to be the best version of myself. I dedicate this milestone to all of you and look forward to the exciting journey ahead."

H. E. Anya Williams, Deputy Governor and Head of the Public Service, stated, "As we navigate the complexities of disaster management and communication, I am confident that Ms. Smith will bring a fresh perspective and innovative strategies to enhance the Department. Her dedication to service and her track record speak volumes about her commitment to excellence. I look forward to seeing her thrive in this position to enhance public information and media relations within DDME."

The Office of the Deputy Governor has announced the appointment of Ms. Ber-



NEWSLINE COMICS



WADE'S GREEN Plantation



NEWSLINE
Journalism of Accuracy, Balance & Courage

HERITAGE

Wade's Green Plantation is located in the settlement of Kew in North Caicos. It is regarded as one of the best surviving example of a Loyalist plantation left anywhere in the Caribbean.

Wade's Green was established in 1798 to grow cotton.

Wade Stubbs, a Florida Loyalist, listed his losses during the Revolutionary War as 1 450 acres of land, 15 head of stock and, 4 riding horses with slave holdings of three Negro men and two children. In 1782 Stubbs petitioned the British Crown for land in the Bahamas to compensate his losses.

Wade Stubbs was awarded 860 acres of land after he lost his property in Florida during the Revolutionary War. The plantation was originally called "Bellefield". Wade Stubbs lives on in the annals of slave history, as it was from his estate in 1800 that 14 slaves escaped together, becoming the largest single escape of slaves in the Bahamian Archipelago.

He was the largest of the plantation owners and at the time of his death in 1822 he owned Wades Green (3000acres), Cheshire Hall (5000 acres) and Haulover. The 1822 slave register lists 384 slaves in his ownership.

Sources: TCMuseum, Turks & Caicos Tourist Board, VisitTCI

TCICC Grand Turk Campus Launches Student-Led Agri-Bionics Initiative

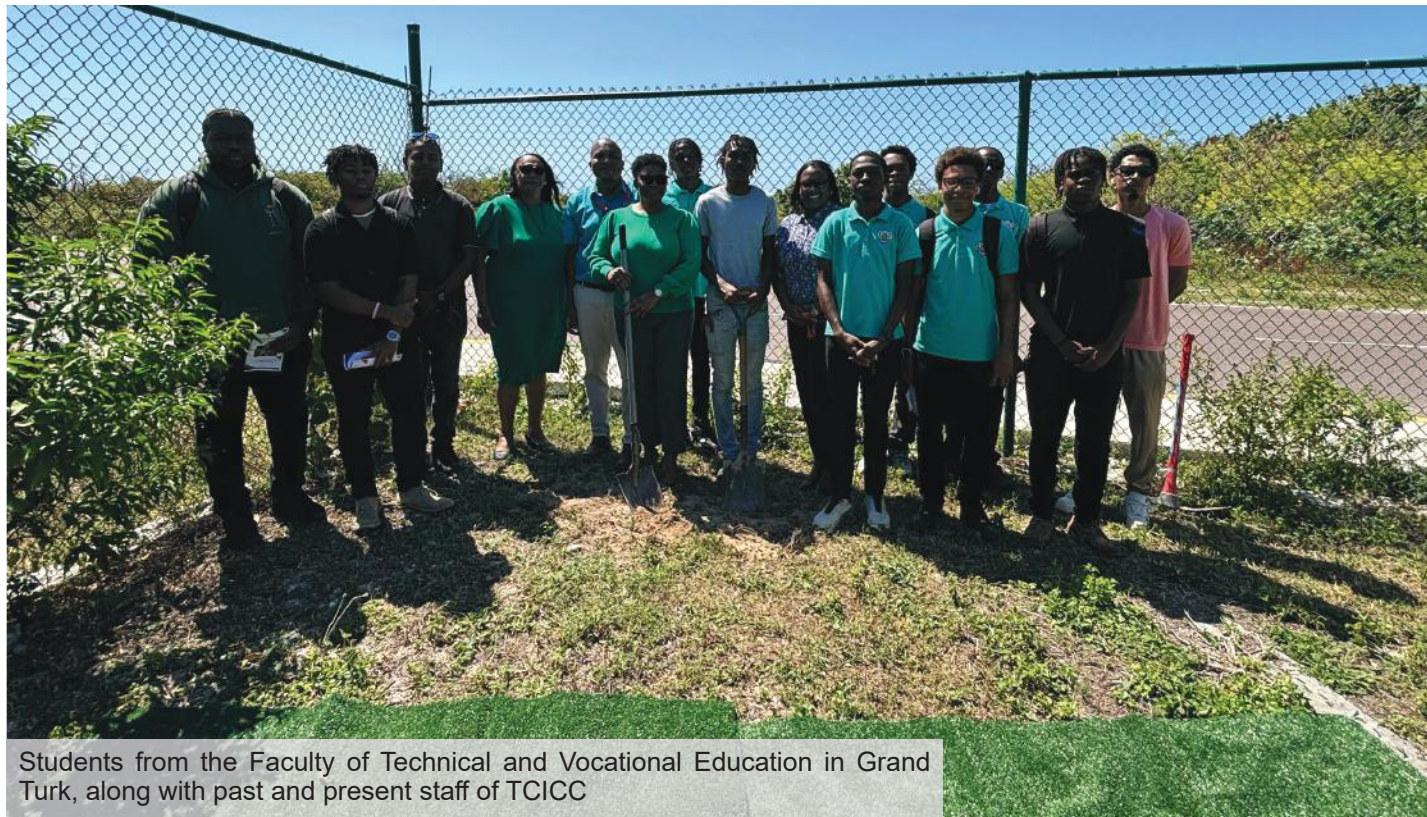
The Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education at the Turks and Caicos Islands Community College (TCICC) is proud to announce the launch of its innovative student-led initiative, Agri-Bionics. This pioneering project integrates technology with traditional agricultural practices to revolutionise farming in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Led by Seth Carter, a student from the Technical and Vocational Education programme, the Agri-Bionics project introduces an automated irrigation system designed to optimise farming efficiency. The system uses soil moisture sensor-controlled sprinklers that detect when crops require hydration and adjust water distribution accordingly. This technology aims to reduce water waste, foster sustainable farming practices, and enhance agricultural productivity.

"I'm inspired to lead this initiative because of the pressing need to diversify our local economy beyond tourism," said Carter. "By integrating technology into agriculture, we can ensure sustainability and improve food security on the islands."

In addition to Mr Carter, the Agri-Bionics team includes students Edmarion Blackman, Ryan Cox, and Neroy Kennedy Jr. The team is also developing a small pond on the project site, with the generous support of TCICC Grand Turk Guild President, Ms Chelsea Been, who will assist in furnishing the pond with turtles and fish.

Minister of Education, Youth, Sports & Culture, Honourable Rachel Taylor, praised the initiative, stating, "This groundbreaking initiative aligns perfectly with my government's focus on advancing agriculture as a national priority. I commend TCICC for its vision and commitment to empowering the next generation of innovators and agricultural leaders."



Students from the Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education in Grand Turk, along with past and present staff of TCICC

Dr Candice Williams, President of TCICC, has expressed full endorsement of the initiative, commending the students for their creativity and forward-thinking approach. "This initiative exemplifies the power of innovation and sustainability in education. Our students are not just learning; they are pioneering solutions that will shape the future. Their dedication and ingenuity are a testament to the unlimited potential within TCICC. We are proud to support and celebrate their achievements."

The launch of the Agri-Bionics initiative marks a significant milestone in TCICC's efforts to expand educational opportunities within technical and vocational fields. The integration of modern technology with agriculture has the potential to inspire future developments in smart farming, supporting sustainable practices across the Turks and Caicos Islands.

TCICC is the leading choice for education and training, committed to excellence, practical learning, and innovation. Through student-led initiatives, the College plays a key role in shaping the future of the Turks and Caicos Islands.



President/CEO, Dr. Candice Williams and Angri-Bionics Project Manager/student Seth Carter breaks ground for the project

Life Line FEATURED CHURCH

This week on Newsline Featured Church, we highlight the Church of Christ, located in Blue Hills, Providenciales. The Church of Christ offers several opportunities for weekly worship. On Sunday at 9a.m. is Devine Worship. At 6:30p.m. is evening service. On Wednesday starting at 6:30pm is Bible Study and prayer meeting. The church is founded on Romans 16:16 – “Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.” Its bedrock is also built on 2Corinthians 9:1-15.

The Church of Christ is pastored by Jack Phanor and Patrick Forbes.



CHURCH OF CHRIST, BLUE HILLS

LIFE LINE CHURCH DIRECTORY

Looking for a worshipping house to praise God and fellowship with members of the body of Christ, here is a list of some of the available sanctuaries you can attend throughout the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Firm Foundation Ministries International
Lee Street, South Caicos.
Telephone: 649-348-3581

Christ is the Answer Ministry,
George Alley Off Aviation Drive, Providenciales
Tel: 241-8030

One Nation Empowerment Center
Church Ministry, Suite #12 Alliance
Business Center, Princess Drive, Grace Bay, Providenciales.
Tel: (649) 244-6194. Email: apostleyoung1952@yahoo.com.

Touch of Love Ministries International Center
Industrial Park, Five Cays, Providenciales
Tel: 941-4903 Fax: 941-7731

Abundant Life Ministries International
P.O. Box 696 Christian City, Leeward
Highway, Providenciales
Tel:941-941-4750 Fax: 941-4755

Anglican Church Rectory Grant Turk,
Front Street, Grand Turk. Tel:946-2289

Bethany Baptist Church,
Blue Hills, Providenciales
Tel:941-4803 / 941-5632 / 941-5118

Church of God of Prophecy,
Lower Bight, Providenciales
Tel: 941-8854

Bible Study Ministries, Grand Turk
Tel:946-1866

Calvary Baptist Church,
South Caicos. Tel:946-3212

Harvest Bible Chapel TCI,
Leeward Highway, Long Bay, Providenciales.
Tel: 1649 333-2009
Email: hbctciinfo@gmail.com.
<https://www.harvesttci.tc>

Firm Foundation Ministries International
19 Honour Lane, Behind Smart Supermarket ,
Providenciales. Telephone: 649-332-6240

Church of God of Prophecy,
Providenciales Tel:941-3438

Roman Catholic Church,
Providenciales, Tel: 941-5136

Faith Tabernacle Church of God,
Providenciales, Tel:946-4073

New Testament Church of God,
Orea Alley, Grand Turk Tel:946-2175

New Testament Church of God,
South Caicos Tel:946-3631

Methodist Church,
Grand Turk Tel:946-2352

Healing Waters Ministries,
Blue Hills Providenciales Tel: 941-5867

House of Prayer Church of God,
Long Bay Road Providenciales Tel: 941-8309

Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses,
Darrell Road, Grand Turk Tel:946-2727

Mount Mariah Baptist Church,
Conch Bar Middle Caicos Tel:946-6205

New Beginning Harvest Ministry,
Pond Street, Grand Turk Tel:946-1759

New Testament Church of God
Orea Alley
P.O. Box 495 Blue Hills, Providenciales
Tel: 946-1255
Airport Road, South Caicos
Tel:231-2402

Firm Foundation Ministries International
Waterloo Road, Grand Turk.
Telephone: 649-332-624

Paradise Baptist Church,
Five Cays, Providenciale
Tel:941-4349

Revival Faith Center,
North Backsalina, Grand Turk
Tel:946-2349

Salem Baptist Church,
Mission Folly, Grand Turk
Tel:946-2565

Solid Rock Apostolic Ministries
International,
Discovery Bay Providenciales
Tel: 946-5181

St. Monica's Anglican Church
P.O. Box 866 Cheshire Hall Providenciales
Tel: 946-4046
Fax:946-4046;941-8499

Turks and Caicos Mission of Seventh
Day Adventists,
P.O. Box 803, Providenciales

United Pentecostal Church,
Brown's Plaza, Leeward Highway,
Providenciales Tel: 956-5852

Wesleyan Methodist Church,
Blue Hills, Providenciales
Tel: 946-4075; 941-4223; 941-3596

Editor's Note: If your Ministry is not listed and/or you would like for it to be part of the NEWSLINETCI Church Diary, contact us at: contact@newslinetci.com

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ED9 SENIOR CITIZEN'S SOCIAL IN FIVE CAYS

On Saturday, March 1, 2025, the Felix Morley Community Center was filled with joy and laughter as seniors from Five Cays, South Dock, and Chalk Sound gathered for the Second Annual Senior Citizens Social. Hosted by the Constituency Council and Hon. Rachel Taylor, Member of Parliament, the event brought together residents aged 60 and older for an afternoon of celebration, entertainment, and community spirit. The following are photo highlights of the event.





TCIAA Seeks Public Input on Strategic Master Plan



Selvyn Hawkins, CEO of the TCIAA

The Turks and Caicos Islands Airports Authority (TCIAA) is inviting public feedback on its newly released Strategic

Master Plan (SMP), now available for review on its official website. Designed as a long-term

roadmap for the modernization and enhancement of TCI's airports, the plan focuses on infrastructure improvements, the integration of advanced technology, and sustainable development to better serve passengers, airlines, and businesses.

The TCIAA encourages residents, visitors, and stakeholders to actively participate in the review process by submitting their feedback through a simple online form, allowing for easy comments on any section of the plan.

"The Strategic Master Plan is a crucial document that outlines a 30-year vision for the development of our airports and the future growth of the TCIAA. Transparency and collaboration are key, and we welcome valuable public in-

put before finalizing its implementation," said Selvyn Hawkins, CEO of TCIAA.

Nikeva Ariza, Manager for Corporate Affairs and Communications, echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the importance of community engagement. "Public input is invaluable as we shape the future of our airports, ensuring they align with the needs of our growing destination and evolving industry standards," she said.

The TCIAA remains dedicated to developing world-class airport facilities through a transparent and collaborative approach. Those interested in reviewing and providing feedback on the Strategic Master Plan can do so by visiting the TCIAA website.

Liam Missick Joins Experience Turks and Caicos as Digital Marketing Specialist



Mr. Liam Missick

Experience Turks and Caicos welcomes Mr. Liam Missick who will take up the role of Digital Market-

ing Specialist effective March 3rd, 2025.

Mr. Missick brings to his role a wealth of experience having worked in the United Kingdom as an SEO Manager for Pacific Digital Inc and an SEO Accounts Manager for Essence Media Com. He holds a BSc Business with Marketing from The University of Brighton.

As Digital Marketing Specialist, Mr. Missick will be responsible for developing, implementing, and managing Experience Turks and Caicos' digital marketing strategies that enhance the online presence of the Turks and Caicos Islands as a top travel destination.

His responsibilities include the development and execution of digital

campaigns, social media management, and content creation and management.

In welcoming Mr. Missick to the Experience Turks and Caicos team, Minister of Tourism, the Hon. Zharvago Jolly, said his role is a vital one.

"The digital landscape is where destinations win or lose in today's tourism industry, and Experience Turks and Caicos has to be at the forefront. Mr. Missick brings the expertise we need to strengthen our online presence, ensuring Experience Turks and Caicos stands out in a competitive global market.

His skills in SEO, content strategy, and data-driven marketing will play a key role in driving visitor en-

gagement, increasing spend, and creating more opportunities for our local businesses.

"It's also great to see young Turks and Caicos Islanders stepping into key roles in shaping our industry's future. Mr. Missick's appointment is a testament to the local talent we have, and I look forward to seeing the impact he will make," the Minister said.

Mr. Missick said he is grateful for the opportunity and looks forward to putting his expertise to work. "I'm thrilled to join the Experience Turks and Caicos team and excited to leverage my experience to help promote the beauty and unique offerings of this incredible island to the world," he said.



OPEN JOB POSITIONS

***Director of Finance**

Responsible for overall management of all finance, accounting, purchasing and MIS functions, including but not limited to safeguarding all assets, strategic planning/budgeting and compliance with internal controls and procedures. Also, act as a financial advisor to the management team of the hotel and a coordinator with the various department heads with respect to the relationship of accounting policies and practices to operational procedures.

Essential Functions

Oversee the financial strategic planning of the company by evaluating its performance and potential risks.

Perform regular financial analysis.

Develop budgets that meet the requirements of company departments.

Establish targets and manage all accounting and finance employees including management accountants and internal auditors.

Supervise all audit and internal control processes.

Prepare detailed reports on the company's financial performance.

Guarantee compliance with financial laws and guidelines.

Recognize patterns in company spending, revenue, and recommend solutions to any problem areas.

Coordinate with external financial entities on behalf of the company.

These duties are not all inclusive and maybe subject to change and include any other duties that may be assigned to you by the Vice President of Finance or General Manager.

Requirements

Minimum 7 years of hospitality accounting experience, with a minimum of 3 years in international assignments.

Minimum 5 years' experience as Director of Finance in a luxury hotel/resort/club of similar size or larger or minimum of 5 years as Director of Finance in a luxury hotel/resort/club of similar size or larger.

Condo hotel or residential accounting experience is a plus Experience in managing resort's Purchasing and IT functions.

A Bachelor degree in Business Administration or Accounting or equivalent in experience.

A proven track record in overseeing the finance function environment, strong people management skills and experience is a plus.

Adaptability: Able to adjust to change, open to new ideas, willing to take on additional responsibilities and able to perform in a deadline driven environment.

Effective communicator with Owners, Guests and Employees and who is not uncomfortable in dealing with challenging issues.

Excellent knowledge of various hotel software to include property management software, POS, and accounting software, specifically Opera, Micros, procurement express and SAP.

Must have excellent

Communication skills

Leadership skills

Advanced mathematical and accounting concepts

Computer literacy

Ability to analyse and interpret general business periodicals, professional journals and governmental regulations

Business Acumen.

Effective Communication.

Critical Evaluation.
Ethical Practice.
Values Diversity
Global & Cultural Awareness.
Relationship Management.

Salary Range: \$108,000 - \$120,000 per annum

Assistant Guest Experience Manager

Responsible for overseeing all guest services operations, including front desk, reservations, PBX, bell staff, and transportation services to ensure quality and guest satisfaction, possessing thorough knowledge of property management software (Opera) or hotel reservation software. This position reports to the Guest Experience Manager and the Executive Assistant Manager- Rooms.

Essential Functions

- Assist with training new Guest experience department personnel.
- Maintains a thorough knowledge of the room rates, room categories, package plans, hotel facilities.
- Maintains a detailed knowledge about the hotel's services and hours of operations.
- Display a pro-active and leading role in terms of service, culture, development, team image, systems, procedures and skill development.
- Check guests in and out, including preparation of guest bills and authorizing payments.
- Responsible for cash handling including float and banking.
- Knows cash handling procedures. Files and posts all changes to guest master account.
- Good understanding about the Property management software (PMS).
- Must be able to navigate Hotsos.
- Anticipates and intervenes in all incidents of guest dissatisfaction and attempts to satisfy all such guests, within hotel policy.

Assist with service recovery procedures.

Requirements

- Bachelor's degree in Hospitality Management, Business Administration, or a related field (preferred).
- Hospitality related certifications are a plus.
- Minimum 3-5 years of experience in hotel operations in guest facing roles with a proven track record of exceptional guest services in a luxury or high-volume hotel/resort.
- Detailed hotel Rooms Division operating knowledge; demonstrated strong leadership and strategic planning skills; and proven achievements in optimizing guest and team member engagement and financial performance.
- Strong interpersonal, team member relations and leadership abilities.
- Technically savvy and familiar with Guest Services operating/budgeting systems and spreadsheets.

Flexibility to meet the demands of a 24-hour operation

Must have excellent

- Business Acumen.
- Effective Communication.
- Critical Evaluation.
- Ethical Practice.
- Values Diversity
- Global & Cultural Awareness.
- Leadership & Navigation.
- Relationship Management.

Salary Range: \$39,600.00 - \$42,000.00 per annum

Qualified candidates should submit their Resumes to Mrs. Celianise Forbes, Director of Human Resources at Email: humanresources@rockhouserresort.com #1 International Drive, Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands, TCKA1ZZ

Qualified Belongers need only to apply. Positions marked with an * are currently being held by a work permit holder. Candidates are also encouraged to submit resumes to the Labour Department.

OPEN JOB POSITION

***Maintenance Labourer**

We are seeking a proficient and enthusiastic Maintenance Laborer to join our team!

Job Overview: Perform tasks involving physical labor at work sites operating under the Maintenance Department to ensure that the property is kept to the standards of the hotel guests and management. May operate hand and power tools of all types and a variety of other equipment and instruments. Will be responsible for upkeeping the daily wear and tear that occurs on a property with a high flow of guests. May clean and prepare sites, dig trenches, and clean up rubble, debris and other waste materials. May assist other craft workers.

Qualifications:

High School diploma is a must

- Work experience in the Construction/Maintenance field
- Experience working at luxury hotel standards
- Good organizational and time management skills with the ability to work under pressure and to multiple deadlines.
- Ability to work independently as well as on a team
- Ability to read and write English proficiently

Full time. Weekend and holiday work may be required.

Salary \$8.00 - \$11.00 per hour

Service Charge

Qualified candidates should submit their Resumes to
Mrs. Celianise Forbes, Director of Human Resources at:

Email: humanresources@rockhouseressort.com

Deadline for submission: May 5, 2025

#1 International Drive, Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands, TCKA1ZZ

Qualified Belongers need only to apply. Positions marked with an * are currently being held by a work permit holder. Candidates are also encouraged to submit resumes to the Labour Department.

Sex in the senior years



AGEING DOES not diminish the need for intimacy and connection. While physical and emotional changes will occur, the desire for fulfilling relationship experiences remains.

Relationship and marriage counsellor, Reverend Dr Stevenson Samuels, highlights the crucial role sex plays in relationship bonding. He explained that during sex, chemicals like oxytocin and vasopressin are released, fostering a deeper connection between partners. This is especially vital for seniors who may experience feelings of loneliness as their families evolve and careers come to an end.

“Sex is important for persons who are seniors, because in this stage they experience emptiness, especially when the

family is gone,” Dr Samuels said. The relationship counsellor explained that frequently, it is family members like children who have kept marriages intact. However, once they have moved out and the couple becomes empty nesters, the relationship may become vulnerable. “Sex can alleviate the tension, anxiety, and void that remains,” he added.

Samuels further noted that with more free time, intimate bonds can provide stimulation that compensates for the loss of engagement from work and connections. “During their retirement years, individuals may experience a sense of loss due to non-employment,” he said.

Dr Samuels pointed out the impact of hormonal changes on sexual desire, particularly the decline in testosterone levels as individuals age. Testosterone is a hormone that plays a crucial role in regulating various bodily functions, including libido or sex drive.

While testosterone is often associated with men, women also produce testosterone, although generally in smaller amounts than men. Testosterone is primarily produced in the testicles in men, and the ovaries and adrenal glands in women. In women, testosterone plays a role in maintaining muscle mass, bone density, sex drive, vaginal health, and overall wellbeing.

“You find that the sex drive you have at 25, will not be the same at age 80.

However, if it is possible, still have sex. It builds bond and attraction between a couple,” Dr Samuels said.

Sixty-year-old Rose Hunter is grateful that she has a very active and healthy sex life with her nearly 70-year-old spouse. “Just the thought of still being able to do it and still being able to enjoy it gives me joy.”

Hunter shared that for her, sex in her senior years makes her feel loved and strengthens the communication in her marriage. She acknowledges that seniors, though not as young as before, still desires to feel adored in their special way.

“Though I enjoy sex in this stage of my life, there are still some challenges. I do experience some pains because I am not young anymore,” she laughed. Certain sex positions can no longer be dared due to physical challenges, but that does not stop her and her hubby from having fun in the bedroom.

Clifford Wright, a 70-year-old, echoed similar sentiments. “Sex was meant to be and so I will enjoy it while I can,” Wright said. He was quick to note that he experiences no challenges in the bedroom, and intimacy has improved the bond within his marriage.

“Senior people should embrace this time in their life. Yes, we are getting older but that does not change a thing. Sex keeps the spice in the marriage,” he said.

However, not every senior experiences

the same enthusiasm. Eighty-year-old Edith Robinson shared that sex is no longer enjoyable for her due to physical changes and entering menopause. “It is too painful now. Ever since I turned 40, menopause changed a lot of things for me, so I don’t have sex as much anymore and I don’t enjoy it like back in the days,” she said.

Robinson revealed that medical examinations such as Pap smears are painful for her, and are an uncomfortable reminder of why she has not been more sexually active at this stage in life.

SOURCE: Golden Designs Blog, a subsidiary of Golden Designs.

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How to reduce your risk of getting cancer

CANCER OCCURS when a cell’s deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) mutates, which can cause the cell to grow and divide uncontrollably. These changes can be caused by errors that happen during cell division, or by damage to DNA from harmful substances in the environment.

Our genes pick up mistakes that happen when cells divide. These mistakes (or faults) are called mutations. Mutations can happen throughout our lives, during natural processes in our cells, or they can happen because of other factors such as tobacco smoke, high energy (ionising) radiation, such as X-rays, ultraviolet radiation from the sun, some substances in food, and chemicals in our environment. Sometimes people inherit certain faulty genes from their parents. This can mean that they have an increased risk of cancer. Only a small portion of cancers are due to an inherited condition. If cancer is common in your family, it is possible that mutations are being passed from one generation to the next.

You might be a candidate for genetic testing to see whether you have inherited mutations that might increase your risk of certain cancers. Keep in mind that having an inherited genetic mutation doesn’t necessarily mean you will get cancer.

It is usual for cells to repair faults in their genes. When the damage is very bad, the cell may self-destruct instead; or the immune system may recognise them as abnormal and kill them. This helps to protect us from cancer.

Sometimes mutations in important genes cause a cell to no longer understand instructions. The cell can start to multiply out of control. It does not repair itself properly, and it does not die when it should. This can lead to cancer.

Some chronic health conditions, such as ulcerative colitis, can markedly increase your risk of developing certain cancers.

The environment around you may contain harmful chemicals that can increase your risk of cancer. Even if you do not smoke, you might inhale second-hand smoke if you go where people are smoking, or if you live with someone who smokes. Chemicals in your home or workplace, such as asbestos and benzene, also are associated with an increased risk of cancer.

According to Dr Orlando Thomas, medical doctor and functional medicine practitioner at Thomas Medical and Shockwave Centre, doctors have identified several ways to reduce your risk of cancer, such as:

- **STOP SMOKING**
If you smoke, quit. If you do not smoke, do not start. Smoking is linked to several types of cancer, not just lung cancer. Stopping now will reduce your risk of cancer in the future.
- **AVOID ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION**
If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation. For healthy adults, that means up to one drink a day for women and up to two drinks a day for men.
- **EAT A HEALTHY DIET**
Eat a healthy diet. Choose a diet rich in fruits and vegetables. Select whole grains and lean proteins. Limit your intake of processed meats.
- **EXERCISE**
Regular exercise is linked to a lower risk of cancer. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week. If you have not been exercising regularly, start out slowly and work your way up to 30 minutes or longer.
- **MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT**
Being overweight or obese may increase your risk of cancer. Work to achieve and maintain a healthy weight through a combination of a healthy diet and regular exercise.
- **EAT CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES**
Cruciferous vegetables are those that are

high in fibre and vitamins, and may help lower the risk of chronic diseases. They include broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, and kale.

• **MEDITATE, RELAX AND HAVE FUN**
Mindfulness is the simple practice of paying attention to the present moment. It can make you feel less stressed and more focused on each task you do. And mindfulness can help you sustain a healthy lifestyle, too. This is great news to lower your cancer risk. Mindfulness supports healthy choices of all kinds, including healthy eating and exercising more.

• **GET SUNLIGHT**
Chronic exposure to sunlight may reduce the risk of some cancers, including breast, colorectal, and prostate cancer. This is because sunlight helps the skin produce vitamin D, which may have anticancer effects. However, too much exposure to the sun can cause skin cancer.

While doctors have an idea of what may increase your risk of cancer, the majority of cancers occur in people who do not have any known risk factors. Factors known to increase your risk of cancer include your age, your habits, your health conditions and your environment.

SOURCE: Thomas Medical and Shockwave Centre

Spice sued by spiritual advisor RT Boss for defamation



Spiritual advisor Nardo Smith, more popularly known as RT Boss, has filed a defamation lawsuit against dancehall star Spice over allegations reportedly made on her social media platform. Spice's company, Spice Entertainment LLC, an individual identified as

Monique Palmer and Goat Throat Records LLC are also listed as defendants in the civil lawsuit, which alleges libel, filed in the Superior Court of Cobb County in the state of Georgia. A libel is a false and malicious defamation of another expressed in

print, writing, pictures or signs tending to injure the reputation of a person and expose him to public hatred, contempt or ridicule. The lawsuit alleges that the defendants' actions caused the plaintiff, Smith, "severe emotional distress" which manifests itself in insomnia,

grief, depression, anxiety and fear. The defendants published false and defamatory material and statements concerning the plaintiff in violation of the laws of the state of Georgia, the lawsuit claims. It is alleged that in May 2024, Spice, a well-known dancehall star, went on multiple online platforms, using her wider audience and repeated a false accusation about Smith suggesting that he engaged in debasing acts and committed the crime of molestation against a minor. The lawsuit further alleges that the defendants' conduct was "extreme and outrageous" and "transcends all bounds of decency as to be regarded as atrocious and utterly intolerable in a civilized society". The suit further alleges that Palmer, an online personality, interviewed the alleged victim in November 2023 and knew the statement regarding the molestation of the minor was false but allowed the podcast's episode to air with the false and defamatory statement. Smith is seeking compensatory damages, presumed damages and punitive damages, as well as funds to cover his attorneys' fees. The lawsuit was filed on February 14.

Paul Tazewell first black man to win Oscar for Best Costume Design



Paul Tazewell made history at the Oscars, becoming the first black man to win Best Costume Design. Tazewell won for his masterful de-

sign work in Wicked at the 97th Academy Awards on Sunday. It is his first win and second nomination. He was previously nominated

in the category for his work on Steven Spielberg's West Side Story. "I'm the first black man to receive the costume design award," he said in his acceptance speech, which was met with a couple standing ovations. "I'm so proud of this." Backstage, Tazewell said winning the award is the pinnacle of his career. He said he feels humbled to inspire other black men aspiring to become costume designers. "I've been designing costumes for over 35 years – that has been on Broadway and now it's film," he said. "There was never a black male designer who I saw that I could follow and see as an inspiration. But to realise now that it's actually me." Before the Oscars, Tazewell won awards at BAFTA, Critics Choice and Costume Designers Guild awards. He's the second black person to in the category after Ruth E. Carter made history for her work in 2018 for Black Panther, which made her

the first African-American to win in the category. Carter became the first black woman to win two Oscars in 2023. "She has paved the way for designers of colour," Tazewell said. In his acceptance speech, Tazewell thanked Wicked stars Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo. "To my muses, Cynthia and Ariana and all the other cast," he said. "Thank you for trusting me with bringing your characters to life. This is everything." Tazewell built a legendary career, winning an Emmy in 2018 for his costume work on The Wiz Live! and a Tony for Hamilton. He worked with Erivo on the 2019 film, Harriet, which was his first feature film. Tazewell, who has earned nine Tony nominations, gained notoriety through theatre projects such as The Color Purple, In the Heights, MJ the Musical, Suffruss and A Streetcar Named Desire.

Kartel for BVI show

CODA Network to offer exclusive pay-per-view livestream



Dancehall icon Vybz Kartel is set to take the stage in Tortola, British Virgin Islands (BVI), in what is his first official international assignment following his 13-year incarceration.

CODA Network (CODA) has secured the exclusive streaming rights for the highly anticipated concert outside of Jamaica.

The event will take place on Saturday, March 15, 2025 in Wickhams Cay and will be available only on CODA Pay-Per-View (PPV) platform.

The show is presented by entrepreneur Steve Parillon of YOLO Promotions as part of his second

annual Black on Black (B.o.B) concert series.

The line-up will also feature top Jamaican artists Skillibeng, Jah Vinci, and other regional rising dancehall and reggae talent like Monea, Banco, Revelation, and more.

As the first event of its kind to bring international attention to the BVI, it highlights the region's growing presence on the global entertainment stage and strengthens its appeal as a hub for cultural tourism.

"CODA is committed to bridging the gap between Hollywood and the Caribbean by providing local creatives with meaningful work

opportunities. We have the talent, the creativity, and the vision within the region. If we lack a particular skill set or expertise, the answer isn't outsourcing; it's collaboration... Our goal is to ensure that regional talent plays a key role in large-scale productions, while helping to elevate and strengthen the Caribbean's film and media industry," said CEO and founder of CODA Lexi Chow.

CODA aims to bring this event to global audiences, further expanding the reach of Caribbean music and culture while showcasing the BVI.

"We are immensely proud and ex-

cited to be hosting an event of this magnitude and the opportunity to reach such a global audience via Coda Network. Undoubtedly, this livestream positions the BVI for exposure that we believe can lead to a tourism boost..." said Natalio D Wheatley, premier and minister of finance of the Virgin Islands.

Tickets for the live event went in sale yesterday, Friday, February 28 exclusively at www.codatv.com or by downloading the free CODA Network mobile app for in-app purchases.

Fans can watch the concert live on multiple platforms, including iOS, Android devices, streaming devices like Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Firestick, and Android TV. Viewers should note that there may be regional viewing restrictions.

Coleta Williams
is seeking a

HANDYMAN

Responsibilities include assistance with plumbing repairs and property upkeep. Candidates should have relevant experience, strong problem-solving skills, and a proactive attitude. The salary for this position is \$8.00 per hour. Hours Monday-Saturday, 9 am - 5 pm.

This position is not occupied by a work Permit holder

Interested persons should send their application to: Kornell Thomas, Email: kornell@misickstanbrook.tc - Tel: 649-339-2010

Jamaicans dominate 2025 Caribbean Gospel Music Marlin Awards noms

Jamaican gospel recording artistes Carlene Davis, Chevelle Franklyn, Glacia Robinson, Kevin Downswell, K-Anthony, Wayne Stoddart, Carey Sayles, The Foster Triplets, and Jodi Ann Myers dominate the nominations in the 2025 Caribbean Gospel Music Marlin Awards.

Davis, Franklyn, Robinson and Downswell are among the Caribbean nationals receiving multiple nominations. Downswell picked up 15 nods in several categories, while Robinson is up for 13

awards. Davis and Franklyn each received six nods.

In a post on her official Instagram page, Robinson showed gratitude for her multiple nominations.

The post read: "Wow! Thank you heavenly Father! Thank you Jesus for gracing us with 13 nominations for the Marlin Awards 2025 in Bahamas. Congratulations to our fellow nominees from all over the world. We pray that God will continue to use you for His glory. May He continue to bless you, and take you to higher heights in

Him."

The event celebrates its 29th anniversary this year. The awards programme was established to recognise outstanding achievement in Bahamian Gospel Music from 1996 to 2000.

It was later expanded to include eight Caribbean Gospel categories. The awards evolved even further in 2002 to incorporate other styles of Caribbean Gospel Music and were subsequently rebranded the Caribbean Gospel Music Marlin Awards, distributed across

over 40 categories.

This year's awards ceremony will be held on July 27 in Bahamas.

Some of the categories include: Outstanding Adapted Recording Duo or Group, Outstanding Adapted Recording Male, Outstanding Album, Outstanding Black Gospel Recording Duo or Group, Outstanding Calypso Recording, Outstanding Caribbean Pop Recording Duo or Group, Outstanding Inspirational Recording Female, and Outstanding Pop Recording Female.



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- Recommend, initiate and participate in personnel actions including recruitment, hiring, promotions, discharges and disciplinary measures
- Coordinate, develop and conduct ongoing training of all department employees so as to develop and increase job knowledge and skill level
- Coach and counsel staff to encourage positive behaviors and correct negative behaviors.
- Schedule daily briefings and continuous improvement meetings to review daily operations, new procedures and solicit input from all employees to remove barriers, promote teamwork and employee morale.
- Complete monthly inventories of equipment, guest and cleaning supplies as per budgetary guidelines
- Maintain an adequate par stock and in compliance with the company's purchasing procedures and budgetary guidelines, initiate orders for timely purchasing of guest and cleaning supplies and equipment so as to prevent any shortages.
- Develop and maintain an inspection process which ensures accountability and the highest levels of quality in guest rooms, public areas, offices and other areas as outlined in the hotel cleaning policy.
- Develop a process to monitor and respond to guest complaints to ensure complete satisfaction.
- Review and update the Operating Procedures Manual as needed and at least once per year
- Develop and maintain a high level of accountability and efficiency procedures in all areas of department operations
- Maintain constant vigilance and oversight of department operations, initiating immediate corrective action where deficiencies are identified.
- Ensure laundry room procedures and standards are established and carried out.
- Manage assigned operational functions consistent with the strategic plan and vision for the department, division and property
- Provide input into research, development, evaluation and implementation of new products, services, technology and processes to ensure the hotels competitive position and in anticipation of customers changing needs.
- Manages Human resources responsibilities including creating a work environment which promotes teamwork, performance feedback, recognition, mutual respect and employee satisfaction, quality hiring, training and succession planning processes;

Skills and Competencies Required

Bachelors degree in Hospitality

Must be an extremely honest person with high levels of integrity

Be able to work in close co-operation with and foster team spirit with all co-workers, demonstrating teamwork by co-operating and assisting co-workers as needed.

Communicates freely and effectively with customers, co-workers and management to provide services as agreed.

Has full knowledge of Hotel and Department policies and procedures.

Projects a positive work attitude at all times while refraining from gossiping and other work habits which may affect your work performance as well as fellow workers.

Must have a high level of effective communication skills in both oral and written forms. Ability to read and write English.

Ability to use computer and computer software programs.

Ability to develop data for use in operations, interpret simple and complex business statements. • Must have full understanding and possess the ability to develop an operating budget and other financial statements.

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Email: humanresources@rockhouseressort.com

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Passengers overcome armed teen trying to board plane in Australia



Passengers in Australia overpowered a 17-year-old boy armed with a shotgun and ammunition on Thursday as he tried to board a plane near Melbourne after sneaking into the airport.

The teenager entered through a hole in a security fence at Avalon airport, then made his way to a plane with about 160 passengers aboard, Victoria police superintendent Michael Reid told reporters.

"As he approached the plane, he mounted or climbed the front stairs to the front of the plane," he said. "At that point, passengers identified that male was carrying a firearm. The male was overpowered by three of the passengers, at least." No one was injured, and the police

took the boy into custody.

Reid said the boy had a shotgun and "there was ammunition located within the firearm".

The plane had been scheduled to fly to Sydney on a flight operated by Qantas budget offshoot Jetstar. Police were in contact with counter-terrorism investigators but it was too early to establish a motive, Reid said.

"No doubt this would have been a very terrifying incident for the passengers," he said.

"Victoria Police really commend the bravery of those passengers who were... able to overpower that male."

The boy appeared to be acting alone in the afternoon incident and

was not known to police.

It is "very concerning that a person can firstly breach security, approach an aircraft and then make his way potentially close to being inside an aircraft with a firearm," Reid said.

It was not known if he had cut the hole in the airport security fence perimeter, or if it was already there.

Footage of the incident aired by Australia's Channel Nine showed a boy in a fluorescent green jacket — similar in colour to those worn by ground staff — being pinned to the floor by a passenger and a pilot.

A flight attendant walks past the melee carrying what appears to be the butt of a shotgun.

Passenger Barry Clark, a wool shearer from a rural town in Victoria, said the teen was "dressed as a worker" or some kind of "technician".

He appeared to be "agitated", Clark told national broadcaster ABC.

"Before we knew it, there was a gun — a shotgun appeared — and I was worried about there being

shots," Clark said.

"All I could do was get the gun out of the way. And then put him in a hold and throw him to the ground until the police came," he added.

"I've been taught from a boy to be responsible and look after others and we're a sporting family, so I was quietly confident I could handle him."

Another passenger, identified only as Woodrow, told ABC he joined Clark, the pilot and another man to help hold the boy down after the struggle broke out.

"We were all boarded, I was last on, sat in my chair, heard a kerfuffle, and saw the pilot and this other guy tackling this young boy in a high-vis vest," he said.

Jetstar said it was working with police and airport authorities investigating the incident.

"We know this would have been a very distressing situation", it said in a statement.

"We are sincerely grateful to the customers who assisted our crew to safely manage the situation."

Jamaica lifts visa requirement for Dominican Republic residents

Jamaica has waived the visa requirement for residents of the Dominican Republic who travel to the island for visits – whether for tourism or business – up to 180 days.

Tourism Minister, Edmund Bartlett, made the announcement on Monday during a press briefing at the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) head office in New Kingston.

He described this as a historic development in Caribbean tourism cooperation between Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

“This represents more than just an administrative change. It symbolises our commitment to fostering stronger regional bonds and creating new opportunities for tourism growth across our beautiful Caribbean region. By removing the visa restriction, we open doors to unprecedented multi-destination possibilities between Jamaica, the Dominican Republic [and] the region on a larger scale with Europe, Asia and Africa,” the minister said. He added that this development is also a step towards achieving multi-destination tourism, which has been a target for Jamaica over the last five years.



Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett (centre), shares pleasantries with Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Senator the Aubyn Hill, and the Dominican Republic's Ambassador to Jamaica, Her Excellency Angie Martinez, during Monday's (March 3) press conference at the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) head office in New Kingston to announce the waiver of visa requirements for residents of the neighbouring country who travel to Jamaica for up to 180 days.

Bartlett said Jamaica has, so far, signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Mexico and Panama, and are in talks with Colombia to this end.

“We think that this is the way forward. At the heart of multi-destination is visa facilitation, and what visa facilitation does is to create an enablement across borders that is seamless,” he stated.

Bartlett pointed out that ‘this visa waiver is just the beginning’, adding that “we envisage a Caribbean where visitors can freely travel between our islands, where our shared heritage becomes our collective strength and where regional tourism cooperation drives economic growth for all our people”.

The Dominican Republic's Ambassador to Jamaica, Her Excellency, Angie Martinez, expressed gratitude to the Jamaican Government. “This is history in the making and I feel very grateful, very humbled. I stand here... not only as the ambassador... but as a Dominican who is deeply moved by the significance of this moment,” she said.

Ambassador Martinez pointed out that the decision to remove the visa requirement is indicative of nearly two decades of diplomatic work, which was further heightened when she arrived in Jamaica in April 2021 following her diplomatic appointment.

“To be here in Kingston announcing the removal of visa requirements for Dominican nationals travelling to Jamaica for tourism and business is not just a diplomatic achievement, it's a testament

to the power of perseverance, the power of friendship and the unbreakable bond between our nations. I cannot overstate how profoundly grateful and humbled I am to stand here today, representing my country in this time of historic transformation in our relationship with Jamaica,” she stated,

Ambassador Martinez added that this historic move is a “circle of reciprocity” as the Dominican Republic has allowed free movement of Jamaicans to the country since 2007.

Meanwhile, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Aubyn Hill, applauded the move, highlighting the economic growth that could result from the partnership between the countries.

He noted that Jamaica already has several Dominican Republic entrepreneurs investing in the tourism and motor vehicle industries, among other engagements, adding that this will increase consequent on the removal of the visa requirement.

“Jamaica is positioning itself as a leader in logistics, financial services, ICT (information and communications technology), BPO (business process outsourcing) investment and, of course, in tourism. With these streamlined protocols, we're increasing our export and travel, strengthening the very foundation of our economies. This, to me, whatever is going to happen in the Caribbean, is wonderful,” Hill said.

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SHARKS TAKE CHARGE



Fancied Provo Premier Leagues Giants Hold Commanding Lead as Clausura Season Reaches Crucial Stage

See Story on Page 32

Neymar back for Brazil after 16-month absence for World Cup qualifiers



Neymar was on Thursday recalled by coach Dorival Junior to the Brazil team after almost a year and a half out injured for the upcoming 2026 World Cup qualifiers against Colombia and Argentina. Neymar started Brazil's first four

qualifying games but went off injured in a defeat to Uruguay in October 2023, his last appearance for the five-time world champions. Brazil have struggled in South American World Cup qualifying. After 12 of the 18 rounds, they are

fifth in the 10-nation group. But the top six are guaranteed places in the World Cup and Brazil are five points ahead of Bolivia in seventh. Neymar returns for qualifiers against Colombia on March 21 and world champions Argentina five days later.

Brazil's top scorer with 79 goals said last month next year's World Cup is going to be his last.

He will be 34 by the time the competition in the United States (US), Canada and Mexico, kicks off.

Neymar scored for the first time in over 14 months last Sunday with his first goal for Santos since his return to his boyhood club at the start of the month.

The 33-year-old helped Santos beat fourth-division Agua Santa 3-1 in a Sao Paulo state championship match.

Neymar, who failed to score in his first three games with Santos, stepped up to slot home a penalty in the 14th minute.

It was his 137th goal in 229 appearances for the club he has returned to after leaving them in 2013 for Barcelona.

It was also his first goal for anyone since October 3, 2023, when he was playing for Al Hilal against

Nassaji Mazandaran in the Asian Champions League.

He terminated his contract with the Saudi club at the end of January to return home.

Neymar spent 18 months with Al Hilal after joining from Paris Saint-Germain in August 2023 on a deal that enriched him by a reported 100 million euros (US\$103 million) a season.

Neymar played five games for them before suffering a serious knee injury playing for Brazil against Uruguay.

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FIFA to pay \$1 billion prize money for Club World Cup



President of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), Gianni Infantino

FIFA on Wednesday announced it will pay total prize money of one billion dollars to participants in the Club World Cup taking place in the United States this year.

The figure is significantly more than the prize money offered for either the last men's or women's World Cups.

World football's governing body

has given few details about the funding of the first edition of the 32-team tournament that will take place every four years but it has signed up a broadcaster and major sponsors in recent weeks.

In a statement confirming the prize money on offer, FIFA said it expected to generate \$2 billion in revenues from the expanded Club

World Cup. It also confirmed that a women's edition will take place from 2028.

"The FIFA Club World Cup will not only be the pinnacle of club football, but also a vivid demonstration of solidarity that will benefit clubs at large to a scale that no other competition has ever done," said FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

"All revenue generated by the tournament will be distributed to the participating clubs and via club solidarity across the world as FIFA will not keep a single dollar."

British streaming service DAZN was awarded the exclusive global rights to the June 14-July 13 tournament in December with a source close to the negotiations saying the contract was worth around one billion euros (\$1.05 billion).

FIFA has also signed sponsorship contracts with Coca-Cola, Bank of America, Chinese electronics brand Hisense and Belgian brewers AB InBev.

By comparison the total prize mon-

ey for the 2022 men's World Cup in Qatar was \$440 million, while for the 2023 Women's World Cup in New Zealand and Australia it was \$110 million.

This season's UEFA Champions League, with a new 36-club format, will pay a total 2.47 billion euros (\$2.66 billion) to the clubs involved.

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Please apply no later than
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Clayton continues hot form with win over Shericka Jackson



Tina Clayton (left) defeats Shericka Jackson over 60m at GC Foster College on Saturday

FORMER Under-20 champion Tina Clayton says her victory in the Women's 60m at the World Indoor Qualifier at G C Foster College of Physical Education and Sport in Spanish Town, St Catherine ON March 1 is a significant boost for her career this season. Clayton defeated a strong field, which included her MVP teammate Shericka Jackson, to win the

event in a season's best time of 7.08 seconds. Her MVP teammate Natasha Morrison secured second place with a personal best of 7.09s, while Kishawna Niles from University of Technology, Jamaica finished third with a personal best of 7.12s. Jackson, who was making her return from injury, placed fourth in 7.14s. Clayton, the twin sister of Tia who

finished seventh in the Women's 100m final at last year's Olympic Games in Paris, was delighted with her performance. "For me, my level of confidence is always high but this is an energy booster to go even harder in training," Clayton said, flashing a broad smile. She says she is pleased with her execution of the race.

"For me, I am going to say that I executed properly but I leave the decision up to my coach to tell me if I executed the race properly," she said.

Clayton stated that she is uncertain whether she will compete at the World Athletics Indoor Championships later this month, as her main focus is staying healthy and having a successful season.

"The season has been going pretty good so far, but you know there are ups and downs," she said. "For me, it is going very well. My main focus is just to stay focused and healthy." National 100m champion Rohan Watson clocked a personal best of 6.50s to claim the overall victory in the Men's 60m event. Nishion Ebanks was second in 6.57s while third place went to Cejhae Green in 6.59s.

Wendell Miller from The Bahamas captured the Men's 400m in a nail-biting finish with a time of 45.95s. National record holder Rusheen McDonald also clocked 45.95s but finished second. Delano Kennedy was third in 46.40s.

Janieve Russell secured gold in the Women's 400m with a time of 53.57s, finishing ahead of Annalice Brady (54.54s), while Jezelle Shaw placed third in 55.18s.

Lamario Wright clocked a season's best of 1:53.66 minutes to win the Men's 800m, finishing ahead of Samuels Henry (1:55.64), with third place going to Jadua Burke in 1:56.85.

Sammy wants to see some white-ball players in Test squad



Daren Sammy

WEST INDIES all-format head coach, Daren Sammy, believes that

some of the region's best T20 and ODI players can help to bolster the

Test team.

However, Sammy has made it clear that he does not intend to force any player to play Test cricket if that is not their desire.

Speaking on Monday during a virtual media interaction arranged by Cricket West Indies (CWI), Sammy maintained that some of the Caribbean's most experienced cricketers were representing the West Indies in only white-ball cricket.

"We are faced with a situation where our players with the most experience...and most exposure to different conditions and the most successful ones are the ones play-

ing white ball.

"Not taking anything away from what Kraigg Brathwaite and company have achieved, but there is a level of consistency that we've seen more, and my philosophy is once you're a batsman, a batsman's job is to score runs in different conditions," Sammy said.

"I'm not just going to turn the Test team into a white-ball team, that's not what I'm about, but I see there are players who are very consistent in our white-ball squads that I feel can add value to the style and the brand that I, as a head coach, want to instill in our cricket."

Sandals Foundation, TCISC Partner to Renovate the Juba Sound Basketball Court



Government Ministers, MPs, Sandals Foundation Officials, and TCI Sports Commission officials join Children on the newly-refurbished Juba Sound Basketball Court for a photo op.



Government representatives along with BTC Managing Director James McAnally cut the ribbon

Some one thousand (1000) Providenciales residents are set to benefit from the resurfacing and renovation of the Juba Sound Basketball Court following a partnership between the Sandals Foundation and the Turks and Caicos Sports Commission.

The project, valued at some US \$50,000, supports residents of the Juba Sound, Long Bay, and Grace Bay areas, as well as students at

the neighbouring Mills Institute and A Louise Garland High School providing a safe space for healthy recreation and socialising.

“Community courts – be it basketball, netball, tennis or badminton provide an essential service in helping residents stay active, exercise, build community spirit and support mental health,” says James McAnally, Managing Director at Beaches Turk and Caicos Resort,

“At the Sandals Foundation we believe in investing in the holistic development of our communities and residents of all ages. The renovation of the Juba Sound Basketball Court will help in this regard.” Speaking at the recent park hand-over ceremony, Jarrett D. Forbes, CEO of the Turks and Caicos Sports Commission said, “the renovation of the Juba Sound Basketball Court was necessary to provide a safe,

high-quality recreational space for the community. The existing court had deteriorated over time, with surface wear, inadequate fencing, and insufficient lighting making it less accessible and less safe for users. Given the growing interest in basketball and community sports, the renovation was essential to ensure that residents—especially youth—have a well-maintained facility where they can play, train, and engage in positive activities.” Forbes added: “The renovated court will have a significant impact on the Juba Sound community and surrounding areas. It will provide a safe and structured environment for young people to develop their basketball skills, stay active, and engage in healthy competition. Additionally, the court will serve as a community hub, fostering social interaction, mentorship, and a sense of pride among residents. With added features such as dusk-to-dawn lighting and enhanced fencing, the facility will be safer and more accessible for extended use. Ultimately, this renovation supports youth development, promotes physical well-being, and strengthens community bonds.” Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Social Services Hon. Rachel Taylor said, “this mission is a culmination of public, private partnership where the youth of the Turks and Caicos Islands are the winners. We are grateful for this support as we commend the work of the Sandals Foundation and Beaches Turks and Caicos resort of helping to foster a safer and healthier community for our youth.”

“This partnership goes beyond the just sports for this community. This is the first phase of development for the social and physical development of our youth. We stand proud of beneficiaries of volunteerism from our partners the Sandals Foundation in community development and education for the youth of the Caribbean. We are looking forward to the continuation of other developments that will help u maintain our beautiful by nature, Turks and Caicos Islands,” Taylor noted.

Across the Caribbean, the Sandals Foundation supports the creation and maintenance of community spaces that facilitate youth sports and nurture the health and wellbeing of residents.

SWA Sharks Take Command as Clausura Season Reaches Crucial Stage



The SWA Sharks Team

The Provo Premier League's Clausura season is heating up, and SWA Sharks FC have stamped their authority at the top of the table with an impressive start.

With four wins and one draw from five matches, the Sharks now hold 13 points, giving them a commanding lead over the competition. Their dominance is further highlighted by a staggering +25 goal difference, showcasing their attacking firepower and defensive stability.

With just a few games left in the season, the race for the top spot is becoming more intense. Can anyone stop the Sharks?

While SWA Sharks FC enjoy their place at the summit, Teachers FC remain in close pursuit. Sitting in second place with 8 points from

two wins and two draws, they have yet to suffer a defeat. Their +12 goal difference reflects their attacking efficiency, but they will need to turn draws into victories if they want to mount a serious title challenge.

Right behind them is Academy Eagles FC, a team that has played one game fewer than the top two. With 7 points from three matches (2 wins, 1 draw), they are in an excellent position to climb higher if they can maintain their strong performances. Their +6 goal difference suggests they have the balance needed to compete at the top, making them a potential dark horse in the title race.

The competition for the remaining top-four spots is getting fierce. Cheshire Hall FC and Provo Unit-

ed SC are locked in a tight battle, both sitting on 6 points after four matches. However, Cheshire Hall FC's -2 goal difference gives them a slight advantage over Provo United SC, who have a -4 goal difference. These teams have struggled with consistency, winning two matches but also suffering two losses each. With a few more games left, every point counts, and both clubs will be desperate to solidify their standing in the league and keep their hopes alive for a higher finish.

At the lower end of the table, Beaches FC and Teachers Young Strikers continue to face challenges. Beaches FC have managed just one win from five games, leaving them in sixth place with 3 points. Their -6 goal difference suggests

they have been competitive but have struggled to convert performances into results.

Meanwhile, Teachers Young Strikers find themselves in deep trouble, having lost all five of their matches. With a worrying -31 goal difference, their defensive frailties have been exposed time and time again, and they now risk finishing the season without a single point.

Match Day Showdowns – March 8 This Saturday, March 8, two crucial fixtures could have major implications for the standings:

🕒 6:30 PM EST – Academy Eagles FC vs. Provo United SC

This match will be key in shaping the race for a top-three finish. A win for Academy Eagles could push them into contention for the title, while Provo United will be desperate to gain ground in the table.

🕒 8:30 PM EST – Beaches FC vs. Cheshire Hall FC

Beaches FC must win if they want to avoid finishing at the bottom, but they face a Cheshire Hall FC side eager to stay in the top four. This could be a decisive match for both teams.

With SWA Sharks FC holding a solid lead, the question remains: Can any team catch them? Teachers FC and Academy Eagles FC are the closest challengers, but they need to be nearly perfect in their upcoming matches.

Meanwhile, the fight for mid-table positioning and survival will add extra intensity to the remaining fixtures. Expect high-stakes football as teams battle for every point in the thrilling Clausura season of the Provo Premier League.

Turks and Caicos Athletes Achieve Personal Bests at Jamaica Meets

A group of promising young athletes from the Turks and Caicos Islands delivered standout performances at the three-day Jamaica Carifta Trials, which commenced on February 28, 2025. Among the highlights of the meet, Rayvon Black, Elisu Ali, and Daens Saint Hilaire all recorded personal bests across their respective events, showcasing their growing talent on the regional stage.

Rayvon Black impressed in multiple disciplines, registering personal bests in three events. He threw an impressive 39.50 meters in the Un-

der-17 boys' discus event, clocked 22.29 seconds in the 200m sprint, and delivered a strong 49.24-second performance in the 400m race. Black, who currently attends May Pen High School in Clarendon, Jamaica, continues to solidify his status as a versatile young athlete. Elisu Ali also delivered a standout performance, running a personal best of 49.47 seconds in the 400m. Meanwhile, Daens Saint Hilaire displayed his sprinting prowess, clocking 22.46 seconds in the 200m race. His success follows another recent milestone, having re-

corded a blistering 11.12 seconds in the 100m just a week prior at a development meet.

Saint Hilaire and fellow athlete Kimani Deans are both students at Jamaica College, a school known for producing elite track and field talents. Meanwhile, the lone female representative from Turks and Caicos, Eunice Missick, specializes in middle-distance events and is currently enrolled at The St. Andrew High School for Girls in Jamaica.

These athletes have deep roots in their homeland, with Black hav-

ing attended Ona Ginton Primary School, while Ali, Saint Hilaire, and Deans are past students of the Louis Garland Thomas High School.

Their recent performances at the Jamaica Carifta Trials mark a significant milestone in their athletic journeys, serving as a testament to their dedication and hard work. As they continue to improve and compete against the best in the region, the future looks bright for these young Turks and Caicos athletes on the road to greater success.