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Border Force Reaping Success



Simons Sounds Urgent Call for Airport and Infrastructure Overhaul PG8





Border Force Reaping Success: Immigration Minister Highlights Major Gains in Budget Address

The Ministry of Immigration and Border Services is making significant strides in securing the Turks and Caicos Islands' borders and safeguarding its economy, according to Minister Hon. Jamell Robinson, who delivered his budget address to Parliament on Tuesday.

Robinson reported that the ministry exceeded its revenue targets for the year, achieving 102% of revised projections. Actual collections stood at \$238.1 million against a target of \$233.5 million. Operating expenditures came in at \$25.8 million, slightly under the target of \$26.8 million—a 3.9% underspend resulting in approximately \$1 million in

The minister outlined persistent challenges facing the border force, including continued instability in Haiti that fuels illegal migration, human smuggling, and the flow of illicit drugs and firearms. Despite these threats, Robinson praised the dedication of border force personnel who have processed, detained, and repatriated 3,412 individuals from 27 vessels this year, compared to 2,882 from 23 boats in the previous fiscal year. Inland enforcement efforts have also been robust, with over 450 individuals removed between January and March 2025. Additionally, the border force intercepted 385 seizures of prohibited or restricted goods, resulting in penalties totaling approximately \$385,234.90.

Enhanced inspection capabilities are paying dividends as well. Portable scanners recently acquired by the ministry have enabled the examination of 265 containers since January, uncovering 11 discrepancies and generating \$9,346.01 in duties and \$4,463.23 in penalties. Transit sheds recorded 43 detections of undeclared goods during the year to date, while in the third quarter alone, there were 66 detections, including six drug busts and one firearm seizure.

Trade compliance efforts continue to bolster revenue collection, with \$1.3 million in unpaid customs duties and fees recovered from five major importers between September 2024 and January 2025. Overall, trade compliance efforts have yielded \$1,752,539.11 since May 2024.

To sustain momentum, the ministry is investing in technology and equipment. An additional \$5 million is budgeted this year to advance the border management system, currently in its evaluation phase, aimed at digitizing and streamlining services. Another \$400,000 is earmarked for purchasing vehicles to support enforcement operations, addressing mobility challenges.

The budget also supports expanding the K-9 unit with an allocation of \$170,000, up from \$160,000 last year. This investment includes the establishment of a new K-9 unit in Grand Turk and enhancements in Providenciales.

Other notable allocations include over \$500,000 for forensic and fraud detection tools, scanning technology for transit sheds, and equipment to strengthen field operations. Over \$2 million is directed towards the implementation of a Labour Market Information System, aiming to better match Turks and Caicos Islanders with mid- and upper-management jobs.

Robinson also highlighted the ministry's role in advancing diplomatic protocol standards, including collaboration with the Bahamas and the potential for TCI to become a full CARICOM member.

He concluded by emphasizing the ministry's commitment to protecting national security, promoting fair trade, and ensuring the well-being of the country. The budget, he said, underscores the ministry's dedication to investing in the tools and personnel necessary to confront threats and build a safer, more prosperous Turks and Caicos Islands.



Immigration and Border Service Minister Hon. Jamell Robinson



Guest Service Expert/Server

Job Specification:

- · Take food and drink orders from customers accurately and with a positive attitude.
- Write patrons' food orders on order slips, memorize orders, or enter orders into computers for transmittal to kitchen staff.
- Engage with customers in a friendly manner.Knowledge of the menu, with the ability to make
- suggestions.
 Ensure tables are enjoying their meals and take action
- to correct any problems.
 Collect payments from tables.
- Prepare checks that itemize and total meal costs and
- Help food preparation staff when necessary.

Job Requirements:

- Must be able to speak English.
- Must have 3- 5 years experience as a Server.Must have good interpersonal skills.
- · Must have experience working in busy restaurant
- Must be able to stand for long hours, and work efficiently under pressur

Salary expectation - \$9.00 - \$11.00 per hour

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Job Specification:

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- Hires, trains, and manages kitchen staff.
- Sets the staffing schedule. Leads pre-shift meetings.

- Develops recipes and menus.

 Determines plating and presentation plans.

 Orders and evaluates the quality of new food.
- Stocks the kitchen with necessary supplies. Helps with financial planning and budgeting.
- Handles and resolves customer complaints
- Makes sure the kitchen staff follows all food safety laws.
 Sets and implements the kitchen policies and procedures.

- Must be able to speak English
- Must have 3-5 years experience as an Executive Chef
 Certificates and advancement qualifications

- Must be able to work in a restaurant and kitchen
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IT Manager

Job Specification:

- Infrastructure Management: Handling physical servers, virtualization (Hyper-V/VMware/Cloud), Active Directory, DHCP, DNS, RAID, O365, SQL, Oracle Database, backup, storage, networking, and various hardware devices (laptop, desktop, tablet, printer, scanner).

 • Assessment and Implementation: Assessing, designing,
- implementing, and migrating/upgrading virtual infrastructure based on Hyper-V/VMware/Cloud. Also, managing structured cabling, switches, VLANs, routers, load balancers, access points, and rack installations.

 System Maintenance: Maintaining computer networks and
- related computing environments, including hardware, systems software, and applications such as POS (Symphony), PMS (OPERA), and other configurations Ensuring data security, network access, and backup
- Support and Project Management: Providing support and project experience in a multi-technology environment, understanding guest and owner requirements, and meeting market standards and customer expectations.
- Technical Leadership: Providing technical leadership and expertise, collaborating closely with development teams to ensure that IT infrastructure meets business requirements.

- Minimum 3-5 years of experience in the hospitality
- Qualification: Bachelor of Information Technology/Network

Salary expectations - \$66,000.00 - \$70,000.00 per annum

Major Crime Down by 67 Percent in Five Cays: Community Celebrates Progress, Aims for More

By Vivian Tyson NEWSLINE Editor-In-Chief

Residents of Five Cays have reason to celebrate as major crime in the community has plummeted by 67 percent compared to the same time last year.

The announcement came on Thursday, May 29, 2025, during a community meeting led by Commissioner Fitz Bailey and Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force (RTCIPF) top brass, also attended by Minister of Education Youth Sports and Culture, and Member of Parliament for Five Cays, South Dock and Chalk Sound, Hon. Rachel Taylor.

Commissioner Bailey praised the community's efforts in reducing especially major crime and highlighted key improvements.

"In 2024, at this time, we had recorded three murders," he said. "This year, there's been just one, representing a 67 percent reduction in murder. That's commendable, and you need to clap yourselves for doing well."

Sexual offenses this year over the same period last year has also seen a positive shift. "In 2024, there was one reported rape," Commissioner Bailey added. "For 2025, there have been no reports, and that's commendable."

Robbery Still Poses a Challenge

Despite the encouraging figures on major crimes, Bailey cautioned that robberies remain a serious issue.

"While we had fewer incidents overall, robberies have increased significantly, with over 30 incidents compared to last year. That's where the problem is," he said. Burglaries



Minister of Education Youth Sport and Culture, Hon. Rachel Taylor (standing at right), addresses the Five Cays Town Hall Meeting organized by the Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force on Thursday, May 29, 2025. From left - ACP Darron Williams, ag DCP Kendall Grant, Commissioner Fitz Bailey, ag ACP Dwight Gardiner, ag ACP Mat Newton and Actin ASP Kirton Sutton

remained constant, with three incidents reported in both years, although there was a slight uptick in attempted burglary.

Community Must Learn How to Settle Disputes

Bailey acknowledged the progress while urging the community to take ownership of resolving conflicts and minor disputes.

"Oftentimes, the police are called to re-

spond to matters that, in an ideal community, should be addressed by community leaders and elders," he said. "We need more community activism and restorative justice solutions so that the police can focus on major crime."

He emphasized the role of the church, spiritual leaders, and community elders in mediating disputes before they escalate.

"The blame game cannot unite us," he said. "We need solutions. That's the way forward."

Taylor Wants Residents to Stay engaged

For her part, Hon. Rachel Taylor commended the police for their efforts and encouraging residents to stay engaged.

"I take the opportunity to thank the police for keeping us safe," she said. "It's important that we ask questions and hold them accountable for their promises."

Taylor highlighted the importance of community involvement, especially given the progress achieved so far.

"There has been improvement, and I want us to put our hands together for the police," she said. "I also want to thank the residents of Five Cays for attending tonight."

Looking ahead, Taylor announced plans to expand community meetings beyond Five Cays to South Dock and Chalk Sound, aiming for quarterly meetings to maintain momentum

"Our proposal includes regular updates, and we'll consider budget implications to invest in security—not just for Five Cays, but for the entire Turks and Caicos Islands," she said.

Despite challenges, both Commissioner Bailey and MP Taylor expressed optimism that with continued community collaboration, Five Cays can further reduce crime and become a model for other communities across the country.

"Together, we can build a safer, more resilient Five Cays," Taylor concluded. "Let's keep working together."

Six Islanders Recognized at Inaugural Brunch; Four New Queens Crowned in Pageant Milestone

Six outstanding Turks and Caicos Islanders—one from each island—were honoured at the Inaugural All-Island Unsung Heroes Brunch, hosted by Myrna-Lisa's Myriad Pageant and Entertainment in partnership with Myrna-Lisa's Guiding Light, a nonprofit established in memory of the late matriarch Mrs. Myrna Mills-Gray.

The elegant ceremony, held on Sunday, May 18, paid tribute to individuals who have made quiet but significant contributions to national development, cultural preservation, and community service. Each honoree received commemorative awards, floral tributes, and gifts, presented by family and community members in an afternoon filled with love, laughter, and reflection.

2024–2025 All-Island Unsung Heroes Honorees:

- Mr. W. Blythe Duncanson (Providenciales) Pioneering media figure and founder of the first locally-owned newspaper still in operation today.
- Mr. Lewellyn Handfield (North Caicos) Esteemed businessman and entrepreneur behind Lew1 Shipping.
- Mr. Ed Forbes (Grand Turk) Longtime contributor to the boating and marine service industry.
- Ms. Emily Malcolm (South Caicos)
 Veteran educator and respected community leader.
- Mrs. Janet Walkin (Middle Caicos)
 Tireless advocate for grassroots development and civic engagement.
- Mrs. Thelma Lightbourne-Kennedy (Salt Cay) Beloved cultural preservationist and heritage champion.

Founder and President Ms. Alicia Swann de-

livered a deeply personal address, reminiscing on her upbringing in South Caicos and the everyday heroes who inspired her.

"The true heroes to me were the fishermen, the mechanics, my grandfather William Henry Mills, my grandmother who served the elderly, and my mother—a woman of faith and resilience. Celebrating our heroes while they are alive to feel the love and appreciation is one of my greatest honors."

A Historic Night for Pageantry in Turks and Caicos

The celebration continued later that evening with the Second Annual One Nation TCI Pageant, where four new queens were crowned, doubling the number from last year and signaling growing regional and international ambitions.

- 2025 Titleholders:Miss One Nation TCI InternationalMs. Shanice Fletcher
- Miss Teen One Nation TCI International Ms. Jay'niqua Wilson
- Miss One Nation TCI Regional Ms. Jenny Louis
- Miss Teen One Nation TCI Regional
 Ms. Rihanna Fulford

With poised confidence, these young women are set to represent the Turks and Caicos Islands in eight international and regional pageants—up from three in 2024—while also taking part in community outreach, fashion events, and youth engagement initiatives throughout the year.

Outgoing queen Ms. Selena Grant, who made national history by placing First Runner-Up in the Miss Global International Pageant, reflected on the powerful impact of her reign. Inspired to continue the legacy

of service, she recently launched her own nonprofit, Barbara's Lighthouse, in memory of her grandmother, the late educator Ms. Barbara Francis.

Fashion, Culture, and Forward Momentum Looking ahead, the organization is preparing for the return of Turks and Caicos Islands Fashion Week, after the resounding success of its inaugural staging earlier this year. The event has become a vital platform for local and regional designers and artists, offering exposure, business development, and collaborative opportunities within the creative industries.

A Community Effort

This milestone weekend was made possible through the generous support of sponsors, partners, and community members who believe in the organization's vision of empowerment and excellence.

The organizers extend heartfelt thanks to The Hartling Group, the official venue sponsor of Turks and Caicos Islands Fashion Week, and to Beaches Turks and Caicos Resort Villages and Spa, Ports of Call Resort, and Barbetta Restaurant for their continued partnership.

The organisation also expressed deep appreciation also goes out to Froggies on da Beach, Omar's Beach Hut, Be You Spa, Grace Bay Market, Aziza, 88.5 FM The Beat, and Radio Turks and Caicos, whose unwavering support helped make the events a success. The organisation also expressed additional gratitude is extended to local brands and businesses including Wellington Collections, Projetech, Conch Shack, HerbMe, Beche, Harbor Deli and Gift Shop, Big Mike's Sports Bar, and Big Mike's Taxi and Tours, Caribbean

Cruisin' TCI Ferry, Barbor Deli and Gift Shop and Big Mike's Taxi and Tour services and Big Mike's Sports Bar, whose collaboration and services were invaluable.

A special thank-you is reserved for Paula Rigby and Apple Astwood (Mama P and Granddaughter) for bringing joy, humor, and heartfelt entertainment to the Unsung Honorees and their guests. The organization also thanks Flow for its continued support of community-centered programming.

With strong community roots and a growing international presence, Myrna-Lisa's Myriad Pageant and Entertainment, along with Myrna-Lisa's Guiding Light, continues to redefine what it means to celebrate excellence—honouring the past, empowering the present, and inspiring the future.

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\$6.7 Million AI Rollout Set to Revolutionize Education at TCICC

By Vivian Tyson NEWSLINE Editor-In-Chief

In a landmark move for the future of education in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), the Government has announced a transformative \$6.7 million artificial intelligence (AI) and extended reality (XR) initiative at the Turks and Caicos Islands Community College (TCICC).

The announcement was made by the Honourable Rachel Taylor, Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, during her 2025–2026 Budget Debate presentation in the House of Assembly on May 21.

The project, established through a ground-breaking partnership between TCICC and global leader EON Reality, will officially launch in September 2025 and is being hailed as a major milestone in the territory's Vision 2040 strategy. The investment comprises a \$6.55 million software grant from EON Reality and a \$216,216 contribution from the TCI Government.

"Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are transforming education by making learning more immersive, interactive and engaging, turning passive learning into active exploration. We are placing resources where they are most needed and will make the greatest impact," Taylor noted.

Immersive Education for a 21st Century Workforce

The Al-enhanced learning initiative aims to transform technical and vocational education in critical sectors including maritime training, hospitality, construction, and beyond. Through immersive simulations, students will gain hands-on experience in virtual environments that mimic real-world conditions.

"In maritime training, students will prac-

tice navigation and emergency drills. In hospitality, they'll manage virtual hotels and tourism experiences. In construction, they'll learn to operate heavy machinery and handle tools—all before stepping into a real workplace," Taylor explained.

Backed by research from Stanford University citing 75% higher retention rates among students taught through VR, the programme positions TCI at the forefront of digital learning innovation in the Caribbean.

Part of a Broader Digital Transformation

The AI rollout is just one component of the Ministry's wider digital strategy. Taylor announced a comprehensive audit of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) ecosystem in all public schools. This review will guide a phased modernization of infrastructure and teaching methods, supported by newly drafted AI policies for teachers, students, and parents.

Additionally, a partnership with GIGA, a joint initiative by UNICEF and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), is underway to ensure every school in the country has equitable access to high-speed internet. The partnership will also see the distribution of 565 new laptops to government schools, further narrowing the digital divide.

"This is the bridge where innovation, equity and access connect today's learners with tomorrow's opportunities," Taylor said.

Boosting Financial Literacy and AI Readiness

In a move to prepare students for the digital economy, Taylor also announced the launch of two cutting-edge educational platforms: the Sustainable Stock Market Game and the Eagle Eye Al Tutor. Spon-

sored by WizdomCRM Caribbean Limited, these platforms will be made available to 1,000 secondary students starting in the next school year—at no cost to the students or government.

The initiative aims to bolster digital financial literacy and Al competency and places TCI among only five Caribbean nations to benefit from this educational collaboration, joining Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Infrastructure and Institutional Growth at TCICC

In anticipation of a rising enrolment at TCICC, the Ministry has earmarked \$134,645 in capital expenditure to furnish a new five-classroom rental block at the college's West Wing in Providenciales. Furthermore, the consultancy for the construction of a new Provo Campus is in the final design stages, with Cabinet approval expected later this year.

Renovations have already been completed at the Grand Turk campus, including staffroom upgrades, student lounge improvements, and paving works, reflecting the government's ongoing commitment to developing lifelong learning institutions.

A Vision Rooted in Human Capital Development

Taylor emphasized that the AI rollout and broader tech initiatives are not standalone investments but part of a deeply integrated human capital development agenda. With new investments in curriculum reform, teacher training, and infrastructure, the Government's education strategy is laser-focused on creating a resilient, future-ready workforce.

"we're not just crossing bridges—we are building highways of opportunity. We are connecting the traditional to the transformational, and we are investing in our people," Taylor pointed out.

The \$6.7 million AI partnership underscores a defining moment in the evolution of education in the Turks and Caicos Islands—a moment where innovation meets inclusion and where local learners are being equipped not just for today, but for a global future.



TAYLOR... "Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are transforming education by making learning more immersive."

HJ Robinson's Daysha Andrews to Represent TCI at International Letter-Writing Competition

The Ministry of Public Safety and Utilities, in collaboration with the Turks and Caicos Islands Postal Services, proudly announces that Daysha Andrews, a student of the Helena Jones Robinson High School, has been selected to represent the Turks and Caicos Islands in the 54th International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People, organized by the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

This marks the first time the Turks and Caicos Islands has participated in this global competition, which sees entries from over 190 countries. Daysha's powerful and expressive letter captured the spirit of this year's theme, earning her the honour of being the country's inaugural representative on the international stage. The international results are expected to be released in October 2025, in celebration of World Post Day.

In addition to Daysha's outstanding performance, the Ministry also recognizes the accomplishments of the national finalists:

- Nathan Garland of Shining Stars Preparatory School, who was named Second Runner-Up, and
- Laila Reynolds of Best Institute, who secured the position of Third Runner-Up.

Presentations have already been made by the Ministry and the Postal Services to Daysha Andrews and Nathan Garland in recognition of their achievements. A presentation to Laila Reynolds will be made in the near



Daysha Andrews collects a gift from Hon. Otis Morris, Minister for Public Safety and Utilities.

future to honour her contribution and commendable effort.

Postmaster General, Ms. Elizabeth James, expressed her pride in the students and the significance of the territory's participation:

"This is the first time the Turks and Caicos Islands Postal Services has participated in this

prestigious competition. I would like to congratulate the seven students from the four schools that entered. All the letters were exceptional, but only one person could be chosen. I would like to thank the winner, Ms. Daysha Andrews, and I wish her all the best as she now competes internationally with

over 190 other participants. The result is expected in October 2025 for World Post Day." Minister for Public Safety and Utilities, the Honourable Otis Morris, praised the initiative and student involvement:

"We are incredibly proud of all our young writers who participated in this landmark event. Daysha has made history for Turks and Caicos, and we eagerly anticipate the international outcome. This competition underscores the importance of self-expression, literacy, and global connection. We thank every student who participated and look forward to even greater engagement next year." Permanent Secretary, Mr. Desmond Wilson, added:

"This competition has sparked a new wave of inspiration among our students. The Ministry remains committed to nurturing opportunities that amplify youth voices and celebrate their potential. We are grateful to our Postal Services team for spearheading this important initiative and ensuring its success."

The Ministry of Public Safety and Utilities and the Postal Services Department extend their sincere appreciation to the students, parents, educators, and schools who supported this effort. As we look ahead, we hope to see greater participation across even more schools and islands in next year's competition.

TCI to Launch National Yacht Registry, Targeting Billion-Dollar Maritime Market

By Vivian Tyson NEWSLINE Editor-In-Chief

The Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) is preparing to chart a new course in the global maritime economy with the launch of a national yacht registry—an ambitious move designed to tap into the booming luxury yacht industry and diversify the country's economic portfolio. The announcement came from Hon. Zhavargo Jolly, Minister of Tourism, Environment, Heritage, Maritime and Gaming, during his first budget debate address in the House of Assembly last week. Minister Jolly said the government will be "crafting a yacht registry in short order" and signaled confidence in the territory's ability to compete in the global maritime sector.
"This is more than a bold idea—it is a high-

"This is more than a bold idea—it is a highgrowth global industry, worth billions of dollars, where nations smaller than ours have already made their mark," said Jolly. "The Cayman Islands. The Marshall Islands. The British Virgin Islands. They've shown us what is possible. Now it's our turn."

The proposed yacht registry is envisioned as a premium platform for the registration of superyachts, high-value vessels, and luxury marine assets. According to Jolly, the initiative will rest on three pillars:

Regulatory credibility aligned with international maritime standards,

Luxury service delivery tailored for vessel owners, managers, and agents, and A compelling brand identity rooted in TCI's natural beauty, prestige, and privacy.

"We believe Turks and Caicos can become a globally recognized jurisdiction of choice for luxury yacht registration," he added. "This is not just about vessels. It's about vision"

Strategic Maritime Reforms Underway

The announcement forms part of a broader strategic reform agenda in the maritime sector, which Jolly's Ministry is advancing across four key areas: compliance, safety, human resources, and long-term planning. Following a recent IMO III Code Proxy Audit, the Ministry is implementing a corrective action plan to strengthen TCI's responsibilities as a flag, port, and coastal state. This includes improved enforcement of critical international conventions such as the SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea), COLREGs (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea), and the Load Line Convention.

Additionally, a dedicated maritime website will soon be launched to improve public transparency and accessibility, while inspection protocols are being upgraded to ensure stronger regulatory enforcement.

Raising the Bar for Safety and Training A second component of the reform strategy focuses on building a national maritime safety culture. The government is reinforcing small vessel standards under the SCV Code and enhancing the training of seafarers to meet STCW-95 certification requirements. Emergency preparedness and the regulation of dangerous goods are also receiving renewed focus.

"We are raising the bar across the entire industry," said Jolly. "We're not just looking to modernize—we are investing in a safer, more professional maritime sector."

To support this vision, the Ministry will also launch a National Education and Training Programme for seafarers, and implement a robust Human Resource Strategy to recruit technical professionals and upgrade the national seafarer registry.

Legislative Action and Sovereignty at Sea

The third pillar of reform involves finalizing TCI's National Maritime Policy and Workplan. This document will guide the modernization of accident investigations, harmonize small vessel registration, and introduce legislative reforms on marine liabilities, wreck removal, and navigational safety.

Importantly, TCI is also preparing to enter maritime boundary delimitation negotiations with The Bahamas—a strategic move aimed at securing and defining the country's exclusive economic zone and affirming its sovereign rights at sea.

"These reforms are serious. They are deliberate. And they are overdue," said Jolly. "But even as we strengthen our maritime foundation, we must look ahead to the opportunities of the future."

Economic Diversification with Environmental Integrity

Minister Jolly emphasized that the government's vision for a yacht registry is not only economically ambitious but environmentally conscious.

"We will expand our economy without compromising our environment or our values," he stated. "This is not regulation for regulation's sake. This is nation-building."

The Ministry will explore legislative frameworks, establish partnerships with global maritime bodies, and ensure TCl's infrastructure and personnel meet international standards to attract and support high-value maritime clients.

While no definitive launch date was given, Jolly confirmed the project is a high-priority initiative for his Ministry. He also thanked the Ministry of Finance for their support in shaping the budget to accommodate the registry's development and acknowledged

the foundational work of his predecessor in the Ministry of Tourism.

"As the Honourable Premier said, progress is a relay—not a solo sprint," Jolly concluded. "This yacht registry is our next leg forward. We are ready to take it."

If successful, the TCI Yacht Registry could position the islands as a competitive maritime hub in the region—offering new revenue streams, high-skill jobs, and a stronger global presence for the territory on the high seas.



JOLLY... "This is more than a bold idea it is a high-growth global industry, worth billions of dollars..."

Dozens Graduate from National Hospitality Training

By Vivian Tyson NEWSLINE Editor-In-Chief

Dozens of individuals representing 18 resorts and entities across the Turks and Caicos Islands graduated on Thursday, May 22, from an intensive hospitality training initiative aimed at elevating customer service standards across the territory.

The graduation ceremony, held at the Salvation Army's Brighter Futures Center along Leeward Highway in Providenciales, marked the conclusion of a dynamic three-week program organized by the Turks and Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association (TCHTA) in partnership with the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Education Foundation (CHTAEF).

The training was designed to enhance service delivery not only in hotels and resorts but across all sectors that play a role in the visitor experience. Participants included front-line staff, supervisors, department heads, human resource professionals, and representatives from allied service providers such as Graceway IGA, the Airport Authority, and other key partners in the tourism value chain.

"This training is about raising the bar across the entire tourism industry," said Stacey-Ann Wharton-Albert, Vice President of the TCH-TA. "Tourism is the heart of our economy, and every interaction counts. Whether it's a resort concierge, a cashier at the supermarket, or an officer at the airport, we want every guest to feel that signature Turks and Caicos warmth and professionalism."

What sets this initiative apart, accord-



Participants and facilitators of the TCHTA and CHTAEF Training grouped for a photo op after the ceremony.

ing to Wharton-Albert, is its inclusive and far-reaching approach. While many large resorts have in-house training departments, smaller businesses and allied partners often lack access to structured professional development. This program helps bridge that gap. Sessions were hosted both at central locations and onsite at various properties

across Providenciales. Training also extended to the outer islands, including South Caicos, ensuring that hospitality standards are raised across the entire country.

Wharton-Albert pointed out that since its inception in 2023, the initiative has trained more than 1,000 tourism workers, and each year it continues to evolve. This year marked

the first time that exclusive training was offered for Human Resources (HR) professionals.

Wharton-Albert noted that HR staff are often tasked with organizing training for others but are rarely given opportunities for their own development.

"We've turned that around. HR professionals need support too — they're key to the health and growth of our workforce."

The training focused on a wide range of hospitality fundamentals including customer service, guest engagement, cultural awareness, leadership, and communication. Participants praised the program for its relevance, practical value, and the opportunity to connect with professionals from across the industry.

Looking ahead, Wharton-Albert said the TCHTA plans to expand the training initiative even further by targeting public sector employees in areas such as immigration, customs, and other guest-facing departments. The aim is to create a fully integrated tourism experience from the moment guests arrive in the country to the moment they depart

"Our goal is to build a national culture of service excellence," said Wharton-Albert. "This is not just about the hotels — it's about ensuring every visitor receives world-class service, wherever they go in Turks and Caicos." She said the TCHTA has committed to continuing the program annually and is encouraging more partners, both public and private, to join in future sessions.

Whites and blacks together again? Another opportunity, perhaps

The Christian Bible recorded the account of the dramatic conversion of Saul of Tarsus while he was on the road to Damascus to persecute Christians. Once a zealous, and a hate-filled persecutor of a group of fellow Jews whom he considered as a religious cult which had departed from orthodox Judaism, he saw the light. Well, not at first, as he was blinded by a light before he then saw the light.

After submitting to Christ it was stated that literal scales fell off his eyes — which, possibly, was symbolic of him coming to the truth, and about the error of his ways. As I thought about Saul, who, subsequently, assumed the name Paul, and about the second chance that he had been given to do the right thing, I thought about the second chance that has been given to whites and African Americans to reunite against the wealthy oligarchic forces now in the ascendancy under the aegis of the Donald Trump Administration. Will the scales of their ignorance fall from their eyes?

Now, someone might have noticed and determined my usage of the word "reunite" in reference to American whites with African Americans as erroneous — given the ravages of hundreds of years of chattel slavery, from which white society benefited greatly, and given the continued mistreatment of African Americans post the Antebellum South in the era of racial segregation under the infamous Jim Crow laws.

But I want to assure my readers that there were no missed steps in my usage of the word "reunite", as both racial and ethnic groups — more so poor whites and black people who were freed from the bondage of slavery or who were born free — did come together, for a brief moment in time, to confront the rich and the powerful oligarchic forces of the plantocracy of the South.

Before blacks and whites marched together to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, to hear the Reverend Dr Martin Luther King Jr's famous 'I Have a Dream' speech, which was delivered on August 28, 1963, they had joined forces — to great effect — long before, which had bred much fear in the rich monied class.

Poor whites were as much against slavery as black people were. The oppression and the brutality against the latter — having no rights under the law and working for their owners, who sometimes hired them out to work for others — is a well-known historical fact.

But what, perhaps, is not familiar to many students of history is that poor whites resented African chattel slavery as well, because they could not compete against it in the labour market, as the free labour of slavery undercut their bargaining power with respect to the paid labour that they brought to the table.

In a paper that was written and submitted by Jeffrey Glossner as a part of his dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History, The University of Mississippi, in August of 2023, he stated that:

"The so-called 'poor whites' of the antebellum South have often been overlooked by historians due to their perceived insignificance to the political and cultural development of the South. However, within the context of the sectional debate over slavery, poor whites represented a disturbing presence for elite southerners who sought to defend slavery on the basis of white supremacy, a political platform built on the promise of universal white superiority. In order to defend the slave labour system from northern promises of white supremacy under free labour and to justify widespread southern white poverty, the architects of the antebellum southern cultural ideal marginalised poor whites and depicted them as inferior creatures who did not deserve the privileges of southern white suprema-

"This dissertation argues that this discourse about poor whites played a significant role in the development of southern social and political culture, and stood at the nexus of central issues that contributed to crises that led to the [American] Civil War. Proslavery elites feared poor whites due to their frequent interactions with enslaved black labourers that exacerbated southern fears of violent insurrection. The presence of poor whites caused tension with efforts to modernise slaverv and adapt it to modern industries. And, most importantly, they appeared to be potential political allies to antislavery northerners.

The problem that poor whites posed to efforts to adapt slavery to the modern world resulted in the further radicalisation of proslavery ideology and the emergence of anti-democratic ideas within the politics of slavery. These provided increased impetus for the southern slave owning elite to seek secession from the United States in order to protect the institution of slavery."

That state of affairs in the economy created tension between poor whites and blacks. And, yet, despite that tension, poor whites and blacks had formed a friendly social bond otherwise. Dr Keri Leigh Merritt, in her book, Leaderless Men — Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South, described the interaction between both racial groups in the following manner:

"Market-driven interracial dealings were exceedingly common, particularly in grog shops, brothels, and gambling houses. [Jeff] Forret described the relationship between the two underclasses as a complex, curious mix of love and hate, equality and inequality. At times, shared economic deprivation and impoverishment tempered racial hostilities and drew slaves and poor whites together into civil, cordial, and even intimate and loving relationships."

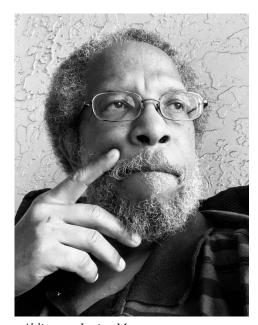
Thus, he concluded, "slave and poor white interaction both reinforced and challenged southern racial boundaries"

"Despite masters' best efforts, therefore, slaves and poor whites in plantation areas, towns, and cities had quite a bit of interaction — and some of those relationships, of course, were sexual. Although there were cases of relationships between poor white men and black women, most historians have studied the more commonly reported sexual interactions between poor white women and black men. [American historian] Ira Berlin found that beginning in colonial times, the largest incidence of interracial sex in America occurred between white servant women and black men. By the late antebellum period, historian Eugene Genovese asserted, "White women of all classes had black lovers and sometimes husbands in all parts of the South, especially in the towns and cities."

Poor white women participated in the underground economy to a large extent, certainly more frequently than slave women. Forret estimated that impoverished women comprised about a quarter of all whites involved in the bi-racial trading network. Given how commonly they engaged in commerce with free blacks and slaves, miscegenation was all but inevitable. Whether abandoned, widowed, or simply alone while their men were gone for weeks or months at a time, these women had to make ends meet as best as possible. Sometimes they turned to black men as romantic lovers, and sometimes sexual favours were used as payments for goods. But one thing is certain: interracial sex between the lower classes happened with relative frequency."

As time progressed the social relationships between whites and blacks found some commonality in a fight against the rich oligarchic plantocracy elites for their rights as workers. The oligarchs soon came up with a strategy to blunt and destroy that forward push against their political and economic power by the Southern workforce by using racism as a wedge between whites and blacks to great effect.

The disdain for poor whites by the white elite never went away, but if giving the poor whites a sense of racial superiority over the blacks and a false sense of social equality with them could help to retain their power, then that was a very small price to pay.

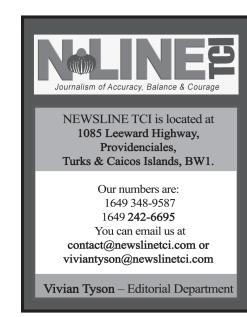


Aldington Junior Murray

Just as then, in the American antebellum South, the oligarchs now, in our time, have the same degree of disdain for lower class whites as they do for African Americans. If anyone doubts that, one only needs to observe the news reports and to peruse the Internet with the various blogs about white MAGA Republicans expressing rage, fear and regret in relation to what they have determined as a rank betrayal of their welfare by the Trump Administration in favour of the rich.

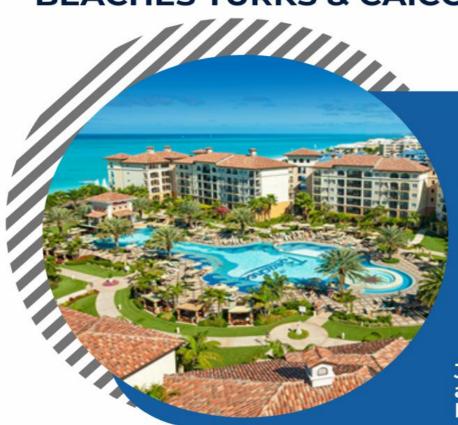
Perhaps whites will now see how the white power elite, the very rich one per cent among us, has used racism to keep them as well as African Americans down politically and economically. Perhaps this is a wake-up call that they ought to heed and reunite with people of colour, putting aside racism, in order to safeguard the welfare of all who live outside on the periphery of the wealthy oligarchs.

Republished from Public Opinion, the fortnightly online thought leadership publication. publicopinion.news Aldington Junior Murray is a writer, teacher, and social work professional.



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Simons Sounds Urgent Call for Airport and Infrastructure Overhaul in Budget Debate

The country's booming tourism economy may be soaring, but one Member of Parliament believes the state of the Howard Hamilton International Airport in Providenciales is dragging it down.

In what was widely regarded as one of the most impassioned speeches of the 2025/2026 Budget Debate contributions, All Candidate Hon. Sharon Simons praised the Washington Misick-led administration for delivering another record-breaking budget—valued at \$549.4 million, up from the previous year's \$506.5 million outturn—but she did not shy away from highlighting persistent deficiencies.

Simons called on the government to match private sector investment with public infrastructure—warning that the lack of a modern airport terminal risks undermining the visitor experience and economic gains.

"We cannot afford to continue for a top-class tourism destination attracting record-setting visitor arrivals to have our guests in long lines in the sun or drenched in rain as they depart our country," Simons declared. "It's not a good final impression for a place that markets itself as paradise." Simons pointed to long-standing warnings, dating back to 2012, about the need for a new airport terminal to support growing air traffic. She noted that major hotel investments, including the Ritz-Carlton project, had already signaled that tourism arrivals would surge, yet public infrastructure had failed to keep pace.

The MP for Grand Turk also raised alarms over the lack of planning synchronization between the government and private sector.

"We sat by and watched these developments materialize with no plan to improve government infrastructure in tandem," she said, criticizing

what she described as reactive governance.

Simons also called for urgent action on traffic congestion, particularly in Providenciales, where she noted the Leeward Highway and areas such as Blue Hills and Five Cays are becoming choke points during peak hours. She welcomed the \$6.6 million allocated for roads across all islands, but urged that more strategic planning be applied.

Turning to the maritime sector, Simons advocated for properly outfitted water sports staging areas in Grand Turk and Providenciales, and questioned the prolonged delay in building a staging dock at the Carnival Cruise Port.

"When will Providenciales get its facility?" she asked.

On broader fiscal strategy, Simons offered a progressive alternative to increased licensing fees, which she warned would burden local residents. Instead, she proposed a tax on undeveloped land owned by foreign investors as a means of expanding revenue without worsening the cost of living.

The Grand Turk representative also pressed for clarity on Carnival Cruise Line's recent reduction in ship calls to the capital island, and referenced speculative plans involving rival cruise giant MSC.

"The people of Grand Turk are becoming impatient," Simons said, demanding answers on the future of cruise tourism in the country's historic capital.

Simons did commend several positive initiatives in the new budget, including over \$12 million in soft dock development, and multimillion-dollar capital projects for education, health, and public safety. However, she criticized the slow progress and incomplete state of several ongo-



SIMONS.... "We cannot afford to continue for a top-class tourism destination attracting record-setting visitor arrivals to have our guests in long lines in the sun or drenched in rain as they depart our country,"

ing projects in Grand Turk, including roadworks and retaining wall construction.

Meanwhile, Simons called for a cross-ministerial infrastructure task force to expedite critical upgrades, especially within the education sector. She pledged to hold the government accountable for implementing the budget's commitments.

"This budget is more than numbers,"

she said. "It is a declaration of intent—a promise to the people. And it is our responsibility as their representatives to ensure those promises are delivered."

With her firm yet constructive tone, Simons made clear that while she supports the government's direction, she will not hesitate to demand better outcomes for the people of Turks and Caicos Islands.

SECURING OF PROPERTIES AND CONSTRUCTION SITES PRIOR TO HURRICANE SEASON

The Department of Planning is reminding the public of the importance of securing properties and construction sites as the 2025 hurricane season approaches. The season officially begins on June 1st and ends on November 30th.

Key Precautions for Safety:

• Secure Loose Materials: Ensure all loose building materials, debris, and discarded items, such as old zinc sheets, are removed or properly secured to prevent them from becoming hazardous projectiles during

strong winds or hurricanes.

- Brace/Strap Containers: Properly anchor freight containers or relocate them to a safe location.
- Clear Construction Sites: Contractors and property owners must remove debris from construction sites and dispose of it at public dump facilities.
- Safe Storage for Materials: Building suppliers and contractors should store construction materials and equipment in a secure facility or remove them from the site when a

hurricane approach.

The Department emphasises that it is the responsibility of property owners and contractors to ensure their sites are secured to minimise risks to life and property. This includes maintaining clean and safe environments and adhering to the guidelines outlined above.

To support public safety, the Department of Planning seeks the community's cooperation in reporting Non-Compliance. Members of the public who observe unsecured prop-

erties or construction sites are encouraged to lodge a complaint with the Department. Contact us via: Phone: (649) 338-2203 (Grand Turk) or (649) 338-4335 (Providenciales) Email: planningconsultation@gov.tc

The Department of Planning remains committed to working with the community to ensure a safe and resilient built environment during the hurricane season. Thank you for your cooperation in safeguarding our islands.

South Caicos MP Calls for Greater Focus on Island's Development

By Vivian Tyson NEWSLINE Editor-In-Chief

South Caicos Member of Parliament Hon. Tamell Seymour made a passionate appeal in the House of Assembly during the 2025/2026 national budget debate, urging the Government to deliver tangible results and greater attention to the development needs of South Caicos.

In a wide-ranging and spirited contribution, Hon. Seymour welcomed several allocations in the national budget aimed at bolstering the infrastructure and economic prospects of the island. However, he also issued a clear call for increased support, faster execution, and intentional policy backing to unlock South Caicos' full potential.

"South Caicos is again on the verge of greatness," Seymour declared, noting a renewed sense of optimism and economic buzz sweeping across the island. "An era of visible and tangible economic advancement is at our doorstep—but the promises must be matched by meaningful action."

Among the notable investments highlighted was the \$3.4 million allocated for infrastructure projects on the island, including continued development of the Hon. Norman B. Saunders International Airport. Seymour praised the improvements to the airport's parking lot—a project he said was long overdue and had drawn criticism from residents and visitors alike. He also commended the \$1 million allocation for housing restoration, calling it a vital step toward preserving family homes and generational legacies.

"We are grateful, but this is only a start," he said, urging for an increase in funding to meet the full scope of housing needs.

Seymour also welcomed the planned development of Cedar Park and \$300,000 earmarked for a functioning district board, which he said would help support community-driven projects and local governance.

Still, he raised pressing concerns—chief among them the need for a comprehensive waste disposal program on the island, which he described as a basic necessity. "This is not a 'nice to have' on our wish list—this is a fundamental necessity that commands top priority," Seymour stressed.

He also called attention to the lack of essential business services in South Caicos, particularly commercial banking and ATM access, which he said denies residents financial autonomy in a modern economy. "In this 21st century, and in this rapidly developing economy, it is inconceivable that basic support services are missing in our smaller islands," he said, calling for government intervention to address the gap left by private-sector decisions.

Transportation for students traveling between islands for national events was another area of concern. Seymour emphasized the need for dignified and reliable interisland transportation to support educational and extracurricular participation.

Referencing the recent milestone of the inaugural American Airlines flight from Miami to South Caicos, Seymour noted the symbolic importance of the event as a launching pad for the island's revitalization. With the Salterra Resort newly opened and the continued success of Sailrock, he described South Caicos as a "compelling destination"

on the rise.

However, he urged government ministries—particularly labor and border services—to ensure locals are prioritized for top positions in these emerging tourism ventures. Quoting the late Hon. Dr. Carlton Mills, Seymour concluded: "No more free lunch."

To sustain momentum, Seymour emphasized the critical need for destination enhancement initiatives—including beautification, infrastructure upgrades, and cultural

preservation—warning that failure to invest strategically could stall or reverse recent gains.

"South Caicos has shown it is ready to rise," Seymour declared. "The question is whether we will give it the wings to soar."

He concluded with a firm reminder: while the budget contains promising allocations for South Caicos, it is the execution, intention, and follow-through that will determine whether the island sees real results.



South Caicos Member of Parliament Hon. Tamell Seymour.

Belliard Calls for National Public Audit Portal to Deepen Accountability

By Vivian Tyson NEWSLINE Editor-In-Chief

All Island Member of Parliament Hon. Willin Belliard has declared his intent to champion the creation of a National Public Audit Portal in the Turks and Caicos Islands, a digital platform aimed at increasing transparency, fostering accountability, and ensuring the prudent use of public funds.

Belliard made the announcement during his contribution to the 2025–2026 Budget Debate in Parliament last week, delivering a passionate address that blended praise for the government's fiscal leadership with a bold call for deeper public oversight mechanisms.

Belliard described the portal as a platform where every government dollar spent and every contract awarded could be publicly accessed and scrutinized. He said such a system would fulfill one of the core promises his government made to the electorate: greater transparency and accountability in public office.

"With that portal, every dollar spent will be accounted for, and every contract awarded will be transparent—because the people's money must serve the people's interest," he said, emphasizing that the platform would be a direct tool for public empowerment.

Throughout his address, Belliard praised the fiscal leadership of the government, noting that the \$540 million budget is not



BELLIARD: "Let history say this was the moment we turned the page—and never looked back."

merely a financial document, but a promise to the people. He said it demonstrates responsible planning, economic foresight, and a deep commitment to national development without placing unnecessary burdens on the public.

Despite increased investment across major sectors, the government is projecting a \$9.5 million surplus and a strong cash reserve of nearly \$400 million by year-end. Belliard credited this achievement to disciplined budgeting, smarter revenue collection, and reduced wasteful spending.

He pointed to growing confidence in the Turks and Caicos Islands' economy, with tourism booming, investment increasing, and small businesses—particularly those led by youth—benefiting from supportive government policies. The creation of 189 new public service positions in key areas such as law enforcement, healthcare, education, and public works was another highlight of the budget he endorsed.

On the matter of public safety, Belliard made it clear that growth cannot come without security. He welcomed the arrival of 30 new police officers, bolstered by tactical support from Barbados and additional regional collaboration through CARICOM IMPACS. Two new marine police vessels have also been added to strengthen the country's ability to respond to threats at sea.

Belliard celebrated the government's investments in education and healthcare, with \$68.9 million allocated to the Ministry of Education and more than \$105 million set aside for health services. He highlighted key initiatives such as the expansion of special education, new classroom construction, school feeding programmes, and the hiring of specialized healthcare professionals, all of which reflect what he called "a government that listens to the people and responds with action."

He also acknowledged the strides being made in infrastructure, including significant investment in roads, airport upgrades, housing, and renewable energy as part of a long-term resilience plan in the face of climate change.

In the meantime, Belliard reaffirmed his commitment to inclusive, honest leadership.

"We were not elected to offer slogans or spectacles, but substance," he said. "This is a government rooted in vision and values. Let history say this was the moment we turned the page—and never looked back."

TCHTA Celebrates Member Resort's Historic Win as Turks & Caicos Islander Makes Caribbean Marriott History

The Turks and Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association (TCHTA) proudly celebrates a significant milestone for its member resort, The Ritz-Carlton (Residences), Turks & Caicos, whose team member, Rachel Gregoire, has been honoured with Marriott International's 2025 J. Willard Marriott Award of Excellence - the company's most prestigious individual accolade. The official award ceremony took place on May 14, 2025, in Bethesda, Maryland, recognizing just ten standout associates selected from over 8,000 nominations across Marriott's global workforce of more than 700,000. Rachel's achievement marks a powerful series of firsts: she is the first-ever recipient from a Ritz-Carlton Residences property, the first honouree from the Caribbean and Latin America (CALA) region, and a proud Turks and Caicos Islander- a moment of historic significance for the destination and the region. Established in 1987, the J. Willard



Stacy Cox (second right), CEO of the TCHTA and Rachel Gregoire (right), share lens with other guests at the J Willard Marriott Ceremony.

Marriott Award of Excellence recognizes associates who embody the company's founding values: achievement, character, dedication, effort, and perseverance. The award not only honors exceptional individuals

but also acknowledges group contributions in areas such as innovation, leadership development, and corporate citizenship.

Reflecting on the honour, Rachel shared: "Excellence is never a solo

pursuit. It's the result of God's grace, unwavering consistency, and the strength of an extraordinary team. This win belongs to all of us."

TCHTA CEO, Stacy Cox, attended the awards ceremony and offered her congratulations, stating "To have one of our member resorts represented on Marriott's global stage in this way is a moment of tremendous pride for our Association. Rachel's award speaks to the calibre of professionals in our industry and the exceptional hospitality talent the Ritz-Carlton and the destination at large cultivate here in Turks and Caicos."

The TCHTA extends its heartfelt congratulations to Rachel Gregoire and the team at The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Turks & Caicos for this landmark achievement that not only elevates the resort and the awardee but also showcases the destination's growing presence on the global hospitality stage.

Genesis PII TCI Ltd As Chargee pursuant to its charge and the registered land ordinance , hereby gives notice that it will cause to be sold the property listed below by public auction, to be held at the Office of Stanbrook Prudhoe , address: 3rd Floor Graceway House, Graceway plaza Providenciales Turks and Caicos Island at 10:00 AM on Friday June 13th 2025



Location	Rio Drive, 60809-82 Juba Sound The Bight
Description	Main residence with 2 bedrooms, 2 bathroom, open dining/living area, kitchen and covered rear concrete porch; there is lower level one bedroom apartment with open living accommodations, laundry room; there is a detached double car garage with an adjoining bedroom and bathroom.
Title	60809/82
Proprietor	Brennan Missick
Aproximate Area	0.64 Acre

A reserved price will be fixed on the parcel and a deposit of 10% is due immediately upon accepted bid. Conditions of Sale available upon request or at the Auction.Terms And conditions of sale by public Auction are available by request form



From left: Jackurlyn Sutton – National Focal Point and Chief Nursing Officer for the TCI; Maya Saunders – Senior Program Officer with the Health and Advocacy Unit; Nurse Subrina Pedican – Infection Control Nurse at Inter-Health Canada/TCI Hospital; Christa Nicolas – Clinical Nurse at the Health Promotion and Advocacy Unit; Tamera Howell-Robinson, Acting PS for the Ministry of Health and Human Services; and Philomene Ewing-Gray, Senior Admin Officer with the Ministry of Innovation, Technology and Energy, and the Ministry of Health and Human Services.

A critical boost to infection control efforts in the Turks and Caicos Islands came on Wednesday, May 28, when the Ministry of Health and Human Services officially handed over five powered respirators and accompanying consumables to Inter-Health Canada/TCI Hospital.

The equipment, sourced through a donation from the National Health Service (NHS)

Acute Trust in the United Kingdom, was presented during a ceremony at the Ministry of Health headquarters in Downtown Providenciales.

Chief Nursing Officer Jackurlyn Sutton, who also heads the National Infection Prevention and Control Focal Point, highlighted the collaboration that made the donation possible. "This equipment was secured thanks to the

Health Ministry Donates Respirators Acquired from UK TCI Hospital

Ry Vivian Tyson NEWSI INF Editor-In-Chief

dedication of Janice Toplass, Infection Prevention and Control Specialist with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), under the UCOT program," Sutton explained. "We are grateful to the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and the West Midlands Ambulance Service for their vital role in ensuring the equipment arrived safely."

The respirators are a vital addition to the broader respiratory protection program established in the TCI during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program began with a two-day national training workshop in January 2023, which trained 12 healthcare professionals in mask fit testing to strengthen frontline staff protection against respiratory illnesses

"These powered respirators are essential for protecting healthcare workers who care for patients with respiratory infectious diseases, particularly those who cannot be fit-tested for traditional tight-fitting masks like the N95," Sutton noted. "They ensure that all staff have the protection they need to deliver safe care."

Sutton also announced plans for virtual training sessions, in collaboration with UKH-

SA, to integrate the respirators into the existing respiratory protection program.

"We are committed to building the knowledge and skills of our healthcare professionals to meet the evolving demands of our population." she said.

Receiving the equipment on behalf of Inter-Health Canada/TCI Hospital, Infection Prevention and Control Nurse Sabrina Pedican expressed gratitude for the donation.

"This equipment is a critical addition to our personal protective equipment, enabling us to maintain a safe environment for both staff and patients," she said. "We are eager to undergo training to ensure our staff feel confident and prepared to use the respirators effectively."

Also in attendance were Tamera Robinson, Acting Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Health and Human Services; Maya Saunders, Senior Program Officer at the Health and Advocacy Unit; Christa Nicholas, Clinical Nurse with the Health Promotion and Advocacy Unit; and Philomene Ewing-Gray, Senior Admin Officer with the Ministry of Innovation Technology and Energy, and the Ministry of Health and Human Services.

Digicel TCI Urges Customers to Complete SIM Swap by June 30

Digicel customers must complete SIM swap by deadline to retain network service

Friday, May 30, 2025. Digicel TCI is reminding all customers that the June 30, 2025 deadline to complete their mandatory SIM swap is fast approaching.

Customers who are still using SIM cards tied to the old Home Network Identifier (HNI) or are using a SIM card that is more than 4 years old, must upgrade to the new SIM ahead of the deadline in order to avoid service disconnection.

This change is a Telecommunications Commission mandate and is a key step in Digicel's ongoing efforts to localise its network infrastructure in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Since 2021, Digicel TCI has been encouraging customers to complete their SIM swap. Now, with HNI, customers will benefit from enhanced network performance and better overall experience, however, those who do not complete the SIM swap will lose all network services after the June 30 dead-line.

Kenva Williams, Director General of Turks & Caicos Islands Telecommunications Commission said, "This SIM swap initiative is



Kenva Williams, Director General of Turks & Caicos Islands Telecommunications Com-

critical to ensuring the long-term integrity and efficiency of telecommunications in the Turks and Caicos Islands. The transition to a localised Home Network Identifier allows for greater control, improved service quality and positions the country for further advancements in telecom technology. We encourage all Digicel customers to comply before the June 30 deadline to avoid service disruption."

"We're working in tandem with the Authorities to deliver greater service quality

and innovation to the people of the Turks & Caicos Islands. With that, we're encouraging customers who have received a message from us to immediately visit a retail store and swap their SIM card, this will avoid any disruption to your service" said Meredith Sharples, CEO for Digicel's Atlantic Region. She added: "Upgrading to the new HNI is not optional, it's essential. If your SIM isn't updated by June 30, you risk losing access to your Digicel mobile service."

Customers unsure of their SIM status are

encouraged to visit any Digicel store or call 649-331-3444 for assistance. SIM swaps are done at no cost to customers at the following Digicel locations:

- Providenciales: Digicel Retail Store, 991A Tower Drive, Providenciales
- Grand Turk: Digicel Retail Store, Off Barracks Hill Road
- North Caicos: Digicel Retail Store, Dards Grocery, Bottle Creek
- South Caicos: Digicel Retail Store, Supervalue Supermarket, Hillgrove Street



Meredith Starples, CEO Atlantic Cluster, BVI, Cayman Islands, TCI, and Bermuda.











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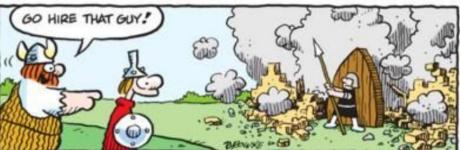






"How will I ever find her? She left only a glass slipper, her house keys, a note with an address, and a jar of DNA."

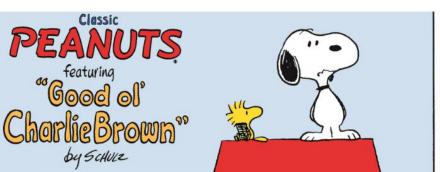








by SCHULZ





















"WELL, NOT IF YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT MR. WILSON'S BELT."











The Turks and Caicos Rock Iguana (Cyclura carinata) is one of the most distinctive and ecologically significant animals found in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Endemic to this region, it exists nowhere else in the world, making it an important part of the islands' natural heritage and a symbol of local biodiversity.

Appearance and Habitat

The rock iguana is a medium-sized reptile, usually gray or brown with a pale underside. Adult males can reach over 20 inches in length, including the tail. While generally shy and non-aggressive, these iguanas are an important keystone species in the local ecosystem.

They primarily inhabit dry, rocky coastal areas, small cays, and scrubland. Most of the remaining wild population lives on small, uninhabited islands such as Little Water Cay (Iguana Island), Pine Cay, and Water Cay. These isolated locations have allowed them to survive without the threats found on more developed islands.

National Significance

The rock iguana is more than a rare reptile it is a living symbol of the unique wildlife that sets the Turks and Caicos Islands apart. Its survival depends on continued public awareness and responsible environmental stewardship.

As development continues across the islands, preserving native species like the Turks and Caicos Rock Iguana ensures that future generations can continue to learn from and appreciate the natural beauty that defines the TCI.

Ecological Role

As herbivores, rock iguanas feed on leaves, flowers, and fruits, playing a critical role in seed dispersal and vegetation balance. Their presence helps shape the local plant communities and contributes to the overall health of the coastal ecosystem.

Conservation Status

The Turks and Caicos Rock Iguana is currently listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Major threats include habitat loss, development, and the introduction of invasive species such as cats, dogs, and rats, which prey on iguanas and their eggs.

Conservation efforts led by the Turks and Caicos National Trust, the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources (DECR), and international partners have focused on habitat protection, predator control, public education, and research. Little Water Cay is now a designated nature reserve and eco-tourism destination where visitors can observe the iguanas in their natural environment with minimal disturbance.

References:



The Environmental Health Department, Ministry of Home Affairs, Como Parrot Cay and Middle Caicos communities stage island-wide cleanup

The Environmental Health Department, in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Public Utilities and Transportation, and in partnership with the Sustainability Department of Como Parrot Cay, spearheaded a highly successful community cleanup initiative on Saturday, May 17, 2025, across the settlements of Middle Caicos.

The collaborative effort brought together officers from the Environmental Health Department, District Commissioner Delancy, the staff from Como Parrot Cay, and residents of Middle Caicos for a unified day of action.

The primary purpose of this proactive initiative was to enhance the environmental health and overall well-being of the Middle Caicos community by removing unsightly and potentially hazardous litter from public spaces. This cleanup directly addresses the critical issue of mosquito proliferation. Accumulated litter, particularly discarded containers, can hold water and provide ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes within the community.

The cleanup operation saw the dedicated group divided into three teams, each strategically assigned to one of Middle Caicos' main settlements: Conch Bar, Lorimers and Bambarra. This decentralized approach ensured comprehensive coverage across the island. Participants diligently collected litter along roadways and public areas, and secured it in garbage bags.

Illustrating outstanding community spirit and invaluable generosity, Middle Caicos resident Mrs. Elsa James kindly volunteered her truck to transport the collected garbage bags to the designat-

ed Lorimers landfill.

Through the dedicated efforts of volunteers and partners, an impressive 30 bags of litter were successfully removed from the environment. This significant achievement underscores the commitment of all involved to preserving the natural beauty and health of Middle Caicos and by extension our Beautiful by Nature, Turks and Caicos Islands.

The day's cleanup initiative was a testament to the power of collaboration and community spirit. The Environmental Health Department is immensely grateful for the enthusiastic participation of District Commissioner Delancy, the dedicated team from Como Parrot Cay, and the diligent residents of Middle Caicos. Their hard work has made an indelible mark in creating a cleaner and healthier environment for everyone.

District commissioner Osbourne Delancy added, "It was inspiring to witness the community come together for this important cause. This initiative highlights the commitment of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Public Utilities and Transportation to support the well-being of our communities and working alongside our partners to achieve positive outcomes."

The Sustainability Department of Como Parrot Cay also expressed their satisfaction with the day's success. "Como Parrot Cay is deeply committed to environmental stewardship within the Turks and Caicos Islands. We were proud to partner with the Environmental Health Department and the Middle Caicos community on this cleanup, and we look forward to future collaborations that benefit the local environment and

its residents."

The Environmental Health Department plans to collaborate with the Department of Agriculture to plant mosquito-repellant plants in various settlements. This initiative will not only aim to further reduce the mosquito population and prevent vector-borne diseases but to also foster a sense of community involvement, as local residents will be engaged in the planting and maintenance of the mosquito repellant plants. The community impact of this initiative is expected to be significant. By planting mosquito-repellant plants, we can help reduce the risks of diseases such as dengue and chikungunya, which are prevalent in the region. The presence of these plants will also improve the overall quality of life for residents, making outdoor spaces more enjoyable and reducing the need for chemical insecticides. This initiative will serve as an educational opportunity, raising awareness among community members about the benefits of using natural methods to control mosquito populations.

Commenting on this initiative, Honourable Minister of Health and Human Services, Kyle Knowles stated that he "Extends his sincere gratitude to all individuals and organizations that contributed to the success of the Middle Caicos community cleanup initiative. This collaborative effort serves as a shining example of how collective action can lead to a healthier, safer, and more beautiful environment for all."



Life Line FEATURED CHURCH

BETHANY Baptist Church

In this issue of Newsline Featured Church, we highlight the Bethany Baptist Church, located at 250 Bay Road, Wheeland. Providenciales.

Bethany Baptist Church is Pastored by Rev. Derek R. Hamilton.

The opportunities for Worship & Fellowship during the course of the week are as follows: Sunday11am – Service; Wednesday 7pm- Prayer & Bible Study via zoom; Friday at 7pm- Children, Youth & Women Ministry; 2nd and 4th Tuesdays- Men's ministr; the church theme is "Connecting people to God and with each other!"



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 Prophesy, 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 Prophesy,

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

OSETA JOLLY STAGES BOYS' DAY FESTIVITIES

On Friday June 23, the Oseta Jolly Primary School hosted its Boys' Day activities. This year, the celebration was taken off property and was held at the Brighter Futures Centre, the home of the Salvation Army Church in Providenciales. The boys were encouraged by a rich cadre of individuals, including Mr. Jorge Rodriquez CEO Bordier Bank, Michael Saunders also of Bordier Bank, Keno Forbes of Boys to Men, Salorne Mc Donald Dept. Of Gender Affairs, Lakeisha Wilson- Nutritionist with the Ministry of Health, Nixon Dickerson of the Youth Department, and Bishop Dale Taylor. The event included Grades 5 and 6. The following are photo highlights of the event.





Home Affairs Minister Champions Gender Equality, Social Upliftment in Budget Debate

In a spirited and purpose-driven address during the 2025/2026 National Budget Debate, Honourable Shaun Malcolm, Minister of Home Affairs, Religious Affairs and Transportation, made an emphatic case for gender equality and expanded social protections, while celebrating landmark progress across his Ministry.

progress across his Ministry. Speaking under the theme "2025: Fueled by Purpose, Steered by Vision, Driven by the People," Minister Malcolm highlighted major operational and policy achievements, and outlined bold plans to modernize service delivery, deepen community engagement, and invest in vulnerable populations.

Central to his address was a strong commitment to gender equity and the welfare of women and children. "The Department of Gender Affairs remains at the forefront of our Government's efforts to address gender-related issues and promote equality and empowerment for all citizens," Minister Malcolm declared.

Among recent achievements, he pointed to the activation of the Hill of Hope Safe House for survivors of domestic violence, the implementation of a National Domestic Violence Protocol, and impactful public education campaigns such as Girls in ICT Day and Camp Build a Boss. The Department also advanced the National Gender Equality Policy and collaborated with international

partners including UN Women and the Caribbean Development Bank to train public servants and establish gender focal points across government.

"These are not just programmes—they are lifelines for many in our community," Malcolm said, affirming his Ministry's vision of inclusive, citizen-centered governance.

The Minister also praised the newly restructured Departments of Family and Children Services and Community Support and Engagement—formerly part of Social Development—for their frontline work. These departments processed over 500 welfare applications, enrolled 367 persons in social aid programmes, and provided services to nearly 800 child-related cases. Minister Malcolm announced plans for a residential facility for at-risk boys and ongoing work to introduce Social Protection Legislation to anchor these services in law.

"This restructuring aligns with international best practices and reinforces our commitment to inclusive, responsive service delivery," he noted, adding that the combined \$7.4 million investment in benefit programming represents the largest in the nation's history.

On the fiscal side, the Ministry expended 99% of its \$18.5 million revised budget and surpassed revenue expectations by over half a million dollars. Key revenue drivers included vehicle

licensing, PRC fees, and Belonger status applications—reflecting strong demand and improved collection.

Looking ahead, the Ministry's new budget allocation of over \$20.8 million will fuel innovation, particularly in service delivery to the Sister Islands. The DMV will roll out e-services and digitize records, while the Registrar General's office will implement sameday service in many areas. A Bedside Registration Policy will allow parents to register newborns at hospitals—an initiative aimed at boosting birth registration rates.

Minister Malcolm also unveiled plans to introduce Local Government Boards in the Sister Islands, a historic milestone that will bring over \$1 million in direct investments to local communities and promote grassroots democracy. He confirmed that the policy framework and board appointments were already before Cabinet.

Religious Affairs, he said, remains vital in national life. Plans include a National Day of Prayer in June, the rollout of a new Religious Affairs Policy, and inter-church initiatives to build community unity.

Meanwhile, Minister Malcolm acknowledged the dedication of his team, singling out senior staff and district commissioners for their service. "Together, we are building a future grounded in service, uplifted by pur-

pose, and guided by a belief that our best days are still ahead," he affirmed. The Minister's wide-ranging and heartfelt presentation drew praise from colleagues and positioned his Ministry as a pillar of compassionate governance, innovation, and equity in the Turks and Caicos Islands.



"Together, we are building a future grounded in service, uplifted by purpose, and guided by a belief that our best days are still ahead,"



Ocean literacy is defined as 'an understanding of the ocean's influence on us, and our influence on the ocean'. For small-island nations like the TCI, having an 'ocean literate' society is crucial especially in the face of climate change.

Throughout the world, small-scale fishers and fish workers have a greater direct interdependency on the ocean than any other group of people, and this is certainly the case in the TCI. Therefore, developing ocean literacy among TCI's fisherfolk is essential for their livelihood security and for the conservation of ocean biodiversity. Local nonprofit organisation FisherFolk-First has been promoting ocean literacy among TCI's commercial fishers and fish workers.

In recognition of this work, FisherFolk-First was recently invited to join the

TCI non-profit Fisher-FolkFirst joins UNESCO ocean literacy network

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Blue Thread, a global network for initiatives putting ocean literacy in action. The Blue Thread serves as a symbol of commitment to sustainable ocean stewardship, inclu-sive participation, and innovative approaches to solving ocean-related challenges.

"We are delighted to join UNESCO's global ocean literacy network," said Marta Calosso, executive di-rector and co-founder of FisherFolkFirst. "It is always very rewarding working with TCI's fishers and fish workers. They have an enormous wealth of knowledge about the TCI's marine environments and they recognise the link between healthy seas and decent livelihoods. Unfortunately, fishers are often vili-fied as being part of the conservation problem. But I strongly believe they are part of the solution. Ocean

literacy helps to empower fisherfolk to advocate for their rights, livelihoods, and traditions at a time when these are increasingly under threat".

FisherFolkFirst partners with both the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources Management and the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources. FisherFolkFirst's recent work includes promot-ing TCI fishers' access to Invest Turks and Caicos' MSME programme, ensuring that the fishing com-munity's voices are reflected in the laws that regulate the fishing industry, and broadly publicising the TCI's fishing regulations and explaining the ecological reasons behind them through brochures, posters, pull-up banners, a website, and videos (all in English, Spanish, and Creole and catering to those whole struggle with literacy). Find out more on the FisherFolk-First website www.fisherfolkfirst.org.



They Key Clubber and their chaperones take time for a photo opportunity.



Local Key Clubbers and official in Orlando.

Key Club Members Shine at Florida District Convention

The Kiwanis Club of Providenciales is beaming with pride as 15 outstanding Key Club members recently embarked on an unforgettable journey of leadership, service, and inspiration the Florida Key Club Convention in Orlando.

The group, which departed the Turks and Caico Islands on Wednesday, April 23rd, did not disap-point. Representing the spirit of youth leadership from the Turks and Caicos Islands, the group included 8 students from Clement Howell High School and 7 students from Wesley Methodist High School. These young leaders had the incredible opportunity to connect with hundreds of fellow Key Clubbers from across the Florida District, sharing ideas, building friendships, and igniting their passion for community service on a larger scale.

Guiding this dynamic group were three dedicated advisors from the Kiwanis Club of Providen-ciales: Faculty Advisor Kiwanian Audrey Semple-Elliot, Vice President Kiwanian Lisa Cox, and Key Club Advisor Kiwanian Michelle Robinson, alongside Lieutenant Governor Stephen Morrison, whose commitment and mentorship



Local Key Clubbers participate in in a project activity.

helped make this experience a truly enriching one.

From motivational workshops to electrifying general sessions, the convention empowered the Key Clubbers with tools to lead, serve, and make lasting impacts in their schools and communi-ties.

"The energy was high, the inspiration was real, and our students returned with a renewed sense of purpose and a fire to do even more," the Kiwanis

It added: "The Kiwanis Club of Providenciales is immensely proud of these young ambassadors who represented the Turks and Caicos Islands with dignity, confidence, and excellence. This trip was not just a conference—it was a stepping stone toward building future leaders who will shape a better tomorrow. Together, we serve. Together, we lead. Together, we soar!

Club said in a news release.

"Want to make a difference in the lives of young people and in your community?

Join the Kiwanis Club of Providenciales and become part of a global movement of volunteers dedicated to changing the world, one child and one community at a time. Join us at our next meetting at Hole In The Wall, Downtown every 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 6PM."



One of the Key Club Members display one of the project that they worked on.



Government officials, members of civic society and the JAGS McCartney Family share a photo at the Mausoleum in Grand Turk.

TCI Marks 45th Anniversary of National Hero with Unveiling of J.A.G.S. McCartney Mausoleum and Information Center

The Turks and Caicos Islands paid a proud and poignant tribute to National Hero, the Rt. Excellent James Alexander George Smith (J.A.G.S.) McCartney, on the 45th anniversary of his passing.

A special memorial service and

wreath-laying ceremony was held on May 26, 2025, in Grand Turk, high-lighted by the official unveiling of the newly developed J.A.G.S. McCartney Mausoleum and Information Center. The commemorative event celebrated the enduring legacy of the nation's first Chief Minister, who at just 34 years old, lost his life in a tragic plane crash in 1980. Despite his short life, McCartney's vision, courage, and commitment to youth empowerment and national development continue to shape the modern identity of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Leading the ceremony was Hon. Rachel Taylor, Minister of Education, Youth, Sports, and Culture, accompanied by other government officials, Including Her Excellency Deputy Governor Anya Williams, Premier Hon.



Premier Hon. Washington Misick lays the wreath at the JAGS McCartney Mausoleum in Grand Turk.

Washington Misick, McCartney's family, community leaders, and proud citizens.

The newly revitalized mausoleum now

houses a dedicated Information Center, designed as a national resource and learning space that chronicles McCartney's life, leadership, and his

pivotal role in advancing the Islands toward self-governance.

As a lasting tribute to his legacy, Cabinet has also approved the renaming of Old Airport Road in Grand Turk to J.A.G.S. McCartney Memorial Drive, symbolically embedding his name into the very fabric of the capital.

"The opening of the JAGS Mausoleum and Information Center marks a significant step in the continued development of a site that will be regarded as a historic and educational experience for all," said Minister Taylor. "We encourage our people to visit, reflect, and honour this sacred space."

The ceremony featured emotional tributes, cultural performances, and reflections on McCartney's far-reaching influence. Attendees reaffirmed their commitment to upholding the values and vision he championed throughout his life.

The Department of Culture and Heritage expressed sincere appreciation to all who contributed to and participated in making the milestone event a success.



From left to right: Mr. Nick Wallen [Director], Ms. Arielle Neely [Debate Chairperson], Ms. Nialah Byfield [Student], Ms. Leonessa Jacinth[Student], Mr. Dario Morley [Student], Imterniza McCartney [Public Education Officer], Ms. Abisabia Prophete [Student], Ms. Melissa Reid [Teacher] and Mr. Wendall Swann [Commissioner].

Marjorie Basden High School Crowns Inter-High Debate Champions – Integrity in Action

The Turks and Caicos Islands Integrity Commission proudly congratulates Marjorie Basden High School, winners of the 2025 Inter-High Integrity Debate, held on Wednesday, 14th May from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM at Beaches Turks and Caicos. The debate centered on the timely and thought-provoking moot:

"This House believes that legislative reforms are more critical than public awareness for the effective operation of an Integrity Commission."

As the only school to accept and uphold their commitment to participate, Marjorie Basden High demonstrated boldness, excellence, and unshakable integrity. They prepared for both sides of the argument, embraced open-mindedness, and mod-

elled respectful discourse—proving that integrity is more than a word; it's a way of life.

Winning team members:

Leonessa Jacinth, Dario Morley, Abinasabia Prophete, and Nailah Byfield. A special commendation goes to Nailah Byfield, who was awarded Best Speaker for her persuasive and poised delivery.

Prizes awarded:

\$1,000 toward a school project \$1,000 to the winning team \$250 to the Best Speaker

The Integrity Commission extends heartfelt appreciation to our capable Chairperson, Ms. Ariele Neely, and our Ministry of Education Representative, Mr. David Bowen, who brought warm and encouraging re-

marks on behalf of the Ministry and Department of Education.

We also thank our sister institutions of good governance, including the Elections Office, and the enthusiastic attendees from lanthe Pratt Primary School, whose presence reflected a growing culture of civic responsibility.

A sincere thank you to our distinguished panel of judges and their institutions for their time and impartial expertise:

Nicole' Collymore, Legal Advisor – Financial Services Commission

Ms. Tavania Wilson, Prosecutor – Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

Mrs. Sandra Stephens-Malcolm, Auditor General – National Audit Office

Mr. Verbal Lightbourn, Education & Outreach Officer – TCI Human Rights Commission

Special recognition goes to Ms. Britonya Martin, Secretarial Support Officer at the Integrity Commission, who served faithfully as timekeeper throughout the event.

We are grateful to Beaches Turks and Caicos for generously hosting this landmark event, where youth leadership and ethical values met in powerful harmony.

This event was not just a debate—it was a declaration that youth, when anchored in integrity, can shape a more just and transparent future. Congratulations again to Marjorie Basden High School—champions of character and truth

Department of Behavioural Health Services Hosts Coffee & Conversa-tions with Minister of Health and Human Services

The Department of Behavioural Health Services (DBHS) on 8th May, 2025, hosted an engaging and impactful session of Coffee & Conversations, wel-coming Hon. Kyle Knowles, Minister of Health and Human Ser-vices, organizational leaders, department heads, and key stakeholders for an open dialogue aimed at strengthening mental health services across the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Unlike traditional meetings, Cof-

fee & Conversations is designed to foster candid, connection-driven exchanges in an informal setting. This recent session brought together professionals from various agencies and DBHS for meaningful discussion on scopes of practice, opportunities for inter-agency collaboration, and how best to respond to the growing behavioural health needs of our communities. The visit provided space for all parties to give and gain insights, align

on strategic priorities, and explore how systems can be strengthened for more effective service delivery. The atmosphere was warm, welcoming, and so-lution-focused, a true reflection of the spirit behind the initiative.

The Department remains committed to cultivating strong partnerships across sectors to ensure that individuals and families receive timely, com-passionate, and high-quality care.

For more information, please contact the Department of Behavioural Health Services as follows:

Zone 1 (Grand Turk/South Caicos, Salt Cay) 649 338 3613

Zone 2 (Providenciales, North & Middle Caicos) 649 338 3616

Also, be sure to visit our website www.gov.tc/dmhsd and follow our social media accounts www.facebook.com/TCIDBHS and @TCIDBHS on Insta-gram.



Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is recognised as the most common entrapment neuropathy. It occurs at the wrist, as the median nerve crosses from the distal forearm to the hand through the carpal tunnel.

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is recognised as the most common entrapment neuropathy. It occurs at the wrist, as the median nerve crosses from the distal forearm to the hand through the carpal tunnel. Throughout the continental United States, the first full week of May each year is observed as Peripheral Neuropathy Week. This year it ran from May 4-11. The goal is to bring public awareness to a condition that is estimated to affect about 2.4 per cent of the global population, with prevalence increasing to five to seven per cent in those age 45 and old-

Peripheral neuropathy, often abbreviated to neuropathy, refers to damage or disease affecting the nerves outside the brain or spinal cord and may affect a single nerve (focal or mononeuropathy) or many nerves (polyneuropathy). Focal neuropathies may result from compression, entrapment, stretch injury, impaired blood supply, direct trauma, fracture or dislocation or other processes. Compression and entrapment neuropathies are among the commonest disorders encountered in electrodiagnostic medicine.

The term compression and entrapment are often used more or less interchangeably, sacrificing some accuracy. Compression neuropathy refers to nerve damage due to applied pressure to a nerve, irrespective of the source; the term entrapment neuropathy is appropriate when the pressure is exerted by an anatomical structure as the nerve travels through narrow anatomical spaces.

All entrapment neuropathies are compression neuropathies, but not all compression neuropathies are due to entrapment.

CAUSES, SYMPTOMS, DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is recognised as the most common entrapment neuropathy. It occurs at the wrist, as the median nerve crosses from the distal forearm to the hand through the carpal tunnel. The walls and floor of the tunnel are formed by the carpal bones and the roof by the transverse carpal ligament (f lexor retinaculum), a strong fibrous band that runs across the palmar side of the hand at the wrist. Lying with the median nerve in the tunnel are the tendons of three forearm muscles, surrounded by a complex protective sleeve surrounding the tendons (synovial sheath). The synovial sheath contains (synovial) fluid which lubricates the tendons and reduces friction during movement.

Most cases of CTS can be attributed to either reduced space within the tunnel (as occurs in inflammatory/degenerative joint diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis), susceptibility of the nerve to pressure (as occurs in diabetes, pre-existing polyneuropathy) or associated with other conditions (e.g. pregnancy, thyroid disease, chronic kidney diseases, and patients undergoing dialysis).

CTS can be an occupational disease, meaning it can be caused or worsened by work-related factors. Work tasks/occupations involving repetitive movements, forceful gripping or the use of vibrating tools can increase the risk of developing CTS. Such occupations include office workers (especially those who type extensively), musicians, mechanics and assembly line workers.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome - Pt 1

Its potential role as a predictor of life-threatening heart disease

CTS produces a characteristic clinical picture of hand pain, numbness, and tingling (all invariably more severe at night), along with varying degrees of hand weakness.

The median nerve is responsible for sensation in the thumb, index, middle and half of the ring finger, so complaints of tingling and/or numbness are typically experienced in these fingers. However, many patients report that the entire hand falls asleep, but if asked directly about involvement of the little finger, most will subsequently note that the little finger is spared.

It is useful to note that pain, typically localised to the wrist, may radiate proximally to the forearm, arm or rarely the shoulder; some individuals describe a diffuse, poorly localised ache involving the entire arm. The dominant hand is more frequently affected in CTS.

While bilateral involvement is common, both clinically and electrodiagnostically, and both hands may eventually be affected, the dominant hand tends to be the first and/or more severely affected.

Patients in whom CTS predominantly affects the non-dominant hand are distinctly unusual and should strongly suggest a specific underlying cause that is not simply resulting from overuse and "wear and tear". All studies indicate that women are two to three times more likely to develop CTS. Symptoms are often provoked when either a flexed or extended wrist posture is assumed. Most commonly, this occurs during ordinary activities, such as driving a car or holding a phone, book or while reading a newspaper.

During sleep, persistent wrist flexion or extension leads to increased pressure within the tunnel and reduced blood flow to the nerve. Patients frequently awaken from sleep and shake or wring their hands or hold them under warm running water to obtain temporary relief.

GOLD STANDARD

The diagnosis of CTS should be based on patient history, physical examination and results of electrophysiological tests (nerve conduction studies/NCS). These elec-

trophysiological tests will usually detect more than 95 per cent of cases of CTS when meticulously performed. While NCS remains the gold standard for diagnosis, high frequency ultrasonography (HFUS) has been validated to be a useful, non-invasive and portable tool in certain situations.

The best treatment approach for CTS will depend on the individual's specific symptoms, the severity of the condition, and other factors.

A variety of non-surgical treatment options exist but carpal tunnel release surgery is usually required when non-surgical options have failed to alleviate severe or persistent symptoms or when there is unequivocal evidence of nerve damage.

The latter may include significant weakness, constant numbness or muscle wasting (atrophy) in the hand. This type of surgery is performed through an open incision in the palm of the hand or through a smaller incision using a minimally-invasive technique with an endoscope.

Dr. Daniel S. Graham, OD, MD, FACP is a consultant in clinical neurology, diplomate, American Board of Neurology and Fellowship trained in Neurophysiology and Neuromuscular Diseases. He is the Medical Director of Neurodiagnostics Limited, Centre for Electrodiagnosis of Neurological Disorders.

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to work five days a week, salary \$ 15.00 hour, also looking for two laborers and a cleaner to work five days-a-week. Salary \$8.50 per hour.

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Reggae Sumfest introduces new 'Luxe Deck' and 'Ultra Luxe Cabana Experience

The organisers of Reggae Sumfest 2025 have officially unveiled the RSF Luxe Deck and Ultra Luxe Cabana Experience, offering premium hospitality options designed for those who want to enjoy the festival in ultimate comfort and style.

The Luxe Tables Experience is designed for groups of four guests and includes secure parking, a dedicated waitress, three premium bottles, six chasers, eight waters, and a high table with four high chairs that allows access and a clear view of the stage. The packages are priced at US\$2,500 for Friday, US\$2,800 for Saturday, or US\$5,100 for the full weekend.

For those craving an even more elite experience, the Ultra Luxe Cabanas offer 10 tickets, secure parking, a personal waitress, six premium bottles, 16 chasers, 20 waters, and hassle-free entry to an elevated private space.

Organisers say they will be strategically located for easy access to



bars, food courts and restroom facilities. This experience is priced at U\$\$8,300 for Friday, U\$\$8,500 for Saturday, and U\$\$16,000 for the full weekend.

Set to run from July 13 to 19, this year's staging of Reggae Sumfest will feature seven events under one festival, culminating in two massive concert nights. Confirmed acts in-

clude Toni Braxton, Vybz Kartel, Tarrus Riley, Masicka, Protoje, Tommy Lee Sparta, and others.

"Reggae Sumfest has always represented the pinnacle of Jamaican music culture. But as the festival grows, so must the experience," said Joe Bogdanovich, chief executive officer of Downsound Entertainment, the producers of the event. "These Luxe and Ultra VIP options allow us to cater to fans who want more than just the music — they want an unforgettable experience with top-tier service and comfort."

For guests seeking a premium yet more traditional seated option, Ultra Seats are also available. These come with assigned seating and secure parking, and are priced at US\$250 for Friday, US\$270 for Saturday, or US\$510 for a weekend combo.

Fans can visit www.reggaesumfest. com for more information and to reserve their Luxe or Ultra VIP experiences.



Tory Lanez's alleged prison attacker says he thought the rapper was coming to kill him.

Santino Casio, who is accused of stabbing the rapper 14 times, leaving him with a collapsed lung, is not denying attacking Lanez but claims he only did so because he had heard Lanez was out to get him.

He told TMZ that, after hearing

"through the prison grapevine" that Tory had a bounty on him, he later ran into Tory and thought he saw a suspicious lump in Tory's pocket.

He claims he believed it was a weapon so he jumped Tory, hit him and stabbed him but he insists he wasn't trying to kill Tory.

He also claims he got stabbed in the leg during the May 12 incident.

Alleged attacker stabbed Tory Lanez 14 times; says he 'wasn't trying to kill him'

Casio – who is serving a life sentence – added the situation was unexpected because they previously had a cordial relationship.

Tory's team told TMZ: "The recent attempt on his life was savage and ferocious, underscoring the clear and present danger he faces while incarcerated. Any claim to the contrary, particularly from an individual serving a life sentence for heinous crimes, is not only baseless but an absurd fabrication."

Tory is serving a 10-year sentence at the California Correctional Institution at Tehachapi for shooting fellow rapper Megan Thee Stallion in the feet in July 2020.

He reportedly received seven wounds on his back, four on his torso, two on the back of his head, and one on his face, during the incident in prison.

Lanez's team wrote on his official Instagram page: "Tory was stabbed 14 times - including seven wounds

to his back, four to his torso, two to the back of his head, and 1 to the left side of his face. Both of his lungs collapsed and he was placed on a breathing apparatus. He is now breathing on his own. (sic)"

The Hurts Me hitmaker – whose real name is Daystar Peterson – is now "talking normally", and he is "deeply thankful to God" that he is "pulling through". The post continued: "Despite being in pain, he is talking normally, in good spirits, and deeply thankful to God that he is pulling through.

"He also wants to thank everyone for their continued prayers and support. (sic)"

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation spokesperson Pedro Calderón Michel told the Los Angeles Times newspaper that prison staff "immediately responded, activated 911, and began medical aid" to Lanez. He was then rushed to a nearby hospital.

Kim Kardashian's Paris robbers found guilty, escape prison time

A Paris court on Friday found the ringleader and seven other people guilty in the robbery of Kim Kardashian at her residence in the French capital in 2016. But none of them will face prison time.

The court acquitted two of the 10 defendants. The sentences read out by the court president ranged from prison terms to fines.

Aomar Aït Khedache, 69, the ring-leader, got the stiffest sentence, eight years' imprisonment but five of those are suspended. Three others who were accused on the most serious charges got seven years, five of them suspended.

With time already served in pretrial detention, none of those found guilty will go to prison. The trial was heard by a three-judge panel and six jurors.

The chief judge, David De Pas, said the ages of the defendants – the oldest is 79 and some others are in their 60s and 70s – weighed on the court's decision not to impose harsher sentences that would have sent them to jail. He said the nine years between the robbery and the trial was also taken into account in the sentencing. Still, he said that Kardashian had been traumatised by the robbery in

her hotel

"You caused harm," he said. "You caused fear."

Kardashian, who wasn't present for the verdict, issued a statement after the ruling was announced.

GRATEFUL

"I am deeply grateful to the French authorities for pursuing justice in this case," she said. "The crime was the most terrifying experience of my life, leaving a lasting impact on me and my family. While I'll never forget what happened, I believe in the power of growth and accountability and pray for healing for all. I remain committed to advocating for justice, and promoting a fair legal system."

Khedache arrived at court walking with a stick, his face hidden from cameras. His DNA, found on the bands used to bind Kardashian, was a key breakthrough that helped crack open the case.

Wiretaps captured him giving orders, recruiting accomplices and arranging to sell the diamonds in Belgium. A diamond-encrusted cross, dropped during the escape, was the only piece of jewellery ever recovered.

The crime took place on the night of October 2, 2016 during Paris Fashion Week. The robbers, dressed as po-

lice, forced their way into the glamorous Hôtel de Pourtalès, bound Kardashian with zip ties and escaped with her jewellery — a theft that would force celebrities to rethink how they live and protect themselves.

The accused became known in France as "les papys braqueurs" or the grandpa robbers. Some arrived in court in orthopaedic shoes and one leaned on a cane. But prosecutors warned observers not to be fooled.

The defendants faced charges including armed robbery, kidnapping and gang association.

Khedache had said he was only a foot soldier. He blamed a mysterious 'X' or 'Ben' – someone prosecutors say never existed.

His lawyer pleaded for clemency, pointing to one of the trial's most visceral moments – Kardashian's earlier courtroom encounter with the man accused of orchestrating her ordeal. Though she wasn't present Friday, her words – and the memory of that moment – still echoed.

"She looked at him when she came, she listened to the letter he had written to her, and then she forgave him," lawyer Franck Berton told The



Kim Kardashian leaves the justice palace after testifying on Tuesday regarding a robbery of millions of dollars in jewels from her Paris hotel room in 2016, in Paris

Associated Press.

LETTER TO KIM

Kardashian, typically shielded by security and spectacle, had locked eyes with Khedache as the letter was read aloud.

"I do appreciate the letter, I forgive you," she said. "But it doesn't change the feelings and the trauma and the fact that my life was forever changed." A tabloid crime had become something raw and human.

Khedache on Friday asked for "a thousand pardons", communicated via a written note in court. Other defendants also used their final words to express remorse.



Jah Fabio

Reggae artiste Jah Fabio, whose given name is Favio Velasco, passed away on Saturday in Guadalajara, Mexico. He was 43.

The reggae artiste, who was booked to appear on this year's Reggae Sumfest show in July, reportedly passed away after suffering a heart

Reggae artiste Jah Fabio dies in Mexico

attack.

Street promoter Boswell 'Stampede' Lammie offered his condolences to the singer's friends and family in Mexico.

"This is a very sad time for me, I lost a friend, a great, great friend as Jah Fabio passed away. Fabio was an artiste who loved reggae music and loved Jamaican culture. My condolences go out to his family and friends in Mexico," Stampede told Observer Online.

Reports are that the native of Guadalajara, Jalisco had battled health problems related to his kidneys for years prior to his death.

Jah Fabio began his career in 2005 and quickly established himself as a key figure in the roots reggae and dancehall genres in Mexico. His music, laden with messages of social awareness and faith, took him to

stages in Mexico, Europe and Latin America, where he collaborated with artists from countries such as Italy, Spain, Germany, France, and Argentina.

In addition to performing, he also worked as a music producer and founded his own independent label, which allowed him to maintain creative control over his work and spread the positive message of reggae.

Jah Fabio performed in Kingston for the first time last February and, according to his social media posts, he was excited to return to Jamaica for Reggae Sumfest. On April 18, he told his followers that he was "very happy and proud to be part of this legendary festival for the third time". He is best known for the song, Vale La Pena, for the record label, Evidence Music.



Participants on Day 1 of Advanced Food Safety Training and Certification conducted by CARPHA's THP.

CARPHA Builds Capacity in Food Safety and Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases in Guyana in Preparation for Expanding Tourism Accommodations

The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), through its Regional Tourism and Health Programme (THP), has bolstered Guyana's public health readiness amid the country's anticipated expansion in tourist accommodations.

With over 2,000 new hotel rooms expected by the end of 2025, including several internationally branded properties, CARPHA conducted a targeted capacity-building mission from May 20–23 to help reduce potential public health risks associated with increased tourist activity.

The Agency delivered advanced food safety training, conducted infectious disease prevention and control sessions (including training on its Tourism and Health Information System [THiS]), recognised local facilities with its prestigious Healthier, Safer Tourism (HST) Award, and presented updated Hospitality, Health Safety and Environmental (HSE) Standards to the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) and the Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana (THAG).

Advanced Food Safety Training: CAR-PHA collaborated with the Minis-

try of Health and Wellness (MOH), Guyana, and the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) to deliver a two-and-a-half day ServSafe® Train-the-Trainer Advanced Food Safety and Certification course. The training targeted environmental health officers, members of the Guyana Food Safety Authority and accommodations and food and beverage facilities such as Cara Hotels and Pegasus Hotel, among others.

The session was facilitated by Mr. Lionel Michael, an Instructor and Proctor of ServSafe®, Mr. Keston Daniel, Visitor-Based Surveillance Coordinator and Ms. Frieda Mohammed, Training and Standards Officer, both of CARPHA. Forty-one (41) persons were trained, and thirty-five (35) participants took the examination on May 22. Successful participants will earn internationally recognised certification in Advanced Food Safety that is valid for 5 years.

Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases: On May 22, CARPHA conducted the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Training with a session on THiS at the Pegasus Hotel, Guyana. A total of fourteen (14) participants from tourism and hospitality sectors, including accommodations, food and beverages, transportation providers, tour guides and tour operators attended. This targeted training provided Guyana tourism stakeholders with the knowledge, capacity and practical examples of prevention and control measures of infectious diseases.

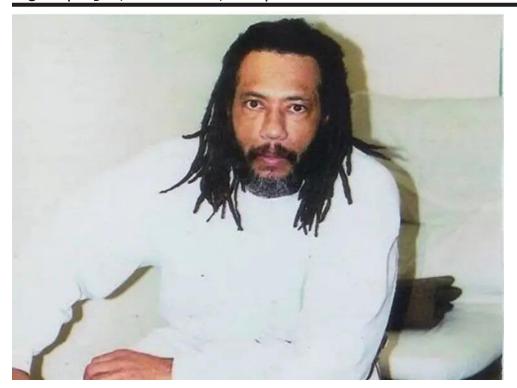
Recognised Healthier, Safer Tourism Awardees and Handover of HSE Standards: On May 22, three (3) tourism facilities were presented with the Healthier, Safer Tourism (HST) Award during an award handover ceremony at the Pegasus Hotel. The HST Award is an accolade granted by CARPHA's Regional Tourism and Health Program (THP) to establishments that demonstrate rigorous training, surveillance, and safety protocols.

By meeting these standards, HST Award recipients actively reduce the risk of infectious disease transmission, protect both visitors and locals, and uphold the region's reputation as a premier, health-focused travel destination.

The awards were presented by Mr. Keston Daniel to Status International Hotel, Atta Rainforest Lodge and Windjammer Hotel. Guyana currently has 200 persons trained in Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases, 54 persons training in Advanced Food Safety Training, 67 hotels registered on THiS and three hotels awarded the HST.

During the ceremony, copies of the seven HSE Standards were presented to GTA and THAG. The Standards will be used by the hospitality sector to improve their food, environmental, energy, solid waste, pest management, water management and sewage systems as the country prepares to expand their accommodation resources.

This mission was made possible through CARPHA's Pandemic Fund Project, "Reducing the Public Health Impact of Pandemics in the Caribbean through Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (RG-T4387)," and funding from the European Union's 11th European Development Fund Regional Health Security Programme.







President Donald Trump

Trump reduces federal life sentence of street gang kingpin Larry Hoover

United States (US) President Donald Trump on Wednesday reduced the federal life sentence of former American gangster and founder of the Chicago street gang Gangster Disciples, Larry Hoover.

The 74-year-old is currently serving a life sentence after being imprisoned in connection with a 1973 murder.

Hoover was sentenced to 150 to 200 years for the murder. He was also convicted of conspiracy, extortion, money laundering and running a continuing criminal enterprise from state prison in 1997.

But according to the Chicago Tribune, a two-page order by the White House said Hoover's sentence was

considered served "with no further fines, restitution, probation or other conditions" and directed the US Bureau of Prisons to release him "immediately".

Hoover is, however, still serving a 200-year sentence for his state murder conviction in Illinois, as a president can commute only federal sen-

tences. He is to be transferred out of the supermax prison compound in Florence, Colorado, the report said. The street gang kingpin has been advocating for years to have his sentence commuted.

American rapper Kanye West and Canadian rapper Drake have since welcomed the news

Charles Rangel, pioneer of US Congressional Black Caucus, dies aged 94

Charles Rangel, a founding member and pioneering leader of the US Congressional Black Caucus, died on Monday, the Caucus said. He was 94. A native and longtime resident of the storied New York neighbourhood of Harlem, Rangel entered the US Congress in 1971, serving for 46 years before retiring in 2017.

In the wake of the US civil rights movement, he emerged as a leading political voice representing black Americans at the turn of the 1970s. Rangel was the first African American to be appointed chairman of the powerful House Ways And Means Committee, which shapes fiscal legislation.

He was forced out of that position and was censured for an ethics violation in 2010, but that did not appear to dent his electability, as he continued to hold public office until his retirement seven years later.

The censure was related to alleged violations of congressional gift rules related to his acceptance of corporate-sponsored trips to the Caribbean, The New York Times reported.

Over the course of an almost-five-de-



Rangel was the first African American to be appointed chairman of the powerful House Ways And Means Committee.

cade career, he established himself as an influential figure in the Democratic Party, forging close ties with former President Bill Clinton and former US Secretary of State Hillary

Rangel was instrumental in convinc-

ing Hillary Clinton to run for a US Senate seat in New York in 2000, kick-starting her political career.

"I'll miss Charlie Rangel, a beloved icon and public servant of New York," she posted on the X social media platform.

"He was a proud veteran who loved serving his Harlem constituents. He urged me to run for the Senate and later was an invaluable colleague."

The Congressional Black Caucus called him "a trailblazer and statesman".

"Known affectionately as the 'Lion of Lenox Avenue', his legacy is one of tireless advocacy, historic firsts, and unwavering dedication to justice and equality. May he rest in power and everlasting peace," the caucus said in a statement.

New York City Council President Adrienne Adams described him as "a giant" of US politics.

"He served with unmatched wit, courage, and an unshakable belief in the power of government to change lives," she said in a statement.

"His legacy lives on in the countless black and Latino New Yorkers he lifted up and inspired."

The death of Rangel, a veteran of the Korean War, came as the United States commemorated Memorial Day on Monday, a day honouring fallen US soldiers.

'I will stay with you'

PM Mottley reverses exit plan

Prime Minister Mia Mottley will lead the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) into the next general election, after all, she announced Saturday night.

Speaking at a BLP rally to celebrate the party's St James North by-election victory, the 59-year-old leader told supporters that although she said in 2022 that the current term would be her last, the gravity of national and global challenges and the widespread appeals from citizens across the country had compelled her to remain.

"In 2022, I told you that that would be my last time. I did so because I had just gone through...six or seven months of true stress," Mottley said, referencing the emotional strain she endured after the death of her brother. "I came to understand that true leadership is never about comfort. It is about calling, it is about timing, and it is about service." Mottley told the gathering that over the past year, and especially in recent weeks, she has been urged by members of her party, civil society, the private sector, the labour movement, constituents and other citizens to remain in leadership.



Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley

Citing the weight of global instability—from wars in Ukraine and Gaza to tensions in the Indo-Pacific and the climate crisis—Mottley said Barbados must not be left adrift amid turbulent times.

"And if you add to that an opposition that resembles more of a pressure group than a political party of 70 years, this country of ours deserves stability and steadiness," she said, taking aim at the Democratic Labour Party (DLP).

The prime minister also stressed that Barbados is still in a period of national transformation that began when the BLP took office in 2018. She noted that the first year and a half of her second

term, which began with the 2022 snap election, was still heavily focused on managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There is no doubt that the water is still choppy," she said. "I came to the conclusion a few weeks ago that this is no longer a personal decision, but it is a decision of duty."

She reiterated her commitment to improving the lives of Barbadians and continuing to lead a now seasoned team of ministers: "Everything I have done in public life has been to try to make the lives of Bajans better, to fight injustice...and to make this country the best that it can be."

Mottley, who became Barbados' first female prime minister in 2018 and led the BLP to a second consecutive clean sweep of all 30 parliamentary seats in 2022, said she believes her team is now more prepared than ever to deliver the transformation the country needs.

Declaring her continued commitment to the people of Barbados and her St Michael North East constituency, she ended her address with a clear statement of intent: "I will stay with you. I will stand with you."

Human rights groups demand apology from Jamaican MP for endorsing anti-gay song

Equality for All Foundation (EFAF), formerly J-FLAG, is calling on Cabinet Minister Daryl Vaz to issue a public apology for allegedly encouraging the playing of a song widely known to advocate for violence against LGBTQ+ persons.

At a Jamaica Labour Party rally in Clarendon South Eastern on Sunday, Vaz, after concluding his speech, requested the DJ to play dancehall group TOK's 2001 hit Chi Chi Man, a song notorious for its anti-gay lyrics.

"Soundman, you think me can come off this stage and you nuh run Chi Chi Man, ah mad yuh mad man," Vaz appears to tell the DJ to shouts of approval from Labourites

Equality for All Foundation, in a statement on Monday, condemned the act, noting that this represents not only a step backwards for Jamaica's politics but for the country at large.

"In the previous elections, both political parties very publicly declared that homophobia was inappropriate on the campaign trail following some unfortunate comments made in East Central St. Catherine. Fast forward five years, and we are we're seeing a homophobic song being teased at another rally. There is a clear need for stronger guide-

lines on what is to be expected on the campaign trail. And the question we must ask ourselves, why is this kind of rhetoric needed at all?" said Glenroy Murray, EFAF executive director.

"Our political leaders are expected to conduct themselves at a higher standard, and they should not, in the excitement of politics, seek to undo the slow progress we as a society have worked hard to achieve," Murray added.

EFAF noted that in a 2023 public perception survey, there was an increase in the number of Jamaicans who are willing to support a Member of Parliament who would protect LGBTQ+ persons from violence and discrimination. "EFAF is calling on MP Daryl Vaz to issue an apology to the Jamaican people for words and actions that are unbecoming of his office. EFAF is also calling on the Office of the Political Ombudsman, alongside the leaders of both political parties to issue a clear statement that the use of homophobic or any other discriminatory language (whether spoken or in music) targeting a person or community is no longer an acceptable feature of our politics," it added.

Jamaicans for Justice (JFJ) has also joined EFAF in condemning Vaz, stating:

"We share EFAF's profound disappointment in the use of any homophobic slur and rhetoric that incite violence against LGBTQ+ persons, a regressive act that undermines Jamaica's Journey toward inclusivity, equality, and justice for all. JFJ strongly supports EFAF's demand for an immediate apology from MP Vaz for actions unbecoming of his office.

Such behaviour is particularly egregious from those entrusted to lead the charge in advancing legislative protections, including the urgent need for an anti-discrimination law and amendments to the Jamaican Constitution to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation," JFJ said.

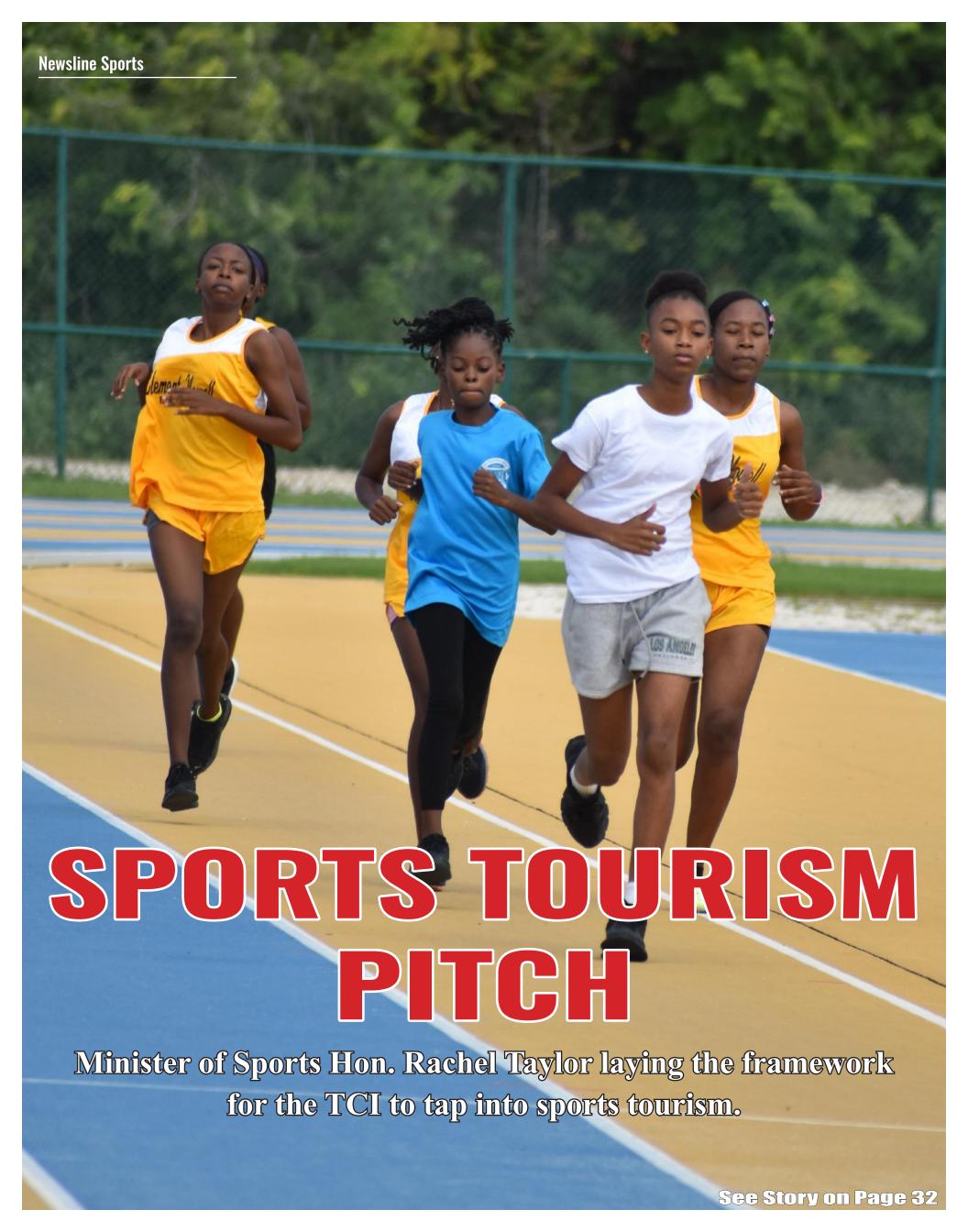
"These progressive steps are essential to ensuring freedom from discrimination for all Jamaicans. When political leaders engage in or endorse discriminatory rhetoric, they not only betray their responsibility to champion these changes but also erode public confidence in the potential for societal and behavioural change among others. If those tasked with shaping our laws act in ways that perpetuate harm, how can we expect broader societal progress?" IFI added.

JFJ called for the Office of the Politi-

cal Ombudsman and the leadership of both political parties to issue clear guidelines prohibiting homophobic or discriminatory language, whether spoken or through music, on the campaign



At a Jamaica Labour Party rally in Clarendon South Eastern on Sunday, Vaz, after concluding his speech, requested the DJ to play dancehall group TOK's 2001 hit Chi Chi Man, a song notorious for its anti-gay lyrics.



Osaka despondent after French Open first-round exit

Naomi Osaka said she "hates disappointing people" after sliding to a tough three-set loss to Spanish 10th seed Paula Badosa in the first round of the French Open on Monday.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Osaka saved a set point in the opening set before dominating the tiebreak, but Badosa ran away with the second set to force a decider.

Osaka regrouped and broke early for a 2-0 lead only for Badosa to quickly pull level, landing the crucial break in the seventh game on her way to a 6-7 (1/7), 6-1, 6-4 victory.

"It was a tough match," said Osaka, who suffered an agonising loss to eventual champion Iga Swiatek in last year's second round, having held a match point.

"I think as time goes on, I feel like I should be doing better."

Former world number one Osaka is now working with Patrick Mouratoglou, the long-time coach to Serena Williams.

She won a lower-level title on clay earlier this month and is back in the top 50 but is still fighting to return to the sport's upper echelons.

"I hate disappointing people," said a visibly emotional Osaka.

"So, like, even with Patrick, I was thinking this just now, but he goes from working with, like, the greatest player ever to, like... this? You know what I mean?"

Osaka did not play in 2023 due to the birth of her daughter and struggled for consistency after returning to the professional circuit last season.

But the 27-year-old had the second round in her sights after taking a one-set lead over Badosa, whose injury problems had limited her to two



Naomi Osak

matches on clay in the build-up to Roland Garros.

Osaka has been wearing flower-inspired outfits this year and unveiled cherry blossom-themed shoes for Roland Garros, with a kit to match. She took a medical timeout between the first and second sets, during which she trimmed her floral nails before later explaining that a blister issue from Rome had resurfaced.

"Since Rome, I have had, like, blisters on my hands. I think it's like from the friction of clay, because I don't have blisters on any other surface," she said Badosa won the first five games of the second set and said she drew inner strength from a famous compatriot as she completed a comeback win.

"I have to say that when I was 7-6 down the first thing I did was to look over there," said Badosa, pointing to Rafael Nadal's footprint carved into the Philippe Chatrier court, which was unveiled during his farewell ceremony on Sunday.

"To get inspiration from Rafa. I'm like 'Come on Paula, you have to fight like he was."

Shericka Jackson satisfied after Rabat win

Shericka Jackson won her first 100m race in almost a year after she clocked 11.04 seconds (0.2m/s) at Sunday's Meeting International Mohammed VI d'Athletisme de Rabat held at Complexe Sportif Prince Moulay Abdellah, Rabat in Morocco, the fourth stop on the 2025 Wanda Diamond League series.

Jackson, who was contesting a 100m race for the first time since the Jamaican national championships in late June last year, overcame a slow start to beat Liberia's Maia McCoy, who ran 11.08 seconds and American Jacious Sears – 11.11 seconds.

She was the only Jamaican winner at the event while Olympic Games shot put medallist Rajindra Campbell and women's 400m intermediate hurdler Andrenette Knight was second in their respective events.

Jackson, who has lost just one 100m race since last year, in the semi-finals at the Jamaican championships, said she was happy with the result.

"I am healthy and that's the most important thing. I did a lot of stuff good, but there are a lot of things that I can improve but it was a good race so I leave this competition with only happy feelings," said Jackson. Campbell threw a season's best 21.95m, joint second in the world, improving on the 21.40m he threw a few days earlier in Germany and was just edged by American Payton Otterdahl, who threw a world-leading 21.97m in the final round.

The Olympic Games bronze medallist threw over 21.00m on all five legal marks on Sunday said afterwards, "It was a good competition, the circumstances were good, the atmosphere was nice, the stadium was packed so it was fun to compete."

He pointed out that, "This is my second meet of the year so everything still feels rusty, but I am pleased with the result. We have the Diamond League in Rome in about a week so onto the next."

Knight, who described her race as "a work in progress", also had a season's best 53.90 seconds and Rushell Clayton was fourth in 54.83 seconds, also her fastest so far this season as world champion Femke Bol of the Netherlands set a meet record 52.46 seconds, beating the 53.68 seconds set in 2011 by Bulgaria's Vanya Stambolova.

Rushell Clayton was fourth in 54.83 seconds.

Knight shared, "I am happy with the season best. I need to work on my whole set up, the race pattern. I try different things every race and just go back and see what has to be done. Next race the goal is to go even faster."

Romaine Beckford was fifth in the men's high jump and Raymond Rich-

ards finished ninth, both clearing 2.21m as the top three men Hamish Kerr of New Zealand, Marco Fassinotti of Italy and Yual Reath of Australia all cleared 2.25m.

Many-time national champion Natoya Goule-Toppin was 10th in the women's 800m running 1:59.92 seconds.



Jamaica's Shericka Jackson celebrates after winning the women's 100m during the IAAF Diamond League competition at Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat on May 25, 2025.



Argentina player Diego Maradona in action during the FIFA 1986 World Cup match against Bulgaria on June 10th, 1986 in Mexico City, Mexico.

Argentine court declares a mistrial in the case over the death of football star Maradona

An Argentine court on Thursday declared a mistrial in the case of seven health professionals accused of negligence in the death of football legend Diego Maradona, the latest dramatic twist in a trial that has captivated the nation and the football world for more than two months.

The whiplash decision comes after one of the three judges overseeing the trial stepped down over criticism surrounding her participation in a forthcoming documentary about the case.

Her controversial withdrawal compelled the court to either appoint a new judge in her place or to retry the entire case from scratch.

On Thursday, the judges decided the latter, effectively turning the clock back on all proceed-

ings in the case that accuses Maradona's medical team of failing to provide adequate care for the football star in his final days.

The judges ruled there would be a new trial, without specifying when.

Julieta Makintach said that she had "no choice" but to resign from the case on Tuesday after the prosecutor showed a teaser-trailer for a documentary, Divine Justice, which traces the aftermath of Maradona's death at the age of 60 to the start of the trial, clearly featuring Makintach as a main protagonist.

Maradona, who led Argentina to the World Cup title in 1986, died on November 25, 2020 on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, days after undergoing surgery for a haematoma that formed between his skull and brain.

Deputy Governor Launches Inaugural 5K Run/Walk for a Cause in Providenciales

The Deputy Governor of the Turks and Caicos Islands is inviting residents and fitness enthusiasts to lace up their sneakers and join the first-ever DG's 5K Run/Walk, an inaugural event set for Saturday, June 14, 2025, starting promptly at 5:30 a.m. at the Deputy Governor's Office (RBC Parking Lot).

Billed as a health-driven initiative with a philanthropic purpose, this exciting community event aims to raise much-needed funds for two vital local charities — the Turks and Caicos Islands National

Cancer Society and United Way Turks and Caicos Islands.

With a scenic route through the streets of Providenciales, participants will enjoy a spirited morning of fitness, community camaraderie, and charitable giving. The event is expected to attract walkers, joggers, and runners of all ages and fitness levels, with the rallying call: "Join us and make every step count!"

Deputy Governor Anya Williams, the driving force behind the initiative, is encouraging widespread participation. "This is more than just a race — it's a chance to unite for a purpose, support our community, and promote wellness," she said.

Registration is open to all, and early sign-up is encouraged to secure spots for what promises to be a high-energy, feel-good occasion for the entire island.

For more information or to register, interested persons can contact (649) 241-2489 or email pvirgil@gov.tc.

Let the countdown begin for this fantastic 5K – where fitness meets purpose!



Her Excellency Anya Williams



Representatives of the various sporting bodies are pictured with Minister of Sports Hon. Rachel Taylor (centre)

TCIGA Participates in National Sports Governing Body AGM : A Call for Unity, Compliance, and Youth Development

The Turks and Caicos Islands Golf Association (TCIGA) was well represented at the National Sports Governing Body Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on Wednesday evening May 28, 2025, under the theme "One Direction: Aligning Vision, Action, and Impact."

The AGM, hosted by the Sports Commission at the Gustavus Lightbourne Sports Complex, brought together the leadership of all registered National Sports Governing Bodies (NSGBs) in a show of national solidarity and forward planning for the future of sports in the TCI.

The AGM comprised all the national sporting federations including the TCI Golf Association, TCI Cycling Federation, TCI Volleyball Federation, TCI Swim Federation, TCI Rugby Football Union, TCI Sailing Association, TCI Basketball Federation, TCI Football Association, TCI Softball Federation, TCI Commonwealth Games Association, and the TCI Amateur Athletic Association.

All federation representatives were invited to provide a report on their organization's highlights for 2024. Vice President of TCIGA, Mr. Mark Fulford, delivered remarks on behalf of the Golf Association. He reaffirmed TCIGA's commitment to strengthening compliance, governance, and grassroots development.

"This AGM represents more than just a statutory meeting," Fulford stated. "It is a collective recommitment to elevating the standards of sport governance and performance across the board. TCIGA is fully aligned with the Commission's goals and has taken proactive steps to demonstrate our commitment to full compliance and transparency."

Mr. Fulford also announced an exciting youth outreach initiative set to launch this year: "We will begin reaching out directly to every high school across the islands to identify students with strong hand-eye coordination to participate in golf tryouts. Our vision is to cultivate a new generation of talented golfers who can proudly represent the Turks and Caicos Islands on the regional and international stage."

Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, Hon. Rachel Taylor, commended the federations for their resilience and collaboration. She offered her ministry's continued assistance and emphasized the importance of data reporting, strategic planning, and talent development, urging federations to align their internal governance with national goals.

"The future of sports in the TCI requires unity of purpose, institutional discipline, and a renewed commitment to excellence" she noted. "I commend all the NSGBs who are present for their engagement, and I encourage you to continue fostering inclusivity and innovation in sports."

Director of Sports, Mr. Jarrett Forbes, delivered a comprehensive presenta-

tion outlining the year's highlights, key milestones, and upcoming priorities, including the development of high-performance environments and support for youth talent.

The AGM concluded with a robust discussion led by Compliance and Support Manager Joddy Harvey, addressing critical areas such as the assessment pro-

cess, strategic planning frameworks, and the implementation of the NGB Enhancement Programme.

The TCIGA expresses gratitude to the Sports Commission for its continued partnership and pledges to play an active role in the transformation and professionalization of sport in the Turks and Caicos Islands.



Mark Fulford (left), Vice President of TCIGA, share lens with Hon. Rachel Taylor (centre), Minister of Sports and Jarrett Forbes, Director of Sports.



The Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands has unveiled a dynamic push into sports tourism as a central pillar of national development, announcing the formulation of a National Sports Tourism Policy and millions in new capital investments aimed at transforming the islands into a regional hub for athletic excellence, community health, and international events.

In a powerful address during the ongoing Budget Debate, Hon. Rachel Taylor, Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, declared, "Sports Tourism in Action!" — referencing the resounding success of recent events like ADF Fight Night vs. Canada, which raised nearly \$30,000 for the Athlete Develop-

ment Fund and showcased local boxing talent from the Felix Morley Community Centre in Five Cays.

"Over 4,000 individuals, from children to seniors, participated in our programmes last year," Minister Taylor said. "These are lives being shaped, communities being strengthened. This year, we intend on doing more!"

National Sports Tourism Policy Incoming

The Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, will develop the territory's first National Sports Tourism Policy, offering a structured framework to guide the planning, promotion, and management of sports-related travel and

Government Pitches Bold Vision for Sports Tourism in National Development Drive

By Vivian Tyson, NEWSLINE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

events. The goal is to harness sports as a force not just for health and youth engagement, but as an economic engine that attracts athletes, teams, and fans from around the region and beyond.

Investment in Infrastructure and Athlete Support

Backing its commitment with capital, the Government announced more than \$4 million in infrastructure projects including:

- \$1.2 million for upgrades to the Gustavus Lightbourne Sports Complex
- \$980,000 for the South Caicos Sports Field
- \$1.3 million+ for the Grand Turk Sports Complex and Shelter
- \$500,000 for park upgrades at Back Salina, Juba Sound, and Kew Park
- \$200,000 for a new Community Centre in The Bight.

Plans are also well underway to establish a National Sports Training Centre, signaling a shift from grassroots participation to elite performance. This phased initiative will incorporate specialist coaching, sports science, psychology, and advanced training facilities.

Youth Empowerment Through Sport Media and Storytelling

In an innovative move blending culture and sports, the Government's Project IDEA Media Club has produced Ripple Effect, a short film

that toured schools and reached over 700 students. It is now set to make history as the first locally produced film from the TCI selected for the Caribbean Film Festival in Trinidad this June.

"That is the power of sport to tell our stories and move the world," said Minister Taylor.

A Science-Based Approach to Athlete Development

Launched in March 2025, the Long-Term Athlete Development Frameworks chart the path "from playground to podium" across basketball, football, cricket, swimming, athletics, and rugby. Over 100 coaches and officials have been trained and certified, and workshops on Sports Psychology and Governance have been rolled out for national federations.

Building More Than Athletes

"Together, we are not just building athletes, we are building a stronger, healthier, more connected Turks and Caicos Islands," Minister Taylor emphasized.

With a focus on equity, community

partnerships, and high-performance transformation, the government's message is clear: sport is not an afterthought — it's a cornerstone of national identity and opportunity. As Minister Taylor concluded, "We must ensure that the foundations of these bridges to brilliance are firmly rooted in our communities."

Four Schools Set to Clash in Upcoming Co-Ed Volleyball Showdown

The court is set, the stakes are high, and the spirit of competition is electric as four of the nation's top secondary schools gear up for the much-anticipated Co-Ed High School Volleyball Tournament, scheduled for Saturday, June 7, 2025, at the Gus Lightbourne Sports Complex in downtown Providenciales.

The action kicks off at 9:30 a.m.,

with fierce rivalry expected among teams from A. Louise Thomas Garland High School, Wesley Methodist High School, British Collegiate High School, and Clement Howell High School. This thrilling one-day tournament promises dynamic rallies, powerful spikes, and high-energy teamwork as mixed-gender teams take center stage in the name of school pride and athletic

excellence.

Adding to the community spirit, entry is completely free, inviting families, friends, and fans to come out and support their schools in a day of exciting, high-tempo volleyball. The tournament is proudly sponsored by TC Crystal, reaffirming its commitment to youth development and community sports. Event coordination is led by Dwight My-

rie, who encourages all supporters to reach out for more details at (649) 243-8729.

With the combination of athletic talent and school spirit, the 2025 Co-Ed Volleyball Tournament is shaping up to be a highlight of the local sports calendar. All eyes will be on the court as these four schools battle for bragging rights and volleyball glory.