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blends roots sounds with
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Dance Your Style

BC's Humuzza to represent Canada at World final of Red Bull Competition

Surrey's Humuza Bazira (aka Humuzza) has danced his way to another world final of the Red Bull Dance Your Style event competition.

Bazira will rep Canada in Los Angeles this fall after winning the Canadian regional dance-off Friday (Sept. 5) at Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver.

The crowd-judged, all-styles competition involved 16 street dancers including Bazira, 22, a hip-hop "popper" who was schooled at Sullivan Heights Secondary and appeared on Canada's Got Talent in 2024.

Now a two-time winner of the Canadian dance event, Bazira earned a trip to the 2022 Red Bull world finals in Johannesburg, South Africa, placing fourth on the international stage.

"I had an amazing time competing (in Vancouver)," he said over the weekend. "Everything from the music to the audience to the venue made it a night I'll never forget. My goal was to have fun and be myself unapologetically, and I'm happy to say I was able to do that, and even walked away with the win."

As a Dance Your Style ambassador, Bazira was allowed to skip qualifiers and head straight to nationals at the Commodore.

"It's a really fun event, probably one of the best crowds of all events I've been to, because the crowd is so involved and it's always a good time, always great energy, great positivity," Bazira said in a phone call pre-competition.

He's excited to dance in Los Angeles this fall.

"The Worlds is in a really cool place, at the (NBA) Clippers arena, Intuit Dome, which is gonna be so fun," he said. "There's thousands of seats there and I know the energy is gonna be amazing. I'm super excited to see how that will look."



Humuzza has danced his way to another world final

Bazira has been dancing for close to eight years now, starting at Sullivan Heights, and has also entered the world of acting on shows including Fire Country and Tracker.

"Dance is 100 per cent my life, and acting," he said. "I am full-time dancing all the time, 365 days a year, definitely my profession. I've danced on TV shows, movies, perform around

the world.... I love art in all forms and I think acting is so similar to dancing. I'm really enjoying the journey of bringing the two together."

The 15 other dancers at the national event in Vancouver were Bibz, Nfinite, Isaiah Peck, Chantelle Mostacho, Prince Django, C.A.L.M., Professor WORD, Sunny, Romy, Kayla, Rahma, King Mars, Jamal, Rajan and Sleepless.

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SIT AND EMBRACE

The Change

Sit here with me for a moment and relax. Take a comfortable deep breath, hold it for a moment, and then gently let it out. Feel yourself settle right where you are.

Now let us be real. Change is not always easy. Sometimes it sneaks in quietly. Other times it shows up like a storm that flips everything upside down. And if you are like most people, the first instinct is to resist it. We have all been there, mainly because we were conditioned to think that way. To hold on tight to what feels safe and familiar. To say, I will deal with it later.

But here is the truth. Change is not against you. Change is for you. Now that is music to my ears.

Think back to where you started. You made a choice to take better care of yourself. You leaned into your own strength. You shifted your perspective. You found a new way to see things. You recalibrated and adjusted when you needed to. You stood firm when life tested you. And all of that happened because you allowed change to move through your life.

You did not stay stuck. You

moved forward. That is how you got here.

So let me ask you directly. Where in your life right now is change asking for your attention? Maybe it is in your work. Maybe it is in your relationships. Maybe it is in the way you treat yourself when no one is looking. For me, it is all areas, especially in my business and the relationship I have with it.

Pause here and think about that for a second. Close your eyes if you need to and scan your body. Focus, take a slow breath, and let one thing rise to the surface. One area where you know you have been feeling a nudge or something that you are not quite sure about. That is something. That nudge is not random. That is change calling you forward.

I know change can feel heavy. I know it can feel uncertain. I have been through it myself. There were times I almost convinced myself it was better to stay comfortable, better to wait until I had everything figured out. That is right. However, I learned something important. Waiting did not make me stronger. Resisting did not keep me safe. What helped me grow was

saying yes to change, even when I did not feel ready, even when it was uncomfortable or scary.

And you have done that too. Think about the changes you already walked through. At the time, they may have felt scary. But looking back, can you see how they shaped you? Can you see how they made you stronger? This is simply a test, nothing more, nothing less. However, it is how you deal with it that makes you stronger.

That is the gift of change. It stretches you. It teaches you to trust yourself. It shows you that you are stronger than you realized.

So how do you embrace it?

First, you trust yourself. Trust that you have already proven you can handle hard things. Trust that the strength you need will rise up as you move forward.

Second, you let go. Holding on to what no longer serves you only creates more fear. When you loosen your grip, you make space for what is new. No attachment and no clutter.

Third, you take one step. You do not need to know how the whole path looks. You just need to take the next step in front of you, and then the next.

That is how change works. Not in one big leap, but in steady steps that add up over time.

Do this with me now. Take a slow breath in. As you exhale, imagine letting go of one thing that no longer belongs to you. It might be fear. It might be doubt. It might be the voice that says you are not ready. Let it go with your breath.

Now breathe in again. Imagine pulling in courage, confidence, peace, or even possibility. Feel that



**HEART
& SOUL**
with
Dianne Ojar

inside you. That is how you invite change. Breath by breath. Choice by choice.

I have decided to live this way too. To stop running from change and start leaning into it. Not to boost my ego, but to grow and to show others it can be done. My friends, my family, anyone who is ready to hear it. Change has been my teacher, and I want to share what I have learned because I know it can help. Change is opportunity.

And now it is your turn.

Think of one change you have been putting off. What would happen if you said yes to it? What would happen if you trusted yourself enough to step forward without having all the answers?

Sit with that. Let yourself feel it.

The truth is, you are ready.

You do not need to keep waiting. You do not need to know how it all unfolds. You only need to decide that you will not resist anymore. That you will move with the change instead of against it.

Change is not here to break you. It is here to shape you.

So let us walk together into what is next.

Are you ready to take the next step? Visit masteryourshifthypnosis.com to explore powerful tools, resources, and transformative hypnosis sessions designed by Dianne Ojar, The Experiential Coach. Let Dianne guide you on this empowering journey toward abundance, success, and prosperity. Take action now and step into the life you deserve.



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THE DARK KNIGHT'S WIFE

How a Guyanese beauty Queen ended up saving the life of Michael Caine

The only thing that may be more remarkable than Sir Michael Caine's long and celebrated career is the fact that he's been happily married for more than five decades – a feat that would be impressive for anyone, let alone a prominent showbiz couple.

Caine's wife, the stunning model and actress Shakira Baksh Caine, has stood by her husband's side through the years. She's supported the Dark Knight star during his incredible acting career, which include two Oscar wins for *Hannah and Her Sisters* and *The Cider House Rules*. But what else do we know about her?

Born in Guyana in February 1947, Shakira Baksh reportedly grew up in a Muslim family of Indian descent. As reported by the Guyana Chronicle, while working as a secretary, Baksh was encouraged by her boss to enter the 1967 Miss Guyana beauty pageant.

Another motivation to enter the contest was the terrorist attack at a US Information Service office that she survived, albeit with "her eardrum ruptured and cheek scarred". Per a 1976 People profile on Michael and Shakira Caine, "That incident, plus diminishing opportunities for Indians in Guyana, led to her entry into a beauty contest – 'my main concern was just to get out.'"

She won Miss Guyana and later went on to compete at the Miss World contest in London, where she snagged third place. Eventually, the future Mrs Caine moved to England permanently.

Shakira's first acting roles were uncredited roles in the 1969 films *Carry on Again Doctor* and *Some Girls Do*. She had a couple of appearances in the 1970s TV series *UFO* as well as a role in the 1973 dark comedy *Son of Dracula* with Beatles legend Ringo Starr. She played Roxanne in 1975's *The Man Who Would Be King* alongside Sean Connery and her husband Michael Caine.

Shakira is Michael's second wife. He was previously married to British actress Patricia Haines, with whom he shares daughter Dominique, born in 1957.

Michael first saw the pageant queen in a 1970s Maxwell House coffee commercial, in which she had a role as a Brazilian peasant. Enamoured with her beauty, Michael was driven to seek out the gorgeous actress. He recalled to *People* in 1976, "She was the most beautiful girl I'd ever seen."

He managed to find her contact details through a friend, and the two later met up at a London restaurant for their first date. "I fell in love with her at first sight. She was everything I had dreamed of," he later said, per smoothra-



Shakira Baksh with her husband Michael Caine

dio.com. The couple married in Las Vegas in 1973 and share a daughter.

In his 2018 book *Blowing the Bloody Doors Off: And Other Lessons in Life*, the Kingsman star recounted how his wife played an important role in getting his life back on track after he went through some challenging times, including alcohol abuse.

"I was never bombed on set, but I thought that a small vodka for breakfast was nothing to worry about, and in the early 1970s I was drinking two bottles of the stuff a day," Michael wrote

in his book. Years later, the knighted British acting legend credited his former beauty queen wife for helping him sort his life out.

"By an immense stroke of good fortune, Shakira arrived in my life just in time," Caine said in the book. "The empty feeling vanished and she got on my case. Then, to top it all, she got pregnant and I was given a second go at fatherhood, and soon I got myself straightened out. I gave up alcohol entirely for a year and now I never drink during the day, and with dinner it's just wine ... Shakira literally saved my life."



LOVE ISLANDS

Antigua & Barbuda's first reality dating TV show goes Caribbean-wide

Antigua and Barbuda's first reality dating show has been deemed a success. With 18,000 views in 48 hours and three couples formed, the twin island nation's TV gamble paid off and now the country is ready to take the entire region along for the ride.

Co-Executive Producer Jamila Watkins is celebrating the success of 'The Mixer' — the dating reality series that became the first of its kind filmed entirely in Antigua and Barbuda — as the show prepares to expand across the Caribbean for its next season.

"We would say that season one was an absolute success in achieving its core mission, which was to introduce the concept of film tourism to the Caribbean while using a dating reality series as the vehicle to drive the vision forward," Watkins said.

The original pilot episode, which premiered last summer, proved there's serious appetite for

Caribbean-produced reality television, attracting more than 18,000 views in just its first 48 hours. But beyond the numbers, Watkins sees the show as a cultural milestone for Antigua and Barbuda.

"It positions us on the map as a pioneer in regional entertainment, becoming the first to host a Caribbean-based dating reality show. It is a historic first for us that not only showcases the charm of our island, but also places us on the forefront of a new and exciting space in Caribbean media," she explained.

The show wasn't just about entertainment value—it delivered on its romantic promise too. "Yes, couples were formed as a result of the show, three couples to be exact," Watkins confirmed, though she admits the production team isn't entirely sure about the current status of those relationships.

Now, as Love Link TV and Productions

opens region-wide casting for Love Link Caribbean — the expanded version of their successful pilot — Watkins has bigger ambitions for the show's cultural impact.

"For this upcoming season, we are hoping to continue showcasing the beauty of Antigua as our host country, while also celebrating the richness of Caribbean culture and its people through breathtaking scenery, authentic experiences, and also it is our hope to promote trans-cultural love and to establish a deeper regional connection," she said.

The casting call is now open for Caribbean nationals between 21 and 35 who are ready to be part of this next chapter in regional entertainment.

Adventurous singles can apply online at www.lovelinktv.com by August 8, 2025.

Filming for the new season is scheduled to begin in October 2025.

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Michael the Pannist

WHEN the curtains opened at the One World One Family Festival in Sathya Sai Grama, India, Michael Hospedales felt time collapse.

For a split second the man known as Michael the Pannist was a boy again, stretching to reach the tenor pan his grandmother once tried to keep him away from.

"That moment was simply overwhelming and humbling. As I stood on that stage and those curtains opened, I couldn't believe that I was really on such a grand world stage representing Trinidad and Tobago—and I couldn't be more proud," Hospedales said,

"However, I felt at peace knowing I worked so hard and this opportunity was well deserved."

The New York-based pannist led a five-piece ensemble that included Wilfred Kieal Jr on tenor pan, Mark Garceran on double seconds, Marc Brooks on drums, and award-winning producer and bassist Shawn "Mas-tamind" Noel.

Together they delivered a set that wove through Freetown Collective's "Take Me Home", a David Rudder medley that included the anthem "Trini 2 De Bone", Kes Dieffenthaller's "Hello", and Shurwayne Winchester's "Don't Stop" which was produced by Noel.

The showcase brought thousands at the 100-day international celebration of humanity, heritage, and harmony—which started on August 16 and ends on November 23—to their feet.

Sharing the stage with a gifted group to T&T musicians made the India performance even more special. What made the group click, he said, was how egos disappeared in the service of the music.

"There was an unbreakable bond formed between the group from day one. We all as a group understood that the moment was bigger than us individually and we truly banded together and delivered a powerful representation of our culture and music."



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GOATOBER

Festival of Goat brings three top Caribbean chefs over live fire

On October 19, GoatoberTT presents Feasts of Fire, the most unique culinary event for 2025.

This “Festival of Goat” brings together three female chefs at the top of their game who will put the spotlight on one of our favourite meats by elevating and demonstrating its versatility.

St Lucian-born Nina Compton, and Trinidad and Tobago’s Debra Sardinha and Brigette Joseph are the chefs bringing the fire to this evening of culinary adventure.

Compton became a household name in 2013 as the runner-up in Bravo’s popular Top Chef competition. Since then she’s won the James Beard Award (the Oscars of the culinary world) and many other accolades for her restaurant Compere Lapin in New Orleans.

Sardinha, known affectionately as Chef Debbie, made history as the first female executive chef at a Hilton Hotel in the Americas. She’s a trailblazer who has been devoted to elevating our local produce and flavours.

The youngest of the chefs, Joseph is celebrating her 20th anniversary in the industry.

In that time, she’s shown herself to be an innovator who has found fascinating ways to present local produce. Joseph is in demand at high profile local and regional events like Freebird’s recent Oil and Music Food Festival and the Barbados Food and Rum Festival.

Goatober is an international celebration of goat that began in the US in 2011. It spread to the UK and Europe and was introduced in Trinidad by journalist and media entrepreneur Franka Philip in 2019.

GoatoberTT was first staged with a series of successful events featuring UK chefs James Whetlor and James Cochran alongside Joseph and popular local chef Bianca Savary Bianco. Covid19 put the in-person event on hiatus; however, the programme shifted to online events like live cook-alongs, interviews, and discussions. Philip was, however, determined to revive the in-person dining experience.

“I’m really excited to bring back Goatober celebrations this year. After covid, it was a struggle for me personally to do it, but in 2024, I was inspired by events in the diasporic culinary space that were putting Caribbean food at the forefront.”

Philip described how she got Compton to



Debra Sardinha

come and participate in Goatober.

“I’ve been talking to Nina about coming for Goatober since 2018 and I know she’s incredibly busy so I went to New Orleans to see her in May. The food coming out of her kitchen at Compere Lapin is possibly the best I’ve ever eaten.

“She visited these shores in August and after hanging out with Brigette and Debbie, she’s eagerly looking forward to cooking with them.”

This year’s Goatober event will take the form of two meals – lunch and dinner in which the meat will be cooked by live fire.

Lunch will be led by Joseph and she will curate a menu that pays homage to the principles she’s stuck with in her 20 years. “It’s an anniversary celebration,” she said. “People can bring a lime and get friends together for a casual way to enjoy serious cooking.”

All three chefs will combine for a four-

course dinner which they’ve described as “a sultry evening of Caribbean chic and culinary excellence” that will bring out the versatility and bold flavours of goat.

In this country, goat is most popularly enjoyed curried but one of the main aims of Goatober is to challenge the notions of how goat can be enjoyed. This is why GoatoberTT will always invite chefs known for their willingness to push the envelope to participate in this event. Philip is inviting the real food lovers to “have their taste buds challenged by some of the Caribbean’s most exquisite chefs.”

Feasts of Fire takes place in Veronique’s Events in St Clair, with lunch taking place from 12 pm-4 pm and dinner from 6 pm-10 pm.

Tickets and details are available on IslandEtickets.



Odiyo is based in Jamaica but features readers with various Caribbean accents

A CARIBBEAN VOICE

Region's first-ever audiobook platform harks back to oral traditions

The Caribbean's first-ever audiobook platform, Odiyo, officially launched at the recent 2025 Calabash International Literary Festival, is introducing a revolutionary way to experience regional storytelling through the vibrant, unfiltered voices of the Caribbean. Designed to preserve and amplify the region's literary and oral traditions, Odiyo transforms how Caribbean stories are consumed, delivering them in immersive, culturally resonant audio formats that centre Caribbean voices, dialects, and soundscapes.

"This isn't just about hearing stories, it's about hearing ourselves, completely and unapologetically," said Saeed Thomas, co-founder of Odiyo. "There's something powerful about listening to a Caribbean story told in a Caribbean voice, surrounded by familiar sounds, maybe the low hum of a fan, the distant bark of a dog, or the chorus of crickets. These aren't just background noises. They're the soundtrack of our lives. And that's what Odiyo is about, honouring the full audio landscape of our culture."

The app features narrators like Jamaica's Desmond Dennis and

Dike Rostant of Trinidad and Tobago, whose unique vocal styles breathe new life into regional literature. Among the standout titles already available are *A Different Me, A Better You* by Janet Morrison, *Riddim & Riddles* by Owen "Blakka" Ellis, *Girlcott* by Florenz Webbe Maxwell, and *All Over Again* by A-dZiko Simba Gegele, all published by Blue Banyan Books and now available in richly narrated audio.

"Odiyo is a game-changer," said Tanya Batson-Savage, publisher and editor-in-chief at Blue Banyan Books. "There's an undeniable magic in hearing a Caribbean story told in a Caribbean voice; it feels personal, grounded, and real. We've always been an oral people. That's how we've passed down knowledge and culture for generations. Odiyo gives us the chance to do that in a new format, one that meets listeners where they are, whether that's on the road, in school, or half-way across the world."

Based in Jamaica, Odiyo celebrates Caribbean identity, one story at a time. Download on the App Store, or visit getodiyo.com



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Family Love

New album from legendary Trinidadian rockers turns spotlight on island soul

For more than two decades, Trinidad and Tobago's Orange Sky have been carrying the Caribbean's rock-reggae banner to the world. From touring the US alongside guitar legend Yngwie Malmsteen, to recording acclaimed albums like Upstairs and Dat Iz Voodoo, the band has built a reputation for fearless fusion, blending heavy rock riffs with reggae grooves and island soul. But with their brand-new single Family Love releasing worldwide on all streaming platforms this week. Orange Sky turns the spotlight squarely on their reggae roots and on a universal message: the power of family, forgiveness, and love.

Family Love is not just another single in the band's discography. It is a heartfelt anthem that speaks directly to the times we live in, a reminder that in a world divided by conflict, distraction, and struggle, family remains the most enduring source of strength. The track leans fully into reggae's warmth, weaving a deep, rolling rhythm with lyrics that cut straight to the heart: "Family should stick together/Family love forever/Family should pray together/Family love."

The song's verses reflect both nostalgia and a call for change. With lines like "I keep on smiling, crying down memory lane/And hoping for a change" and "It's all the fighting up, struggle up making us stray. Time to make a change", Orange Sky captures the bittersweet tension of remembering childhood innocence while facing present-day struggles. The chorus offers the answer: unity, prayer, and love within the family.

Musically, Family Love is a deliberate step into reggae authenticity. Known for their ability to blend hard rock guitars with Caribbean grooves, the band strips back distortion here in



Orange Sky

favor of a rootsy, melodic sound that highlights Nigel Rojas's soulful vocals and the band's rhythmic precision. The result is a track that is both intimate and expansive equally at home on reggae playlists and at global festivals celebrating world music and unity.

What makes Family Love so powerful is its timeless universality. While rooted in Orange Sky's Caribbean identity, the song's themes transcend borders. It speaks to anyone who has leaned on family through hard times, anyone who has longed for reconciliation, and anyone who believes in the healing power of love. In an era where digital distractions and social divides pull people apart, Orange Sky offers a reminder of what truly lasts: the bonds of family.

For Orange Sky, now celebrating over 25 years as one of the Caribbean's most resilient bands, this release marks both a continuation and a rebirth. It honours their past fusion of rock and reggae while embracing reggae's spiritual and emotional depth more directly than ever before.

As Rojas explains, "After all the battles, the only thing that matters is love, family love, music love, love for our people. That's what we want the world to feel when they hear this song."

With Family Love, Orange Sky delivers more than a single. They deliver a statement of purpose, a healing anthem and a song destined to resonate across generations and geographies.

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BABY ROCKI

Rihanna and ASAP Rocky welcome a daughter to the family

Rihanna couldn't be more thrilled to add a baby girl to the family.

Reports are the beauty mogul and mom of three, 37, is "over the moon" about welcoming her first daughter, Rocki Irish, with rapper A\$AP Rocky.

The couple's new addition, whom the pair welcomed at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, has "already brought a whole new energy to the family."

"She's obviously so grateful for her boys — all three of them — but she's been ready for some more girly energy," a source told reporters. "She's over the moon about her baby girl."

"It's already brought a whole new energy to the family," the insider continues. "She's always dreamed of having a little girl. She's been shopping a lot and is so excited about dressing her daughter. It's a whole new world for her."

The source also shares that baby Rocki is "everything she hoped for," adding that Rihanna is feeling "incredibly blessed."

Another source says that the FENTY Beauty founder and the Don't Be Dumb artist, 36, are "so happy" to add a girl to their family.

"They're so happy to finally have a girl," the insider said. "They've wanted this for a while and can't believe it actually happened."

"They love that RZA and Riot get to grow up with a little sister, all so close in age," the source shares. "Ri's always wanted a big family, and she's excited to do all the girl stuff. Rocky's just been saying he feels lucky."

The source also reveals that the newly minted family of five is only having family and a couple of close friends over to see them as they adjust to being parents of three.

The "Love On The Brain" singer welcomed her third baby, daughter Rocki Irish Mayers, with the Don't Be Dumb rapper on Saturday, Sept. 13. She shared the news on social media, posting the first few photos of her little one.

In the photo, Rihanna could be seen holding baby Rocki, who was wearing a pink onesie. She also included a photo of her baby's little pink gloves, which had ribbons lacing them up the top. Rihanna also sweetly wore a ring reading "Mom" for the special moment.



Rihanna with her precious new baby girl Rocki

"Rocki Irish Mayers Sept 13 2025," the musician captioned the photos, tagging Rocky.

Though Rihanna and Rocky weren't actively planning to start a family when they became pregnant with their first child, the "Work" singer did tell *Vogue* that the two were "certainly not planning against it" either.

"I always thought it would be marriage first, then a baby, but who the f--- says it has to be that way," she told the outlet in April 2022. "I'm certainly not gonna let that get in the way of me being a mom."

Following the couple's big pregnancy reveal at the 2025 Met Gala, an exclusive source shared

that the couple was "thrilled to be growing their family." The insider also explained why the couple wanted to have their children close together in age.

"Rihanna has always wanted a big family, so she couldn't be more excited. Rihanna and Rocky are thrilled to be growing their family and they can't wait to give their boys another sibling," the exclusive source said.

"They wanted to have their children close together in age, so that they could grow up together and share a close bond," the insider added. "They feel so blessed and are so grateful for this next chapter in their lives. It's a very special time."



Mr. Vegas has released his latest studio project

GHETTO REGGAE

Mr. Vegas releases new album

International recording artist Mr. Vegas has released his latest studio project, *Ghetto Reggae*, now available on all major streaming platforms.

The 14-track album, which dropped on August 29 under his MV Music imprint, highlights both the artist's versatility and his expansive vision. While largely a solo effort, *Ghetto Reggae* features appearances from Daddy U-Roy on Call Tyrone, Demelo on My Enemies, and Greentone on One Praise.

True to its name, the record blends roots reggae with a wide range of sounds, including

dancehall, afrobeat, rhythm and blues, and even soca influences—reflecting the broad scope of Mr. Vegas's artistry.

The project explores a variety of themes, from lovers' rock ballads and a ganja anthem to tracks tackling environmental awareness, spirituality, and “bad mind” struggles. A standout moment comes with Land of My Birth, Mr. Vegas's reinterpretation of Eric Donaldson's classic, which adds fresh perspective to the familiar anthem.

Thoughtfully produced, *Ghetto Reggae* re-

affirms Mr. Vegas's standing as one of Jamaica's most dynamic artists. The album is available now on Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, Tidal, Deezer, iTunes, and more.



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CARIBCON

Caribbean's most influential voices in media to meet in Turks & Caicos

This October, the shores of the Turks and Caicos Islands will become the stage for a bold and visionary event aimed at celebrating and elevating Caribbean culture.

From October 23rd to 26th, the island of Providenciales will host the inaugural CaribCon, a dynamic gathering designed to spotlight the region's creative excellence while fostering meaningful connections between the Caribbean's most influential voices in media, content creation, and innovation.

Set against the luxurious backdrop of The Shore Club Resort in Long Bay, CaribCon promises a rich and immersive experience that blends cultural celebration with professional development. Creators, influencers, media professionals, marketers, and brand leaders from across the Caribbean and the diaspora are expected to attend, uniting for four days of powerful dialogue, learning, and inspiration.

At the heart of CaribCon is the vision of Omega Simmons, founder of SOS Media, whose Bahamian and Turks and Caicos heritage has deeply shaped her mission to amplify Caribbean storytelling on the global stage. Simmons describes CaribCon not only as a creative conference but as a cultural movement — one aimed at positioning the Turks and Caicos Islands as a vibrant hub of artistic and digital innovation within the broader Caribbean landscape.

"The Turks and Caicos Islands is celebrated worldwide for its pristine beaches and luxury tourism," Simmons says, "but what the world should also see is the richness of our creative community. Our singers, storytellers, designers, and digital creators stand shoulder to shoulder with the best of the Caribbean. Host-



Omega Simmons

ing CaribCon here is about showing that Turks and Caicos is not only a premier tourism destination, but also a hub where culture, creativity, and innovation can thrive."

CaribCon's programming is carefully curated to reflect the depth and diversity of Caribbean creativity. Throughout the four days, attendees will engage in lively panel discussions with industry leaders, take part in hands-on workshops that sharpen their skills, and participate in brand activations that bring ideas to life. A special "TikTok Turks and Caicos Takeover" is set to shine a digital spotlight on the islands, while networking events and cultural showcases will celebrate the Caribbean's vibrant music, fashion, cuisine, and artistry.

But beyond the content and connections, CaribCon is rooted in a deeper purpose. Sim-

mons believes it's time for Caribbean creatives to move from being admired to being empowered and from being seen to being supported. "Our region is known for its music and dance, but we are also comedians, innovators, designers, thespians, visual artists, storytellers, and digital creators," she explains. "CaribCon is not just about showcasing talent; it's about access. It's about building bridges to global industries so that our creatives are not only celebrated but also positioned to monetise their craft on the world stage. This is the piece we've been missing, and that's the heart of why CaribCon exists."

The timing for CaribCon couldn't be more relevant. As the global creative economy continues to grow, there is a renewed urgency for Caribbean voices to be heard and invested in not only as entertainers but as entrepreneurs and cultural leaders. With its sweeping beaches and world-class hospitality, Turks and Caicos offers an ideal setting for this fusion of inspiration and innovation. It's a place where natural beauty and bold ideas can meet, and where Caribbean creatives can dream, build, and thrive together.

Registration for CaribCon opened on September 1st. For those across the Caribbean and in the diaspora who believe in the power of storytelling, who are passionate about shaping the future of culture and content, CaribCon offers an unmissable opportunity to connect, collaborate, and chart new paths forward.

As Simmons puts it, "CaribCon is about more than just a moment, it's about momentum. It's time for the Caribbean to take up its space on the world stage. And this is just the beginning."

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Lobster and Lambie are two seafood dishes which have put Carriacou and Petit Martinique on the culinary map

LOBSTER & LAMBIE

Grenada launches unique seafood festival scheduled for January 2026

The Grenada Tourism Authority (GTA) has officially launched the inaugural Lambie and Lobster Festival, scheduled for January 2026 on the Sister Isles of Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

The festival aims to celebrate the seafood and fishing heritage of the islands while highlighting the people, culture, and traditions that sustain these vital sectors.

The event represents a milestone in GTA's strategy to develop Carriacou and Petite Martinique as integral parts of Grenada's national tourism agenda. While Grenada is already recognized internationally for its natural beauty and hospitality, the festival seeks to boost the islands' visibility and create economic opportunities for local communities.

Festival programming will kick off in Carri-

acou with a welcome ceremony featuring local entertainment, traditional string band music, and food prepared by island vendors. Visitors will also enjoy live cooking demonstrations and boat tours showcasing the natural and cultural offerings of the islands.

Ahead of the festival, the GTA held a launch event to unveil the vision for the Lambie and Lobster Festival and provide a preview of the culinary and cultural experiences to come. Guests were treated to live music by the Culture Train String Band and remarks from key stakeholders, including Ministers Hon. Tevin Andrews, Senator Hon. Adrian Thomas, and GTA Chairman Randall Dolland.

Four vendors from Carriacou, Petite Martinique, and Union Island created unique seafood dishes for the launch, including lobster salad,

grilled lobster, cracked lambie, and a mahi-mahi dish with jalapeno and pineapple salsa, reflecting the festival's culinary theme.



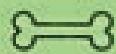
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Sad Passing

Ms Jamaica Universe contestant, an anti-suicide advocate, found hanging

The Miss Universe Jamaica Organisation says it is deeply saddened by the passing of Tyra Spaulding, a beloved finalist in the 2023 staging of its competition.

Spaulding, a 26-year-old accountant, was reportedly found on September 23 at her home with a curtain around her neck.

Police are probing the case as a suspected suicide.

In a statement on September 27, the organisation described Spaulding as “more than a contestant,” calling her “a vibrant, intelligent and inspiring young woman whose grace and spirit touched everyone she met.”

Condolences were extended to her family, friends, and loved ones on behalf of reigning Miss Universe Jamaica Dr. Gabrielle Henry and National Directors Mark McDermoth and Karl Williams.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with them as we remember and honour her remarkable life and legacy. May she rest in eternal peace,” the statement said.

Spaulding was also known as an advocate for mental health and suicide prevention.

“Our hearts are heavy as we mourn the loss of the beautiful Tyra Spaulding,” the organisation added.

“She was a radiant soul and an amazing human being. Her light, grace, beauty and kind spirit touched every life she encountered, leaving memories that will never fade. She had a smile that lit up every room, bringing warmth and joy to all who had the privilege of knowing her.”

The Miss Universe Jamaica Organisation said it will continue to keep Spaulding’s family, friends, and loved ones in its prayers as it celebrates “the beautiful life she shared with us.”



Spaulding was known as an advocate for mental health and suicide prevention

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CANNAABLISS

St Vincent to host second medicinal cannabis festival

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is gearing up to welcome visitors from around the world for CannaBliss SVG 2025, the Caribbean's premier medicinal cannabis festival, set for October 2–5 at Victoria Park in Kingstown.

Now in its second edition, the festival promises "More of Everything" — more culture, innovation, music and cannabis. Organized by the country's Medicinal Cannabis Authority (MCA), the four-day event will feature conferences and networking sessions with global cannabis leaders and medical experts, an expo and Traditional Cultivators' Village highlighting Vincentian farming heritage, and guided farm and facility tours across St. Vincent.

Entertainment will take center stage on October 4 with a grand reggae concert headlined by international icons Beenie Man and Spragga

Benz, alongside top local performers. The celebration wraps up on October 5 with a catamaran cruise to Bequia, offering a scenic escape to the Grenadines.

"Our industry has already attracted more than EC\$60 million in private investment, created hundreds of jobs, and positioned SVG as a global leader in medicinal cannabis," said Dr. Jerrol Thompson, CEO of the MCA. "CannaBliss SVG 2025 will build on this momentum while deepening international partnerships."

Agriculture Minister Saboto Caesar described the festival as a meeting point for traditional cultivators, investors, health professionals and researchers, calling it "a powerful fusion of culture, innovation and economic growth."

More than 400 international delegates are expected to join regional and local attendees.

Hotels and other accommodation partners across the islands are offering special rates to make the experience more accessible, inviting visitors to enjoy not only the festival but also St. Vincent and the Grenadines' natural beauty and warm hospitality.

CannaBliss SVG aims to showcase the nation's culture and pioneering role in medicinal cannabis while giving travelers a chance to experience a true Caribbean paradise.





Air Mobility

Rwanda unveils Africa's first self-flying electric taxi

Rwanda has made history by unveiling Africa's first self-flying electric air taxi in Kigali.

The live demonstration took place at the Aviation Africa 2025 Summit in Kigali, where the aircraft completed its maiden public flight before industry leaders and government officials.

The project is being developed in partnership with China Road and Bridge Corporation and will be operated by Chinese drone technology firm EHang.

Authorities say the autonomous aircraft is designed to ease urban congestion while offering a sustainable alternative to conventional transport.

The demonstration featured the EHang EH216-S, a two-passenger, autonomous, eVTOL aircraft, marking Rwanda's commitment to becoming a hub for advanced air mobility in Africa.

Although this was a successful demonstration, a full commercial service will require

further development of regulatory frameworks, according to the country's Ministry of Infrastructure.

Rwanda has invested heavily in positioning itself as a testbed for innovative technologies, particularly in transport and logistics.

Officials say the air taxi project underscores the country's commitment to building future-ready infrastructure, connecting communities, and attracting international investment.

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MEDICAL MIRACLE?

Ugandan Pharmacist develops drug that could cure Breast Cancer

Emmanuel Kiyonga, a Ugandan pharmacist and researcher based in South Africa, has developed a drug that may end breast cancer.

Kiyonga graduated from Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, South Africa, with a degree in pharmaceutical.

His innovation won him R100,000 and Studentpreneur of 2024 title. Emmanuel also made history by registering his university's first patent.

Kiyonga's novel formulation of Raloxifene Hydrochloride, named Raloxifene Hydrochloride Hydrate Solvate, has shown potential in treating postmenopausal osteoporosis and reducing the risk of breast cancer.

His innovation enhances the solubility and bioavailability of Raloxifene, potentially improving its therapeutic effectiveness.

Kiyonga's research was driven by the pressing global health issues of breast cancer and osteoporosis, conditions that significantly affect postmenopausal women.

His innovation aimed to improve the therapeutic effectiveness of Raloxifene, a drug used in treating osteoporosis in postmenopausal women, which also possesses anti-cancer properties.

In 2023, at the age of 28, Kiyonga received the Young Scientist Award from the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences of the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa.

This accolade was in recognition of his research project titled 'Co-crystal Systems for Solubility Enhancement of Raloxifene HCl in Breast Cancer and Osteoporosis Therapy.'

A Ugandan pharmacist is earning international attention after unveiling a new drug formulation that could transform how breast cancer is treated across Africa.

Kiyonga, a dedicated Pharmacist and Researcher, has been working for years on affordable, accessible healthcare solutions.

"I've always believed that solutions to our biggest health challenges can come from within Africa," Kiyonga said in an interview. "This drug has the potential to save lives, not just in Uganda, but in communities across the continent and beyond."



Emmanuel Kiyonga, a Ugandan pharmacist and researcher based in South Africa



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