

# TEENTIMES

FOR THE YOUTH, BY THE YOUTH!

SEPTEMBER 2024



## SXM U-15 Basketball Team

.....**READY!**

Pages 8&9





# SETTING THE STAGE FOR SUCCESS

BY SANYA JANDIAL

*"Teaching is a calling. Many are called, but few are chosen. I believe I was chosen," vocalized Mrs. Amissa President, Learning Unlimited Preparatory School's current principal, after numerous years of hard work and dedication to her job.*

This school year's theme, "Setting the Stage for Success", encompasses the enthusiasm and commitment Mrs. President has for the accomplishments of her students as well as her staff. She had her heart set on becoming an educator from the age of eight and has fulfilled her childhood dream by obtaining the highest possible rank in school – Principal. Having attended Pace University, Mrs. President graduated with a Master's degree in education and literacy. She received training and gained experience for an estimated four years by student teaching in New York.

Mrs. President has certainly worked her way up from

the bottom, especially at LU. After joining the school in 2005, she started as an elementary school teacher then became the head of the primary school. Starting in 2023, she now serves as the head of the school. Guiding students ranging from toddlers to high school seniors is not a simple task, but with Mrs. President's positive energy and assurance, it is clear that heading a school certainly doesn't feel like work to her.

Though Mrs. President has only been principal for a year, she has initiated numerous changes that have transformed the school for the better. While it's impossible to capture everything in this article without filling the entire newspaper, some of her most notable achievements will be highlighted.

First and foremost, Mrs.



President observed that high school students were still uncertain about their future aspirations. In response, she implemented a three-day career week, during which students explored various fields and undertook internships with companies on the island. Many students felt that this job training helped them in the lengthy college application process, as well as in discovering their interests and dislikes by working in the real world. Based on the outcomes from last year, these internships are expected to continue.

This school year, LU launched its first dual enrolment program with the College of Coastal Georgia, thanks to Mrs. President and her connections. She recognized an imbalance in which students in the United States had access to such programs, while those on the island did not. Her efforts now make it possible for everyone to benefit from this academic advantage. Mrs. President also introduced office hours after school so students can receive assistance in each subject area from their respective teachers. These hours are specifically designed to provide

academic support for middle and high school students at no additional cost.

Apart from all she has already brought to the school, Mrs. President is looking forward to building on these successful contributions. She is introducing etiquette classes for middle and high school students, where they will prac-

tice communication skills and chivalry. Although this diverges from traditional academics, she believes these skills are essential for navigating social situations in life. Mrs. President is also planning to engage volunteer dads to mentor young boys on aspects of personal development, such as tying a tie, dressing appropriately, and speaking confi-

dently. As Mrs. President continues to put in her finest work as principal, the future essentially looks bright for the Learning Unlimited students. Her unwavering devotion should not go unnoticed as she shapes the lives of these students and rolls out the red carpet for them to thrive.



is a publication of

The Daily Herald

Founder

Michael R. Granger

Coordinator

Roche Layne Rommy-Richardson

Asst. Coordinator

Jennyvier Poulino

Editor

Saheli Kirpalani

Content Coordinator

Lavina Ramchandani

Writers/Members

Haila Forde  
Bishaka Khatri  
Lavisha Dadlani  
Diya Rajpal  
Chirag Ramchandani  
Shiloh Williams  
Ijaelen Sanderson  
Johnathan Sang  
Ivan Wu  
Jessica Su  
Rohan Goswami  
Jahzara Payne  
Sage Williams  
Anastacia Adams  
Asante Phillips  
Alisah Kirton  
Arti Bulland  
Aditi Rajpal  
Aditi Ramchandani  
Makayla Cooks  
Isabella Carazo  
Lehar Marata  
Raynella Romney  
Suhani Nathuma

Graphic Designer

Evadney "Eve" Henriques

Contact

teentimesxm@gmail.com



# My hair is ME!!

~ Teen Times submits law proposal ~

*In a bold move toward fostering inclusivity and cultural respect within St. Maarten's schools, the youth newspaper, Teen Times, has officially presented what it called the Hair Discrimination Prevention Act (HDPa) to Member of Parliament, Sjamira Roseburg. The HDPa seeks to eliminate hair discrimination in educational institutions across the island, ensuring that students can express their cultural identities freely without fear of prejudice or punishment.*



The initiative reflects *Teen Times'* ongoing commitment to addressing social issues that affect the youth of St. Maarten and advocating for tangible action. The document was presented to MP Roseburg, known for her strong advocacy against hair discrimination, with a request to advance it through Parliament until it becomes law. The group has been working on the law proposal for over a year.

"We chose this particular issue because we ourselves have seen hair discrimination within our classrooms, especially towards students of colour," said *Teen Times* Editor Isabella Carazo. "We believe we owe it to the youth of St. Maarten to fight so that their personal and cultural identity does not affect their academic performance or personal success. St. Maarten is an incredibly diverse place, and the Parliament has gone to great lengths to promote equality. Why should it end at hair?"

The HDPa draws inspiration from similar successful initiatives, such as the CROWN Act in the United States, but is uniquely tailored to the cultural and social context of St. Maarten. The Act aims to protect students who choose to wear their natural hair textures and cultural styles, such as braids, locs, twists, Bantu knots and afros, from being stigmatized or penalized in schools.

The key parts of the proposed legislation are as follows:

**Prohibited Conduct**

*It shall be unlawful for any educational institution to:*

- Enforce any grooming policy that dis-

criminate against students based on their natural hair texture or protective hairstyles.

- Punish, exclude, or otherwise discipline a student for wearing their hair in a natural state or protective style.
- Impose any requirement that forces students to alter or cover their natural hair texture or protective hairstyles.

**Rights of Students**

*Students have the right to:*

- Wear their hair in its natural state or in a protective style of their choice.
- Not be subjected to discriminatory treatment based on their hair texture or style.
- Report any incidents of hair discrimination to the appropriate authorities without fear of retaliation.

**Implementation and Enforcement**

Educational Institutions' Responsibilities

*All educational institutions must:*

- Review and revise their grooming policies to ensure compliance with this Act within six months of its enactment.
- Conduct mandatory training for educators, administrators, and staff on cultural sensitivity and the importance of this legislation.
- Establish a clear and accessible process for students and parents to report instances of hair discrimination.

**Government Oversight**

*The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (MECYS) shall:*

- Monitor the implementation of this Act in all educational institutions.

- Establish a task force that includes representatives from relevant government departments, educators, parents, students, and cultural organizations to oversee compliance and address any issues arising from the implementation of this Act.
- Provide annual reports to Parliament on the status of compliance and the impact of the legislation.

**Stakeholder Consultation**

*The development and implementation of this Act shall involve consultation with:*

- Representatives of cultural organizations, particularly those advocating for the cultural rights of the people of St. Maarten.
- Educators, administrators, and school boards, to ensure understanding and compliance.
- Students and parents, to gather feedback and address concerns.
- Legal experts, to ensure the Act is consistent with national and international human rights standards.

The Act does not exclusively focus on one type of hair. *Teen Times* also identified "straight hair pressure" among its peers. For instance, long, flowing straight hair is often idealized, while shorter or unconventional straight hairstyles might be frowned upon or seen as unprofessional.

The proposal outlines that not all people with straight hair are of European descent. Many Asian, Indigenous, and Latino people also have straight hair. Discrimination against straight hair in its natural state, particularly if it is thick, coarse, or worn in traditional styles, can reflect broader ethnic or cultural biases.

*Teen Times* Coordinator Rochelayne Rommy-Richardson emphasized the significance of this proposal, stating, "This is about more than just hair; it's about respecting and celebrating the cultural identities of all our students. Our schools should be safe spaces where every young person can learn and grow without having to compromise who they are. Your hair has nothing to do with learning in school. We could have chosen to only write about

this subject, but that is not who we are. We believe in advocating through significant action."

The HDPa is the fourth parliamentary proposal presented by *Teen Times*. Previous initiatives include tackling Period Poverty, advocating for the inclusion of St. Maarten history in the school curriculum, and the Go Solar initiative aimed at increasing the use of solar energy in schools. Additionally, the group has submitted a white paper to the government with ideas on how to address youth delinquency. Their most impactful project to date, tackling Period Poverty, has already seen success, with former MP Angelique Romou ensuring that it is now part of the government's budget for execution – a significant win for the youth-led group.

Upon receiving the proposal, MP Roseburg acknowledged the importance of reviewing the legalities involved, but expressed her commitment to advancing the HDPa through Parliament, with the cooperation of her fellow MPs. "It's an honour to be chosen by the youth for such an important cause," she said. "I have always stood against any form of discrimination, and this Act is a crucial step in making our schools more inclusive and respectful of all cultural identities."

She echoed *Teen Times'* position that a student's hair should have nothing to do with their educational abilities. More than that, she explained that there is also a greater issue of hair discrimination in the workplace. She shared stories of her history with hair discrimination in the workplace and said this is also an issue she will look into while further looking into the proposal.

"*Teen Times* is of the opinion that the importance of this legislation cannot be overstated. By protecting students from hair discrimination, the HDPa fosters an educational environment that is not only more inclusive but also more conducive to the academic and personal development of all students. It encourages self-acceptance, boosts self-esteem, and ensures that students are judged on their abilities and character rather than their appearance."



FEATURE



# MARCH AGAINST VIOLENCE

## 'You showed up for the photos, now show up for us.'

*Recently, the Police Force of St. Maarten organized a march against violence, and it was hard to miss. Ministers, Members of Parliament (MPs), and even candidates from various political parties all showed up in a united front. It was commendable to see so many important people making time for this cause, but if you talk to the teens – us – you'll hear a different story: Sure, marches are cool, but do they really change anything?*

A few of us from Teen Times had a chance to speak to some of our peers right after the march, and the responses were... let's just say, not overly positive. For one, not everyone knew about the march. Some even admitted they only joined because it was a chance to get out of class for the day. It didn't feel like something serious to them. In fact, some said it had a "carnival vibe" with all the music and dancing. While it may have been fun, we're left asking: What comes after the fun?

We've seen it too many times – big public events make for good media coverage and great photos for social media, but when the cameras go away, life on St. Maarten goes back to the same struggles. The violence doesn't stop, and young people keep falling into delinquency.

The truth is, a march is not enough. Teens, especially, are waiting to see what all these politicians who showed up will actually do for young people. Many of us are asking: How will they improve opportunities for us, help us stay out of trouble, and build a future here? We also want to know what they plan to do for our parents, who are working two or three jobs just to make ends meet.

What about the cost of living? These issues affect our daily lives. A march won't fix that.

It's clear we need real solutions – practical, long-term ones. Teen Times recently presented a white paper on youth delinquency, with ideas for addressing these problems. One of the key points in that paper was that the government, police, and parents need to work together. Here are some things we think can actually help:

**Better after-school programs:** Too many of us are bored after school, and that's when trouble starts. The government can invest in safe, engaging places where we can learn skills, play sports, or just hang out in a positive environment.

**More opportunities for summer jobs or internships:** Many of us want to work and earn our own money, but finding jobs or internships that fit our age group is hard. If the government teamed up with local businesses to offer more opportunities, we'd have a chance to develop skills and stay out of trouble.

**Support for parents:** Our parents are struggling, and when they're stressed about money, it affects the whole family. The government should focus on policies that lower the cost of living, whether through affordable housing, better wages, or even just programs that ease the financial burden on families.

**Police and community working together:**



We see police officers as enforcers, but what if they were more involved in our communities? Police can do more than patrol – they can mentor young people, work with schools, and even help mediate family issues before they turn into bigger problems.

When interviewed, many teens were clear: We don't want to be part of just another public spectacle. A march may make for a great day out of school, but it doesn't change our reality. We want to see actual steps taken, and we want the politicians who showed up at the march to-

member their promises.

So, to every leader who walked with us during that march: What's next? You showed up for the photos; now show up for us. Help create opportunities, make our streets safer, and improve life for our families. We're watching closely, waiting for action, and hoping that this isn't just another moment that passes without change.

We, the youth of St. Maarten, are ready for more than just marches; we are ready for real solutions.



# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

BY ASANTÉ PHILIPPS

*Recently, there have been numerous conflicts among youths, whether in or out of school. Some of these conflicts can be prevented if youths learn conflict management skills. To provide insight on this, I took the initiative to interview Ms. Sjamila Webster, a social worker at Milton Peters College. Given her experience working with youths, I felt it was only right to interview her, as she has encountered conflicts first-hand.*

When addressing conflicts between adolescents, Ms. Webster focuses on a few key principles. First, she prioritizes active listening, because it's crucial in times of conflict that everyone involved feels heard. Often, conflicts arise because someone feels that their voice isn't valued, so Ms. Webster makes sure each person has the chance to express themselves. As a professional adult, Ms. Webster says it's also important for her to remain neutral during conflict resolution. She does her best to ensure that no one feels she has taken a side, because the goal is to find a solution that works for everyone. She encourages collaboration, guiding the students to work together to resolve the issue rather than viewing each other as enemies. Finally, she emphasizes respect.



see that the root of the issue was a simple miscommunication, and they worked together to rebuild trust. In the end, they agreed to be more mindful of how they communicate online and in person. Ms. Webster followed up with them over the next few weeks to make sure things were getting back to normal.

Ms. Webster ensures a safe environment while dealing with conflicts because creating such an environment is also a way to solve conflicts. Creating a safe environment involves making sure students feel comfortable and respected. Ms. Webster starts by assuring them that their conversations are confidential. It's important that everyone understands and agrees that what is said in her office stays in her office. She also sets ground rules for their discussions, such as no interrupting and no name-calling (she's very particular about ensuring that everyone is addressed by their name and not "she/he" or "that girl/boy"). This helps everyone feel that they can speak their mind without being judged. She tries to create a space that feels warm and welcoming, whether it's through the arrangement of chairs or by ensuring the room is quiet and free from distractions.

Ms. Webster believes that empathy is crucial in resolving conflicts. She always encourages students to try and see things from the other person's perspective. For example, she might ask, "How do you think she felt when that happened?" This helps them move from a place of anger or hurt to one of understanding. She also models empathy by acknowledging each student's feelings and showing that she understands where they're coming from. When students feel that their emotions are understood, they're more likely to be open to resolving the conflict peacefully.

Resources or tools that Ms. Webster recommends for students seeking to develop their conflict management skills, include reading books or articles on the topic, as there are many excellent ones written specifically for young people. Another tool she uses is social media. Ms. Webster knows that young people aren't always keen on reading, but they love Instagram and TikTok, so together they look for videos or accounts that teach essential social-emotional skills, including conflict resolution, emotion regulation, and coping strategies. Finally, she enjoys role-playing with her students. She might set up scenarios where students can practice handling conflicts in a safe environment. This can be especially useful as it gives them a chance to build confidence and learn from experience.

Understanding conflict management is crucial, especially for students. When you know how to handle conflicts, you're less likely to let small issues turn into big problems. These skills are useful not just at school, but in every area of life, whether with friends, family, or eventually at work. Knowing how to manage conflicts also helps you feel more in control of your life. It's empowering to resolve issues on your own, without always needing someone else to step in. Ultimately, having these skills can help maintain strong and healthy connections with others.



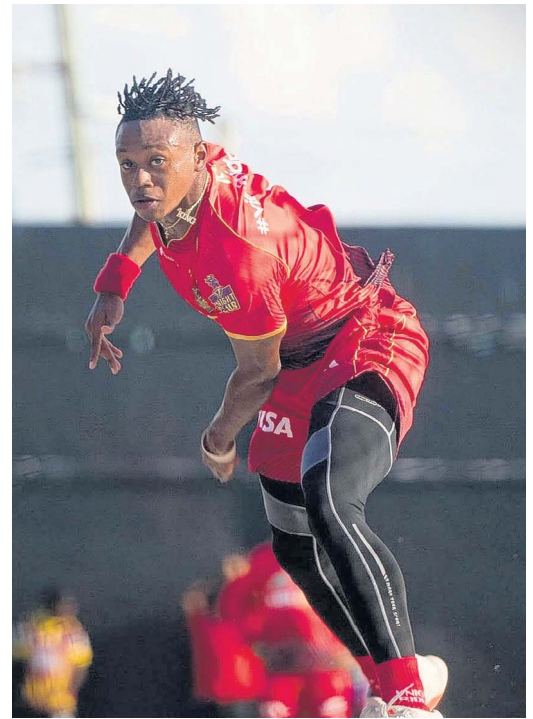
Regardless of the nature of the disagreement, everyone deserves to be treated with dignity.

To ensure a conflict is fully resolved, Ms. Webster believes in the importance of follow-ups. She checks in with the students involved after their initial conversation to see how things are going. This could be a quick chat in the hallway or a more formal meeting, depending on the situation. She also uses restorative practices, where students can openly discuss any remaining feelings in a safe space. For example, Ms. Webster says she might organize a meeting where everyone gets to share their perspective one more time, ensuring there are no lingering issues. They also create clear agreements on a simple plan for how they will interact moving forward, so there's no confusion about expectations. This final step is imperative for ensuring that all individuals can move on from the conflict without worrying about further escalation.

Ms. Webster often advises students to use "I statements". For example, instead of saying, "You always ignore me," she encourages them to say, "I feel hurt when I'm not included." This way, they express their feelings without blaming the other person, which can help prevent escalation. She also teaches them active listening, which focuses on genuinely paying attention to what the other person is saying rather than just waiting for their turn to speak. Another helpful tool is using conflict resolution scripts like, "Can we talk about what happened?" or "I want to understand how you're feeling." These phrases can help them start difficult conversations in a calm and respectful way.

An example Ms. Webster shared of how she resolved a conflict was with a group of girls who had a falling-out over a misunderstanding that quickly escalated. The conflict started on social media, which is often the case here on Sint Maarten, and it spilled over into the classroom. The girls stopped talking to each other, and it began to affect their friendships and schoolwork. She met with each of them individually to understand their side of the story and then brought them together for a group discussion. They talked about the impact the conflict was having on them and their friends. Ms. Webster helped them





# CHANGING THE GAME: NATHAN EDWARD

BY SURAJ VASWANI

*Nathan Edward is a promising cricketer from St. Maarten. Born on May 29, 2005, he is a left-handed batsman and bowls left-arm pace. Edward represented West Indies in the U-19 World Cup, where he delivered a standout performance, particularly in a high-pressure match against England, taking three wickets and scoring 49 runs. Edward is currently playing in the Caribbean Premier League for the Trinbago Knight Riders, alongside many cricket stars such as Keiron Pollard, Andre Russell, Jason Roy, and Sint Maarten star Keacy Carty.*

now and it's my profession. My goal is to play cricket at the highest level.

**2: Who or what inspired you to take on cricket?**

My father brought me into cricket. He was a cricketer himself, so it was only right for him to introduce me to the sport at a young age. The men in my family all went through cricket during their lives but never reached the level that I am at today. Seeing that makes me eager to be the first to reach the highest level of cricket and, of course, get paid for what I do best.

**1: Can you tell us a little about yourself?**

My name is Nathan Edward, I was born and raised in St. Maarten, I've been playing cricket for 13 years

**3: What has been your proudest moment on the field so far?**

My proudest moment was during the U-19 World Cup that concluded in January, where I carried the team



on my back with ball and bat, showing my all-round capabilities.

other young players like me that are making their way.

**4: What is the biggest challenge you have faced so far in your career?**

The biggest challenge I have faced is learning how to accept failure. You're not going to perform your best every time and there will be bad days, but it's how you bounce back. Never let failure dictate how valuable you are.

**6: Do you think the government should invest more in sports science and youth development for cricket and other sports?**

Yes, the government should take it upon themselves to help the athletes in St. Maarten strive for greatness, because at the end of the day when we do well, it all boils down to where we come from – which is St. Maarten. Putting St. Maarten on the map for athletes is a big thing so I feel the government should invest a lot into sports – we are the future, as they say.

**5: What are your thoughts on the facilities available for cricket players in Sint Maarten?**

The facilities that are available here for cricket are not up to standard. With the little help we get from sponsors, the SXM Cricket Board is trying to help us get decent enough facilities. The government hasn't been investing in cricket in St. Maarten, and we have two players representing the island internationally; and many

**7: What advice would you give to young aspiring athletes?**

Never let the hard times break you; the hard times are what create character.



# Miss Talented Teen St. Maarten Pageant

BY SHILOH WILLIAMS

*Pageants are more than just a beauty show with girls strutting down the runway in custom gowns. It's more than simply smiling and waving like a queen to the crowd. Brains are more involved than people often realize. Our honourable former Minister of Justice, Anna E. Richardson, once said, "Pageants are the only sport where you are required to memorize so much information and think quickly on your feet under intense pressure. It is also a sport that requires you to move with grace. It's a world where dreams can come true in the blink of an eye."*

Recently, Shiloh Bedminster made her dreams come true by winning the Miss Talented Teen Pageant, hosted by the intelligent and talented Cha's Gifted

Corner, better known as Cha Gumbs. The event, which took place on September 5, saw five girls competing head-to-head for the title of Miss Talented Teen of St. Maarten and the honour of representing St. Maarten in the Caribbean Talented Teen Pageant in Tortola this December.

The theme of the pageant was "Tea Party", inspired by a Chinese tea party, which was reflected in the décor. It was a magical night full of hope, grace, and excitement, where each contestant left a permanent mark on the stage. Nakysa Jederon showcased her courage and perseverance by demonstrating her Jujitsu skills and passion for the craft. M'Quelia Brodie serenaded the audience with her powerful voice and a poignant message about bullying, spreading awareness in high schools. D'Angelique Harrigan displayed her love

for music and drumming, and shared her aspiration to become a criminal offense officer to combat youth violence on St. Maarten. Zoya Joseph highlighted sensitive topics within the community.

And Shiloh Bedminster took the stage by storm, demonstrating her love of dance and the importance of including it in the curriculum. Each girl celebrated St. Maarten in her own unique way, whether through song, dance, or another form of expression. They represented their country and culture with pride. The evening segment left the crowd amazed as each girl showcased her beauty, gracefully walking across the stage to Beyoncé's song "Spirit", with stunning smiles and outstanding confidence.

As the moment approached for the crowning of the queen, you could see the hope and excitement in each girl's eyes, with the audience eagerly waiting. Then, Shiloh Bedminster's name echoed throughout the building. The Belair Community Center erupted in screams, confetti, and tears of joy and relief. Standing front and centre amid the whirlwind, Shiloh looked heavenly – not only because of the gorgeous dress and the shimmering crown, but also because of the radiant smile on her

face. Even if you were a supportive stranger, it was clear that this was Shiloh's moment, and she was immensely proud of herself.

We wish Shiloh the utmost success in her preparations for the upcoming pageant, and no matter the outcome, Shiloh Bedminster has made St. Maarten proud.



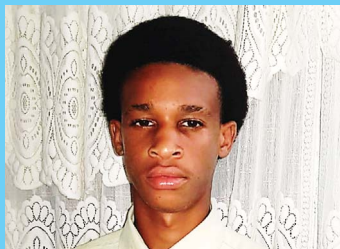
Feature



# PARADISE SHOW



# Feature



**TAHNICIO PETERSON**

My name is Tahnicio Peterson. I am 14 years of age. I attend the Sundial School and am currently in Form 1. I have been playing sports since the age of 10. I love soccer, basketball, baseball and netball. I am looking forward to gaining the experience of playing in an international basketball game. I would like to help my team win and bring home the trophy. I also would like to build relationships with other teams to gain knowledge of their experiences and what it is like playing basketball in their countries.



**JOSHUA MAISON**

My name is Joshua Maison and I am 14 years old. I attend Learning Unlimited Preparatory School. I look forward to playing in a great competition, while I do my best along with my teammates. I look forward to doing my best as well as playing the game I love.



**KEY-MARI RICHARDSON**

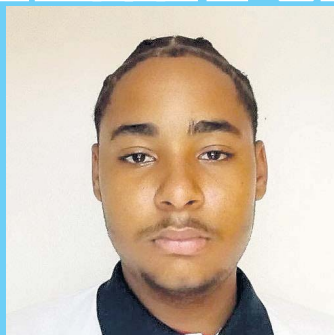
My name is Key-Mari Richardson, and I am 14 years old. I attend Milton Peters College, HAVO. I look forward to competing against the other islands and showing that St. Maarten has great basketball talent.

# TEAM SXM UNDER



**BRANDOLL SALOMÉ**

My name is Brandoll Salomé. I am 14 years old, and I attend the St. Maarten Academy School (academic). For this upcoming competition, I am looking forward to getting seen and showcasing my skills.



**DYONDRE YORK**

My name is Dyondré York. I am 15 years old and attend St. Maarten Academy. What I am looking forward to in the Paradise Showdown tournament is to showcase my skills and play against different people with different skills and to also learn to become better as a Forward/Centre.



**AMARU HODGE**

My name is Amaru Hodge. I am 15 years old. I attend St. Dominic High. I look forward to playing against the different countries and competing for first place.



# SHOWDOWN



The Paradise Showdown is an under-15 youth basketball tournament taking place daily from October 5 to 10 at the L.B. Scott Sports Auditorium from 1:00 to 8:00pm, during the school mid-term break. The event is being organized by the Performance Sports Academy.



Eight teams comprising a total of 96 players from Aruba, Antigua, Anguilla, St. Kitts, St. Eustatius, Saba, St. Martin and St. Maarten will be participating in this event to showcase the best under-15 basketball athletes each island has to offer.

The focus of the Performance Sports Academy Association is to continuously develop student athletes while providing them with a platform to display their skills along with creating opportunities for them.

“We believe that the more we invest in our youths and provide worthwhile opportunities, in return they can become successful men and women,” said Omar Beuperthuy of the Academy.

During the tournament, there will be several coaches in attendance from the United States and the Netherlands Basketball Bond (Dutch Basketball Federation). In addition, there will be several coaches viewing via the livestream on the Academy’s YouTube channel (Performance\_Sports\_Academy\_SXM) throughout the United States, France & Italy for potential prospects.

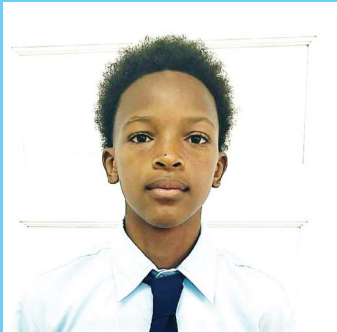
Each participating player will be evaluated for their skillset and potential. Teams will be competing to see who will be victorious in the first year of this event. PSA will also be offering free Coaching and Referee clinics during the tournament to inspire coaches and referees to take part in advancing their knowledge within their respective categories.

“We strongly believe that knowledge is power and for us to grow as a country, it is crucial for the development of this sport,” Beuperthuy said, adding that anyone interested in taking part can feel free to contact PSA via its social media platforms.



**RUTH PAUL**

My name is Ruth Paul, and I attend MAC-CSE (MAC-High). I am 13 years old. Throughout the Paradise Showdown tournament, I am looking forward to having fun and creating opportunities for myself.



**A'JAHNI VAN HEYNEGEN**

My name is A'Jahni Van Heynegeen, and I am 13 years old. I attend the MAC-CSE (MAC High). I am looking forward to the excitement of the Paradise Showdown tournament and the experience.



**ELI JUNIOR BRUNO**

My name is Eli Junior Bruno. I am 14 years old, and I attend the St. Maarten Vocational Training School. I am looking forward to the competition in hopes of receiving an opportunity.

# U-15 BASKETBALL



**JADEN BAPTIST**

My name is Jaden Baptist, and I am 13 years old. I attend St. Maarten Academy PSVE, and I look forward to competing with other islands at a high level.



**ACKEEM BURGAN**

My name is Ackeem Burgan, and I am 15 years old. I attend Milton Peters College CCSLC. In this competition, I am looking forward with the mindset of seeking and creating opportunities for myself.



**TERREL RICHARDS**

My name is Terrel Richards. I am 14 years old. I attend Milton Peters College, and I am in the TKL stream. I look forward to helping my team in every way possible for us to be successful in the Paradise Showdown tournament.

Feature



# Interview with MP and PFP leader Melissa Gumbs

BY JAHZARA PAYNE

*Member of Parliament and Party For Progress (PFP) leader, Melissa Gumbs, is currently undergoing screening before being officially sworn in as Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports (ECYS). The manifesto of PFP outlines the party's plans for the island in just such an event of PFP holding an executive position (Minister) in collaboration with Parliament.*

**PFP's Plans for Education**

**1: Do you believe you will live up to everything in your manifesto as Minister of Education?**

We've always been very realistic about the time needed to execute work from the executive and legislative branches, so while I will focus on rolling out certain areas of our manifesto on ECYS, the manifesto itself makes note that there are things that can be done early and things that are long-term. There are also projects already underway that fit into our manifesto, so those will continue to run.

**2: Do you think there is a lot of work that must be done in the Education Department?**

Of course! ECYS as a whole is a ministry that has seen some neglect and there are critical decisions that need to be made to move the

country forward in this area.

**3: Your manifesto outlines plans for the special needs students. How would you bring about those plans?**

Implementing the special needs policy that was presented towards the end of 2023 is one step. Further to that, there is a need for consistent assessment and training at all schools to make sure no special needs student is left out or left behind.

**4: What do you have to say about the lack of teachers on the island?**

It's an unfortunate reality facing many countries, big and small, across the globe. For St. Maarten, I see a lack of incentive and proper planning to replenish educator ranks, even in light of global trends.

**5: Would you say that your plans for special needs students would face obstacles, due to the lack of teachers?**

Every educational initiative faces obstacles with the global shortage of teachers now being experienced.

**6: What would you do to persuade students to become local teachers as the lack of teachers is a special needs issue?**

Any incentives that can be offered (study financing forgiveness, etc.)

must be investigated and we also need to encourage them to take it a step further, to ensure we have quality teachers across all areas of the academic chain.

**7: Why is it taking so long to rebuild the school in Middle Region?**

I'll find out more once sworn in, but from the information we received in Parliament, it's a combination of lack of capacity, new procurement practices and general World Bank bureaucracy.

**8: Do you have plans to rebuild the Middle Region school?**

The Catholic School Board has their plans and it's now a matter of ensuring the project has enough attention in those areas where government is necessary to move things along.

**9: Why is it taking so long to fix some of the schools that were damaged by Hurricane Irma?**

According to what was shared with Parliament, lack of capacity within the ministries and just the general procedures and processes of the World Bank, as the manager of the trust fund.

**10: Are there reconstruction and renovation plans for the schools that were damaged in Hurricane Irma?**

Yes, and those are already underway.

**11: What plans and solutions do you have to minimize school fights?**

It may not be popular to say, but the first line of care to minimizing school fights is parents. But, there needs to be collaboration between VSA, Justice, and ECYS to make sure that the underlying issues that drive and affect school – and really most forms of violence – are addressed, such as extreme poverty, abuse, police presence and training.

**12: Do you believe the island will improve if the education system changes?**

Education is the foundation on which you build a nation – so yes, we do believe that improvement in many areas comes with improving our education system. We get critical thinkers, strategists and an informed population with any enhancement to the environment surrounding education.

**13: Do you plan on adding agriculture as a subject in school;**



**and at what level?**

This is a vision the party has had, particularly because within the region, CXC schools offer Agricultural Science as a subject. If the teacher shortage issue can be overcome, it's definitely something we'd want to see included in the curriculum.

**14: Do you believe there are subjects other than the STEAM subjects that should be taught in schools?**

It would be great to include basic financial literacy and anything that boosts literacy as a whole.

**15: Are there any solutions for students abroad who want to come back home and give back to the community, even when there are no vacancies?**

We've advocated for having our young professionals abroad work for the country, without expecting them to uproot their lives and return here. COVID showed us that many professions can be managed digitally, but for those who definitely want to return physically, improving the diversity of our economic reality would go a long way. This is something that can be tackled together with the Ministry of TEATT.

**16: Are there any plans to teach subjects that deal with entrepreneurship?**

As a firm believer in "Government can't and shouldn't do it all", supporting those initiatives in the community that are already deeply involved in promoting and introducing students to entrepreneurship, is definitely something that will continue.

**17: Will gender identity be taught in school and do you believe that a male is a male and a female is a female?**

Girl Power and Real Talk are already discussing these and other critical themes within our school environments, and support of those programs will continue, especially considering the alarming information shared with Parliament by the St. Maarten AIDS Foundation in 2022.



Feature



# A STUDENT'S JOURNEY IN HOLLAND AND AUSTRALIA

BY DISHITA BABANI



*The former Editor of Teen Times, Lavisha Dadlani is now furthering her studies in the Netherlands. We wanted to catch up with Lavisha, who is currently in Australia doing her internship, and see how her student journey abroad has been thus far.*

## 1: What challenges did you face during the process of finding housing accommodation in Holland?

In my first year of university, I had student accommodation which made the moving process easier. Now, I am currently looking for my own apartment in The Hague which is quite challenging, especially while not being physically in The Netherlands. My advice for students looking for housing would be to use websites like kamer.nl, Facebook groups (when you are able to go for house viewings), and Pararius. Additionally, networking with people who live in Holland is very useful, as they may be able to add you to group chats with other contacts who are subletting/renting their places.

## 2: What course of studies did you

take?

I chose to do a Bachelor's in Hospitality and Business Management as it provides me with both the hard and soft skills required in my current desired profession – Event planning.

## 3: How were you able to secure your internship in Australia?

In the first half of my second year, it is required to do a "practical placement" in a country not considered your home. Therefore, I started looking at the potential places I would be able to apply to through my university's contacts. After considering options like the United States and cities in Europe, I also realized Australia would be an interesting place for me to visit and explore as a prospective country to work and live in, in the future. Hence, I began researching hotels connected with my school, which led to me having an interview with the hotel I am currently interning in. One tip when researching a place for an internship is to make sure to take into account not only what the country offers, but also its safety, public transport, and cost of living.

## 4: What skills or experience have you gained from your internship in Australia?

I have currently only completed one week of my internship in Australia. Therefore, in terms of grasping the skills and experience I know I will have by the end of these five months, I have just touched the tip of the iceberg. I think I made a good choice by coming here, be-

Netherlands, I think taking the step to move away from home is a very brave and scary one. However, if you feel that you want to reach a goal, learn more about yourself and make new connections. Moving away to study is one of my best decisions.

For students searching for internships, I would suggest choosing



cause the people are friendly, the work-life balance is ideal and there are many growth opportunities here. I am learning to enjoy my independence even more, as I have not made many connections yet; but I know I will be a well-rounded person by the end of it.

## 5: Do you have any advice for students considering studying in the Netherlands, or those who may be looking for an internship?

To those looking to study in the

country very wisely. There can be many distractions, but keep in mind the reason you are planning to go there. Also, make sure the decision you make is based on your interests and not swayed by others. It is important to pick a place that is suitable for the study/work environment that you are going to be in, as this will allow you to envision yourself growing through the opportunities presented in that place.



# BEGIN THE SCHOOL YEAR WITH A PLAN

BY ARTI BULLAND

*School has begun, marking the beginning of a new academic year ahead. It is time for a fresh start, making new friends, moving to new classes, setting new goals, and starting clean on a new journey. For some, you might be continuing your school journey further, but even so, you might have new goals and expectations for the new academic year. It's a great opportunity for your journey towards success. However, to make the most out of this new chapter, one important thing to master, is your time management skills. Without having effective time management skills, you may experience the major issue of procrastination. Procrastination will affect your grades, mental health, and productivity, because when you procrastinate, you will fall behind on the assignments; you won't meet your deadlines; and the work will pile up overtime, forcing you to put pressure on yourself.*

Below are some tips you can use to start the school year on the right path, with special emphasis on managing your time and avoiding procrastination.

- **Set goals for yourself which you expect to achieve.** You should take some time to think about what you want to accomplish at the end. These goals can be academic or personal, but are essential for your success. These goals can help to keep you on track throughout the year. Your goals, for example, can be maintaining a certain GPA or learning something new, such as a

skill. Once you have set these goals, the next step would be to start taking small steps towards it. You can break the larger goals into smaller ones that will bring you closer towards your main goal. For example, you get an 'A' for a certain subject and a 'B' for the other, you would need to determine how much time and effort you would need to put in to reach your main goal of maintaining a certain GPA. This would keep you motivated towards achieving your goal and would also avoid procrastination.

- **Have a balanced routine for yourself.**

You can manage your time effectively by having a balanced routine. You can determine which times of the day you are most productive. Some individuals are morning persons while others are night owls. Knowing when you are most productive will help you complete tasks during times when you are most focused, which will allow you to get more work done. Having a balanced and scheduled routine will also help to minimize stress levels.

- **Create a schedule for yourself.**

This is similar to the one stated before where it also assists in good time management. It helps you to have time for other things including academics, extracurricular activities, and most importantly self-care. In making this schedule, you can include completing assignments and homework, reviewing what was taught, or even studying for an upcoming test, as well as your extracurricular activities, your hobbies and breaks in between for relaxation. Also do not forget to include



enough time for sleep – getting a minimum of seven to eight hours of sleep is very crucial if you want to be active and alert the next day. Having a schedule prevents last-minute or rushed assignments which happen due to poor time management skills. Most importantly, don't forget to use the schedule and not just have it there!

- **Study methods.**

You can find suitable study methods which are appropriate for you. Also, you can break tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces rather than doing everything at once, which may be intimidating. An example of a study method that can help to fight procrastination is the Pomodoro Technique. In this technique, you work for 25 minutes straight and then take a five-minute break. This can help to improve your concentration and focus and will

give you a sense of motivation as well, knowing that you have a five-minute break to look forward to after the 25 minutes of hard work.

Starting the school year right is not just about going to school or classes. It is more about setting goals, managing your time effectively, and, most importantly, prioritizing assignments. As the school year progresses, you can also ask yourself questions and reflect on what you are doing. Questions such as: Am I managing my time well? Am I on top of my assignments and not procrastinating? Asking yourself questions will also help you reflect on areas that need more improvement and allow you to make the changes accordingly. By using some of these tips, you can have a productive school year to enjoy ahead of you, which will also lead to your success at the end.





# University of St. Martin Review

BY ALISAH KIRTON

*Starting college is an exciting experience for every student. Feelings of adjustment and uncertainty are common companions to the thrill of starting a new school year, making new friends, and venturing into an unknown universe of possibilities. For first-time students at the University of St. Martin (USM), the journey is unique and transformative, filled with challenges and moments of personal growth.*



Adapting to the rigorous academic requirements of the university was highlighted by several students as a major obstacle. The academic demands of university life were much higher than those of high school, according to several newcomers. Difficulties arose due to the rapid pace of the workload, its depth, and the expectation that students would be more flexible in their learning.

“The first two weeks were very crazy,” said a first-year in business technology. “It took me some time to figure out how to manage my time, and the workload was significantly more than I had anticipated.”

In agreement with this student, several students have brought attention to the steep learning curve that is maintaining a healthy balance between academics, extracurriculars, and personal life. Nevertheless, most students credited the teachers and support services at USM with being essential in their adjustment.

Another first-year student observed: “The professors here are approachable and care about their students. The transition is made easier because they are willing to answer questions and provide assistance if you’re struggling.”

Academics weren’t the only thing that first-year students at USM had to worry about; juggling all of their other obligations was an immense challenge. Finding a way for students to thrive academically while still attending to their professional and personal commitments is essential, especially for those who have part-time jobs or family responsibilities.

“My biggest issue has been managing my time well as I work part-time to help support myself,” an-

other first-year revealed. “However, things have become more manageable with USM’s accommodating class schedules and understanding professors.”

Many students were grateful that USM recognized the challenges faced by St. Martin students, such as the necessity for many to juggle numerous obligations. Students have found that online tools, evening classes, and flexible class times have helped them manage their time better.

Lots of students were excited to check out the many social events and extracurriculars that USM has to offer. Not only do these activities give students a break from school, but they also give them opportunities to develop abilities that are rel-

evant outside the classroom. You can become active in campus life in a variety of ways, from student government to cultural clubs.

A general liberal arts student mentioned that she joined the student government to have a say in the direction of campus life. “It’s been an amazing opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and make a meaningful impact on the student body.”

There was a greater variety of perspectives and experiences represented in the student body, which enhanced the quality of life there. Students valued the opportunity to interact with classmates who held contrasting viewpoints, as it allowed them to gain a broader understanding of the world.



Although the majority of students had positive impressions of the university, a few voiced concerns about the high cost of snacks and expressed a need for additional food options – but other than that, most students said they are enjoying being first-time students at the University of St. Martin. They have experienced excitement, challenges, and personal growth.

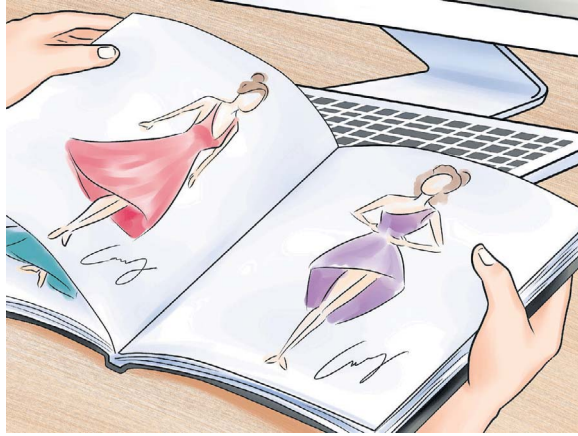
They learn from classes, community and experiences, preparing for careers and building skills. The small, supportive environment facilitates transitions, while academic and extracurricular opportunities allow personal and professional growth. As long as students embrace challenges and opportunities, they will find that USM provides a solid foundation for success.

Feature



# More than just clothes

BY ADITI RAJPAL



**Boho chic:** This style thrives in the unconventional – creative, personal expression and comfort are the building blocks of this style. Colourful, flowy garments are essential, from embroidered blouses to maxi dresses to wide-legged jeans.

**Retro revival:** This is similar to how people in the 1960s dressed, with a bit of a modern twist to it. This includes mod dresses, bold prints and something known as go-go boots.

**Full skirts:** Full skirts are exactly what the name suggests – these are skirts that go to your ankle to give a more romantic silhouette. This is the best trend to make all of your princess dreams come true.

**Denim domination:** Denim is making a comeback in styles from the classic denim jeans, to skirts and jackets.

**Animal print:** Animal print has been around for so long, but the most recent ones are Zebra and Leopard prints that appear in everything from scarves to bags to even shoes!

**Jorts:** Jeans shorts just like in previous decades are making a comeback! This time, however, they are higher waisted than the ones seen in previous years.

**Tartan:** This is classic pattern in dresses, shoes, and accessories. Although commonly associated with



the Scottish, it is an essential pattern in the closet of any rock star.

**Argyle:** This is a type of retro pattern which adds preppy char to sweaters, cardigans and even socks.

**Suede:** This is a type of leather with a fuzzy finish like in jackets and most commonly boots.

**Lace:** Lace details are adding a feminine feel to blouses and dresses.

**Popover blouses:** These are stylish tops that fit both categories – casual and dressy – at the same time!

**Ankle boots:** These are a type of boots that are more versatile.

**What's your favourite fashion trend?**

That being said, recent years have been different than previous years and here's why. Traditionally, fashion trends have followed a specific pattern, recycling every decade or so. Let's say skinny jeans were popular in the 1990s, then they became less popular, until they gained more popularity in the 2000s. Now in the current fashion climate, everything is in style – there is not much insolvency towards fashion trends like before. So we're in a very weird spot with fashion right now. Everyone is just doing their only style and doing what they feel fits them the best. This is called the 20-year rule of fashion.

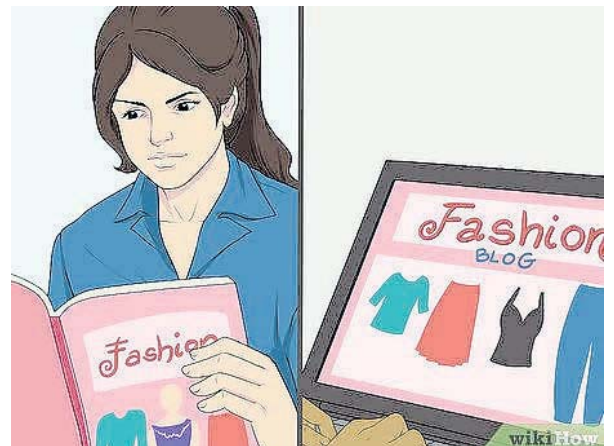
The way people started to consume social media in the past 10 years means that a person can decide to follow any trend they see, while others may feel that the style doesn't suit them and so they'd decide to follow their own trend. That gives us roughly 15 to 20 different trend cycles of clothing every year. These trends can change every month.

So, my question is, what do you think fashion trends will look like in the next three to five years?

**What is fashion?**  
Fashion is a way one may express oneself; it may be influenced by historical events, social, and cultural changes.

While there are often recurring trends and styles, fashion is very personalized varying from person to person. It can also be a way for a person to feel confident, empowered, and connected to their culture, as fashion holds big cultural significance.

This year's fashion trends include various styles such as Boho chic, retro revival, full skirts, denim domination, animal print, jorts, country style, tartan, argyle, leopard print, suede, lace, popover blouses, slim flared jeans, ankle boots, bags and, of course, accessories.





# Turning your phone into a productivity tool!

BY LEHAR MARATA

*As we settle into the new school year, we will hear all about procrastination, productivity, motivation, discipline, among other subjects. But if you're a student, you already know that most of those motivational talks do not help at all. Realistically speaking, most students will fall back into the procrastination traps within the first month of school. The main reason behind this is our phones!*

To help tackle this problem, here are three of my favourite apps to turn your phone into a productivity tool!

### Notion

Many people think Notion is an app that can only be used for notetaking. While that is Notion's main purpose, Notion also has a wide variety of uses: Making to-do lists, organizing projects, and even working on assignments together. Notion is a fully customizable app through which you can organize your entire academic year. It has features allowing you to use different resources like videos and pictures as a part of your notes/ Notion projects. The best part about Notion is that it syncs through logged in devices using the same account.

### Forest

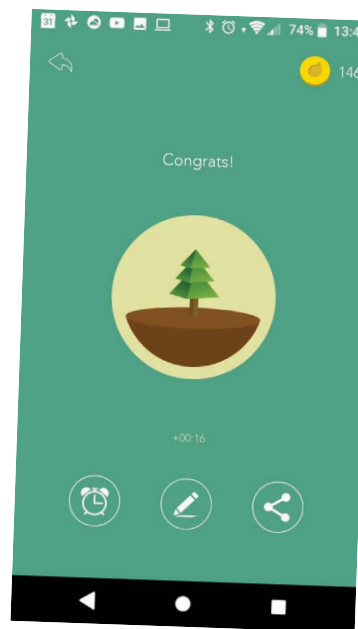
I'm sure we've all tried to set a timer to spend a certain amount of time away from our phones and with our books. However, no matter how much we try, it always ends up in endless scrolling on TikTok or Instagram. To solve this problem, we have Forest to the rescue. Forest is an app that sets a timer, but a timer

that plants trees. If you exit the app while the timer is still running, your tree will die. The longer the timer is, the better the tree; and the main goal of this app is to end up building a beautiful forest. Therefore, this app helps prevent unnecessary scrolling on social media by motivating students to build their beautiful forests. An interesting fact about this app is that they have partnered with many tree-planting organizations to contribute to a better environment.

### Knowt

Flashcards, flashcards, and flashcards! Everyone talks about how beneficial flashcards are for studying; but can you imagine AI making flashcards for you? Not only that, but Knowt also uses AI to make notes and quizzes. To study these notes, you can use features similar to Quizlet – a matching game, spaced repetition, learn, and practice tests – except on Knowt, these are all free! On Knowt, you can also access other students' public notes and flashcards to study and revise. And if you are an AP student, there are also AP guides that have proven to be beneficial for AP students around the globe. This is a great app to personalize your academic journey with the help of AI and Knowt's free resources.

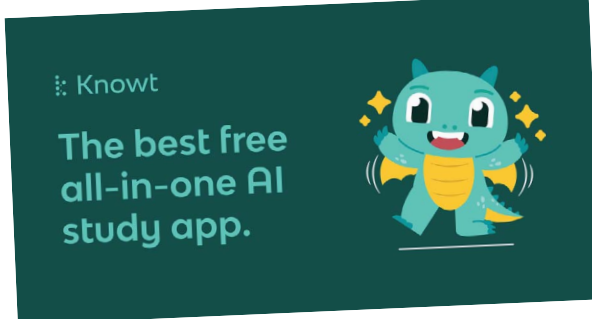
Procrastination is the biggest challenge students face daily and can often be hard to overcome. However, downloading these apps may be able to increase your productivity and enhance your overall studying experience!



Gemini



Notion



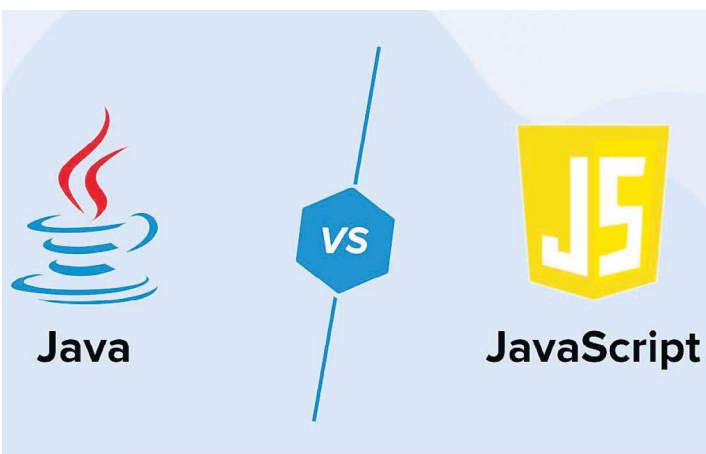
Feature

## The Coding Corner Did You Know?

### Java vs Java Script

BY CHIRAG RAMCHANDANI

JavaScript and Java were unrelated languages, but the latter was deliberately given the name JavaScript in order to capitalize on the latter's rising popularity in the mid-1990s. Due to this marketing choice, there was a great deal of misunderstanding, with many people thinking that JavaScript was a subset or derivative of Java. Actually, JavaScript is a simple scripting language meant to add interactivity to or develop web pages, whereas Java is a powerful, object-oriented language used to create large-scale applications, like Microsoft Word. Even though their names are similar, they have completely different functions and are used in different contexts.





**26**  
**OCT**

**FROM**  
**7PM**  
**2AM**

**TEEN TIMES**  
14" YOUTH, B. TH. 14OUTH

**TEEN TIMES PRESENTS**

# **HALLOWEEN**

*Frightfully Fun*

**COSTUME  
CONTEST  
SCARE TUNNEL  
SCARY THEMES  
...AND MORE!**

**@BELAIR**  
Community  
Center



**\$5 before 12am - \$10 after**