

- [Puzzles](#)

[Mobile version](#)

[Subscribe to this feed](#)

[Join us on Facebook](#)

[Follow us on Twitter](#)

## Editorial | St Vincent and the Grenadines signals CWI

[WhatsAppShare](#)

Published: Friday | August 8, 2025 | 12:09 AM



File

If it were solely an act of celebration, the conferring by the St Vincent and the Grenadines of citizenship on the living members of the West Indies men's team that won the

inaugural cricket World Cup in 1975 would still be an important development.

Golden jubilees, or 50th anniversaries, are worthy of notice.

But given the current state of West Indies cricket, and the search for answers to its malaise, the decision by the Vincentian prime minister, Ralph Gonsalves, and the country's parliament, and the timing of the event, was an important act of remembrance. It placed West Indies cricket in the larger contextual frame, which this newspaper has been insisting is critical to any mapping of the game's sustainable recovery.

First, by making the citizenship awards coincidental with the English-speaking Caribbean's celebration of the anniversary of the formal end of slavery in the British West Indies, Dr Gonsalves acknowledged the pivotal role cricket has played in the regional social and political development – and no unit more so than the one that won the 1975 World Cup, which became the core of the great, all-conquering team of the 1970s and 1980s.

Further, by granting citizenship to 12 people from five Caribbean territories – four Guyanese; three Barbadians; two Antiguan; and two Trinidadians – Dr Gonsalves also affirmed cricket's institutional centrality to Caribbean integration, and its place as a regional public good. This is an important consideration in today's global environment, with the reassertion of 19th century Great power politics.

## **Headlines Delivered to Your Inbox**

[Sign up for The Gleaner's morning and evening newsletters.](#)

In these circumstances it is sad and disappointing that the Vincentian opposition leader, Godwin Friday, couldn't muster the capacity to transcend partisan considerations and rally his party in support of the citizenship legislation.

## **FIERCE SLAP**

Indeed, Dr Friday's personal abstention in the vote, for all his high-sounding contortions, was a fierce slap in the face of the great cricketers he claimed to admire. It also betrayed, in our view, a misapprehension of cricket's place in the region, as well as the elements that will be necessary for its resuscitation.

An outright 'no' vote would have been easier to digest.

We therefore commend to Dr Friday for his deep consideration, the rhetorical question, oft-quoted by this newspaper, posed by C.L.R. James, the radical West Indian thinker, in his book, **Beyond a Boundary**, about cricket and life in colonial West Indies: "What do they know of cricket, who only cricket know?"

It bears reminding that the group of men – now in their 70s and 80s – honoured by St Vincent and the Grenadines, became the core great team of the 1970s and '80s that, led by Clive Lloyd, dominated international cricket.

But the renewal didn't start entirely with Lloyd. After a meandering period of transition from late 1960 into the early 1970s, the rebuilding began under Rohan Kanhai. Lloyd's team, however, as was the case in previous epochs of West Indian development, epitomised the social and political ferment of its period. It was brash, confident, skilled, and

moved to controlled anger by threats of being made to “grovel”.

If other nations had wealth, seats on the Security Council and military technologies, the West Indies had Richards, and Lloyd, Greenidge, Kallicharran, Roberts, Holding, Garner and others.

Despite the emergence of individually gifted, and a handful of great players, West Indian cricketing powers began to wane in the 1990s, and, but for sporadic deceptive spurts, has been in decline since.

The regional team reached new low last month in the third Test match against Australia at Sabina Park when it was bowled out in its second innings for a measly 27, the second lowest total in the history of Test match cricket. The West Indies lost the Test series against Australia 3-0 and the T20 series 5-0. They were then beaten 3-0 by Pakistan in T20s.

These results might otherwise have been considered in keeping with transitional phases that periodically affect teams. Except that the West Indies has been in a funk for three decades – perhaps the longest of any team in the modern history of cricket.

There is no single cause for this collapse. What, though, is clear is that the governance structures for West Indies cricket isn't fit for purpose, especially when considered in the context of James' question and the idea of cricket as a regional public good. Ways have to be found to meet/balance players interests and cricket's larger role, and for Shai Hope, the captain in the shorter formats of the game, to have a better, or

more nuanced answer than not having an answer for the team's retched performance.

If West Indies cricket is a public good that transcends private interests, monopoly ownership/control of Cricket West Indies (CWI) – the body manages the game – by six territorial associations is untenable.

Indeed, there is an urgent need to overhaul the structure and management of the game. The Patterson and Wehby reports have implementable templates by which this can be done – if CWI and its owners have the will.

The action by St Vincent and the Grenadines ought to be another impetus for CWI to proceed – with seriousness.