



## THE AGENCY FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

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26/2/2026

### **APPRECIATING OUR IDENTITY, PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE AND PRIDE” IN NATIONAL HERITAGE MONTH**

National Heroes’ and Heritage Month 2026 will be celebrated under the theme “Appreciating our Identity, Preserving our Heritage and Pride”. The Minister of Social Welfare and Community Empowerment, Ecclesiastical Affairs and National Heritage, Hon. Shevern John, has called for an appreciation of our people’s resilience as we enter Heritage Month.

With regards to appreciating our identity, Minister John said that “we have lost that in a way. Especially our indigenous people... We don’t have a specific language... Our dress was lost, our dress code, the way we eat, you know, basic things. Over the years, it has gained some traction. And I am grateful for that. But if you don’t feel a part of it, you are basically lost.”

“And I really want our people to get back to that place, where we appreciate who we are, where we take ownership of who we are. ...And some people are Garifuna. So, wherever you fit in, we are indigenous people. And be proud of that indigenous race. Wherever you fit”, Minister John stated.

According to Minister John, Heritage Month provides an opportunity for Vincentians to celebrate, reflect upon, and promote their cultural traditions. She said the month of activities will start with a Heritage Market and Prayer Rally at the Joseph Chatoyer National Park in Rabacca, starting at 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 1st. The event will blend cultural expression and spiritual reflection, reinforcing the

themes of identity and national pride.

The Minister said the Heritage Market and Prayer Rally will incorporate prayers and singing, among other faith-based expressions. Craft and food items will be on sale. There will be activities for children, with an atmosphere fit for families. She urged the public to support the first activity in the National Heritage Month.

Minister John disclosed that the indigenous peoples of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will host a cultural exhibition on the 7th of March in London, Sandy Bay. Later in March, Minister John said that her Ministry will host a heritage market on Friday, the 27<sup>th</sup>, and Saturday, the 28th of March at the ministerial car park, just outside the many people who know it as a post office building.

Friday's heritage market will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Minister John disclosed that Friday's event "will be honored by the presence of Royal Highness, our Carib Queen, out of the Dominica." Accordingly, patrons attending the heritage market will be able to enjoy local foods, and "the artisans will once again have that opportunity to showcase their craftsmanship and their talent", Minister John said.

"And on Saturday, the 28th, there will be a cruise ship call at Port Kingston. So, we are trying to capitalize on that and have all tourists come and experience what we have in St Vincent and the Grenadines", the Minister of National Heritage stated.

Minister John used the opportunity to remind the public of the Obelisk ceremony, National Heroes Day celebrations in Greiggs and Fancy on the 14th, and the Garifuna Heritage Foundation Garifuna Conference: "And again, they will have their pilgrimage to Balliceaux, ... that's a sacred ground for Garifuna people. So that pilgrimage will be on the 15th of March."

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