

INSIDE:

- COVID booster shots approved for special categories only
- Governor General gives highest award to Sir Hilary Beckles
- Jamaicans in shivers over thousands of unsolved rapes



YET ANOTHER WOMAN VIOLENTLY MURDERED!

PAGE 8

Antiguan pilot Aron Simon (in uniform) was the First Officer of the crew that brought in the inaugural Frontier Airlines nonstop weekly flight from Orlando, Florida to Antigua on Saturday at the V.C. Bird International Airport. First Officer Simon is flanked by his proud mother (in white dress) and his wife. Others pictured in the foreground include Civil Aviation Minister Sir Robin Yearwood and Tourism Authority CEO Colin C. James for a ribbon-cutting occasion of raucous joy – expected and deserved. READ THE FULL STORY ON PAGES 11-12



CCJ before Republic process

by Taliban Byron

Congratulations to the people of Barbados on abolishing the Queen as their Head of State and officially moving to Republic status. The ancestors must be smiling down as Barbados takes these steps to complete the cycle of Independence – and rightfully so.

We are hearing many shouts for other Caribbean countries to follow this move so that we can remove the last shackles of colonialism. Wonderful. But I mean ... if we are REALLY interested in leaving our colonial past behind and not just playing “woke”, let us also follow Barbados by abolishing the

Privy Council as the final court of appeal for our countries.

Queen Elizabeth, as our Head of State, is basically a figure-head in a largely ceremonial role with no day-to-day impact on our lives. And yes, symbolism is important and it is indeed momentous that she is being removed.

But if we want to

show some ACTUAL testicular fortitude, we would be advocating for the immediate removal of The Privy Council, a foreign court of appeal which is an ACTUAL relic of slavery and colonialism.

This foreign court which has the final say on the interpretation of our laws; this foreign court which



APUA **ELECTRICITY** MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

These planned outages are necessary for our continuous upgrade and maintenance programme to provide reliable and consistent service to our customers.

Monday, 6th December 2021	Tuesday, 7th December 2021	Wednesday, 8th December 2021	Friday, 10th December 2021
Section of Creekside south of the Bridge 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Section of Paynters west of the Piggotts Primary School 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Section of Willikies; Call Sign 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Gilberts and Betty's Hope 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Section of Sea View Farm near the Football Field 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM			

Kindly note that this schedule is subject to slight variation. Changes will be communicated on the APUA Facebook page. Any service disruptions outside of this schedule were not anticipated. For further information and updates please call 311.

has the final word on our cases; this foreign court which 95% of our litigants who are dissatisfied with Court of Appeal decisions NEVER go to; this foreign court whose members likely will never set foot on our shores and who don't give us a passing thought from day to day; this foreign court which – at the end of every judgment – says, “We hereby advise Her Majesty (!) that this appeal be dismissed/allowed.”

If we remove this relic of colonialism, that is when we are talking about effecting genuine impact in people's day-to-day lives. But, somehow, we think removing a figurehead is the real demonstration of “wokeness”.

The Privy Council was abolished by Barbados almost 20 years ago without a referendum. Mia Mottley was then Deputy Prime Minister. And guess what? The earth hasn't

shattered, the country hasn't gone up in flames, tourists and foreign investors don't shun the island as a result of that historic decision. This is also true of the many other former British colonies from Canada to Australia who have abolished the Privy Council.

In the first few years, Barbados saw a dramatic increase of their cases from the Court of Appeal being appealed to the Caribbean Court of Justice (almost 300%), directly improving

access to justice for more ordinary people.

By removing the Privy Council and never looking back, what Barbados also boldly declared is: “Our people are worthy. Our people matter. Our children can be anything they set their minds to be. Our children can aspire to be judges, even the highest possible ranking judges, and they will be accorded the respect for their leadership and authority that the role deserves. Our

Judges are not inferior simply because they were born and raised in the Caribbean, simply because they may be black, as opposed to being born and raised in England and being white. Our Judges are not more susceptible to corruption or to poor ethics simply because they were born and raised in the Caribbean, simply because they may be black, as opposed to being born and raised in England and being white. The experts we produce



can go head to head with any other experts anywhere. In fact, our experts may even be better. We believe in the potential of our people.”

Sure, by all means let us remove Queen Elizabeth the figurehead. Let us stop saying “God save the Queen” in courtrooms and other places. Let us take the Queen’s face off of our dollar bills. Let’s rename Her Majesty’s Prison as just The Prison. I strongly believe that such a move is long overdue. But with all due respect, removing a figurehead and changing some names of

buildings doesn’t really take the balls that some of us may think. Nor does it go all the way in completing the cycle of Independence.

I wish to applaud the Republic of Barbados (who we grew up calling “Little England”) for boldly severing all colonial ties with that country which has to this day refused to be held accountable for the abject brutality inflicted on our descendants for centuries.

Rather than the rest of us fighting now to take the “Little England” title which Bar-

bados has cast aside, I look forward to us joining the movement to fully throw off those shackles of colonialism as has been done already by Guyana and Dominica, which are also Republics.

Let us take the real steps necessary to show our children that they matter and that they are equal to anyone anywhere; to ensure that our ancestors’ struggles were not in vain, and to bring about the real changes which can and will have palpable impact in our day to day lives.



The advertisement features a yellow Suzuki Vitara SUV shown from a rear three-quarter view, set against a background of diagonal orange and white stripes. To the right of the car is the Suzuki logo, consisting of two interlocking hexagons. Below the logo, the text reads: "Suzuki Vitara", "Fully Loaded All Grip 4WD", "Time to Play", and "Starting at \$76,600". At the bottom right, there is a logo for HADEED MOTORS LTD. featuring a stylized mountain range in red and blue, with the text "Give us call 481-2500" and "HADEED MOTORS LTD." below it.

Rotaract Club of Antigua Celebrates 35th Anniversary



On December 5th 1986, the Rotaract Club of Antigua was chartered as a project of the Rotary Club of Antigua.

The Club was originally founded by Rotarians Patrick “Paddy” Benjamin and the late Anthony Michael.

Greg Walter was our Charter President and Keva Margetson our Vice President.

Over the years, the Rotaract Club of Antigua emphasizes the four pillars of service: Community, Interna-

tional, Professional, and Club Service.

This year, the Club proudly celebrates 35 unbroken years of service and making a difference in Antigua and Barbuda.

In the photo are members of the Rotaract Club of Antigua at the St. John’s Anglican Cathedral; including the Club’s President, Ashlee Christian; along with Assistant Governor Evangeline Allen, and members of the Rotary Club of Antigua.

To: Your Worship
St. Johns Magistrate Court
Gray’s Farm
St. Johns
Antigua.

To: The Commissioner of Police
Police headquarters
American Road
St. Johns
Antigua.

Dear Sir/ Madame,

Re: Notice-Application for Tavern License

I, Elvis Murray-Watkins of Hatton, with registered business situated at Lower Long Street St. Johns Antigua and Barbuda **DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE** that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the liquor licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate’s Court, Grays Farm, St. Johns, Antigua on Thursday 6th January, 2022 next ensuring for a Liquor Licensing Pursuant to section (11) (5) of the licensing (intoxication liquor) act cap.249 of the laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 revised edition, in respect of premises known as “**W.I.B.A.D-WEST INDIAN BREAKFAST ALL DAY**” situated at the Lower long street in the parish of st. Johns, Antigua, and Barbuda.

Dated the 3rd day of December, 2021

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GG's highest honour conferred on UWI vice chancellor

At an investiture ceremony held on December 4, 2021, Antigua and Barbuda's Governor General, His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams, conferred upon Professor Sir Hilary McDonald Beckles, Vice Chancellor of The University of the West Indies (UWI), the Governor General's Faithful and Meritorious Award's highest honour, the Cross and Plaque, for his 40 years of distinguished, faithful and meritorious service to UWI and the Caribbean.

His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams described the honouree as a giant of a Caribbean man who had a passion for people, a passion for progress, a passion for productivity, and a passion for preserving the past treasures of the region. The Governor General also shared that the honour was not only well deserved but a timely one, since the Vice Chancellor's 40 years of distinguished service at UWI also coincided with the celebration of Antigua and Barbuda's 40th anniversary of political independence.

The lengthy citation, which outlined the many academic accolades and internationally recognized social

contributions of Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, also identified his leadership at UWI as a transformational one, as evidenced by the results of his Triple-A management strategy of Access, Alignment and Agility. Through this strategy, UWI was recently ranked by the Times Higher Education in the top 1.5% of globally ranked universities.

In his response, the Vice Chancellor expressed his profound thanks to the Governor General for the honour and shared that divine intervention, the influence of his parents, mentors and his hard-working team at UWI have all contributed to making him the West Indian man he is today.

The ceremony took place in the Investiture Room at Government House in the presence of a number of distinguished guests, including the Acting Prime Minister, Hon. Steadroy Benjamin; Minister of Education, Culture & Creative Industries, Hon. Daryll Matthew; Board Chairman of UWI Five Islands Campus, Mr. Aziz Hadeed; and Principal and Pro-Vice Chancellor UWI Five Islands, Professor Densil Williams.



Sir Hilary Beckles receives award from Governor General Dr. Rodney Williams.

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Grisly discovery of murdered female; person of interest surrenders

by Shelton Daniel

Investigations are continuing into the apparently gruesome death of a young woman whose body was discovered in the vicinity of the old Burma Dump on Sunday.

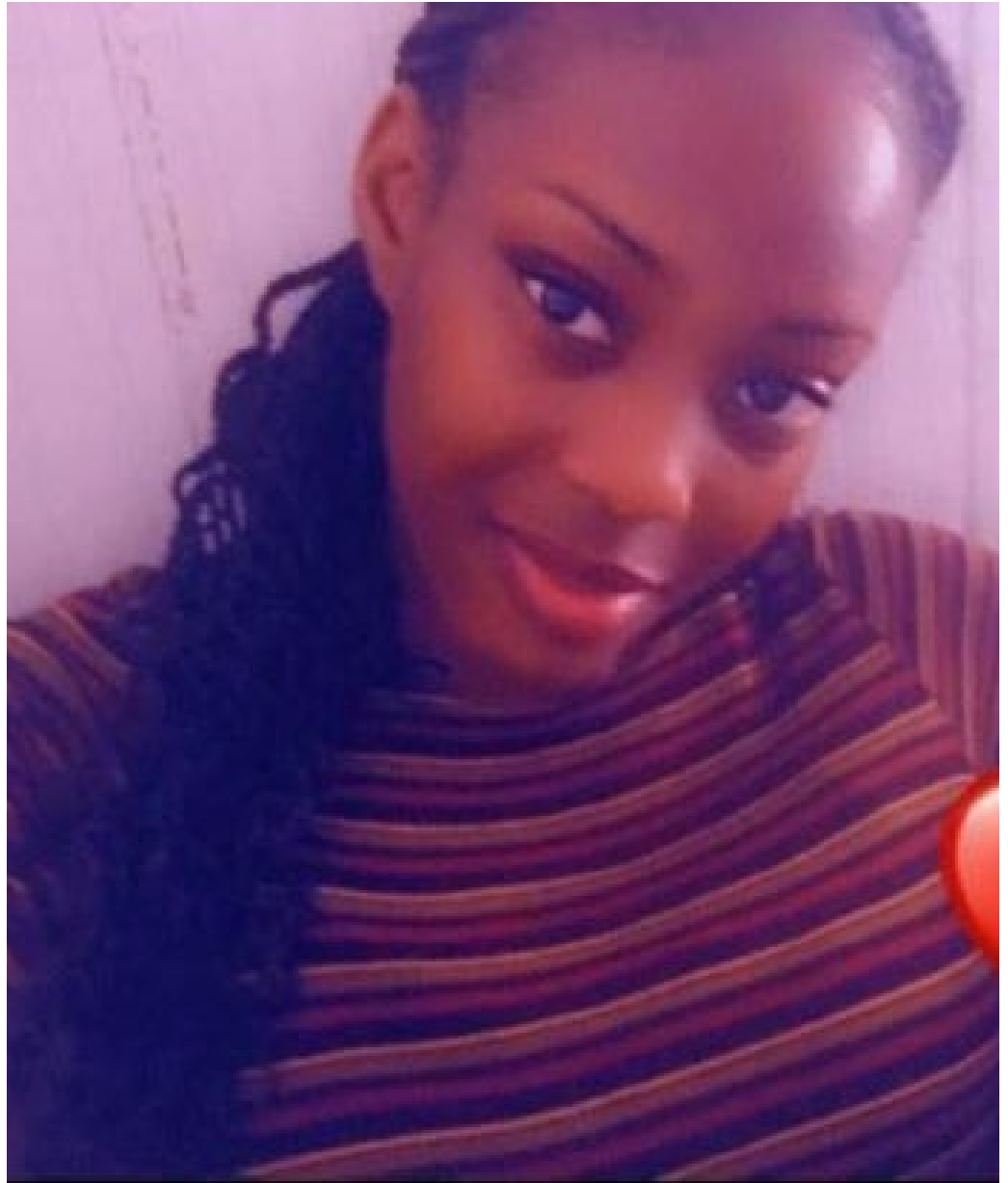
Neltah Telemaque – 25, of Horsford Hill, Liberta – was found lifeless with what appeared to be numerous wounds about her body, including having her throat slit.

The shocking discovery was reportedly made by a livestock farmer in the course of tending to his animals.

Police subsequently issued an appeal to her reputed boyfriend – Kevin Samuel of All Saints – to turn himself in without delay to the nearest police station, saying they believed he could provide them with useful information that would help their investigation into the circumstances of Telemaque's demise.

Later on Sunday it was reported that Samuel had complied and turned himself in to police as they try to piece together the seemingly violent end to Nelta Telemaque's life.

Her death marks homicide #14 for 2021 and comes while Antigua and Barbuda joins the rest of the world in observing the annu-



al 16 *days of activism to end all forms of violence against women and girls* from November 25 to December 10.

The 2021 theme of this United Nations-sanctioned observance is, partly, *'End Violence Against Women Now'*.

However, several of the 2021 homicides recorded thus far have

involved women being killed by reputed partners – current, former or estranged.

While much speculation has abounded as to the reasons – with a major common presumption among the public – this is not always disclosed or proven by subsequent investigative probes and trials.

Health Ministry announces additional COVID-19 vaccine doses for specific groups

Minister of Health, Wellness & the Environment, Sir Molwyn Joseph has announced that the Ministry will begin administering COVID-19 booster vaccines today Monday 6th December 2021 to specific groups.

This policy is being

implemented by the Government on the heels of recommendations made by the National COVID-19 Vaccination Technical Working Group and Senior Medical Technicians within the Ministry.

The additional doses of the Covid-19 vac-

cines will be administered to the most vulnerable and at-risk groups within the society in the first instance. These include healthcare providers such as doctors, nurses, radiologists, pharmacist and emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

Focus is also being placed on immuno-compromised individuals such as cancer patients, renal dialysis and transplant patients, persons living with HIV/AIDS, and persons receiving immune-suppressive therapy. Once the vaccine programme pro-

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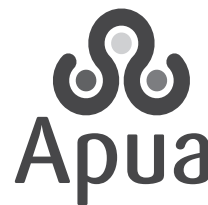


Minister of Health & Wellness, Sir Molwyn Joseph.

gresses, individuals 60 years and over will be prioritized, including those living in long-term care facilities.

In order to be considered eligible for the booster vaccine, one must have received their second dose of a two-dose vaccine or a single dose of a one-dose vaccine at least six months ago.

The additional vaccine doses will be administered at the Multipurpose Cultural & Exhibition Centre and the Villa Polyclinic from Mondays to Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. They will also be administered at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center for these special groups.



DELAYED DELIVERY OF PHYSICAL BILLS

APUA would like to advise our customers that due to unavoidable circumstances, there is a delay in printing the November bills for zones B, C and D. Affected customers can access copies of their bills online via our Online Payment Portal at <https://myutilities.apua.ag/> or via our website at www.apua.ag. Alternatively, customers may request their bill balance or a copy of their bill from our Customer Service Department at email customerservice@apua.ag or call 480-7150.

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause.

Airline launches weekly nonstop service from Orlando, Florida to ANU

Low-fare carrier Frontier Airlines on Saturday began weekly nonstop flights between Orlando International Airport in Florida, USA and the V.C. Bird International Airport (VC-

BIA) in Antigua (ANU). The new service marks the only nonstop flight option between the two destinations.

“We’re excited to begin the only nonstop

flights between Orlando and Antigua and Barbuda today,” said Barry Biffle, president and CEO of Frontier Airlines. “Frontier’s expansion in the Caribbean, and now the West Indies region, highlights our epic international growth story throughout the past year, while maintaining the affordable fares that shape our ‘Low Fares Done Right’ strategy.”

Antigua and Barbuda’s Minister of Tourism & Investment, Hon. Charles Fernandez, called the launch of the new Frontier Airlines’ service “welcomed news for Antigua and Barbuda as we head into the winter season. With competitive fares on offer and greater connections to other US cities out of Orlan-

do, we expect to see a significant increase in stay-over visitors to Antigua and Barbuda from the US market”. Frontier is focused on more than low fares. The carrier offers customers the ability to customize travel to their needs and budget.

Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, the company operates more than 110 aircraft of the A320 family and has the largest A320neo fleet in the US. The use of these aircraft, Frontier’s seating configuration, weight-saving tactics and baggage process have all contributed to the airline’s average of 43 percent fuel savings compared to other US airlines, which reportedly makes Frontier the most fuel-efficient

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(L-R) CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority, Euletta Francis; Frontier Airlines International and Domestic Sales Manager, Alfredo Gonzalez; Minister of Civil Aviation, Hon. Robin Yearwood; CEO of Frontier Airlines, Barry Biffle; Minister of Tourism & Investment, Hon. Charles Fernandez; Frontier Airlines Station Manager David Woodard; Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority US Director of Tourism, Dean Fenton; and CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority Colin C. James.

US airline. Frontier also describes itself as committed to families, enabling children

14 years and younger to fly free through the airline's Discount Den travel club on qualify-

ing flights. With more than 230 new Airbus planes on order, Frontier says, it will contin-

ue to grow to deliver on the mission of providing affordable travel.

Heritage District to be developed in Barbados

CMC - Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley has announced the creation of the Barbados Heritage District – an area that will include a memorial, a major global research institute, and a museum located in Newton Plantation.

In making the announcement on Saturday, Mottley said that this will be dedicated to accurately recounting the historic and contemporary impact of slavery on Barbados and on the lives of individuals, cultures, and nations of the Western hemisphere.

The Prime Minister added that the District's research institute will document Barbados' pivotal role as the harrowing portal through which millions of enslaved Africans were forced to the Americas.

"In the wake of Barbados' transition to a Parliamentary Republic, the Barbados Heritage District will also serve as a cornerstone and catalyst for the ongoing development of Barbados' independent identity, culture, and place on the world

stage." The Prime Minister also announced that David Adjaye has been commissioned to design the Barbados Heritage District.

The first phase of the project will be the Newton Enslaved Burial Ground Memorial, a monument to the nation's enslaved ancestors that will serve as a place of remembrance, honouring those individuals impacted by the effects of forced migration.

Located at the Newton Burial Ground, the memorial will provide the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual framework for the scholarly research and public programs that the future centre will generate.

Upon completion, it will be the first research institute and resource centre of global stature based in the Caribbean, dedicated to exploring the history and enduring impact of slavery and forced migration on the world.

The ground-breaking is slated for November 30, 2022, on the first anniversary of Barbados'



Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley

status as a Parliamentary Republic.

The development of the Barbados Heritage District will support significant job growth in new industries, technologies, and construction sectors.

The District is being developed in partnership with the Prime Minister's Office, the Barbados Archives Department, and the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, who are working in col-

laboration with a team of Barbadian scholars, spearheaded by Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies.

"Barbados is authentically enshrining our history and preserving the past as we reimagine our world and continue to contribute to global humanity. It is a moral imperative, but, equally, an economic necessity," the Prime Minister said.

Grenada seeks to reform rights of 'common law' spouses

Loop Caribbean - Grenada is discussing the possibility of allowing cohabiting partners to have the right to apply for spousal maintenance in the event of a relationship breakdown.

The measure is part of the Grenada Spotlight Initiative which "is designed to focus attention, coordinate human effort, and strategically apply resources to the implementation of a well-conceived comprehensive national programme to contribute to ending family violence and all forms of violence against women in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique".

Funded by the European Union and the United Nations, the initiative is organised around six pillars of programming, namely: legislative and policy framework; strengthening institutions, prevention and social norms; delivery of high quality, essential services; data availability and capacities; as well as supporting women's movements.

According to a statement issued by the project, discussions are also focusing on proposals for legal reforms which address rights to the division of property when cohabiting partners split up. "Further, it is pushing for legal reform on the inheritance rights of 'com-



mon law' spouses in Grenada. Currently, common-law spouses have no right to an interest in their deceased partner's estate. "Any such legislation would remove inequalities between lawful marriage and common-law unions, correcting outdated legislation with no real relevance to the Caribbean region," said the statement, adding that the proposed reforms fall under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG goal five of eliminating gender inequality and Article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which was ratified by Grenada in 1990.

Article 16 obliges State parties to commit to taking all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations. Presently, the United Kingdom Matri-

monial Clauses Act 1973 (as amended) applies to Grenada. The statement said the 1973 Act is ill-suited to the country, does not recognise how the family is commonly understood, and allows no rights to maintenance after a cohabiting relationship.

"This legislation makes no provision for unions other than marriages and thus ignores the prevalence of non-marital unions throughout the region, and specifically in Grenada," said the release.

Under this law, only married spouses are entitled to apply for a division of property at the end of the marriage and there are no rights for cohabiting partners to share a property if it is only registered in one name.

"The new legislation being proposed, if effected, will extend the 2010 Domestic Violence Act which currently provides partial relief and offers some recognition of

non-marital unions. Stakeholders and policymakers are also looking at whether there is to be a limitation that the property must have been acquired during the course of the relationship to qualify for a declaration of interest."

On the legislative reform agenda, also, are whether there should be options of a lump sum, a periodic payment, or a transfer of a specific asset to a surviving common-law spouse based on the circumstances. Currently, there is no right of entitlement to an interest in the deceased's estate – regardless of the length of the cohabiting relationship or the existence of children born to the union – when a cohabiting partner dies intestate.

The National Insurance Act Cap. 205 (Section 3) allows the Director of the Social Security Scheme in Grenada to award a survivor's benefit as though the cohabitants were a widow or widower, but this is seen as inadequate.

This section only stipulates that the single person must have been living with the deceased at the date of death. No further requirements are articulated and the discretion is left with the Director of National Insurance to grant the benefit or not.

Guyana: Mexicans looking to invest in oil refinery, airport terminal



Loop Caribbean - Three Mexican investors have expressed an interest in massive infrastructure projects in Guyana, including building an oil refinery, a new terminal at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA), and potentially paving the Linden to Lethem Road.

The investors, led by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Grupo Industrial Omega, Andres Holzer, met with President Dr. Irfaan Ali and a team of government ministers and officials on Saturday

The other investors were CEO of Grupo TCO Federico Martinez, CEO of Cometa Javi-

er Vazquez and local partner and CEO of Star 10 Dean Hassan.

A statement from the Office of the President said the investment team spoke about their ability to construct affordable, modern concrete houses and prefabricated hospitals. It is expected that they will engage in further discussions with the leadership of the Housing Ministry.

It was also noted that the investors had a keen interest in Guyana's oil and gas industry and signalled this by stating their interest in constructing oil refiners.

Earlier this year, President Ali

said his government supports the establishment of an oil refinery since it will "add value" to the oil and gas sector. He, however, emphasised that such an investment would have to be private sector-led instead of it being an investment from the government.

He also indicated that the government had already received proposals from some members of the private sector.

The Holzer-led Mexican investment team will be among the more recent private sector players interested in this investment which is geared at serving Guyana's nascent but attractive oil and gas industry.

Jamaica: Rape crisis!

Jamaica Observer - LESS than half of the over 6,500 rape cases that were reported in the last 10 years have been 'cleared up', officials have said.

According to data provided by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (Statin) and the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), a total of 6,573 acts of rape were reported between 2011 and 2020. Of that number, only 3,254 have been cleared up.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Radcliffe Gordon, crime officer at the Centre for Investigation of Sexual Offences & Child Abuse (CISOCA), explained that the term 'cleared up' means that charges have been levied against accused persons.

"There are other ways it can be cleared, but predominantly it's when charges are laid. If the accuser is deceased and a witness comes forward and positively identifies the person who has made the offence, it can be cleared in that way — but that is very rare; it's really when the charges are laid," Gordon told the Jamaica Observer.

The year 2012 saw the most reports of rape within the period, with 948. However, only 40 percent of those cases have been cleared up. Behind that year, 2011 had 845 reported cases with only 45 percent cleared up.

The most cases that

have been cleared up in a year was 2013 with 390. But that year there were 814 reported cases. The JCF's Statistics & Information Management Unit said that, as of November 30 this year, 370 rape cases were reported and 287 were cleared up. Moreover, when compared to the same period last year, there has been a 25 percent decline in rape.

Attorney-at-law Bert Samuels told the Sunday Observer that rape cases are not prioritised in Jamaica. "The backlog in cases is a critical issue for the dispensation of justice, and there has been a COVID issue [added] now. Rape trials are normally tried with a jury and there are no jury trials that have taken place in Jamaica from the last two years because of COVID, and the courtrooms are not retrofitted to facilitate social distancing in the jury box and in the courtroom, so here it is now that we have a new delay factor — that is COVID not allowing jury trials," he said.

Samuels also said there is usually difficulty in getting accused individuals tried before a court for rape.

"In most rape cases, it is one person's word against the other. In other words, there are other crimes in which there is a trail left behind in the form of a death, someone loses property, or

a wounding where you can see the wound. In a lot of rape cases there is no physical evidence to prove the case or to prove it for the complainant, or to prove it for the defendant, if it is denial," Samuels explained.

"Most times the complainant is the only witness that can prove her case. In a few cases there are times when scientific evidence is used in the defence which excludes the accused."

An example of such is if semen is left behind and the accused is tested. If the accused isn't guilty of the crime, he is thereby excluded by DNA evidence.

Samuels added that before a jury there is an "issue" where the standard of proof is beyond a reasonable doubt.

"It is Jane's word against John's. This creates some difficulty for the prosecution to prove its case. And because it's one person's word against another, the law book says it is an accusation easy to make but sometimes difficult to disprove. Then you have the situation where you have hate rape, where the person had a relationship with the person before, and jurors may take the view that this is a relationship gone bad and they are hesitant in convicting. So, many factors come to light."

Convictions are also hampered, resulting in guilty men walking free

when assaulted women of a "tender age" have to take the stand to testify.

"They can't deliver themselves well in court, and the trauma attendant on going through that weighs heavily on a person's ability to tell their side of the story."

Meanwhile, Dr. Adella Campbell, associate professor and dean of the College of Health Sciences at University of Technology, Jamaica (UTech), pointed to the fact that the statistics only reflect those cases that have actually been reported.

"There are times when health-care workers manage the care of rape victims prior to the offence being reported to the authorities. Victims often show up at health institutions — both primary and secondary care — for treatment. A key point to note, however, is that the institutions have protocols for reporting sexual offences of this nature to the relevant authorities as soon as they visit the health facilities."

Campbell underscored that it is not uncommon to encounter situations in which victims of sexual offences, such as rape, are reluctant to have the matter reported to the relevant authorities such as the police, Child Protection & Family Services Agency (CPFSA), and CISOCA.

Pope chides Europe, comforts migrants on return to Lesbos

(AP)— Pope Francis returned Sunday to the Greek island of Lesbos to offer comfort to migrants at a refugee camp and blast what he said was Europe's indifference and self-interest "that condemns to death those on the fringes".

"Please, let us stop this shipwreck of civilization!" Francis said at the Mavrovouni camp, a cluster of white UN containers on the edge of the sea, lined by barbed wire fencing and draped with laundry drying in the air.

A maskless Francis took his time walking through the camp Sunday, patting children and babies on the head and posing for selfies. He gave a "thumbs up" after he was serenaded by African women singing a song of welcome.

It was Francis' second trip to Lesbos in five years. He lamented that little had changed since

2016 when Lesbos was at the heart of a massive wave of migration to Europe, and when Francis brought 12 Syrian Muslim refugees from the island back home with him aboard the papal plane.

That concrete gesture of solidarity had raised hopes among current residents of the Lesbos camp, some of whom have given birth to children here while waiting for their asylum claims to be processed. But there were no papal airlifts on Sunday and Francis returns to the Vatican on Monday.

"It is a grace for us that the pope is coming here. We have a lot of problems here as refugees, a lot of suffering," said Enice Kiaku from Congo, whose two-year-old son on her lap was born on Lesbos. But like little Guilain, she has no identity documents and is stuck.

"The arrival of the

pope here makes us feel blessed, because we hope the pope will take us with him, because here we suffer," Kiaku said as she waited in a tent for the pope to arrive.

Francis' five-day trip to Cyprus and Greece has been dominated by the topic of migration and Francis' call for European countries to show greater solidarity with those in need. He insisted Sunday that Europe must stop building walls, stoking fears and shutting out "those in greater need who knock at our door".

During the first leg of Francis' trip in Cyprus, the Vatican announced that 12 migrants who had crossed over from the breakaway Turkish Cypriot north would be relocated to Italy in the coming weeks. Cypriot officials, who say the European Union island nation can't accept more migrants, said a total of 50 would eventu-



ally be sent.

"I ask every man and woman, all of us, to overcome the paralysis of fear, the indifference that kills, the cynical disregard that nonchalantly condemns to death those on the fringes!" Francis said Sunday. "Let us stop ignoring reality, stop constantly shifting responsibility, stop passing off the issue of migration to others, as if it mattered to no one and was only a pointless burden to be shouldered by somebody else!"

He denounced that the Mediterranean Sea, "the cradle of so many civilizations", had become a vast cemetery where smuggling boats packed with desperate people too often sink.

"Let us not let our

sea (mare nostrum) be transformed into a desolate sea of death (mare mortuum)," he said.

Sitting before him in a tent at the water's edge was Greek President Katerina Sakellariopoulou, EU Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas and would-be refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq and Congo, among other countries.

Addressing the pope, Sakellariopoulou strongly defended Greece's response to the needs of migrants and thanked Francis for showing his support with his presence.

"It is the strong message of hope and responsibility that is conveyed from Lesbos to the international community," she said.

Top Space Force official: China is developing space capabilities at 'twice the rate' of US

(CNN) - Gen. David Thompson, vice chief of space operations for the US Space Force, said on Saturday that China is developing its space capabilities at "twice the rate" of the US.

On a panel of US space experts and leaders speaking at the Reagan National Defense Forum in a panel moderated by CNN's Kristin Fisher, Gen. Thompson warned that China could overtake the US in space capabilities by the end of the decade.

"The fact that in essence, on average, they are building and fielding and updating their space capabilities at twice the rate we are, means that very soon – if we don't start accelerating our development and delivery capabilities – they will exceed us," Gen. Thompson said, adding, "2030 is not an unreasonable estimate."

Gen. Thompson was joined by Rep. Jim Cooper, a Tennessee Democrat who chairs the House Armed Services



Committee's strategic forces subcommittee; which helps oversee the Space Force's budget; and Chris Kubasik, president and CEO of L3Harris Technologies, a defense contractor that develops Space and Airborne systems.

Cooper said, "Hell yes," when asked if the US is competing in a so-called space race with China.

Both Gen. Thompson and Kubasik agreed with Cooper's assessment. Cooper has been a steadfast advocate for the Space Force, but said Saturday it is not moving fast enough to "keep up" with private

industry.

"It's great that the private sector is so much more innovative than our Air Force was, and we need to get the Space Force to be much more innovative and try to keep up with the private sector," Cooper said.

He added: "To really be superior, we've got to go beyond Elon Musk's imagination, Jeff Bezos' imagination, beyond their pocketbooks. (The) budget right now is \$17 billion -- that's a lot of money, but considering how crucial space is, are we doing enough?"

Cooper suggested the Space Force should be

more like the National Reconnaissance Office which oversees government space satellites and provides satellite intelligence to several US agencies.

"The NRO has actually done a pretty amazing job," Cooper said. "They're not as well-known as some other agencies. But I had a recent side-by-side briefing with the NRO and Space Force. My conclusion after that briefing was 'Thank God for the NRO'. I anxiously await the day that I can say the same about the Space Force."

When asked to respond, Gen. Thompson said, "As Congressman Cooper noted, every time we meet, Congressman Cooper asks what he can continue to do to help, and my request of him is always the same: 'Continue to be our strongest supporter and our toughest critic, and I can say this morning he continues to perform effectively in both of those roles,' to which the room erupted in laughter.

COVID: travel changes too late to halt potential new wave - scientist

BBC - The latest travel rule changes are “a case of shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted,” a scientist advising the government has said.

Prof Mark Woolhouse said the new rules had come “too late” to make a “material difference” to a potential wave of the Omicron variant in the UK. The changes include pre-departure tests for people arriving in the UK, and Nigeria going on the travel red list.

Downing Street said the changes were due to a rise in travel-linked Omicron cases.

From 04:00 GMT on Tuesday, travellers aged 12 and over will be required to show proof of a negative PCR or lateral flow test taken no earlier than 48 hours before departure.

Health Secretary Sajid Javid said the measures were temporary.

Nigeria will also be added to the travel red list of countries from Monday, which means UK or Irish nationals, or UK residents returning from the country, must quarantine in a hotel for 10 days.

But the latest changes have been described by

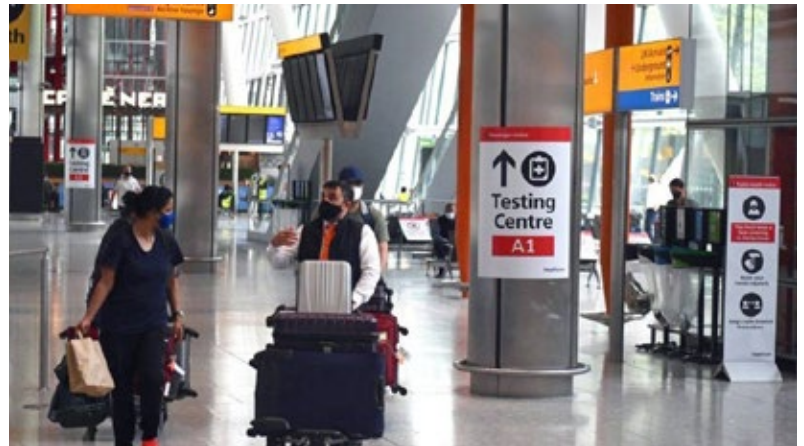
the travel industry as a “hammer blow”, with the Business Travel Association warning livelihoods would be “devastated”.

Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab accepted the latest measures might “upset or disrupt” some people, but insisted it was right for ministers to take “incremental steps” early to avoid “bigger disruption” to travel and the economy.

Prof Woolhouse, a member of the government’s Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (Spi-M), told the BBC’s Andrew Marr that while imported cases of the Omicron variant were “important”, community transmission of the variant would be the driver of a next wave.

He added that the numbers of UK Omicron cases were currently “quite small” and he strongly suspected the absolute number was “more in the hundreds than the thousands”.

But he warned Omicron was “spreading pretty rapidly” in the UK, and if current trends here and in South Africa continued in the coming weeks and months, it could even re-



place the Delta variant around the world.

Asked about Prof Woolhouse’s comment that the new restrictions had come too late, Mr. Raab said there would always be “Goldilocks criticism that we’ve done too much or we’ve done too little”.

He said ministers would stay “eternally vigilant” to the risks associated with the Omicron variant and that measures, including adding countries to the travel red list, were intended to prevent its “re-seeding” in the UK.

Citing this week’s drop in the number of COVID hospital admissions and deaths, and the “success” of the vaccination rollout, he said: “We have steadily and steadfastly created the resilient defences – which means we can enjoy Christmas.”

But Dr. Katherine Henderson, president of the Royal College of Emergen-

cy Medicine, said hospitals were already struggling to cope because of winter pressures and warned that the NHS would be in a “very, very difficult position” if the new variant led to a surge in hospital admissions.

It comes as the UK Health Security Agency on Sunday reported a further 86 cases of the Omicron variant across the UK, taking the total so far to 246.

Scientists have raised concerns that the heavily-mutated variant may be more transmissible than the dominant Delta strain and be able to escape immunity from vaccines.

Ten southern African countries had already been added to the UK’s travel red list because of fears about Omicron - South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Angola, Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia.

US congressman posts family Christmas picture with guns, days after school shooting

Reuters - A US congressman on Saturday posted a Christmas picture of himself and what appeared to be his family, smiling and posing with an assortment of guns, just days after four teenagers were killed in a shooting at a Michigan high school.

“Merry Christmas! ps. Santa, please bring ammo,” U.S. Representative Thomas Massie of Kentucky wrote on Twitter.

Ethan Crumbley, 15, on Tuesday carried out the deadliest US school shooting this year, the latest in a decades-long series of mass shootings at US schools. His parents were arrested on Saturday in connection with the slayings.

Massie, who represents a solidly Republican district, posted the picture of himself and six others holding firearms resembling an M60 machine gun, AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, and a Thompson sub-machine gun.



US Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY) in a Christmas photo of his family holding guns, in this image obtained from Twitter, posted on December 4, 2021.

Some semi-automatic weapons are made to look nearly identical to fully automatic weapons like machine guns. Under US law, weapons like machine guns are restricted to the military, law enforcement and civilians who have obtained special licenses for weapons made before May 1986.

Jonathan van Norman, a campaign manager for Massie, did not immediately reply to a request for comment

via Twitter.

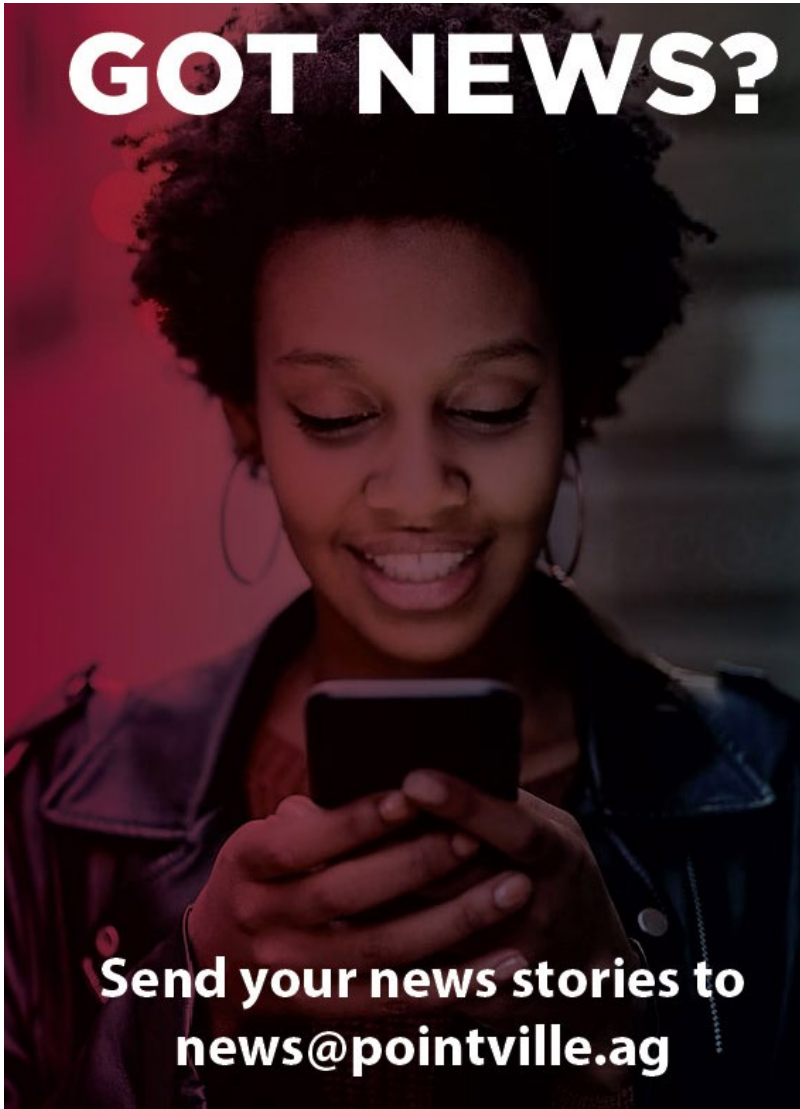
Democratic US Representative John Yarmuth, who chairs the US House of Representatives Budget Committee, condemned his fellow Kentuckian's post.

“I’m old enough to remember Republicans screaming that it was insensitive to try to protect people from gun violence after a tragedy,” Yarmuth wrote on Twitter, apparently referring to calls for gun control

laws. “I promise not everyone in Kentucky is an insensitive asshole,” he added.

The shooting in Oxford, Michigan - in which four teenagers were killed and a teacher and six other students were wounded - was the latest in a string of sometimes deadlier incidents that have prompted fierce debates over school safety, gun control, and gun rights.

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YOU THINK IT WE PRINT IT

Team name changed to Guyana Amazon Jaguars

Ramnaresh Sarwan



Kaieteur News – Because of issues involving Guyana Cricket Inc. (GCI) which have reached the Courts, new president of the Guyana Cricket Board (GCB) Bissoondyal Singh disclosed that because the Guyana Jaguars Franchise is owned by GGI, under the previous administration, the Guyana Jaguars has been changed to Guyana Amazon Jaguars.

This, among several other issues, was dealt with on the weekend at the Grand Coastal Hotel on the East Coast when the GCB held its inaugural press conference since they assumed office eight months ago.

Four of the 14 executives were absent yester-

day, including the chairman of Cricket West Indies (CWI) Selectors, Roger Harper, and the chairman of Guyana's National Youth Selectors.

The 41-year-old former Guyana and West Indies captain, Ramnaresh Sarwan, addressed the gathering – which included GCB staff members and the media – via zoom from Florida, and disclosed that he and fellow national senior selectors Albert Smith, Peter Persaud and Otto Christiani had agreed on a number of the changes for the national team.

According to Sarwan, “This is to ensure that when our players get to West Indies level it would be easy to pass their fitness

test since they will be fitter. Players should take personal responsibility for their fitness. The four-day players are better in this regard to those who focus on T20 cricket.”

Still the youngest West Indian to play first-Class cricket after making his debut for Guyana against Barbados in the Red Stripe Cup of 1995-96 at the age of 15, Sarwan says there must be a way to encourage players to want to be in all formats.

The stylish right-hander, who retired from cricket in 2016 after playing 87 Tests, 181 ODIs, 18 T20Is, 220 First-Class, 265 List ‘A’, and 77 T20s, spoke about plans for leadership succes-

sion. Sarwan says that while Johnson is a good leader, he needs to lead from the front with the bat with more runs on a consistent basis. While the CWI's requirement to pass their fitness was achieving at least 40 on the YO-YO test, the GCB test would move up to 45.

“We have won five tournaments that have not been producing outstanding international players who not only make the team and remain in due to their consistent performances. We need our players to be averaging at least 40 at international level,” said Sarwan, who averaged above 40 in both Test and ODIs.

“We have not had much cricket to play because of the COVID-19 pandemic, so we have got to pick a squad based on experience but our major concerns have been the batting ... the bowling has been quite good but changes in the batting will be made. We have to give young players a chance to get exposure, even if they do not make the final XI. We have already identified three players,” said Sarwan, the proprietor of the Amazonia Mall.

The scaled down First-Class season has been reduced from 10

to five matches and is scheduled to commence on February 20 with the newly branded Guyana Amazon Jaguars playing their first three games away from home.

“We should commence preparation for that tournament on December 6 and should have two practice matches. We have our core players, but for any young players outside those, we are looking at outstanding performances, they could be selected,” said Sarwan, who scored his maiden Test century in 2003 against Bangladesh at Dhaka.

Sarwan explained while the selectors want to mix youth with experience, those young players will be selected because it is believed that they can contribute with the bat or ball.

“The most important goal is winning, but we want a balanced team. Having Raymond Reifer from Barbados meant we had three fast bowling all-rounders and that disrupted the balance of the team,” said Sarwan, who reiterated that the main worry is the batting.

NBA: Chicago Bulls edge to win over Brooklyn Nets as DeRozan shines in fourth quarter

DeMar DeRozan scored 13 of his 29 points in the final quarter as the Chicago Bulls edged to a 111-107 win over the Brooklyn Nets.

In the battle of the Eastern Conference's top two sides, the Bulls' Zach LaVine top-scored with 31 points.

But it was team-mate DeRozan who inspired the Bulls to their second win over the Nets this season, making six of 11 shots in the fourth period.

He has now scored a league-leading 178 points in final quarters this season.

Kevin Durant led conference leaders the Nets with 28 points and 10 rebounds to move up to 24th - past Hall-of-Famer Ray Allen - on the NBA's all-time scoring list.

Elsewhere, Western Conference leaders the Golden State Warriors lost 112-107 to the San Antonio Spurs, who extended their winning streak to a season-best four games. Derrick White scored a late three-pointer and three free throws to help the Spurs hold off the Warriors who, after facing a nine-point deficit at half-time, clawed their way back



DeMar DeRozan leads the NBA with 178 points in fourth quarters this season

into the game with a third quarter flurry inspired by Stephen Curry.

Nikola Jokic scored 32 points and added 11 rebounds as the Denver Nuggets cruised past the New York Knicks 113-99 for only their third win in 10 games.

The Milwaukee Bucks won their seventh straight home game with

a 124-102 victory over the Miami Heat, while there was a dominant win too for the Boston Celtics, who schooled the Portland Trail Blazers 145-117.

In Saturday's other fixtures, the Memphis Grizzlies beat the Dallas Mavericks 97-90, and the Sacramento Kings defeated the Los Angeles Clippers 104-99.

Anthony Yarde stops Lyndon Arthur with spectacular performance in fourth round of thrilling rematch

BBC Sport - Anthony Yarde gained revenge on Lyndon Arthur with a spectacular knockout performance in their light-heavyweight rematch at London's Copper Box Arena.

Yarde was a changed man from the one beaten convincingly by Arthur a year ago, setting a ferocious pace and landing hard shots from round one.

A game Arthur was forced into survival mode immediately. But he was eventually dropped in the fourth round under a flurry of eye-catching hooks from Yarde, succumbing to the first defeat of his career.

The start was night and day to the first round 12 months ago, with Londoner Yarde stepping on the gas from the off. The Manchester fighter - who was defending the Commonwealth and WBO Intercontinental titles - did well to pull Yarde into clinches to slow him down and managed to narrowly avoid serious damage.

Arthur composed himself in the second after surviving a furious start but the Londoner could count himself two rounds up - and then stunned his opponent again in the third

with a hard right hook. Arthur tried to fight fire with fire as Yarde stepped in, but was unable to push him back.

Yarde's right hand was finding its home in a way it never did in the first fight, but Arthur smiled as he saw off another fast flurry in the final 20 seconds of the third round.

Arthur thought he had hurt his opponent early in the fourth, but with a shake of the head, Yarde stepped in and unleashed.

He caught Arthur repeatedly with blows to the head, mixing in uppercuts with shots to the body. Eventually, the Mancunian's knees buckled under the pressure.

Arthur was not permitted to continue, sparking wild celebrations for Yarde who avenged just the second defeat of his career and took the Commonwealth and WBO Intercontinental titles.

While Arthur is likely to push for the trilogy, Yarde will look forward to securing a world-title fight in 2022, in what will be his second crack at becoming a world champion.



Anthony Yarde earned redemption over Lyndon Arthur with a superb performance

DAVIS CUP FINALS: DANIIL MEDVEDEV LEADS RUSSIAN TENNIS FEDERATION TO TITLE



World number two Daniil Medvedev celebrated the “best weeks” of his career as he led the Russian Tennis Federation to a third Davis Cup title.

Medvedev’s 7-6 (9-7) 6-2 win over Marin Cilic sealed a 2-0 victory over 2018 champions Croatia in the Madrid final.

Andrey Rublev had won the first singles match against Borna Gojo 6-4 7-6 (7-5). “It feels amazing, but I am more happy for the team than for myself,” said 25-year-old Medvedev who did not drop a set at the Finals. “It is never easy to come at the end of the season, but it was the best two weeks of my

career.” The Davis Cup triumph comes at the end of a season in which Medvedev won his maiden Grand Slam title at the US Open.

The Russians are the fourth nation to win both the Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup - the women’s equivalent team competition - in the same year.

Medvedev was initially tested in the first set by 2014 US Open champion Cilic, who had lost three of his four matches coming into the final.

The 33-year-old Croat built up a 4-2 lead in the first-set tie-break, but his forehand lost its way in the closing stages as the Russian steadied his

own nerves. Cilic’s serve deserted him in the early part of the second set, with Medvedev going an early break up and keeping that advantage. The Russians, playing under the name of their federation because the nation is banned from international competition for doping violations, claimed their first title since 2006.

They were the pre-tournament favourites and have demonstrated why with some strong performances since the start of the year.

Medvedev, Rublev and Aslan Karatsev are in the world’s top 20, while former world number eight

Karen Khachanov is in the top 30. However, the winning moment in Madrid was a muted celebration with a slightly less combative on-court interview after Medvedev previously baited the home crowd when he reminded the home crowd on Saturday that his team had eliminated Spain in the group stage. The tournament will return next year with more proposals to tweak the format to include a fourth group-stage city and a neutral host for the final stages, with venues yet to be decided.

DEWS